
SuperBeam 4.2 changes

Adobe Acrobat PDF file generation

A Adobe Acrobat PDF (portable document format) file is a file containing a document of some sort (SuperBeam calculations in this case) which can be displayed on screen and/or printed using the free Acrobat Reader (available from the Adobe Web Site; you'll also find copies on most magazine cover CD's.). SuperBeam 4.2 now gives you the option of 'printing' calculations to a PDF file without needing to install any third-party software.

The new Print dialog now has printer and PDF options; if you select the latter you will be prompted for a file name: the PDF file containing your calculation(s) will be generated, and optionally displayed. There are several reasons why you might find this facility useful:

- You can email the PDF file as an attachment to someone if they need a copy of your calculations (note that PDF files are very small compared with most document files): they can then view them (using the free Acrobat reader) and/or print them out if required, but cannot change the content.
- You can use Adobe Acrobat reader to provide a Print Preview facility and use it to print the reports if satisfied.
- You can use the PDF files as an electronic archive.

The PDF files are generated at A4 size with predefined options; if you have a copy of the full Adobe Acrobat program (not just the free reader) you will probably prefer to use it to produce PDF files as it provides a much wider range of options and facilities.

Web updates

No more waiting for us to send you the latest release - assuming you have current update cover of course!

To use this facility you will need to enter your details and a keycode using the Miscellaneous, Enter Activation Key option. If you have not already been sent a key, you can request one by sending an email to keycodes@sda.co.uk.

Survey Design Associates Limited

5A Waldegrave Gardens,
Twickenham, Middx. TW1 4PQ

Tel: 020 8744 2002

Fax: 020 8891 0866

E-mail: support@sda.co.uk

Web site www.sda.co.uk

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The information that you need to enter will be emailed back to you. Either type it in the Enter Activation Key dialog exactly as sent to you, or copy the email and press the 'Paste' button in the dialog. When you press the 'Continue' button, a message will be shown confirming that the details were entered correctly (or not).

Once you have entered a valid key, you will be able to access the Miscellaneous, Web updates option. It will only work when you are connected to the Internet. Press the 'Check for updates' button and a check will be made with our website to see whether a later version is available. If it is, details will be shown and you can press the button again to download the update. When downloading is complete a confirmation message is sent to us so we can update our records and a temporary shortcut icon captioned 'Install SuperBeam 4.20x' will be added to your Windows desktop. Exit the program and double click on this icon to install the new version. When you run it for the first time, the temporary installation icon will be sent to the recycle bin (the downloaded program update, InstSB420b.exe for example, will not be deleted). Please note that when you use the web update facility the serial number does not change between releases of the program: the release used to produce a particular calculation is shown at the top of each sheet.

The activation key option will also be used when we introduce direct selling of SuperBeam from our website during the next month or two. Versions bought this way (as opposed to being installed from a disk supplied by us) will only work when an activation key has been entered: this will be automatically sent as part of the e-commerce purchasing process.

Hollow steel section support added

Checking of hollow steel sections has now been added: the new steel data file, including hollow sections, is called ALLSTEEL.DTA.

Section properties are now taken from the SCI 'Blue Book', 6th edition, and there are some minor changes from earlier versions (properties are now given to three significant figures). Please note that a number of hollow sections are shown as only being available in S275 or S355 grade steel, not both.

Standard notes and beam load descriptions - less typing!

A standard note library facility has been added: this lets you type in the text of a note you will use repeatedly and give it a title. You can then use this note in any beam or column by clicking on the 'Use Note' or 'Add Note' buttons above the Notes field in each edit dialog. The former replaces any text with the selected standard note; the latter appends the standard note to any text already entered. The note editor is accessed from the Configuration, Standard Notes option. The notes are, by default, saved in the file C:\SDA\StdNotes.xxx where xxx are your initials. This file is shared with ProSteel, if you also have it.

The Standard Notes dialog also includes a table in which you can enter standard beam load descriptions (e.g. 'o.w.' or 'Floor'): when entering beam loads these descriptions can be selected from a drop-down list.

Other changes and enhancements

1. The beam load description field has been increased to 20 characters (on printouts, column widths are now adjusted to suit the maximum length of data entered in each column) (*user request*)
2. If you enter a load and forget to enter the start and/or end positions, default values of 0 and L (part UDL's and VL's) and L/2 (PL's) are entered. Previously the blank field was taken as 0 which meant that the load was ignored. (*user request*)
3. The height of the beam load edit dialog can now be changed: increasing it shows more loads or make the notes pane larger, depending on the page selected. (*user request*)
4. For non-hollow steel beams a check is now made on the unstiffened web capacity at supports. If the reaction is greater than this, the required stiff bearing length is calculated. If this cannot be provided, web stiffeners will be required (this is unlikely in domestic scale building structures) (*user request*)
5. Bug fixed that caused a crash if you tried to calculate a beam bearing plate with a negative reaction at R1 (due to load on cantilever extension of beam)

6. Steel bearing plate thicknesses are now calculated using the plate projection beyond the stiff bearing length across the section (taken as $t + 1.6r + 2T$). This will give a slightly greater plate thickness. (*changed following query raised by checking authority*)
7. The steel check section dialog now remembers last sort order
8. For stanchions you can now enter separate effective lengths for the major and minor axes. (*user request*)
9. Where a stanchion design includes moments calculated from applied reactions, a section schematic is now printed to make it clear which reaction is which. (*user request*)
10. Where a menu item has a toolbar equivalent the toolbar icon is shown on the menu
11. The Project Manager can now be accessed from the keyboard: press F12 and the focus jumps to the listbox, whose background turns yellow. Select an item with the Up and Down keys and press Enter to select it; press Tab to move round the buttons.
12. The 'keep windows on screen at all times' options have been removed from the Project Details dialog. When you close a window it is now always closed, not minimised. The old arrangement was a hangover from DOS days and has been redundant since the new style Project Manager was added
13. We are now using UPX compression instead of Shrinker which makes the main program file much smaller - now only 575K!

In view of the large number of changes please contact us as soon as possible if you encounter any problems or suspected bugs.