AT-8676 SELF-SUPPORTING TOWERS

ERECTION

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1. GENERAL

1.01 This section outlines the general considerations involved in erecting AT-8676 self-supporting towers, and includes recommended procedures and precautions.

1.02 When this section is reissued, the reasons for change will be listed in this paragraph.

1.03 Erection drawings are furnished with the tower, and provide information necessary for the field assembly of the tower, including the location and orientation of every piece and subassembly. All steel (except nuts, bolts, and washers) is identified by stencils, stamps, or metal tags which correspond to the markings shown on the erection drawings. The identifying mark of leg members is located on the outer face near the lower end. These drawings also show the number and type of bolts, nuts, and washers required to join the members. A more-than-adequate supply of each specified type of bolt, nut, and washer is furnished with the tower, but care must be exercised that the proper type and size of each is used for each joint.

2. PRE-ERECTION CONSIDERATIONS

2.01 Tower erection should not be started until all required permits have been obtained as outlined in Section 400-100-003. If the tower will exceed 100 feet in height, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) requires that an environmental impact statement be submitted along with the application for construction. See also Section 010-160-001.

2.02 The permit issued by the FCC to construct and operate a radio system will indicate whether or not lighting and painting to improve visibility are required. If lighting is required, arrangements must be made to have electric power provided at the site. Note that the standard lighting kit contains only the lighting material which goes on the tower. Conduit and wire from the base of the tower to the lighting control panel in the station should be ordered locally. Methods of lighting and painting towers are described in Sections 760-925-230 and 760-925-300.

2.03 The rules of the FCC and FAA require that temporary warning lights be placed on any tower which is required to have permanent air obstruction warning lights. The number of sets (or levels) of temporary lights required will be the same as the number of levels of permanent lighting. Where two or three levels of permanent lights are required, one temporary set of lights is required (at the top) until the level of the first permanent lights is exceeded. Temporary lights then should be installed at the level of permanent lights, and in addition, a set of temporary lights is always required at the uppermost point of the structure. On towers requiring only one level of permanent lighting, a set of temporary lights is required at the top of the partially completed structure. This applies even though only one section of the tower is erected by sunset.

2.04 Temporary lights are to burn steadily from sunset to sunrise. Top lights are to consist of two 100-, 107-, or 116-watt lamps (No. 100 A21/TS, No. 107 A21/TS, or No. 116 A21/TS, respectively) enclosed in aviation red obstruction light globes. Two similar lights are required at each level where permanent lights are to be installed. (Permanent lights may be used in lieu of temporary lights.) All side lights are to be positioned so that at least one of the two lights at each level will be visible from any angle of approach. Many tower contractors are equipped with temporary warning lights for use during erection, but it is advisable to notify the contractor if temporary lighting will be required, and whether one-, two-, or three-level will be required.

2.05 Section 760-927-201 provides information on foundations and anchors for AT-8676 self-supporting towers. Steel erection should not be started until the results of concrete compression tests are known to be satisfactory. (See Section 760-925-130 for additional information on concrete details.)

2.06 The tower grounding system should be completed, and the ground connections at each pier should be readily accessible. Material for grounding the AT-8676 tower is covered in Section 760-927-201. Section 760-925-135 contains detailed information for grounding microwave towers.

2.07 All equipment to be installed on the tower should be available when required, and its mounting location on the tower should be specified to the contractor so that hoisting equipment may be positioned to avoid conflict.

2.08 If aerial electric power facilities are in a location that may present a hazard to or interfere with hoisting equipment, tag lines, etc, arrangements should be made to have the power company relocate, de-energize, or insulate their facilities.

2.09 Foundations should be checked carefully during construction to ensure that they are located correctly, are of the right size, and include all specified reinforcing steel and anchor bolts. Incorrect spacing or differences in height of the foundation piers can make it virtually impossible to erect the tower. Details of layout are covered in Section 760-927-201.

2.10 It may be desirable to install a talking circuit on the tower to facilitate adjustment of antennas or reflectors during system lineup. Information on this subject is contained in Section 760-925-230. A walkie-talkie radio can be used in lieu of a physical circuit. This equipment also may be of value during tower erection.

2.11 Tower climbing safety equipment, B safety sleeve and B and C safety rail (see Section 081-725-105), should be installed on all new towers. This is not furnished with the tower and must be ordered separately.

2.12 If the base shoes are leveled accurately, the tower sections fabricated correctly, and the tower erected properly, the tower will not vary from vertical to any appreciable degree. In any case, the tower should not deviate from vertical by more than its total height in feet divided by 720. Methods for observing vertical alignment are outlined in Section 760-925-300.

2.13 Prior to starting erection of the tower, it is important that all erection drawings be reviewed to determine how the associated components (antenna platforms, waveguide supports, parabolic antenna mounts, etc) will be supported on the tower and the level or levels at which they are to be mounted. As indicated on the respective erection drawings, some components have parts which must be installed during the erection of the tower legs when the required level of mounting is reached.

3. INSTALLATION OF BASE SHOES

3.01 The base shoes must be oriented on their piers so that the point of intersection of the vertical wing plates is nearest the outside corner of the pier. The line bisecting the angle between the two wing plates should point toward the center of the tower.

3.02 The pier surface and the base shoe should be cleaned of mud, grime, and other foreign matter. The pier may be damp, but standing puddles or pools of water on its surface should be eliminated.

3.03 As shown in Fig. 1, each base shoe should be set on four steel wedges located about midway between the anchor bolts. The four base shoes should be set so that they are level and at the same elevation (±1/8 inch). If this is not done, the tower will be extremely difficult (if not impossible) to assemble. Wedges should be positioned so that the base shoe is about 1 inch above the surface of the pier. The shoe should be leveled in two directions with a spirit level, and the nuts on the anchor bolts tightened. Leveling should be checked after the nuts have been tightened, and if necessary, the position of the wedges should be adjusted to relevel the shoe. After the nuts are tightened, the wedges should provide a clearance of 3/4 to 1-1/4 inches for grout between the base shoe and the top of the pier.

3.04 The base shoes of AT-8676 self-supporting towers are grouted only after 25 feet or more of the tower has been erected and the first level of internal bracing installed (see 4.13). The

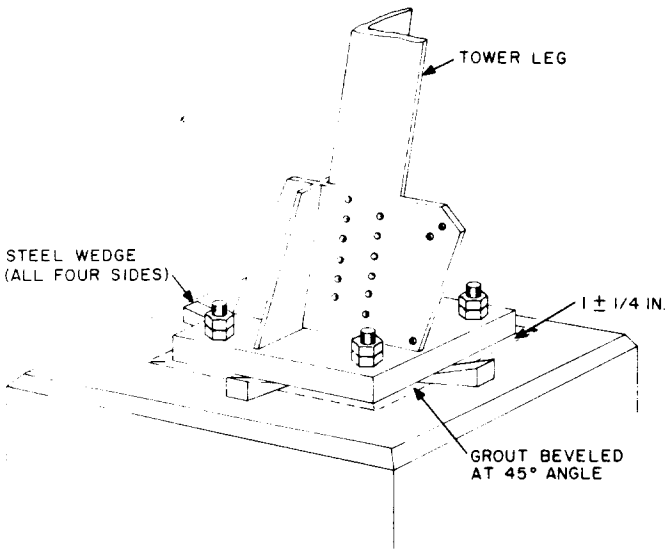


Fig. 1—Baseplate

grout should consist of one part portland cement (type I or III) to two parts sand (by volume). Clean sand from a reliable supplier should be used. The sand and cement should be mixed thoroughly in a dry condition. Water should be added sparingly so that the mixture retains a granular appearance, but not wet enough to resemble plastic mortar. Water must be clear and fit for drinking. The final mixture must form a lump when squeezed in the hand, and upon being disturbed, must crumble freely. Water should be kept to a minimum to obtain high compressive strength.

3.05 Grout should be forced under the shoe from all four sides, and should completely fill all voids. Next, the nuts of the anchor bolts should be loosened and the wedges withdrawn carefully. The nuts should be retightened ***carefully*** and the voids left by the wedges filled. (It is not necessary to wait for the grout to set before doing this.) The grout should be beveled as illustrated in Fig. 1.

4. ERECTION CONSIDERATIONS

4.01 Erection of steel towers usually is performed by contractors rather than by telephone company personnel. It should be noted that the contractor is responsible for the job, the construction methods he chooses to use, and is presumably the best judge of the condition of his equipment and the loads which it can handle. The telephone company representative should, however, assure normal safeguards (see Section 760-925-300) and require the contractor to correct any obviously dangerous conditions such as frayed winch lines and ropes.

4.02 The particular procedure used in erecting towers will vary among contractors. Usually, after the base shoes have been leveled and the anchor nuts tightened, the four lower leg sections are installed. The associated horizontal and diagonal bracing is installed on two opposite faces of the tower (Fig. 2, Faces A and C). The bracing for the other two faces (B and D) is not installed at this time to avoid interference with the gin pole. The legs are held in place by a number of interrupted rib (drive) bolts. All rib bolts are to be equipped with flat washers and Anco nuts (Fig. 3). Washers are employed to ensure that the nut can be turned up tightly without running into the ribbed part of the bolt, since some of the ribbed portion may extend out of the member. The ribs gouge into the sides of the hole into which they are driven, thus ensuring a snug fit and preventing rotation when the nuts are tightened. The underside of the bolt head should be in contact with the surface of the member involved. Care must be taken to avoid overdriving bolts. There should be no gap between the nut and the washer or between the washer and the adjacent surface of the member. All tower leg splices are to be made with interrupted rib bolts. Do not permit the use of machine or ordinary tower bolts or the reuse of rib bolts for this purpose. Some contractors may install bolts with the heads on the inside of the angle, so the nut will be exposed and more easily tightened.

4.03 A typical method of erecting self-supporting towers is illustrated in Fig. 2. Two cables are crossed on the ground, and their ends fastened to the foundation piers. The gin pole is placed between the two tower legs with its lower end resting on, and shackled to, the cables at their intersection (Fig. 2). The use of wood gin poles for erecting these towers is not recommended.

4.04 The gin pole is set upright between the tower legs and temporarily guyed while the diagonal and horizontal bracing is installed on the remaining two faces of the tower. Four sets of blocks and tackles are employed to support the gin pole. One end of each set is fastened to the pole somewhat above its center point, and the other end fastened to a tower leg at the highest point at which all the bracing has been installed.

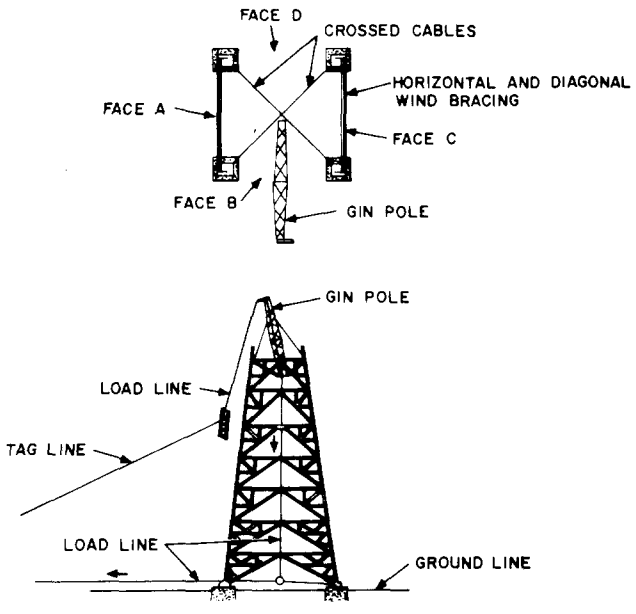


Fig. 2—Typical Construction Method

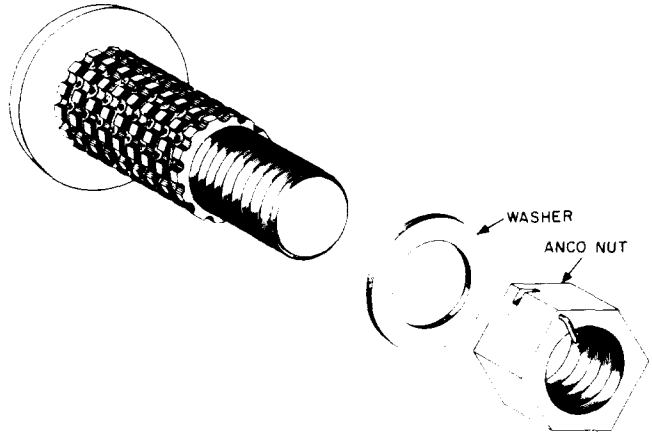


Fig. 3—Interrupted Rib Bolt Assembly

4.05 Components usually are laid out and assembled on two opposite sides of the tower. Two legs and their connecting bracing are assembled, and all bolts tightened. Splice plates are installed at the top of each leg, but the nuts and Palnuts* are not tightened at this time.

*Registered trademark of the Palnut Company

4.06 The associated bracing to complete the third and fourth faces of the tower is attached to each assembled panel, but the nuts are not tightened. Unbraced legs or assembled panels should not be left freestanding. If time will not allow all associated bracing to be installed, sections should not be hoisted into position on the structure.

4.07 The gin pole is tipped to one face by adjusting the block and tackle on each leg. The assembled panel is hoisted into position and splice plate nuts tightened. The gin pole is tipped to the opposite face, and the corresponding panel hoisted. The associated bracing for the remaining two faces is swung across and bolted in position.

4.08 After all associated horizontal and diagonal bracing has been installed, and all nuts tightened, the gin pole is raised to the next higher position. It usually is set to allow about 2 feet of head room when sections are hoisted.

4.09 The lower end of the gin pole usually is supported by four steel cables which are attached to diagonally opposite legs at a point where all bracing has been installed. It is common practice that as soon as the lower end of the gin pole clears a point at which interior bracing is required, the bracing is installed. The set of cables crossed on the ground usually is left in place, with the load line snatch block shackled to their intersection.

4.10 There are other satisfactory construction methods, such as boom cranes, which are used quite frequently. Some contractors erect supplementary portable towers on the site for use in hoisting tower sections and equipment items.

4.11 All bolted connections in the tower, except leg splices, are made with 5/8-inch ASTM A325 or A490 high-strength tower bolts. The number of bolts in each connection is indicated on the erection drawings. A typical bolt assembly is shown in Fig. 4. Bolt heads should be drawn snugly against the surface of the member which they pass through. ***Bolts of strength lower than the specified strength should not be substituted under any conditions.*** The plain washer shown in Fig. 4 ensures that the service nut can be tightened fully without running into the unthreaded part of the bolt. The unthreaded part of the bolt should, however, extend through the shear plane at the interface between the fastened members (Fig. 5). The service nut should be installed with the chamfered side against the washer, not against the Palnut. The Palnut is provided as insurance against loosening of the service nut

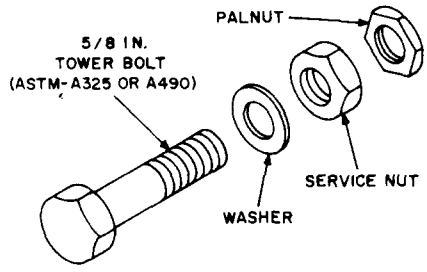


Fig. 4—Typical Bolt Assembly

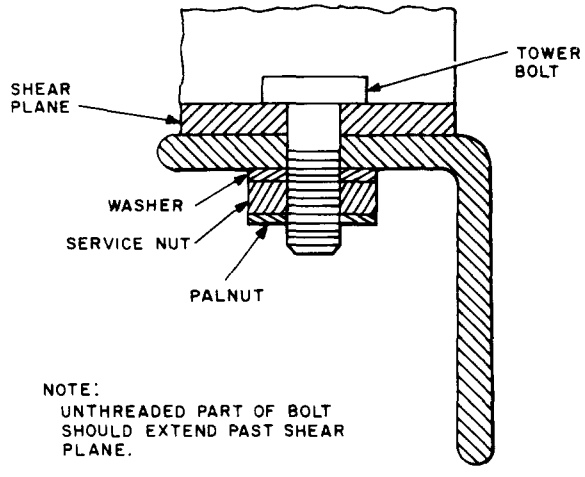
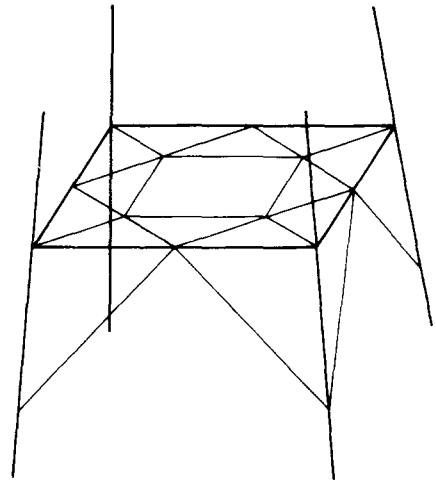


Fig. 5—Tower Bolt in Place

due to vibration. Tower bolts usually are installed with the head on the inner side of vertical members and on the lower side of horizontal members.

4.12 Installation of the first level of internal bracing provides a check on both the accuracy of fabrication and alignment of the foundation piers and anchor bolts. Figures 6 and 7 illustrate types of internal bracing which are used in the AT-8676 self-supporting towers. Internal bracing in the horizontal plane is all that is required to determine whether the tower can be trued up. In general, it seems desirable to install the first level of internal bracing as soon as possible; however, procedures may vary according to contractors.

4.13 For either type of bracing shown, some difficulty usually will be experienced in completing the internal square. The tower cross section tends to form a parallelogram until the internal bracing is installed to square it up. Some forcing is to be expected, but deformation of



NOTE:
THIS TYPE PLAN BRACING USED ON TOWERS OF 150 FEET OR LESS; ALSO FOR UPPER 125 FEET OF TALLER TOWERS. (SOME FACE BRACING OMITTED FOR CLARITY)

Fig. 6—Tower Bracing

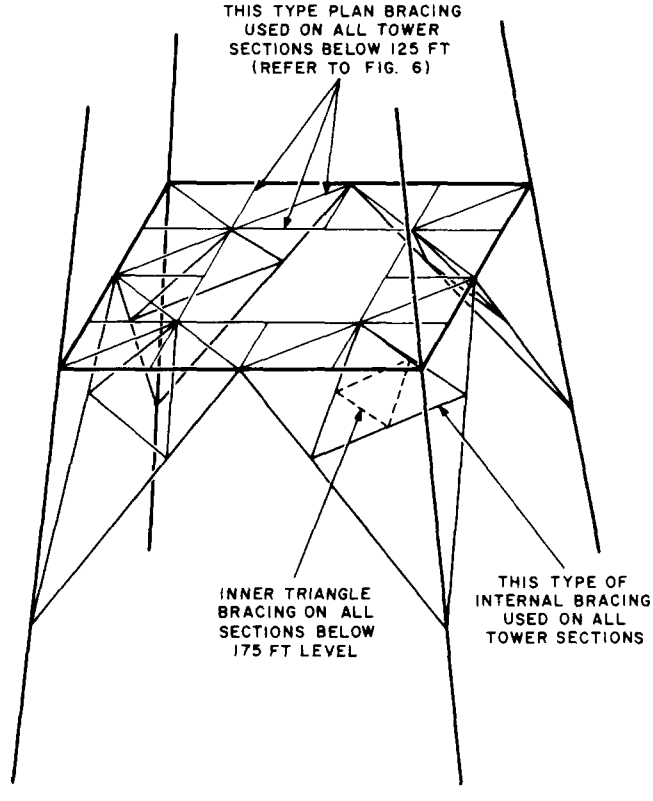


Fig. 7—Tower Bracing

members (buckling or bending) should not be permitted. Usually the square can be completed without too much difficulty by adjusting the position of the steel wedges under the base shoes.

4.14 Errors in fabrication are rare, but they do occur. Sometimes such errors can be detected by comparing measurements of similar pieces, eg, one leg versus an adjacent leg. These measurements should be checked against the fabrication drawings, which are included in the specification covering the manufacture of the tower. Each piece of steel (except nuts, bolts, etc) may be identified by its mark number.

4.15 Figure 8 shows a butt leg splice where there is no change in size of the leg member. Note that the ends of leg members are not required to bear against each other. Some difficulty is experienced occasionally in making up these joints due to irregularities in galvanizing, or because of slight misalignment of holes. Another possible source of difficulty is insufficient chamfer of the outside corner of the splice angle. The reason for the chamfer is to provide clearance for the fillet on the inside of the leg angle. (Outside corners have an extremely small radius—perhaps 1/16 inch—see Fig. 9.) Leg angles with an unusually generous fillet will produce the same effect as too little chamfer. The remedy is to grind the splice angle to obtain a greater chamfer. Occasionally, it will be found that holes do not line up adequately to permit full bolting without drifting of holes. There is no objection to removing excess zinc (galvanizing), which may increase hole size; but generally, reaming of holes is undesirable. Members which cannot be joined without further field fabrication should not be installed without checking dimensions against shop drawings to determine the nature of the mistake in fabrication. Members which are merely too long may be cut to proper length, provided distances between bolt holes are correct and edge distances will be correct after cutting. Grinding is permitted in lieu of cutting. Cutting by a torch should not be allowed.

4.16 Freshly cut surfaces, or any surface where galvanizing has been damaged, should be painted immediately. The best protection is probably provided by the zinc-rich type of paint. These paints are 90 percent (or more) powdered zinc and will provide some galvanic protection in the same fashion as galvanizing. They also have the property of preventing rust from creeping under the paint

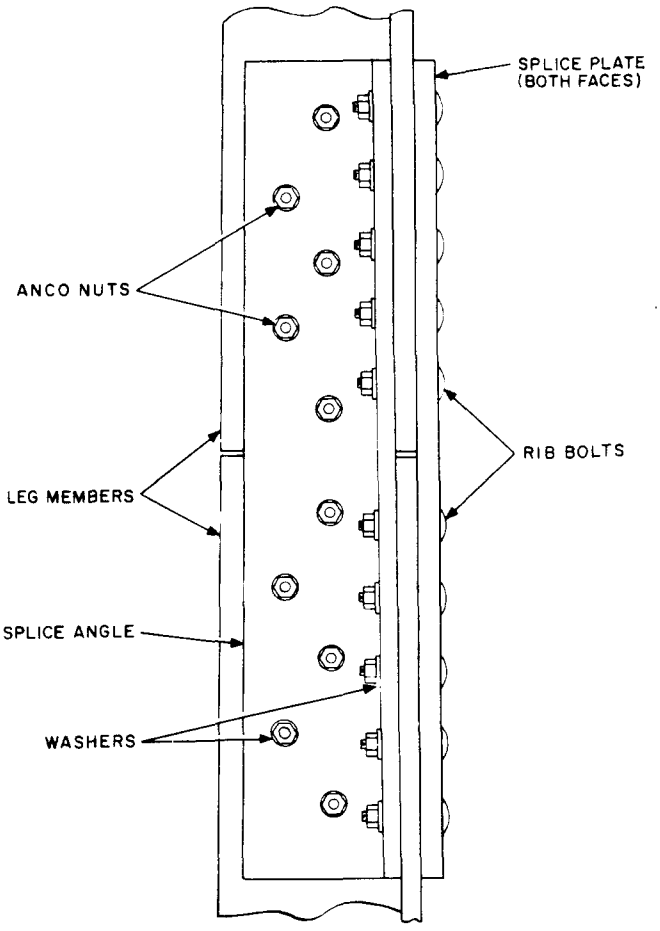


Fig. 8—Butt Leg Splice

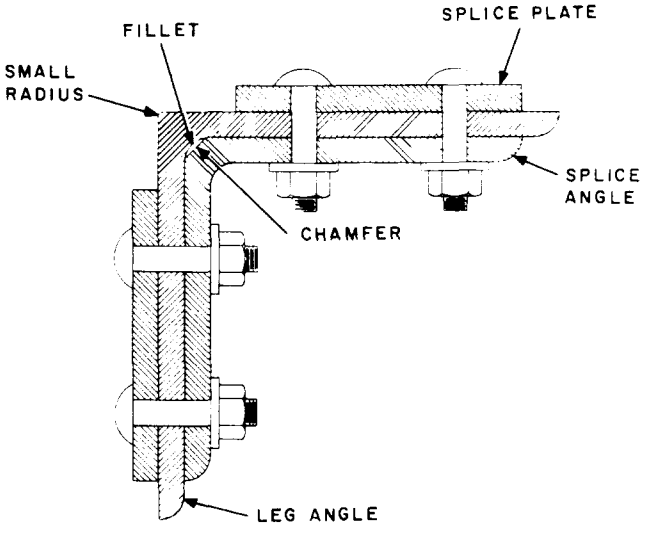


Fig. 9—Cross-Sectional View of Butt Leg Splice

film. They should not be applied to steel which is damp or wet or coated with mud, oil, grease, mill scale, bird droppings, etc. To be effective, paint of this kind should have a coverage rate not exceeding 350 square feet per gallon. If this type of paint is not available, zinc-dust, zinc-oxide paint is an acceptable substitute. It must be applied over clean dry metal and should conform to Federal Specification TT-P-641c, Type I or Type II .

4.17 To obtain savings in fabrication and erection, leg angle sizes are decreased gradually from bottom to top of the tower. Changes in leg sizes affect both width and thickness. The latter produces a problem at splices which is solved by the use of filler plates (Fig. 10). Note that the filler plate is fastened to the thinner leg angle by one bolt, which does not pass through the splice plate and splice angle.

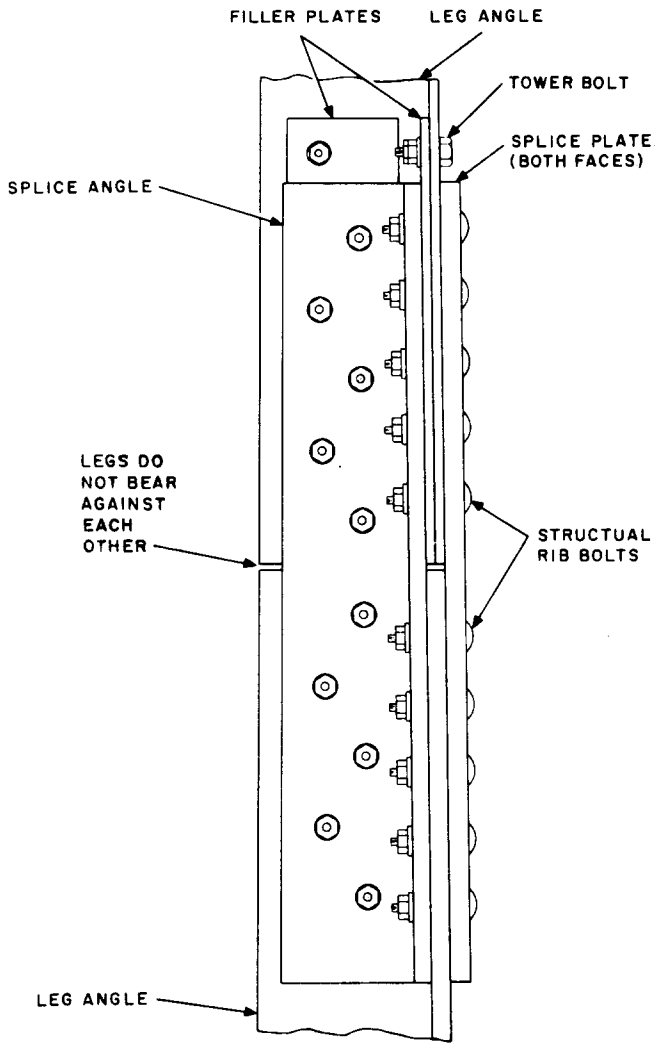


Fig. 10—Filler Plate

4.18 Not all splices are butt splices. All towers over 100 feet high contain one set of lap splices which are made approximately 100 feet down from the top of the tower. At this point, the leg size changes from 6 by 6 by 5/8 inches to 8 by 8 by 1/2 inches. The lap splice puts the smaller angle inside the larger, and the outside of the smaller angle is chamfered for the same reason as the splice angles used at butt splices.

4.19 In general, details of hoisting are best left to the contractor. However, it may be worthwhile to caution the contractor on one item in the event he has not previously erected an AT-8676 self-supporting tower. That is, a panel should ***not*** be hoisted by using a single hitch at the midpoint of the horizontal member because the dead weight may cause buckling. (Two hitches using a spreader bar will prevent this.) ***Members which have been bent or buckled should be replaced.*** All sizes of towers use K bracing on the face, and these panels can be damaged by improper methods of hoisting (Fig. 11). K bracing becomes fairly elaborate as the distance between leg members becomes greater.

4.20 Access to the tower is provided by special step bolts, each of which is designed to support 500 pounds (Fig. 12). This step bolt is attached with a single 5/8-inch bolt to the tower leg up to a level 75 feet from the top, and to a step bolt ladder angle for the top 75 feet. Rotation of the step is prevented by the right-angle bend which engages the outer corner of the leg angle. The 135-degree bend in the step results in alternate steps being in the same plane when mounted on a 90-degree angle, as opposed to the conventional straight step bolts which would be at right angles. Since a splice plate is not of sufficient thickness to provide restraint for the step, a filler plate must be placed on the outside of the splice plate where a step falls at a leg splice (Fig. 12). The filler plate should be attached by not less than two splice bolts. Filler plates and extra length bolts are provided as required. Step bolts may be eliminated in the lower 8 feet of the tower to deter unauthorized climbing.

4.21 All 100-foot and higher towers are equipped with a safety strand where the climber must transfer from the leg of the tower to the step bolt ladder angle on the face of the tower. A safety strand should be installed at the level of side obstruction lights (assuming two- or three-level

lighting) and at intermediate antenna levels. The strand may be standard 6M, as used in pole line work. It should have a tension of about 500 to 600 pounds (not critical). Holes are provided for attachment of this strand to the tower legs at all required levels. The holes are located approximately 4 feet above the horizontal girt in the panel. Section 081-725-200 provides instructions for using the strand. Strand also may be provided at the top of the tower, using the leg extensions as posts.

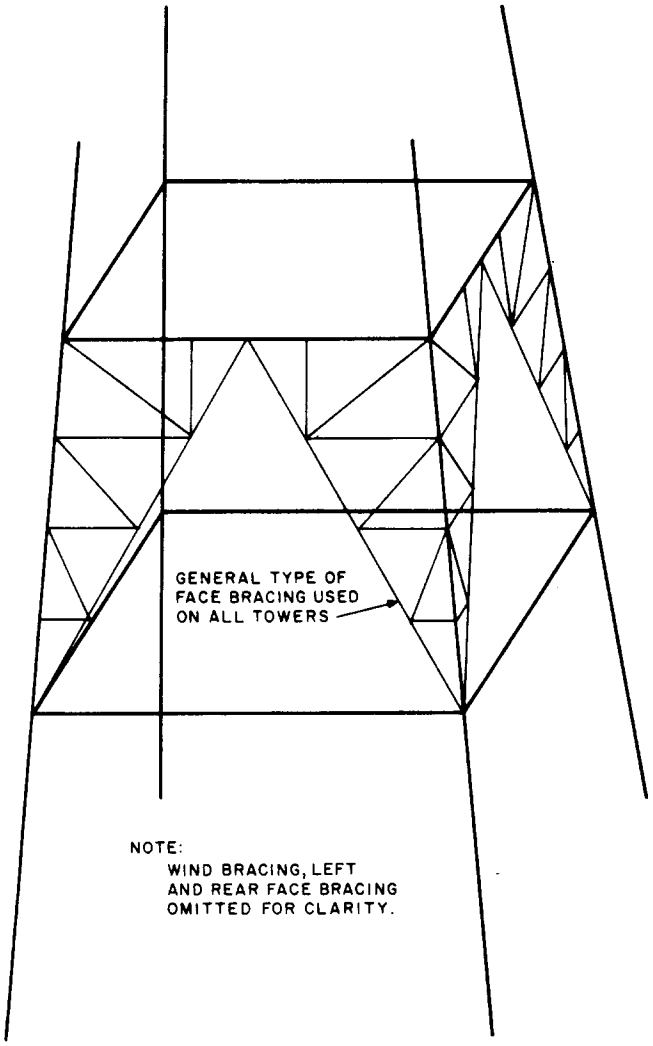


Fig. 11—K Bracing

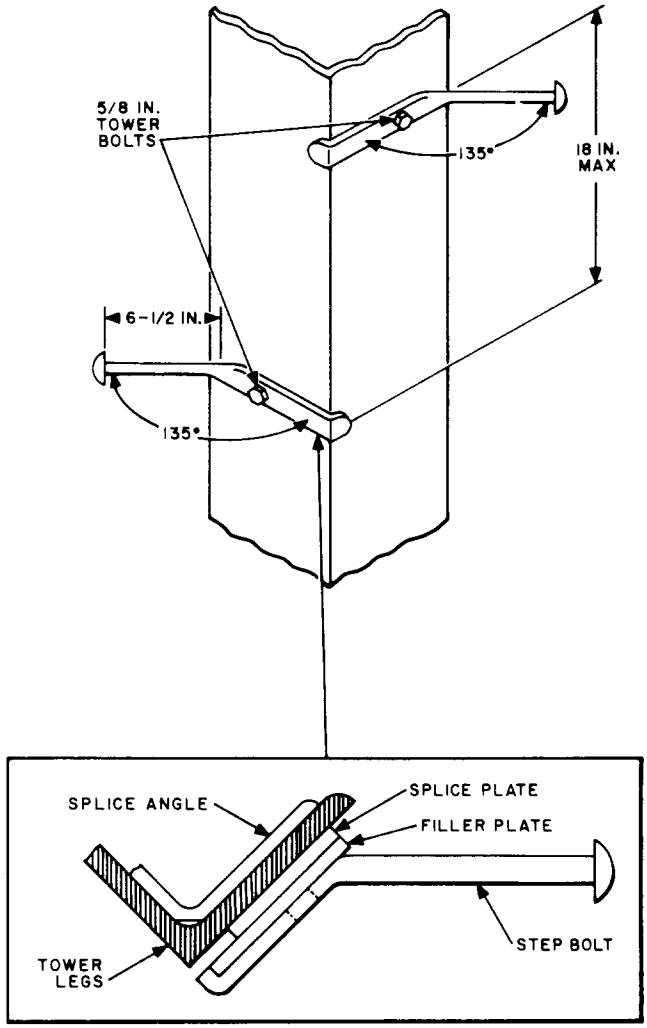


Fig. 12—Typical Step Bolt at Leg Splice