

Institution of **MECHANICAL ENGINEERS**

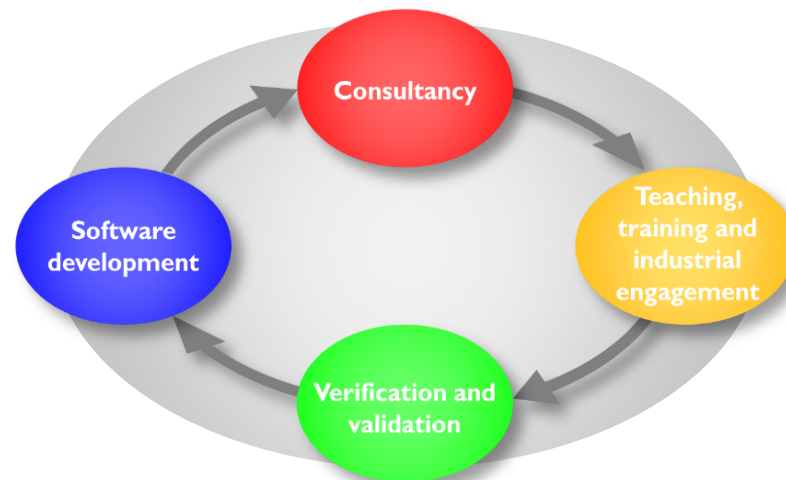
Enabling improved analysis data for blast protection of offshore structures

Steve Howell and Simon Feven – 8th December 2015



Abercus

Abercus is an independent, privately-owned consultancy specialising in advanced engineering simulation within the energy sector – computational fluid dynamics (CFD), finite element analysis (FEA), the development of bespoke software tools and teaching/training.



Acknowledgements

- Fellow authors
 - Matt Straw – Norton Straw Consultants (Derby)
 - Celine Beurlet and Charles Lefevre – Cobra Advice (Paris)
 - Fanny Guerriero – Saipem (Paris)
- Conversations
 - Nicolas Salaun – Gexcon (Bergen)
 - Matt Yates and Ali Sari – Genesis Oil and Gas (Aberdeen and Houston).



Agenda

- Acknowledgements
- Introduction
- Probabilistic explosion assessment
- Improving the integration of analysis data
- EXCGEN – a software tool to enable an integrated approach
- Sharing/democratisation of analysis data
- 3D risk assessment
- Selection of representative 10^{-4} /yr events
- Probabilistic structural response
- Summary.



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Introduction

- When designing for blast it is necessary to quantify the magnitude of the design accidental loads (DAL) and CFD is often used to simulate explosion events for this purpose
- When determining the DALs there is often a large amount of useful analysis data that is generated but not used
- This paper introduces a method aimed at improving the integration of explosion and blast analysis data in structural design to enable improved and safer offshore facilities
 - Sharing and associated democratisation of analysis data – sensitivities
 - 3D risk assessment
 - Probabilistic structural response.

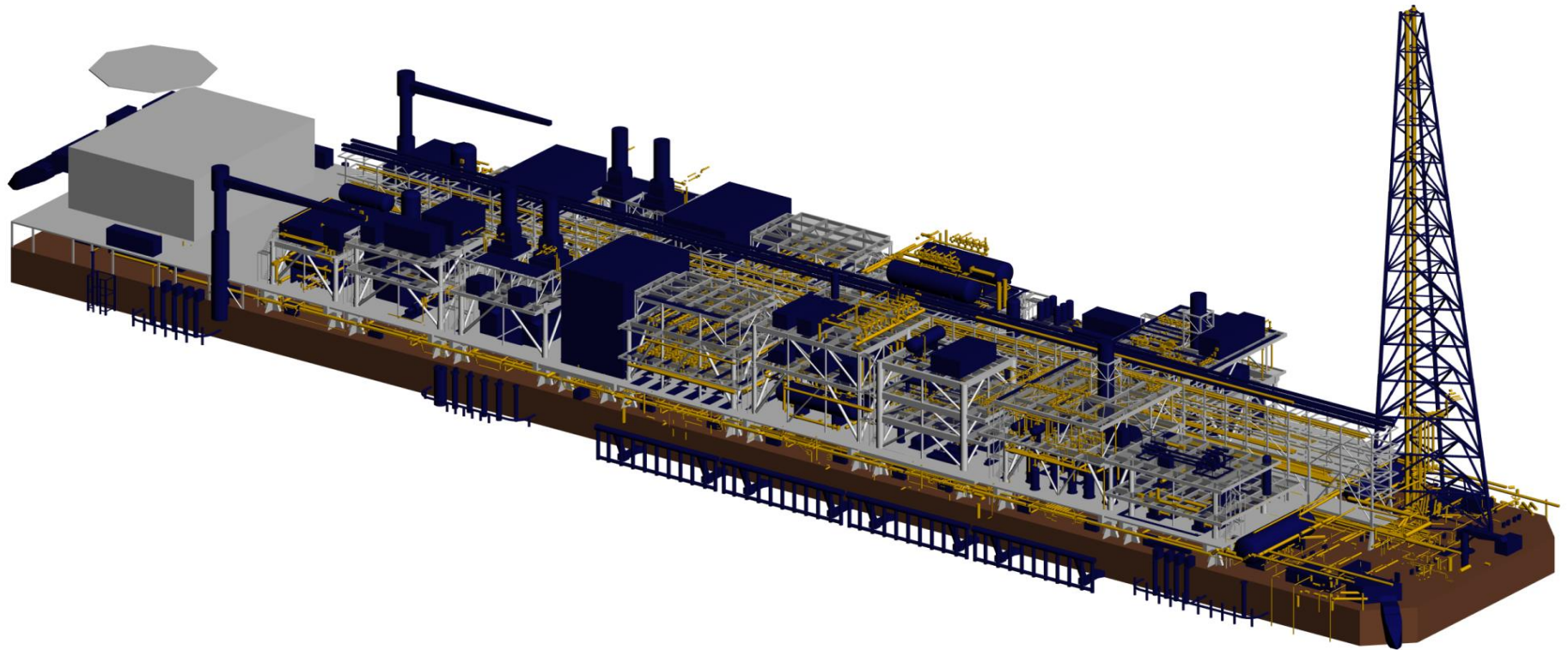


Introduction

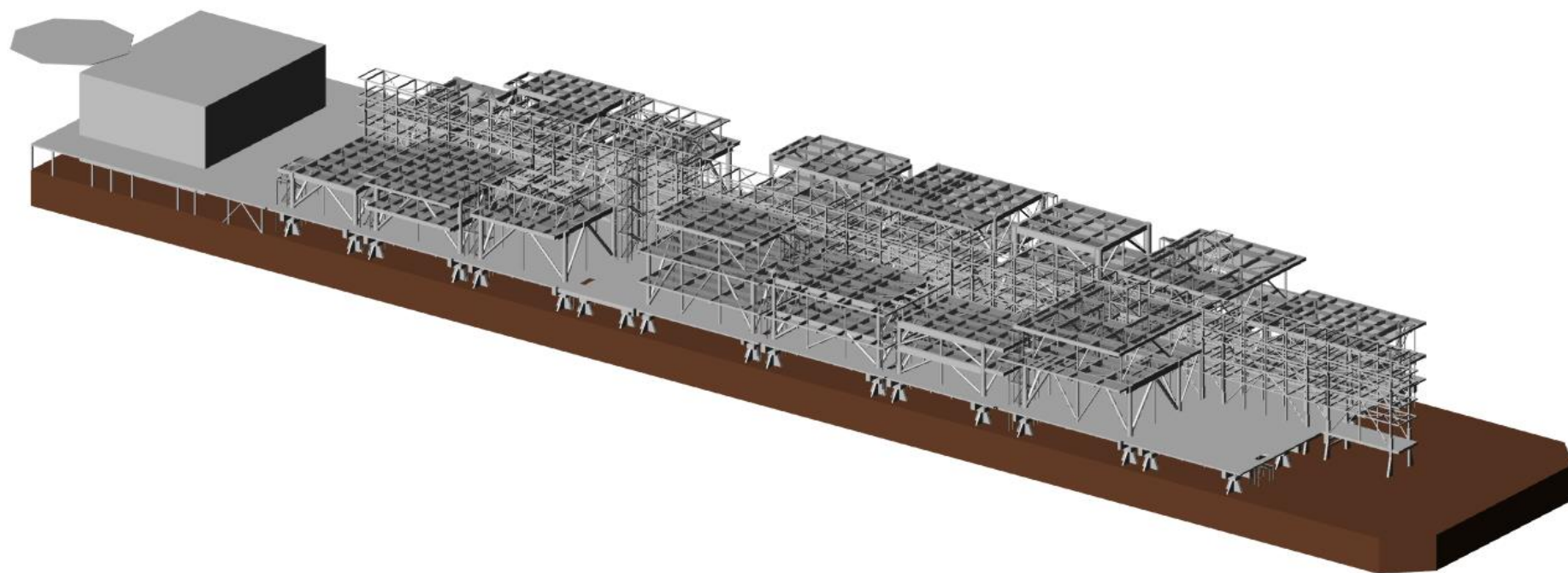
- Computational fluid dynamics (CFD) is a numerical approach used for solving the governing equations for fluid flow
- CFD is widely used in many industries and is becoming increasingly used in the offshore and energy sectors
- With the CFD approach, the flow domain is divided into many non-overlapping volumes and the governing equations are solved iteratively for each cell ...



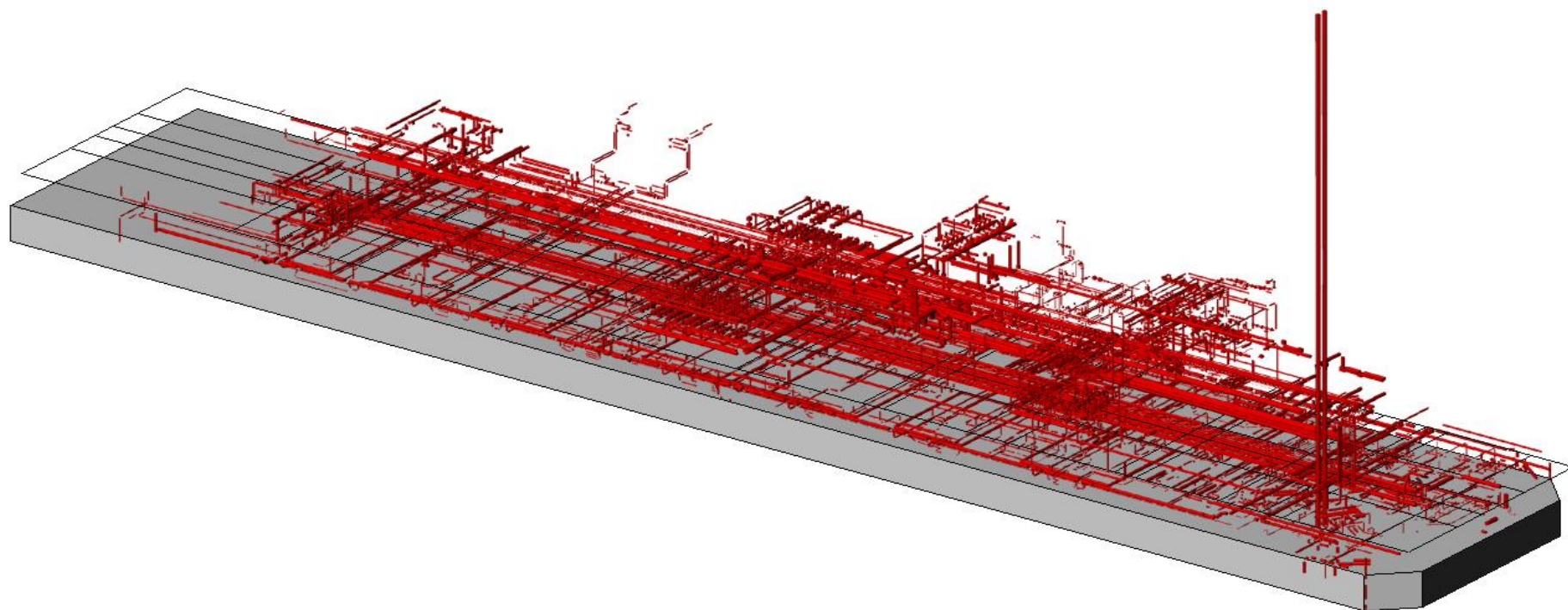
Introduction



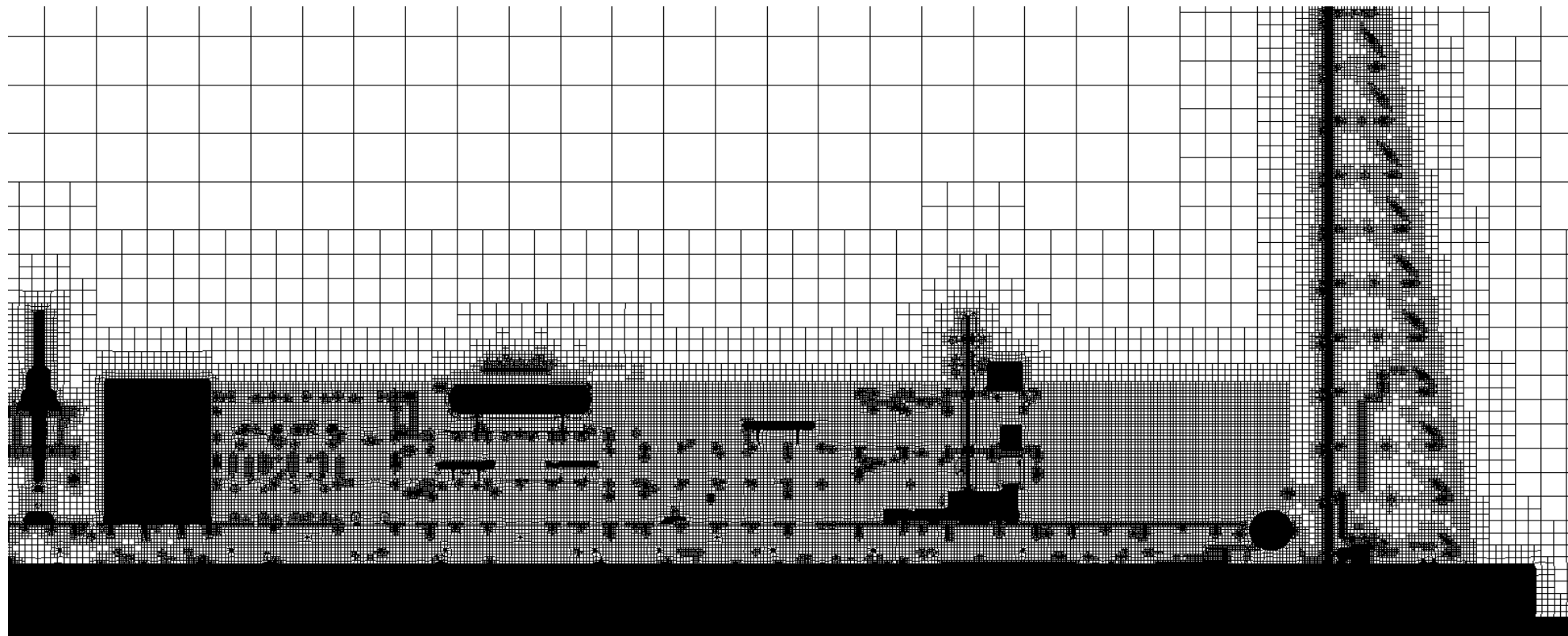
Introduction



Introduction



Introduction



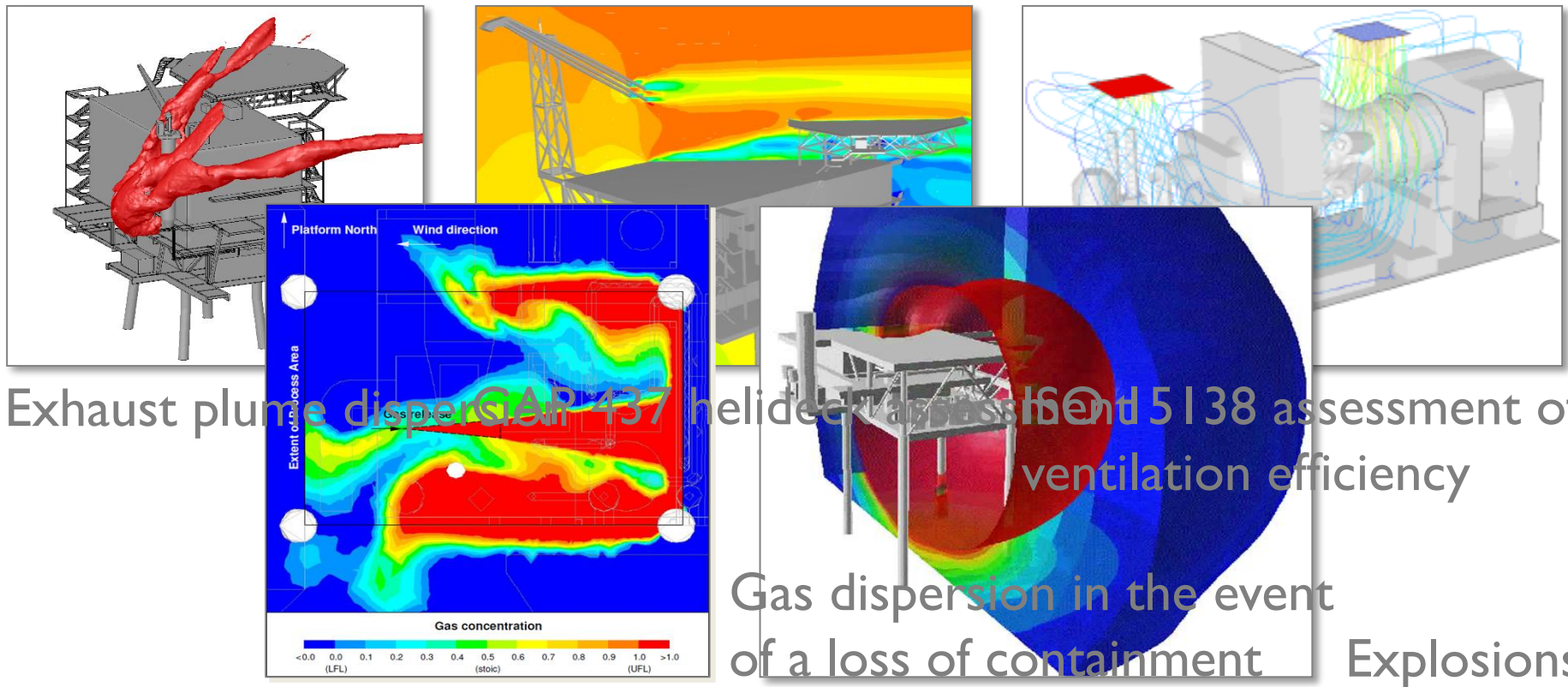
Introduction

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- CFD is widely used in many industries and is becoming increasingly used in the offshore and energy sectors
- With the CFD approach, the flow domain is divided into many non-overlapping volumes and the governing equations are solved iteratively for each cell ...
- ... and then the governing equations describing fluid flow are solved iteratively for each cell.



Introduction

- CFD is widely used for technical safety applications:



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Probabilistic explosion assessment

- CFD can be used to simulate a well defined explosion event – this is deterministic
- How do you define which:
 - Flammable cloud
 - Ignition point
- How should the flammable cloud be defined:
 - Geometry (typically rectangular)
 - Composition (typically stoichiometric composition).

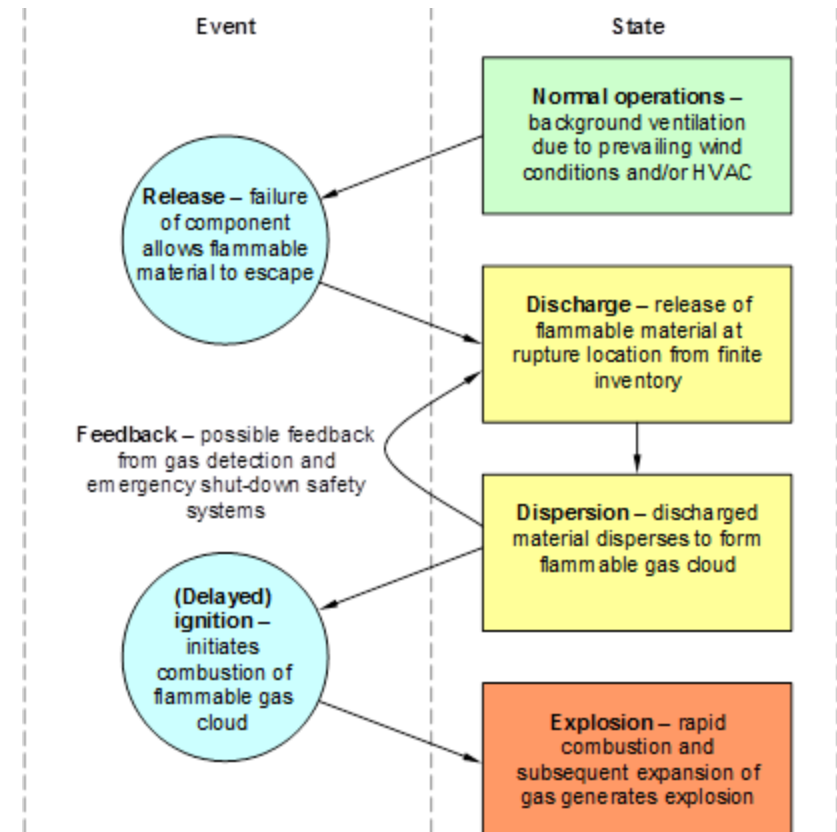


Probabilistic explosion assessment

Simulate the sequence of events that lead up to any potential explosion event –

- background ventilation during normal operations
- dispersion following a release
- explosion following ignition.

Deterministic sequence!



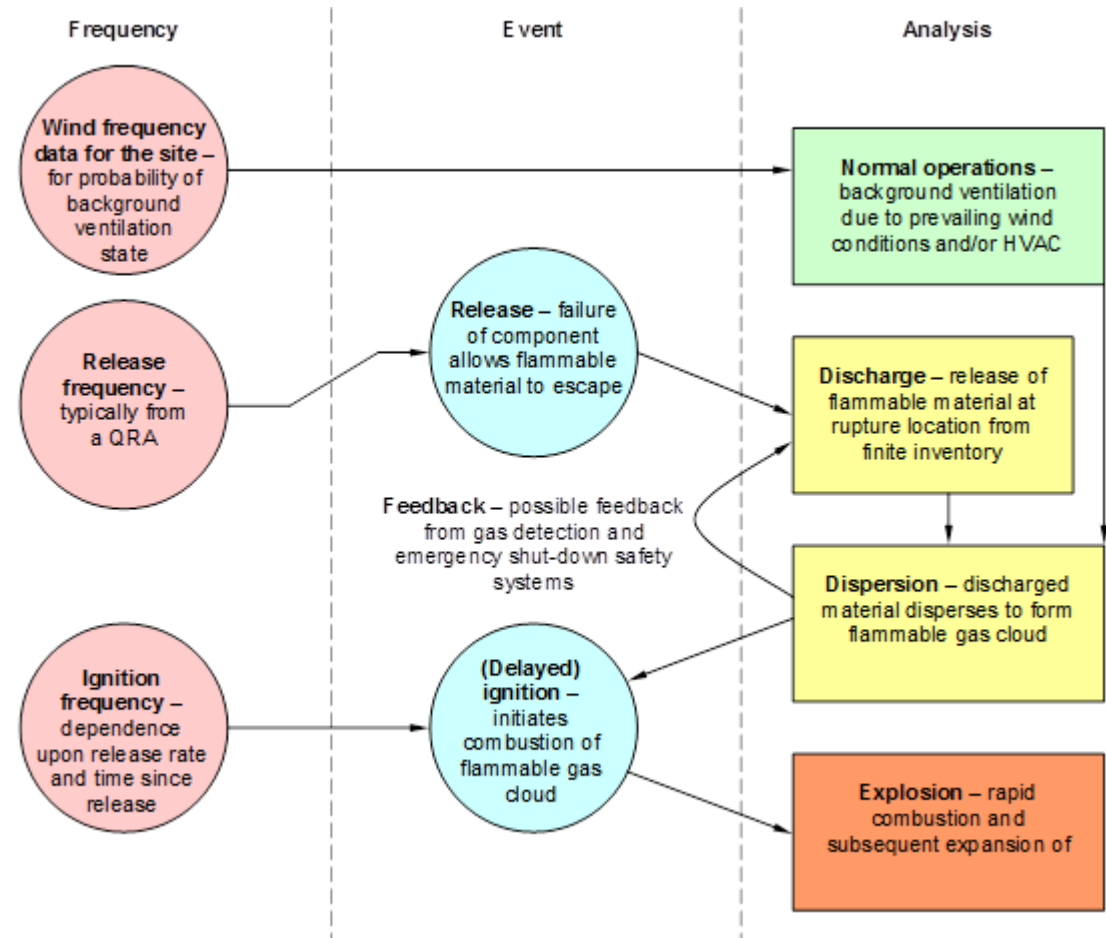
Probabilistic explosion assessment

- Determining a suitable basis for the design explosion load for a structure can be challenging
- Considering a worst-case, large release event will typically lead to explosion loads that are well in excess of what can be realistically designed for
- A more pragmatic option is to adopt a probabilistic approach to construct explosion load exceedance curves describing the probability of a particular load occurring
- This is the recommended procedure outlined in Annex F of *Risk and emergency preparedness assessment*, **NORSOK Standard Z-013** (Edition 3 is dated October 2010).



Probabilistic explosion assessment

By simulating a large dataset of scenarios, and with an understanding the frequencies of occurrence at each stage, it is possible to construct exceedance curves for the explosion load at any point of interest.



Probabilistic explosion assessment

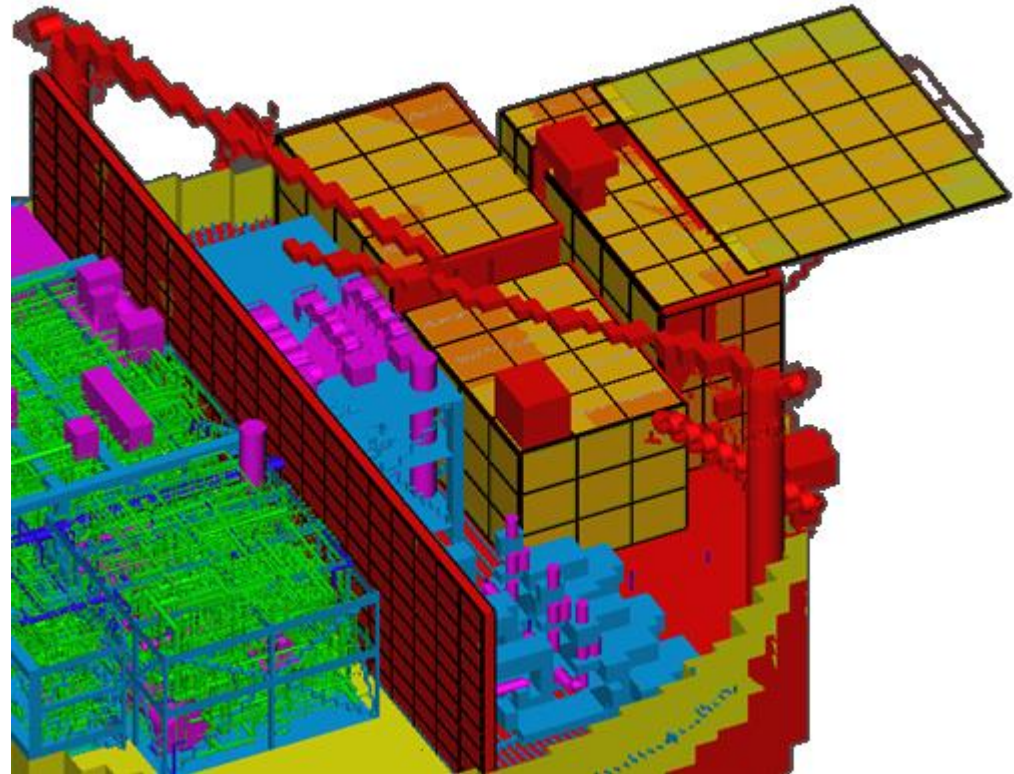
- A typical probabilistic explosion assessment may comprise
 - Twelve ventilation CFD simulations
 - Several hundred transient dispersion CFD simulations
 - Several hundred explosion CFD simulations
- Each explosion CFD model may include several thousand monitor points or (2D) panels of interest which the instantaneous explosion overpressure is predicted
 - The pressure trace can be approximated using a triangulation defined by eight parameters, including the maximum predicted overpressure and underpressure, and the positive and negative impulse.



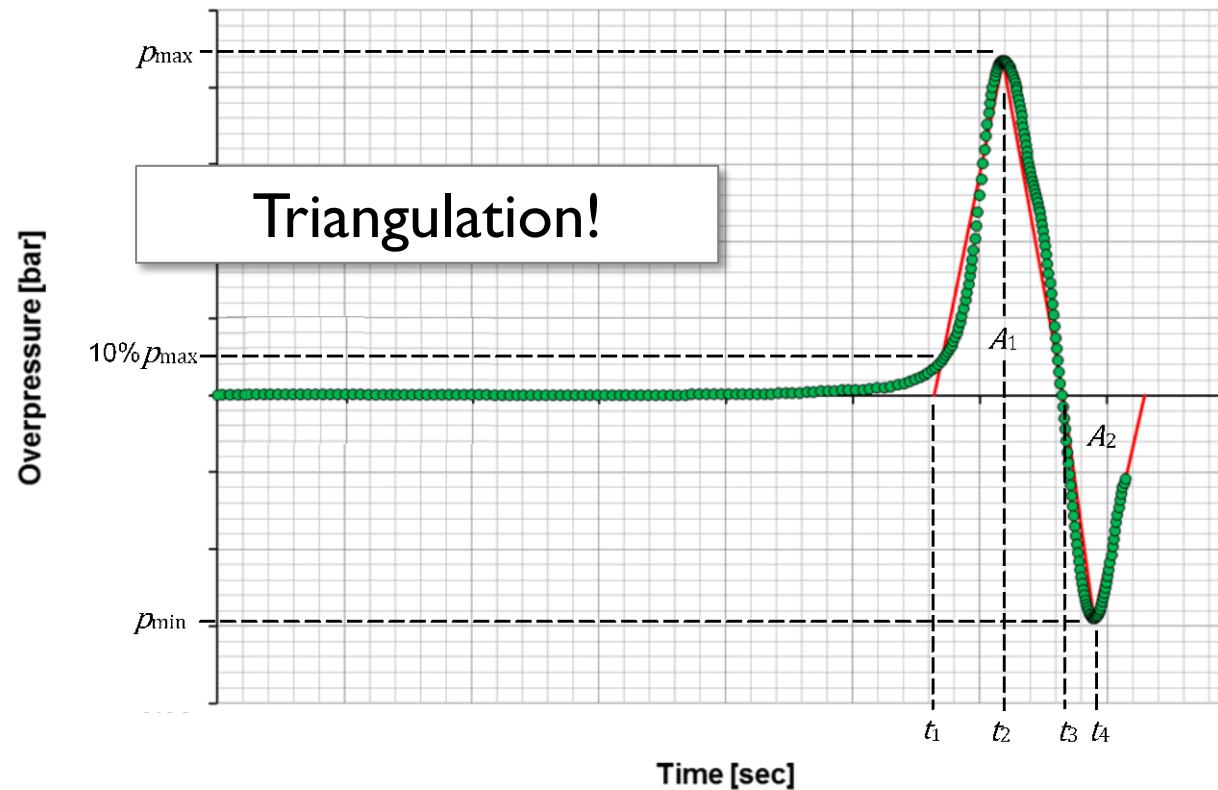
Probabilistic explosion assessment

Example of an FPSO showing arrays of 2D monitor panels across the targets of interest:

- Blast wall
- LQ/TR
- Helideck.

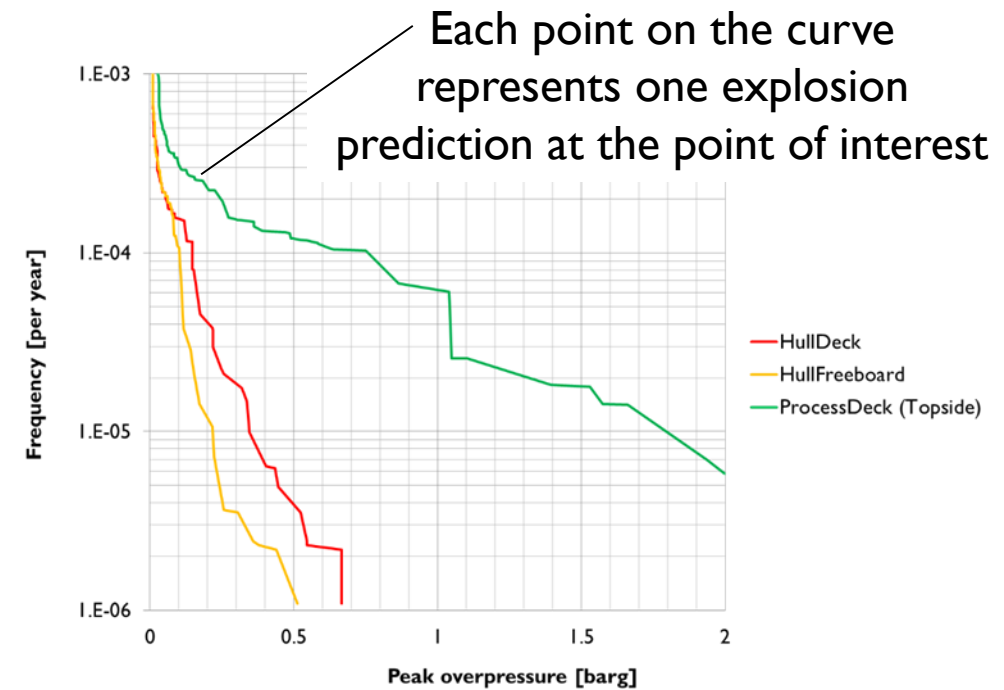


Probabilistic explosion assessment



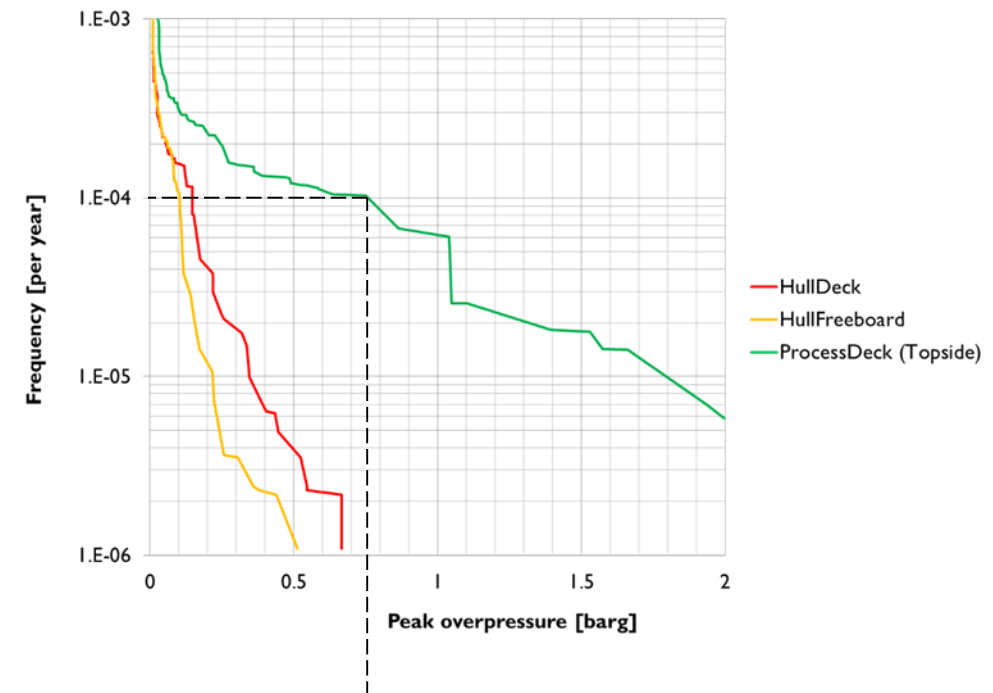
Probabilistic explosion assessment

The figure to the right shows a typical set of exceedance curves for peak overpressure, although similar curves can be constructed for underpressure and positive/negative impulses.



Probabilistic explosion assessment

Typically an allowable frequency of occurrence is taken to be $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$, and the exceedance curves are used to determine the corresponding explosion loads.



Design explosion load of 0.75 barg for the process deck

Nothing new so far!

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Improving the integration of analysis data

- There is a huge amount of predictive data generated during the course of a probabilistic explosion assessment that could be extremely useful to the structural engineer
- This is often not utilised because the probabilistic explosion assessment and the structural design are typically undertaken by different parties and the sharing of information has not been easy
- The interface between the parties generally comprises the transfer of a single DAL for each target of interest, the $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ DAL, comprising the $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ peak overpressure and an associated measure of the duration of the $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ blast.



Improving the integration of analysis data

- The probabilistic methodology outlined in NORSOK Z-013 is not new, and many consultants have, over the last decade, developed their own in-house tools to perform this analysis
- The precise details of each in-house tool tend to be kept secret, perhaps because of the intellectual investment associated with the development of the tool
- The NORSOK Z-013 methodology, however, is open to interpretation, which means that there could be inconsistent approaches between different consultants, which is not good for our industry.



Improving the integration of analysis data

- There is currently no software tool available for use that is designed specifically for undertaking the probabilistic analysis
- Such a tool would provide a single reliable methodology for the industry and would minimise any inconsistencies which may currently exist
- Abercus has developed **EXCGEN**, a software tool for undertaking probabilistic assessments.



Improving the integration of analysis data

- Abercus has developed **EXCGEN** with the associated key benefits to the design team that are not yet commonly available:
 - Sharing and associated democratisation of analysis data
 - 3D risk assessment
 - Probabilistic structural response.
- Enabling easier data sharing can enable improved interaction between the structural engineer and explosion analyst
- This can allow, for example, the sensitivity of explosion loads with respect to the underlying assumptions to be explored
- Deeper understanding of explosion events should lead to better, safer design.



Improving the integration of analysis data

- There are additional benefits for similar types of study, since the underlying set of CFD simulations can be used to predict:
 - Ventilation efficiencies in accordance with ISO 15138 (both global and local ventilation efficiency)
 - Probabilistic assessment of flammable accumulation, which can feed into a gas detector layout study.

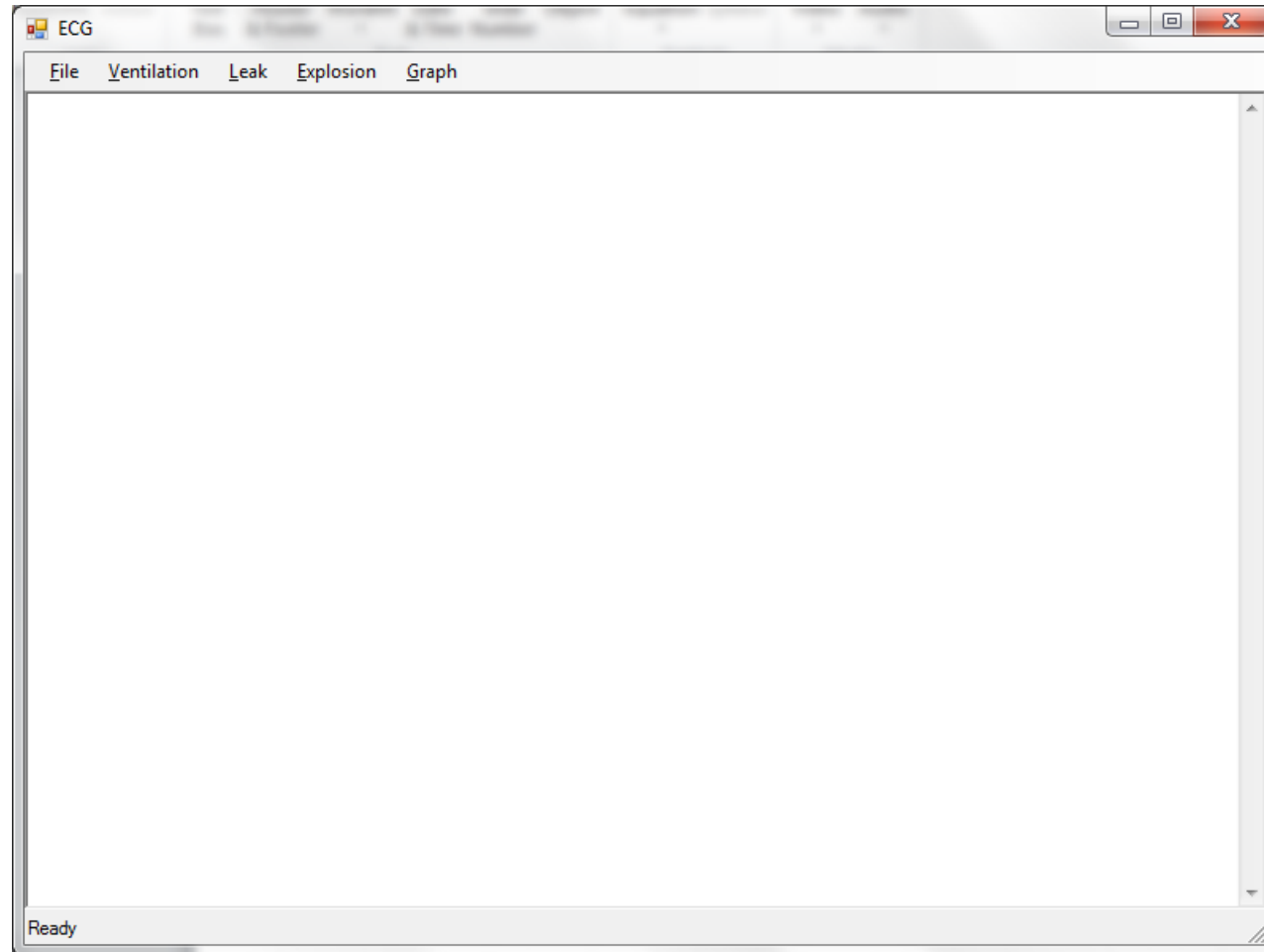


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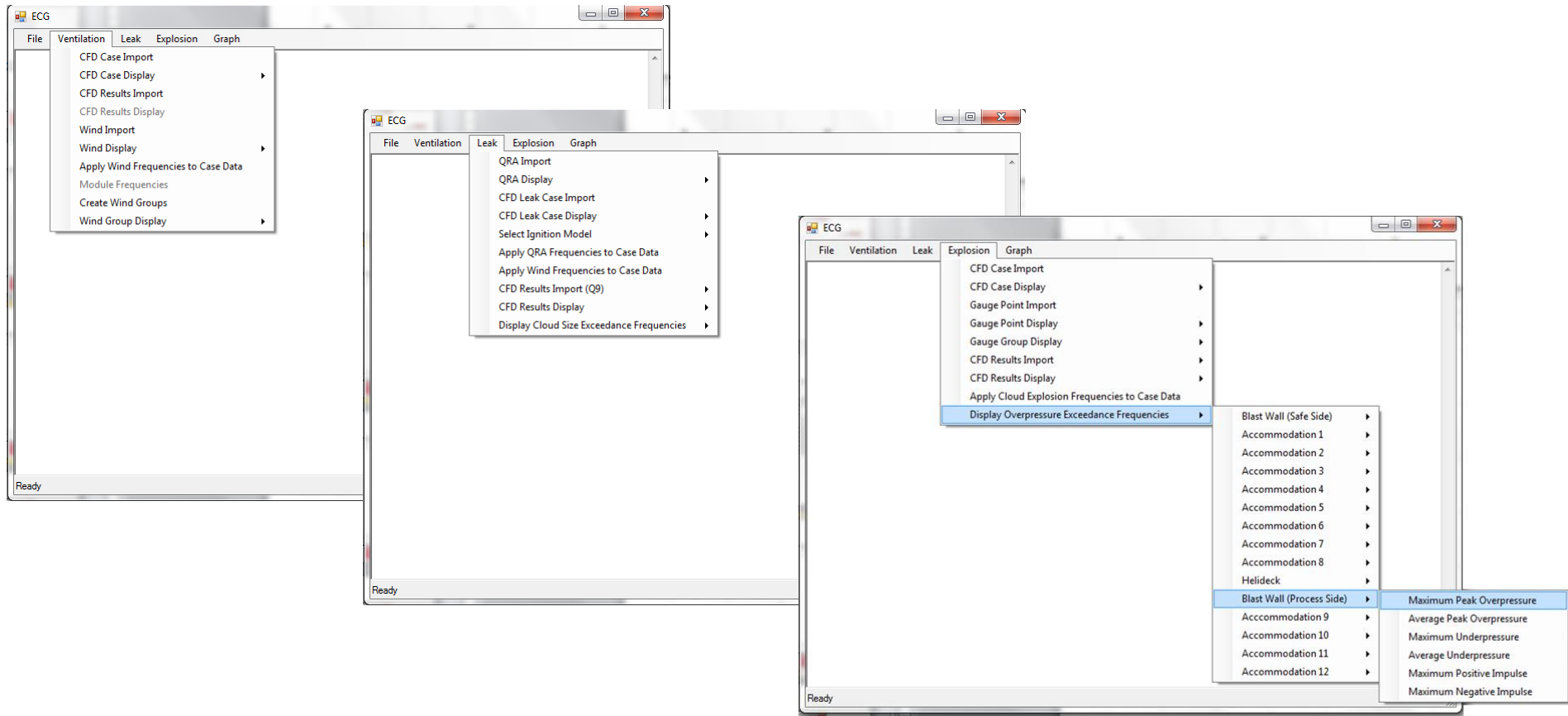
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EXCGEN



EXCGEN

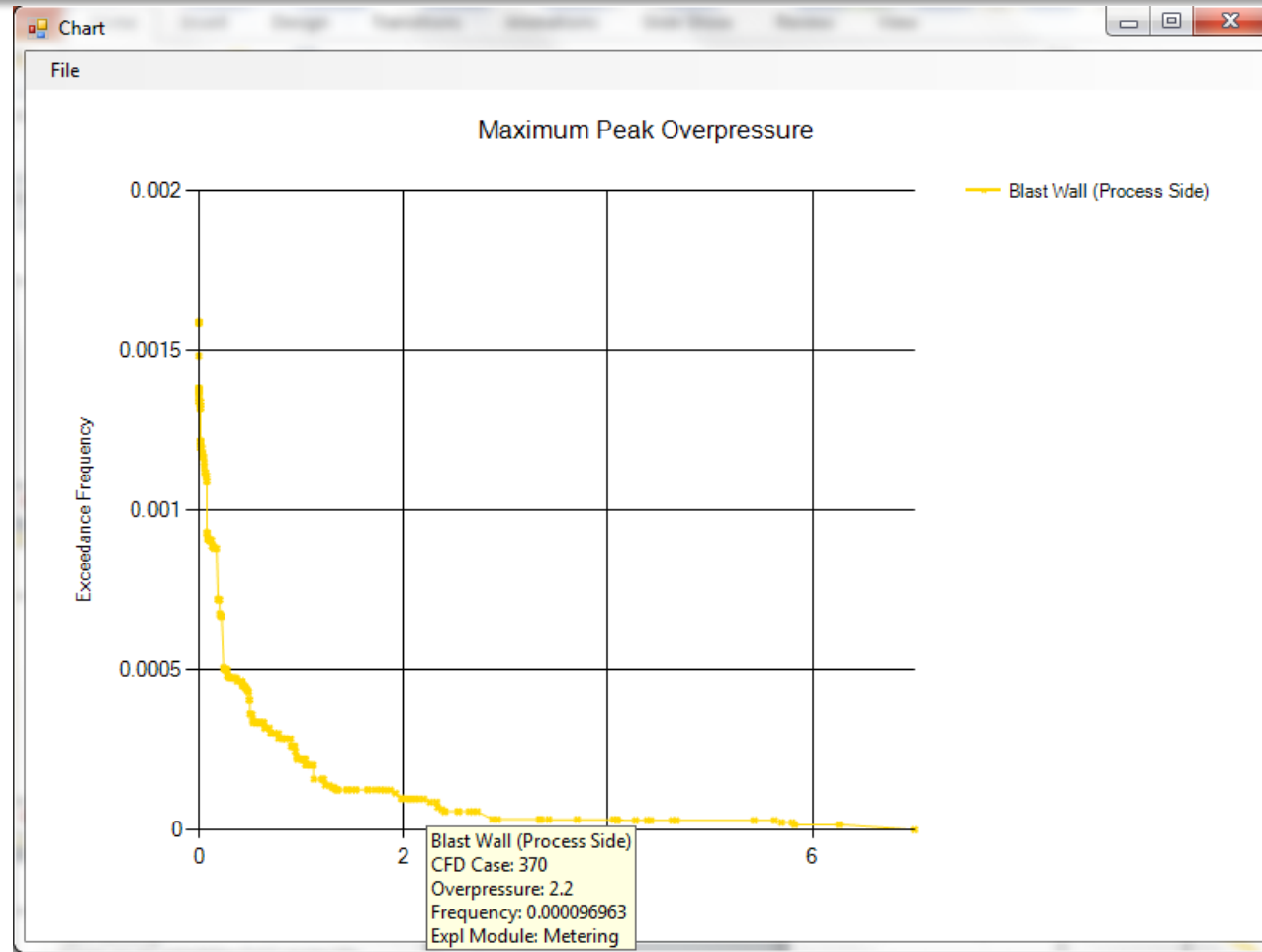


EXCGEN

- **EXCGEN** is based upon a logical, documented methodology
- The probabilistic assessment is based upon data extracted from the underlying CFD simulation files, stored in text format which can be shared without excessive file storage requirements
- The underlying file system is human-readable so that it can be easily audited
- It allows us to easily explore and interrogate specific event-chains in the ventilation-dispersion-explosion sequence of events.



EXCGEN



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Sharing/democratisation of analysis data

- **EXCGEN**'s underlying file system is generated from, but separate to, the underlying CFD files, which allows the information to be easily shared
- Sensitivities to (some of) the probabilistic assumptions can be considered on-the-fly, in the company of the design team
 - Ignition methodology
 - Underlying wind conditions
 - Flammable volume methodology
 - Release frequencies from the QRA
- Typically these sensitivities may not be explored.



Sharing/democratisation of analysis data

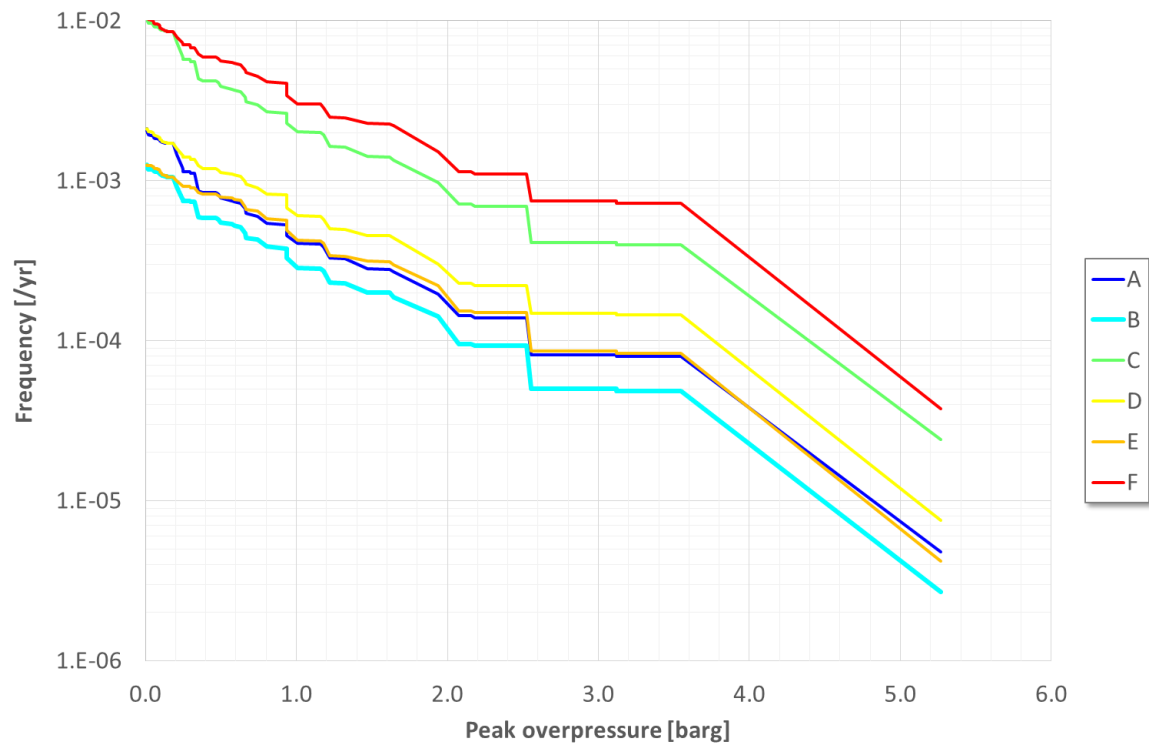
Ignition methodology	Probability of ignition	Probability of explosion given ignition	Time dependence
A	UKOOA 25	Fixed at 20%	UKOOA
B	UKOOA 25	Cox, Lees and Ang	UKOOA
C	UKOOA 25	Ignored	UKOOA
D	UKOOA 25	Fixed at 20%	Ignored
E	UKOOA 25	Cox, Lees and Ang	Ignored
F	UKOOA 25	Ignored	Ignored

Sensitivity cases relating to ignition methodology



Sharing/democratisation of analysis data

Sensitivity cases relating to ignition methodology

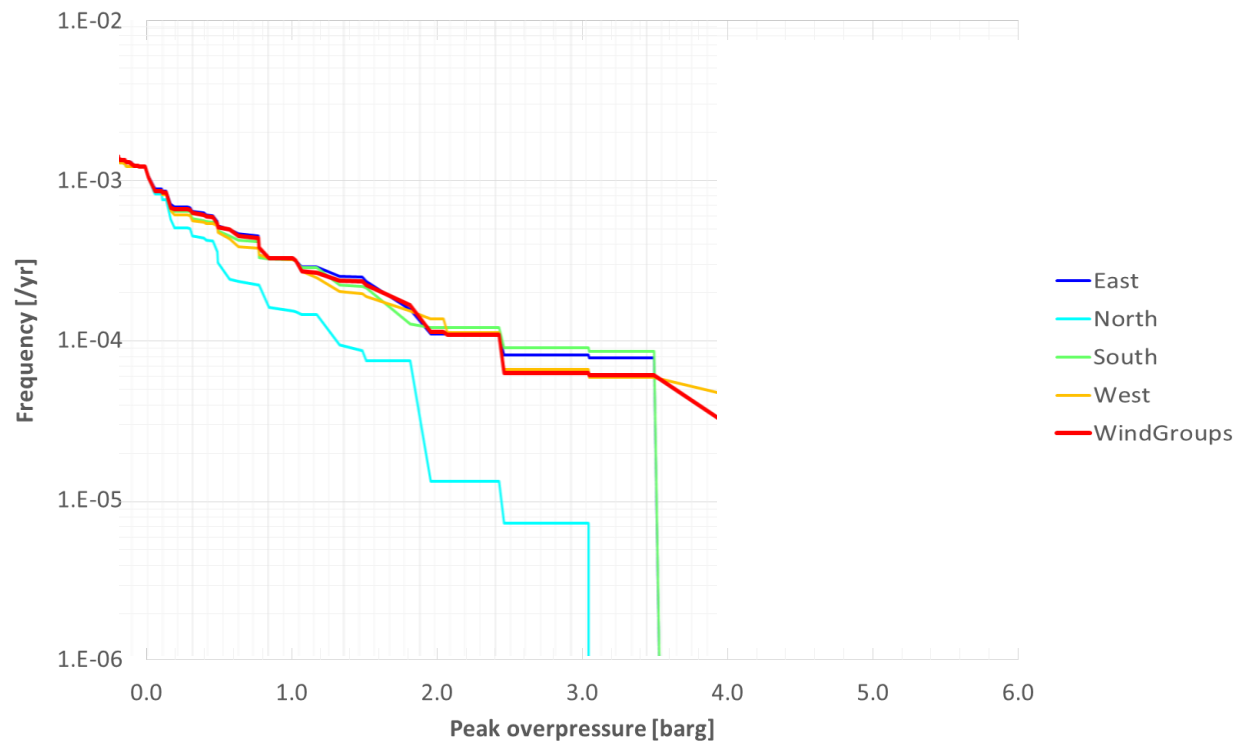


Exceedance curves for peak overpressure



Sharing/democratisation of analysis data

Sensitivity cases relating to underlying ventilation pattern/wind direction

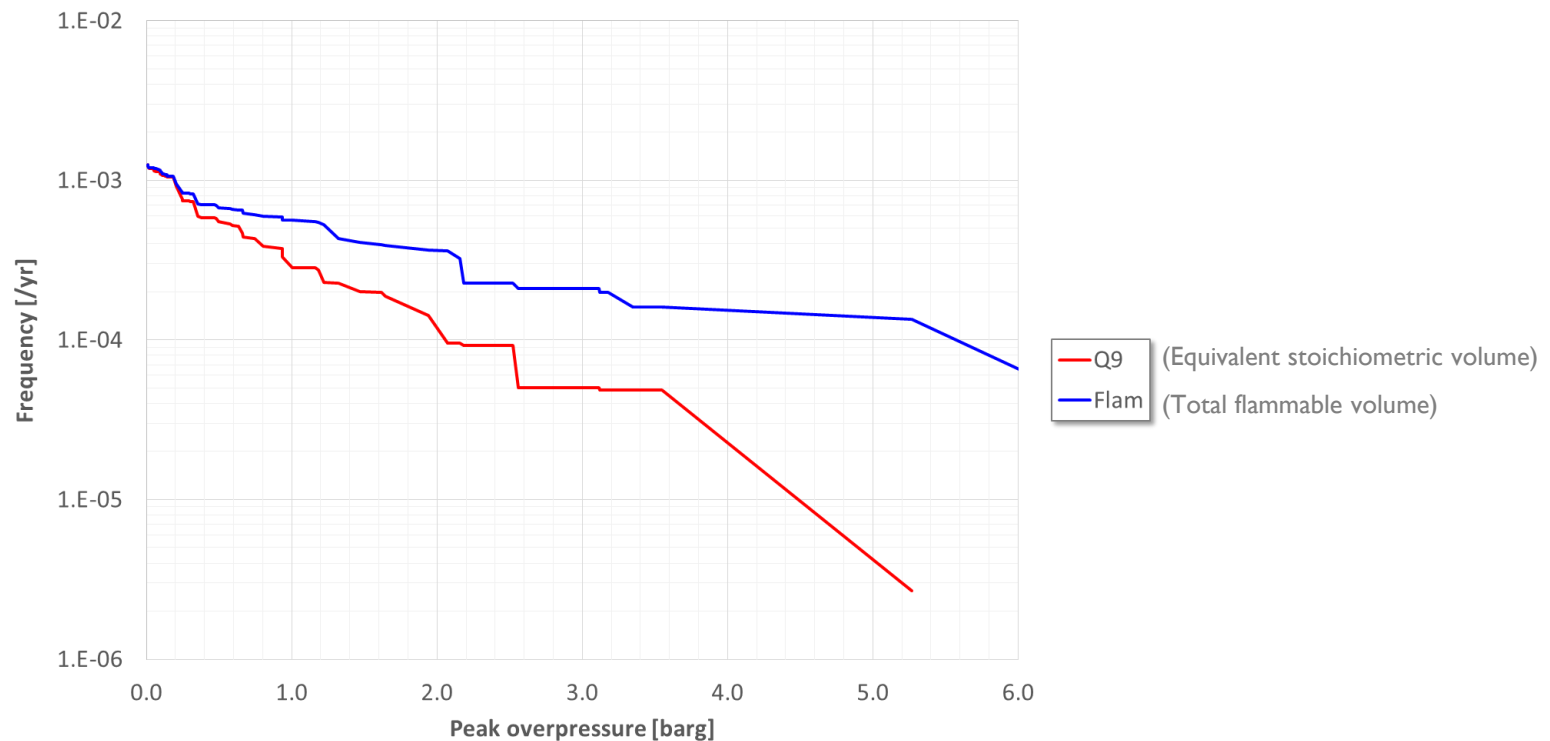


Exceedance curves for peak overpressure



Sharing/democratisation of analysis data

Sensitivity cases relating to flammable volume methodology



Exceedance curves for peak overpressure



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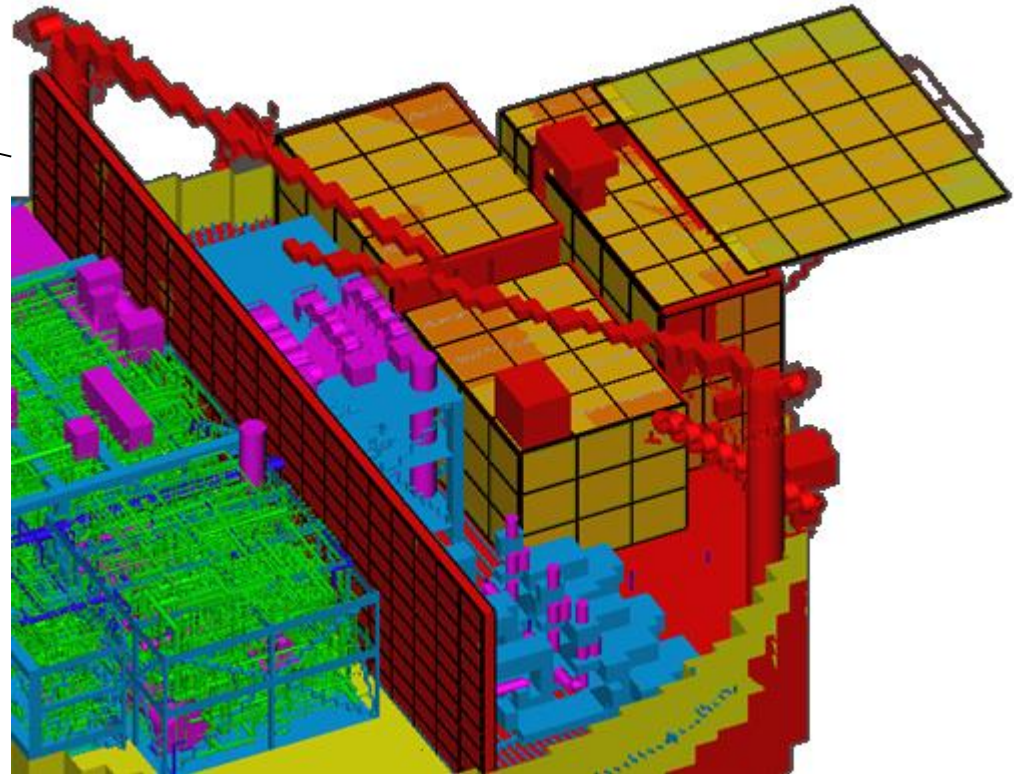
3D risk assessment

- Perhaps because it is not straightforward to share information between different parties, the design explosion loads are typically extracted from the exceedance curve for each structural target and provided to the structural engineer as a single design load for each target
- The explosion loads, particularly for large targets such as blast walls may vary across the target, so providing a single value for the design load may be overly conservative.



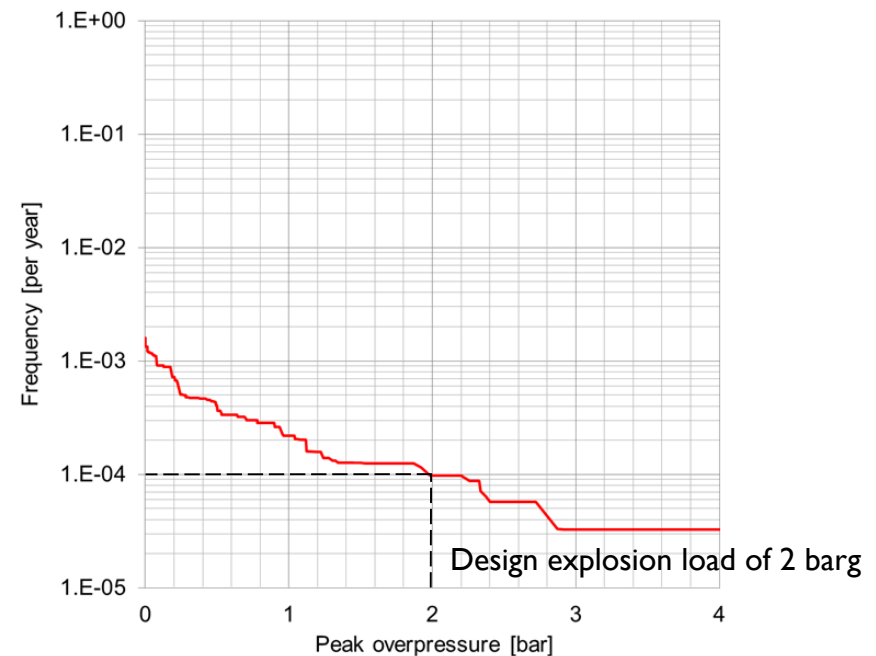
3D risk assessment

Blast wall, represented by a discretised array of monitor panels within the FLACS model



3D risk assessment

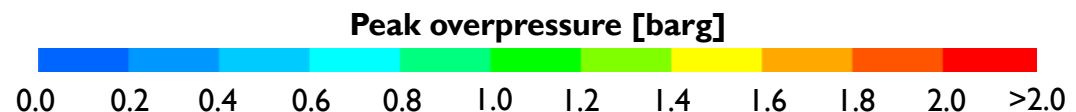
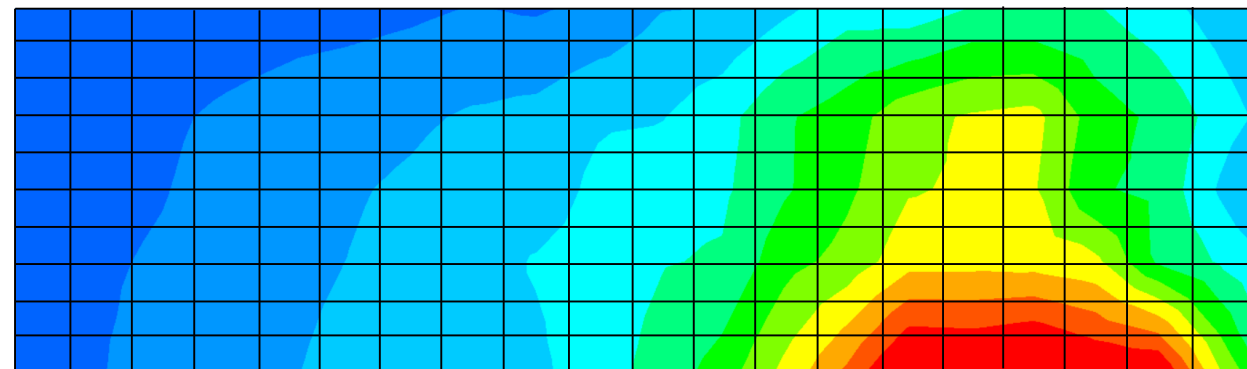
For this example, the $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ peak overpressure for the blast wall is 2 barg.



3D risk assessment

The design explosion load retrieved from the exceedance curve (2 barg) is localised – the $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ overpressure for the majority of the blast wall is significantly less than 2 barg.

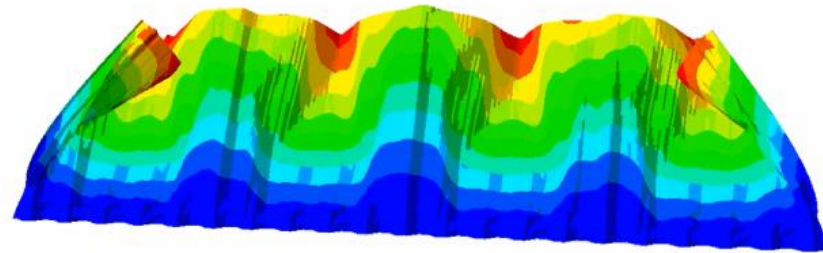
Contour plot of $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ peak overpressure



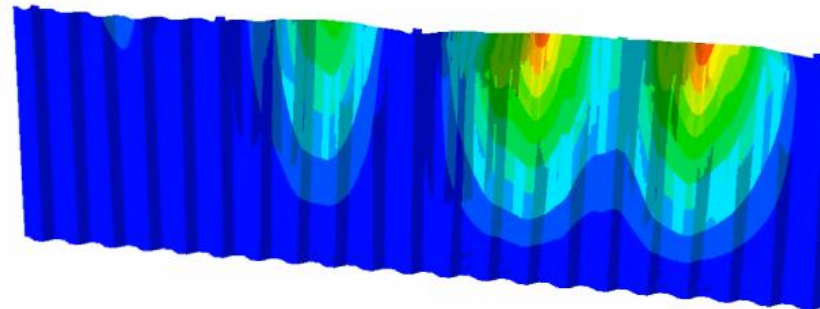
3D risk assessment

This can have a significant impact upon the structural response of the blast wall under DAL loading.

Contour plot of normalised deflection



2 bar overpressure uniformly applied



Contours of overpressure for 10^{-4} /yr pseudo-event

Normalised deflection



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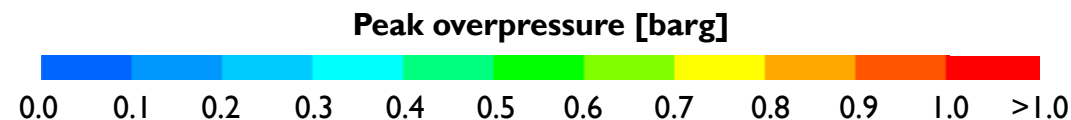
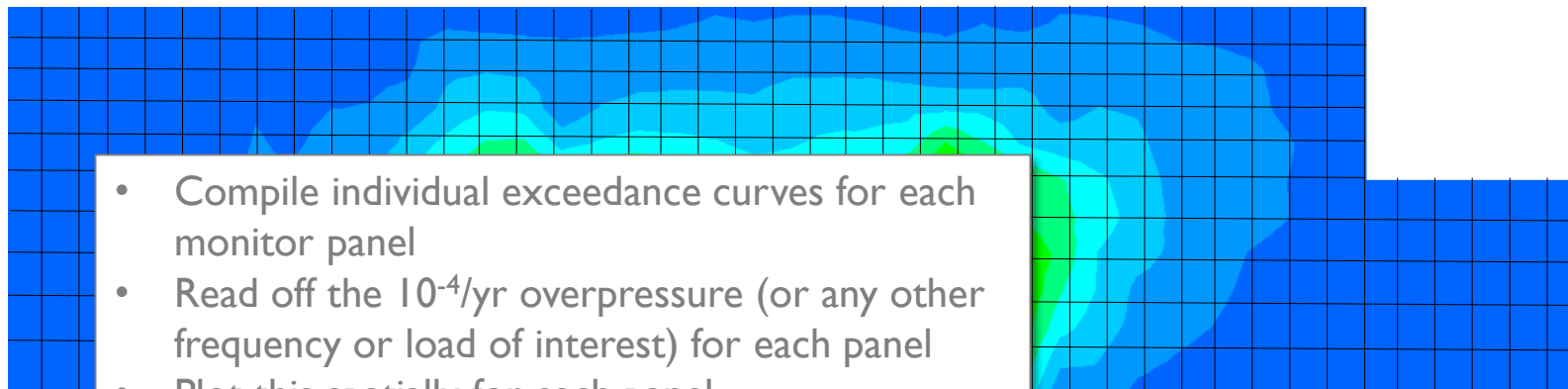
Selection of representative 10^{-4} /yr events

- **EXCGEN** can link to FEA codes to directly apply 3D spatially varying explosion loads on an FEA model
- What explosion load should be applied?
- Is it even possible to satisfactorily define a representative 10^{-4} /yr event?



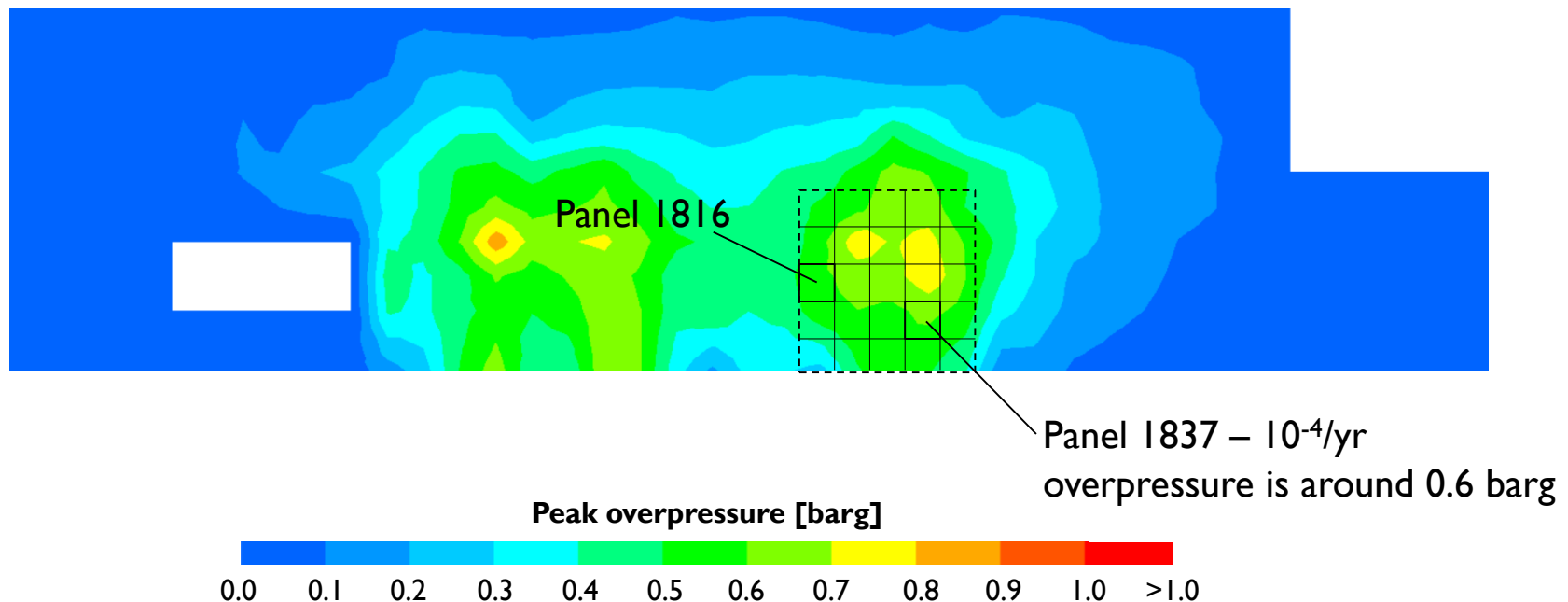
Selection of representative $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ events

Contour plot of $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ peak overpressure



Selection of representative $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ events

Contour plot of $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ peak overpressure



Selection of representative $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ events

- At panel 1837, the $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ peak overpressure is around 0.6 barg

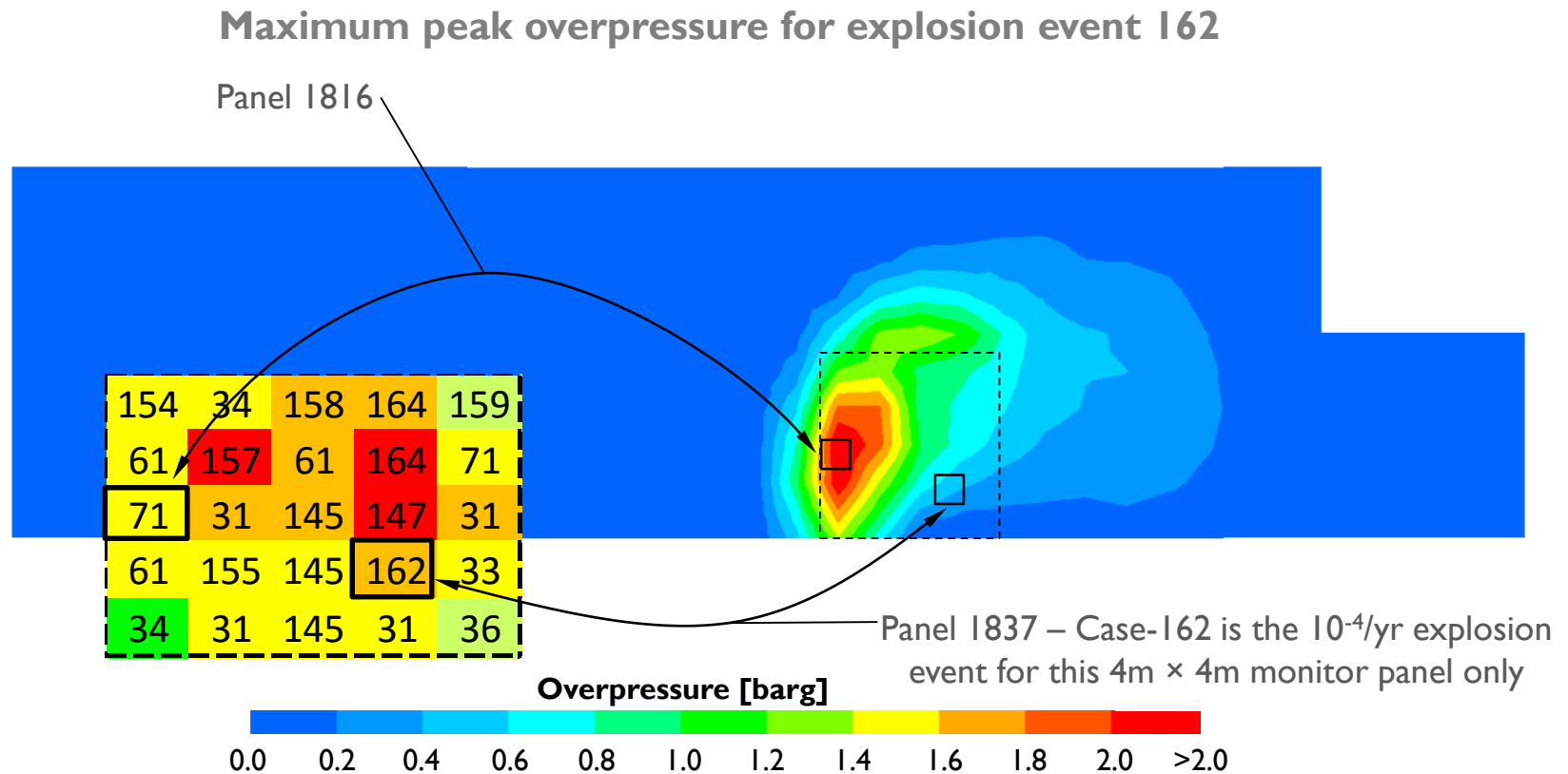


Selection of representative $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ events

- At panel I837, the $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ peak overpressure is around 0.6 barg
- The explosion event corresponding to this $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ peak overpressure is event I62



Selection of representative $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ events



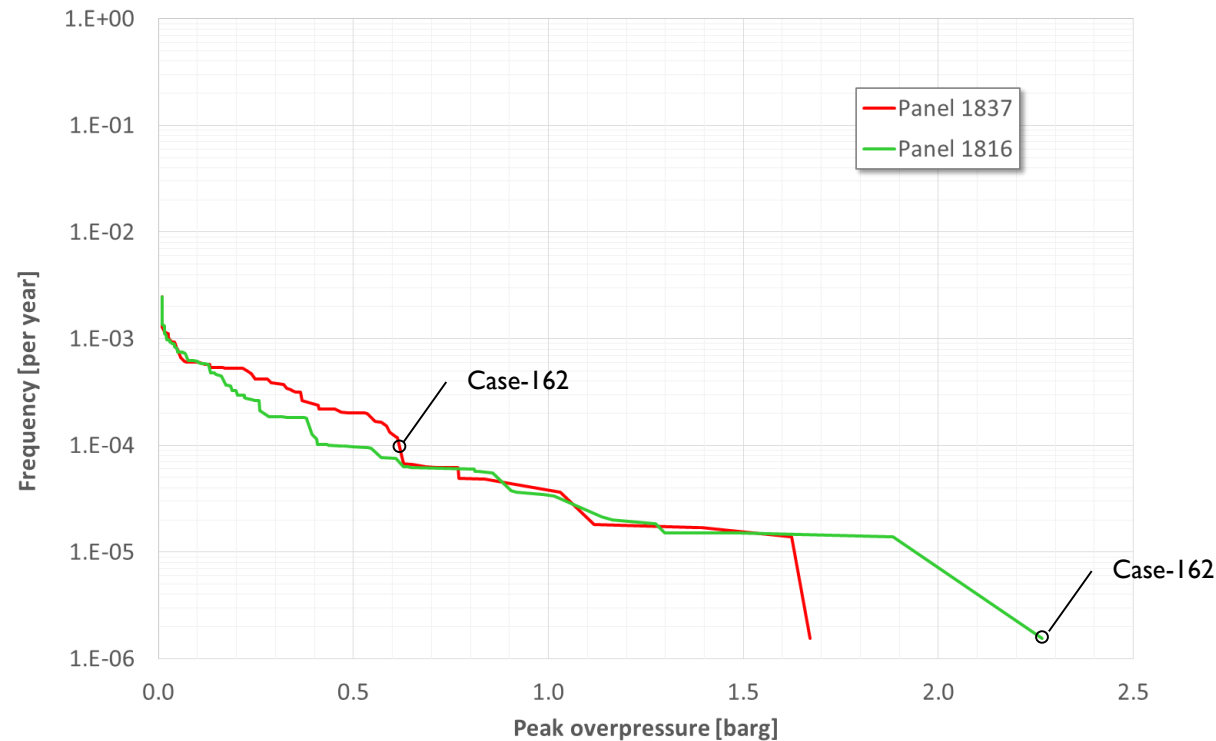
Maximum instantaneous overpressure (averaging area $4\text{m} \times 4\text{m}$)

Selection of representative $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ events

- At panel 1837, the $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ peak overpressure is around 0.6 barg
- The explosion event corresponding to this $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ peak overpressure is event 162
- The peak overpressure for event 162 is over 2 barg, which is significantly higher than the $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ overpressure, but it occurs in a different location (at panel 1816)
- From the exceedance curves, event 162 represents a lower frequency of occurrence at panel 1816 and, therefore, this higher overpressure does not contribute to the $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ overpressure reported on the contour plot.



Selection of representative $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ events



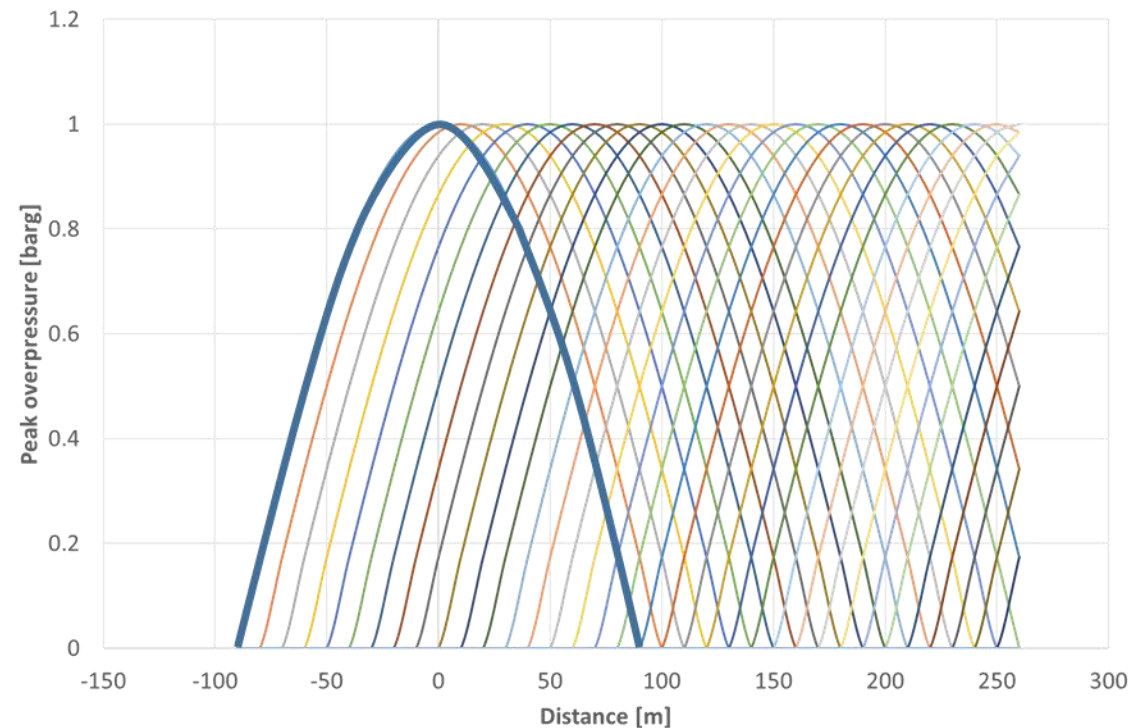
Exceedance curves for panels 1837 and 1816

Selection of representative $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ events

- Imagine that we have simulated a series of identical blast events, such that the blast dynamics for each event are similar, but with the clouds displaced at 10m intervals
- Imagine that the variation of the peak overpressure with distance along a deck for the first event which has a **peak overpressure of 1 barg**
- If we then plot the peak overpressure for all of the blast events on the same plot, we have the same shaped curve but it is repeated at intervals of 10m.



Selection of representative $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ events

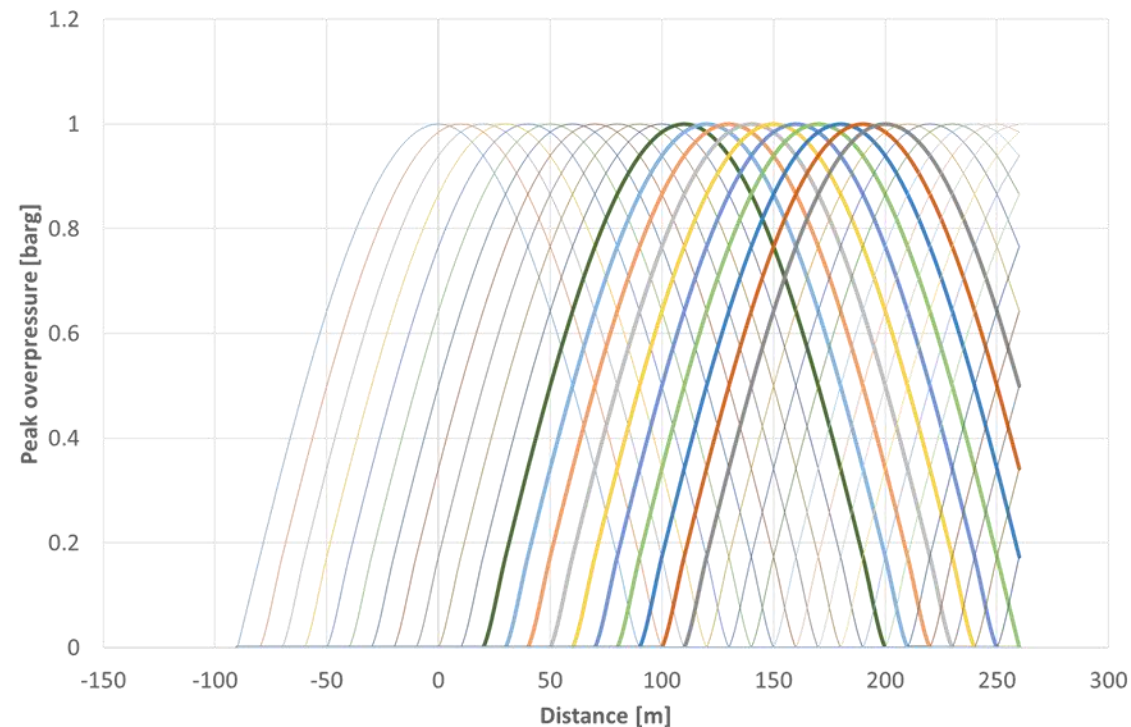


Selection of representative $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ events

- Imagine that each blast event individually has a probability of occurrence of $10^{-5}/\text{yr}$
- This means that to find the $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ overpressure at any point along the deck there needs to be 10 of the curves which, at that point, has a higher local peak overpressure
- To illustrate this 10 of the curves are identified in bold in the upper part of the figure.



Selection of representative $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ events

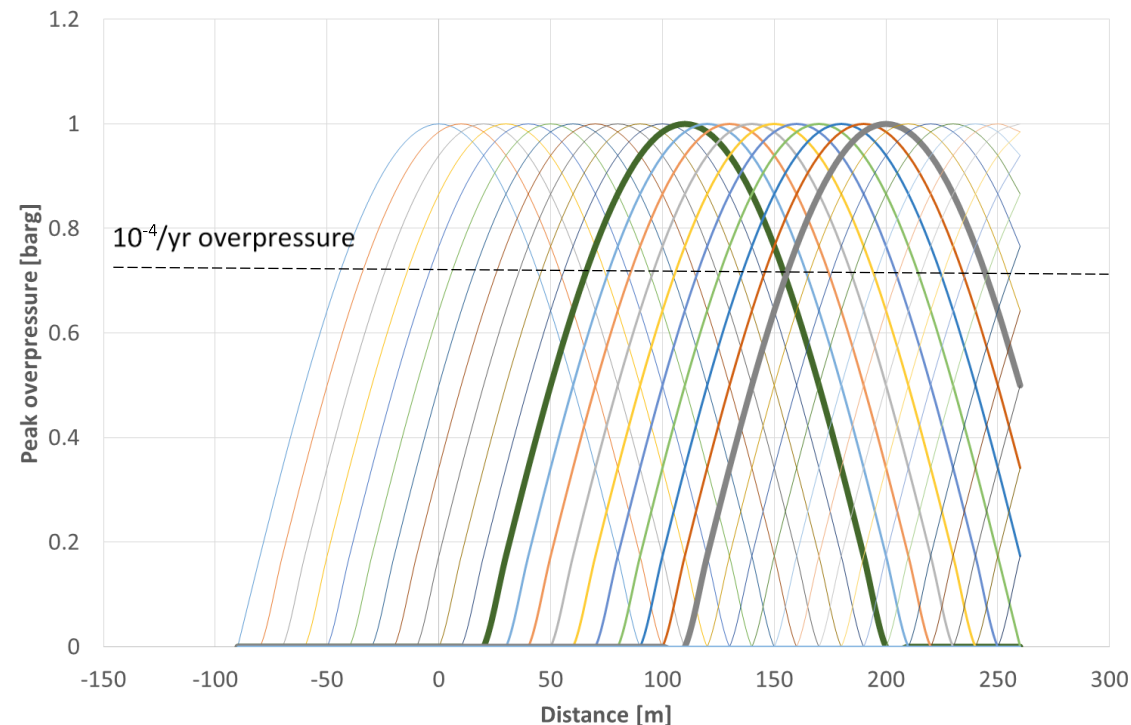


Selection of representative $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ events

- If we then consider the 150m location, the **$10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ peak overpressure is 0.7 barg** – at this point, 10 of the curves have a peak overpressure in excess of 0.7 barg – with the probabilistic approach we can ignore the higher overpressure events at this location, hence the lower $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ overpressure when compared to the peak value for each of the curves individually
- In this idealised example, the events represented by the dark green and dark grey curves in the figure below are the representative $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ events, each of which has a **peak overpressure of 1 barg**.



Selection of representative $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ events

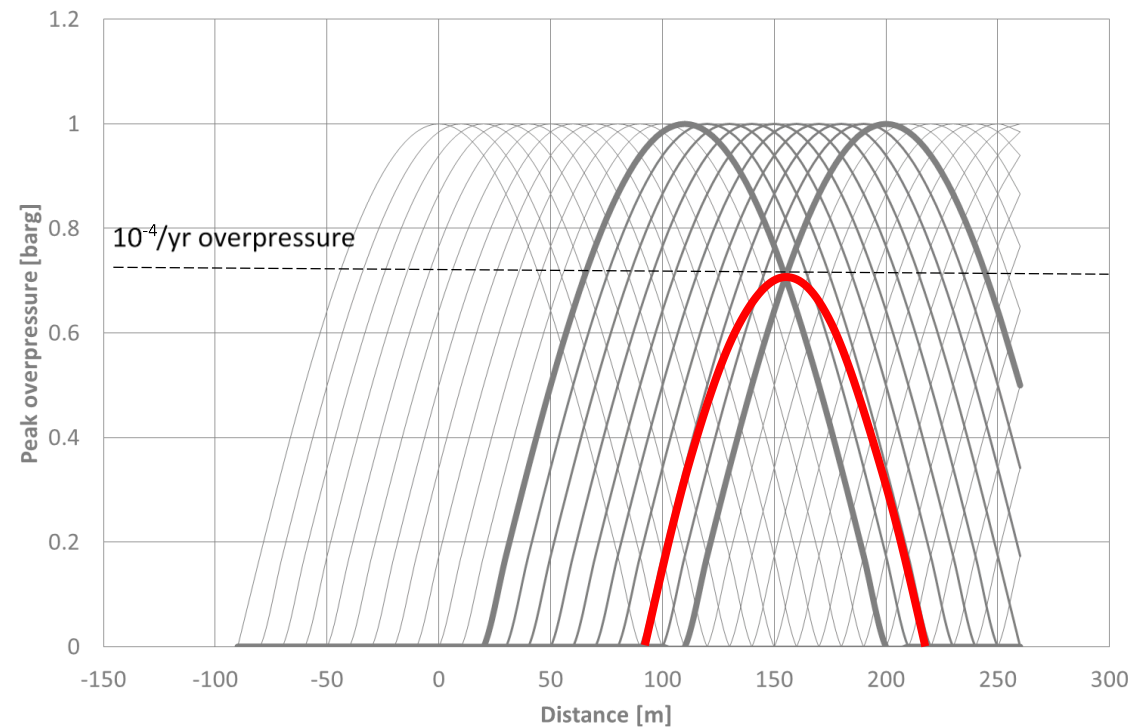


Selection of representative $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ events

- When selecting representative events it is important not to simply select an event which has a peak overpressure comparable to the local $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ overpressure – doing so would be equivalent to selecting the red curve, which is a lesser event than either of the $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ events we identified previously, represented by the grey bold curves.



Selection of representative $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ events



Selection of representative $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ events

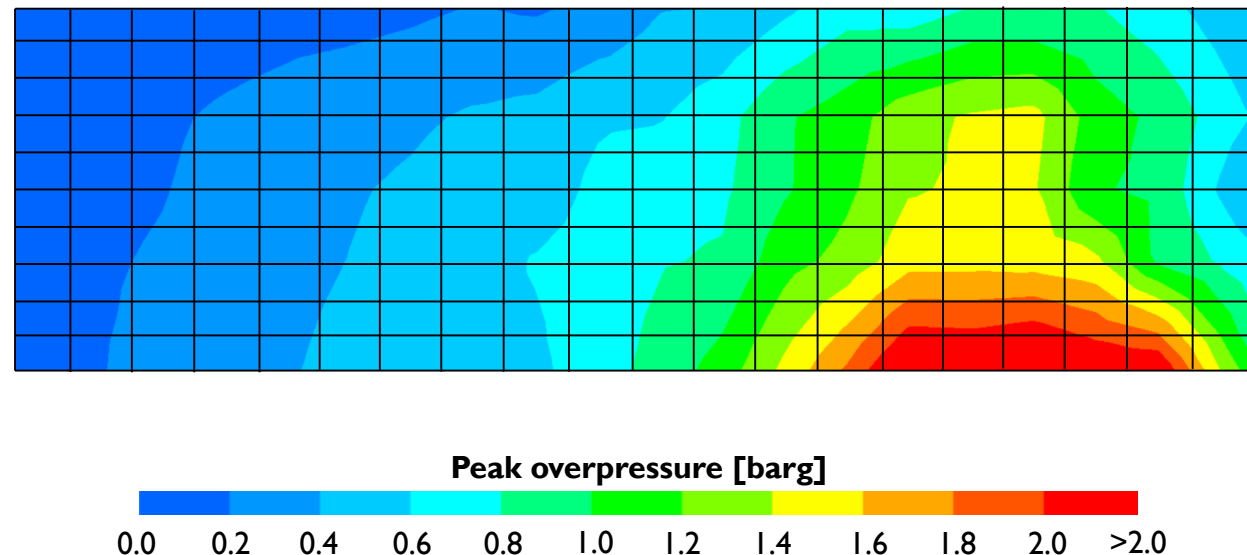
- It is generally not necessarily possible to identify any single individual event from the underlying simulated explosion events as a representative $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ event
- The contour plots of $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ overpressure receive contributions from a wide range of explosion events
- Is it possible to construct a $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ pseudo-event?



Selection of representative $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ events

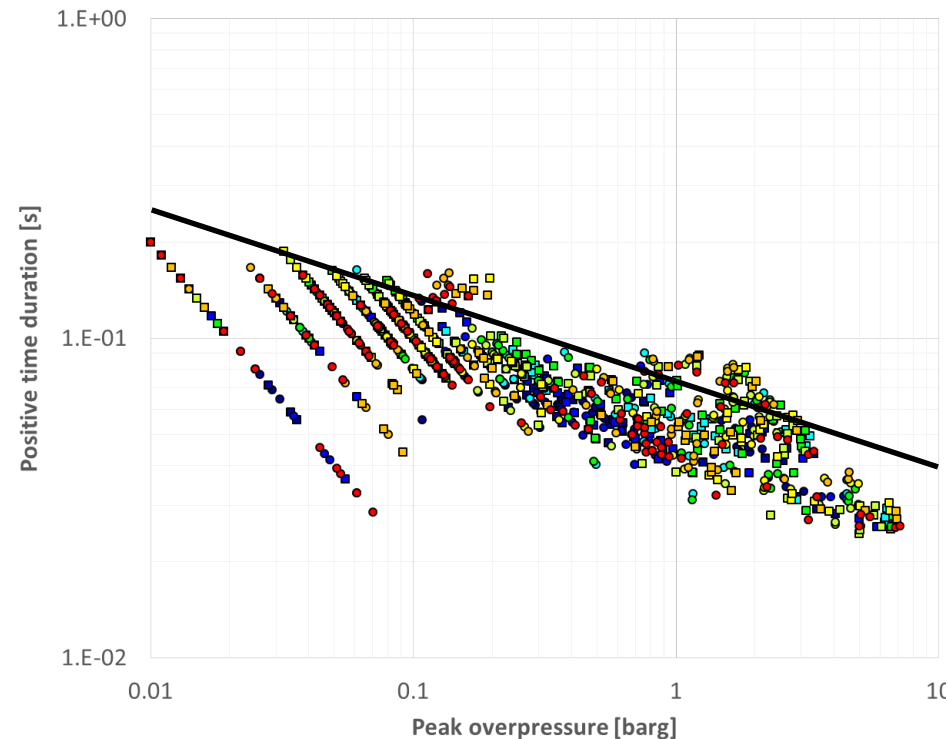
The $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ overpressure is just part of the DAL definition – need to consider the dynamic behaviour with respect to the duration of the blast and how the blast might travel across the blast wall.

Contour plot of $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ peak overpressure



Selection of representative $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ events

Sensitivity cases relating to flammable volume methodology



Scatter plot showing time duration of the positive blast phase with peak overpressure

Selection of representative $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ events

- The $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ overpressure is just part of the DAL definition – need to consider the dynamic behaviour with respect to the duration of the blast and how the blast might travel across the blast wall
- Identifying trends from the underlying explosion data set can allow us to define the associated time duration of the positive blast phase
- The same approach can be used for the negative blast phase, so that the shape of a (triangulated) $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ pseudo-blast can be fully described
- A blast, however, will not impinge everywhere instantaneously.



If it can be assumed that the initial impingement is at the location of the peak, the time delay across the blast wall can be included into the pseudo-event blast behaviour.

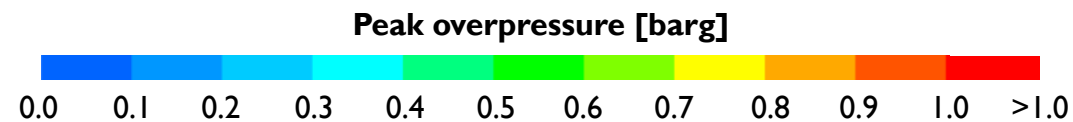
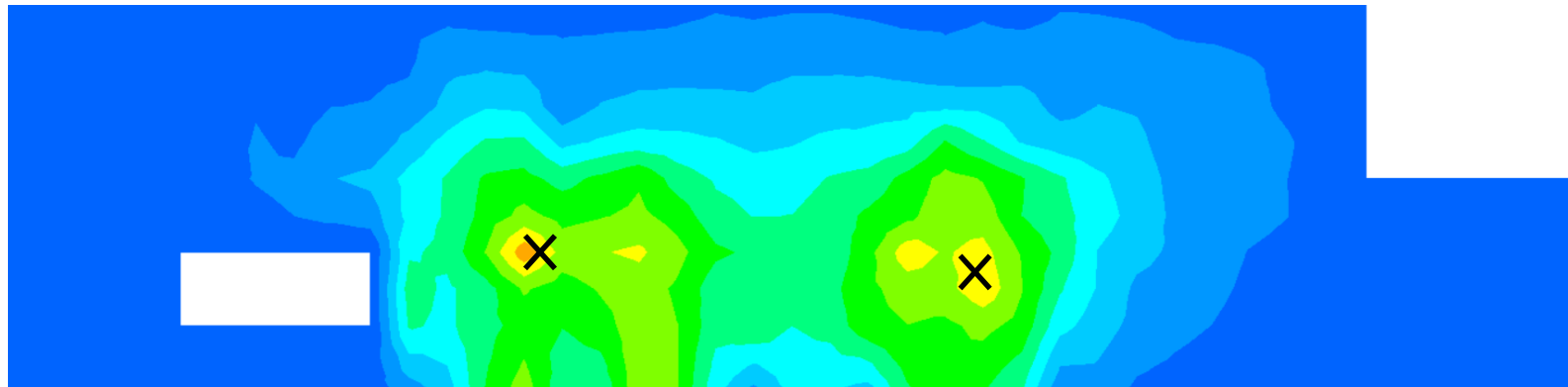
Selection of representative $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ events

- If it can be assumed that the initial impingement is at the location of the peak, the time delay across the blast wall can be included into the pseudo-event blast behaviour, based upon an assumption of the local speed of sound
- What happens if there are two local peaks in the $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ peak overpressure?



Selection of representative $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ events

Contour plot of $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ peak overpressure



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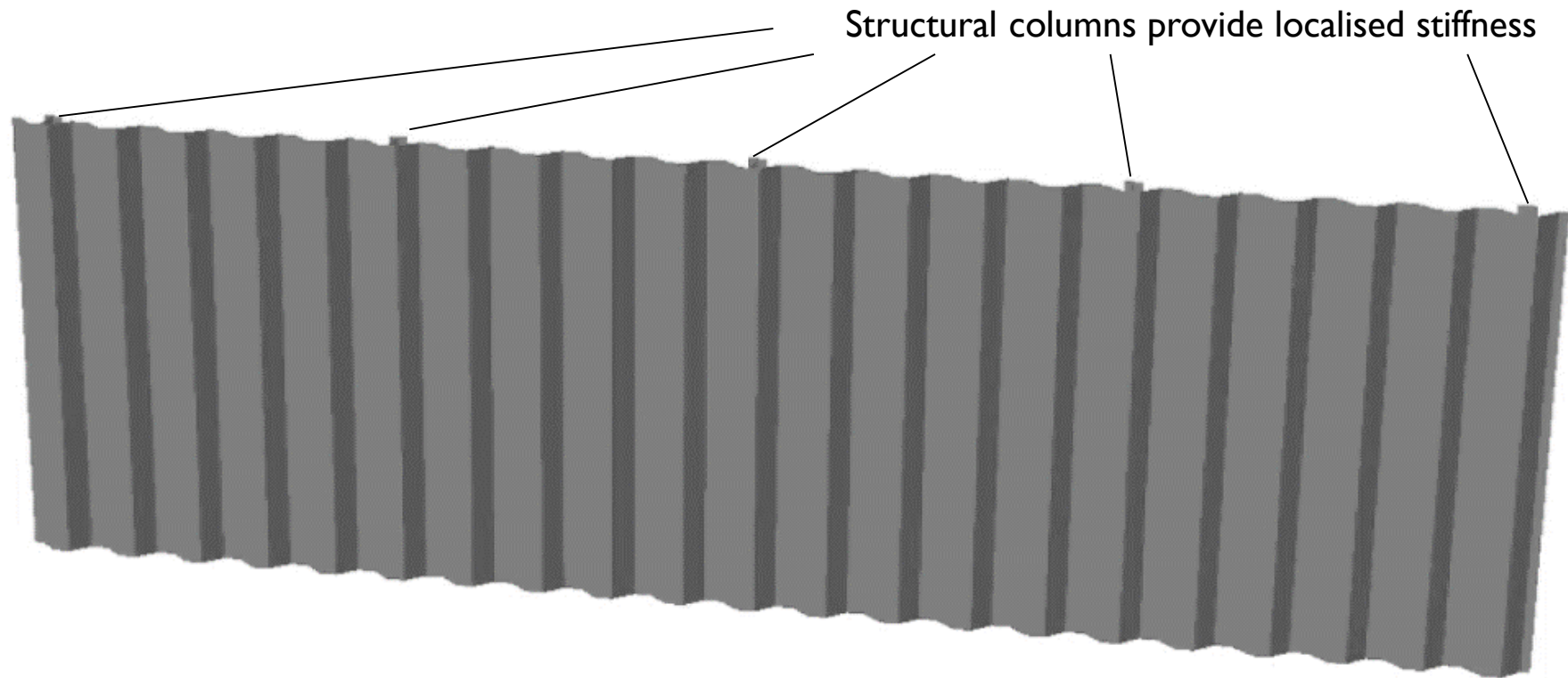


Probabilistic structural response

- Rather than construct a single pseudo-event, undertake a probabilistic assessment for the structural response instead:
 - The probability of occurrence for each underlying explosion event is known
 - Use FEA to simulate the structural response for (every?) explosion event
 - Compile exceedance curves for structural measures (for example, stress and/or deflection) at every monitor panel
 - Compile into plots of 10^{-4} /yr stress and/or deflection
- No need to make assumptions regarding the pseudo-event
- Faster computers at least make this a realistic alternative.



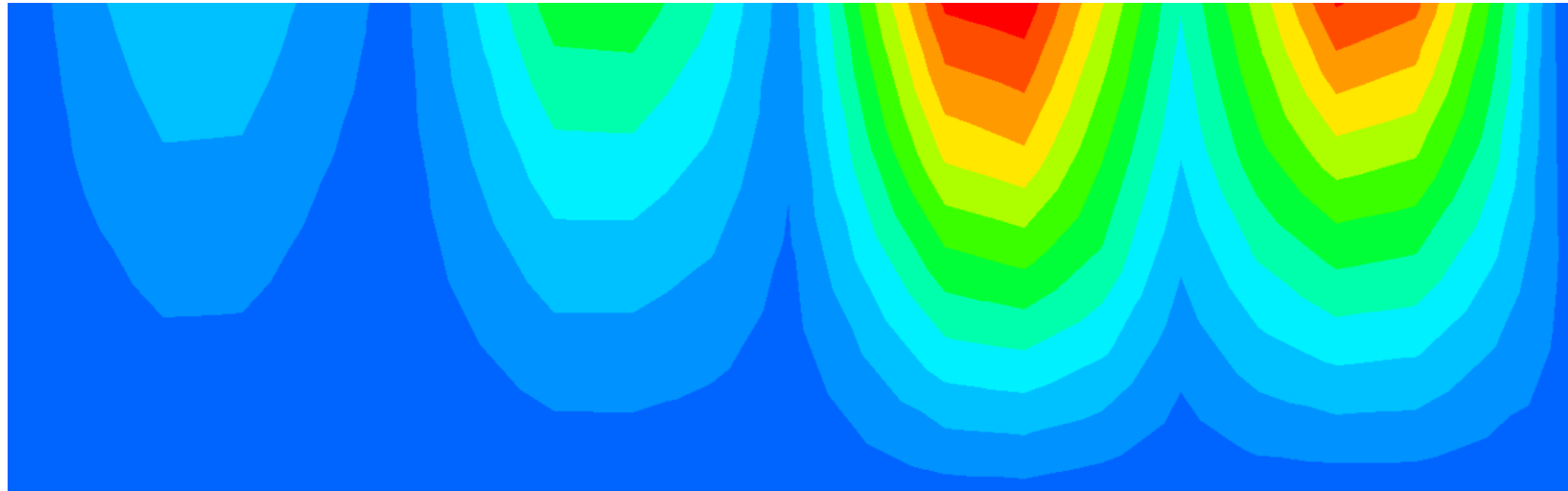
Probabilistic structural response



Structure of the blast wall

Probabilistic structural response

Contour plot of $10^{-4}/\text{yr}$ deflection
(using a probabilistic structural response approach)

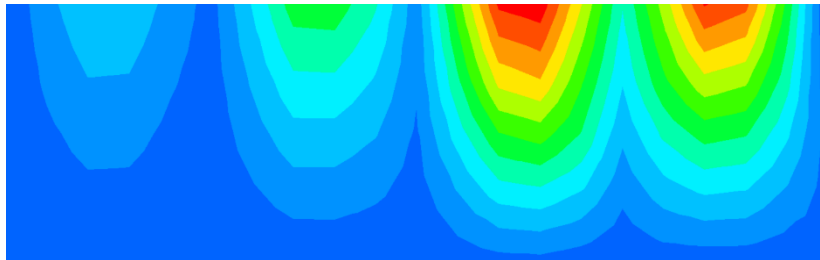


Deflection [m]

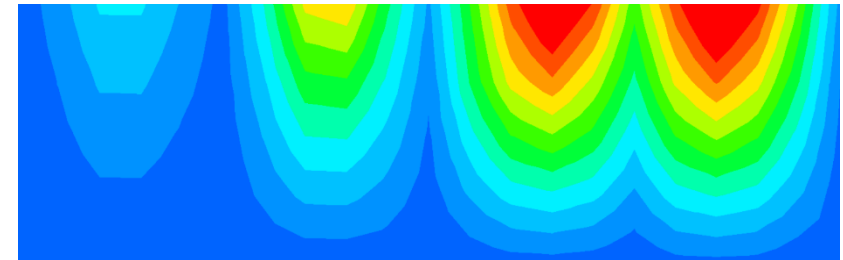


Probabilistic structural response

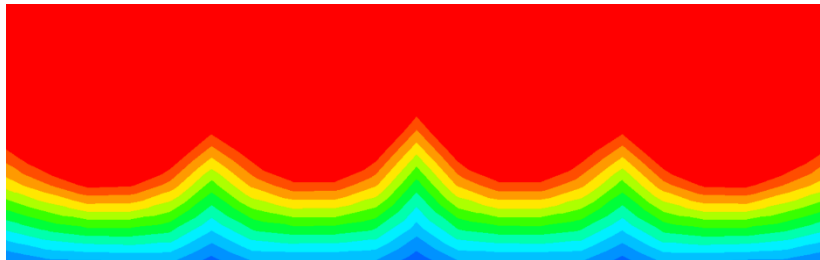
Contour plot of 10^{-4} /yr deflection



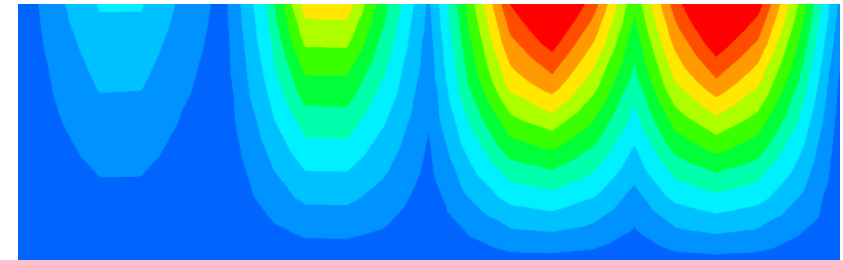
Using a probabilistic structural response approach



Using the 10^{-4} /yr pseudo-event without time delay



Traditional approach – uniformly applying the 10^{-4} /yr overpressure (2 barg) from the exceedance curve



Using the 10^{-4} /yr pseudo-event with time delay

Deflection [m]



Agenda

- Acknowledgements
- Introduction
- Probabilistic explosion assessment
- Improving the integration of analysis data
- EXCGEN – a software tool to enable an integrated approach
- Sharing/democratisation of analysis data
- 3D risk assessment
- Selection of representative 10^{-4} /yr events
- Probabilistic structural response
- Summary.



Summary

- CFD is used for many types of technical safety study, including probabilistic explosion assessments – ventilation, dispersion and explosion
- There is a huge amount of predictive data generated during the course of a probabilistic explosion assessment that could be extremely useful to the structural engineer
- This is often not utilised because the probabilistic explosion assessment and the structural design are typically undertaken by different parties and the sharing of information has not been easy.



Summary

- The industry needs a tool to provide a robust method of implementation of the probabilistic methodology outlined in NORSOK Z013
- Abercus has developed the **EXCGEN** tool for this purpose
- Gexcon is currently developing **RISK** for the same purpose
- Other tools may follow?
- **EXCGEN** enables:
 - Sharing and associated democratisation of analysis data – sensitivities
 - 3D risk assessment
 - Probabilistic structural response.



Summary

- The more you look at something, very often, the more interesting it gets – when information becomes easily available other points of discussion follow:
 - How to select representative 10^{-4} /yr events?
 - How to construct 10^{-4} /yr pseudo-events?
 - Is it worth pursuing a probabilistic structural response approach?

For the example considered there is reasonable agreement between the pseudo-event and probabilistic structural response approaches, but we need to consider a much wider range of examples to determine whether this is generally the case
- A role for NAFEMS/FABIG?



Thank you for listening

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