Factoring Process: Traffic Adjustment Factors

Traffic Adjustment Factors

Traffic Adjustment Factors are numbers that are used to create traffic statistics representing an average day. Factors are generated by applying statistical methods and programs to raw traffic counts. The different procedures used to factor counts depend on the following outcomes:

24-Hour Total Traffic and Truck Traffic Estimation

Count data less than 24-hours (short term counts) must first be expanded to a 24-hour total, which is accomplished through the use of hourly percentage tables. Separate tables are utilized for total vehicles and truck data application.

AADT and ADTT Estimation

A 24-hour count is processed to an Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) and Average Daily Truck Traffic (ADTT) through the application of a "day of week by month" factor. Separate tables are utilized for total vehicle and truck data application.

Axle Correction

Axle volume count data is collected by counting the number of axles striking a single pneumatic tube stretched across a section of highway and dividing by two. This type of data must be corrected to compensate for vehicles containing more than two axles (specifically truck data) to obtain a representative number of vehicles actually traveling that road section. This representation is obtained through the application of an axle correction factor.

Equivalent Single Axle Load Adjustment (ESAL)

ESAL adjustment factors are applied to the ADTT for each type of truck classification, to determine the loading effect these truck classes have on the pavement. Two separate calculations are performed: one for rigid type pavement (concrete) and one for flexible type pavement (bituminous). The AASHTO Mechanistic Empirical Pavement Design Guide has incorporated improved methods of determining loading effects of traffic termed axle-load spectra. In the future, these new methods will supersede the use of ESAL factors.

Growth Factor

If the count to be analyzed was taken earlier than the current year, a county growth trend is applied to project the older count data to a representative current year estimate. County growth trends are established based on Functional Class Group (FCG).

Design Hour Volume Factor, DHV (K)

The K-factor represents the percentage of AADT during the design hour. It is calculated by dividing the peak hour volume by the AADT. A 24-hour count is required to calculate the K-factor. If this condition is not met (in the case of manual counts), a default value is applied. The default value is calculated from the 95 permanent site stations using the 30th highest hour and is established based on Traffic Pattern Group (TPG).