Development of Concrete Ablation Module for Molten Core-Concrete Interaction Analysis

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1. Introduction

To prevent large amount of radioactive material release from the nuclear power plant, the containment integrity should be maintained. One possible way to fail the containment is base-mat through by the Molten Core-Concrete Interaction (MCCI) phenomenon. To evaluate this failure mode accurately, precise prediction of concrete ablation is required. However, the concrete ablation is analyzed with too much conservative assumptions in general system-level codes.

For this reason, the concrete ablation module is being developed for the Code of Corium-Concrete Interaction (COCCI), which is developed by KAERI based on C++ [1]. In this research, concrete ablation model options for COCCI and analysis results are presented.

2. Concrete ablation model

After the reactor vessel failure under the severe accident condition, concrete in the cavity is heated up by high temperature corium. During the heat-up phase, the crust layer can be formed between the corium and the concrete. As the crust layer grows, heat transfer from corium to concrete decreases so that corium bulk temperature rises. The crust layer fails in the end, then the concrete starts to melt when the boundary temperature reaches at ablation temperature of the concrete [2].

There are three representative models for concrete ablation: Quasi-steady, fully developed, and transient dry-out [3]. Quasi-steady model ignores heat-up phase of concrete and heat conduction into concrete. This model generally used for system-level code. Fully developed model ignores the heat-up phase of concrete same as the quasi-steady model, but this model considers heat conduction into concrete. Fig. 1 shows the schematic of fully developed concrete ablation model. Transient dry-out model considers both the heat-up phase of concrete and the heat conduction into concrete as the description above.

For now, the concrete ablation module of COCCI covers quasi-steady model and fully developed model so that the boundary temperature between corium and concrete is assumed as the ablation temperature from the beginning. If the concept of a thermal boundary layer thickness in the concrete wall behind the ablation front is employed, then the thermal response in this layer satisfies the transient one-dimensional heat conduction equation as below:

$$\rho_{con} C_{con} \frac{dT}{dt} = k_{con} \frac{d^2 T}{dx^2} \tag{1}$$

ρ_{con} = density of concrete [kg/m^3]
C_{con} = heat capacity of concrete [J/kg-K]
k_{con} = conductivity of concrete [W/m-K]

The linear temperature profile (steady state) was assumed in the concrete in this research. Boundary conditions including thermal boundary layer thickness, and the ablation rate based on the energy balance equation between corium and concrete can be expressed as below:

$$T(x = 0) = T_{con,ab} \tag{2}$$

$$T(x = \xi_{con}) = T_{con,o} \tag{3}$$

$$\frac{dT}{dx}\Big|_{x=\xi_{con}} = 0 \tag{4}$$

$$\rho_{con} \Delta h_{con} \eta' = HTC(T_{bk,m} - T_{con,ab}) + k_{con} \frac{(T_{con,o} - T_{con,ab})}{\xi_{con}} \tag{5}$$

$T_{con,ab}$ = ablation temperature of concrete [K]
ξ_{con} = thermal boundary layer thickness [m]
$T_{con,o}$ = internal temperature of concrete [K]
Δh_{con} = amount of change of concrete enthalpy [J/kg]
η' = ablation rate [m/s]
HTC = heat transfer coefficient from corium to concrete [J/m^2-sec]
$T_{bk,m}$ = bulk melt temperature [K]

It is assumed that materials in the concrete except gas are merged to the corium by ablation so that decomposition heat can be expressed as below:

$$Q_{dc} = (1 - \chi_{g,con}) \cdot (Q - A \frac{k_{con}(T_{con,ab} - T_{con,o})}{\xi_{con}}) \tag{6}$$

Q_{dc} = decomposition heat [W]
$\chi_{g,con}$ = mass fraction of gas in concrete
Q = heat transfer from corium to concrete [W]
A = heat transfer area [m^2]

In the quasi-steady model, heat conduction into concrete is ignored because the thermal boundary layer thickness is infinite.
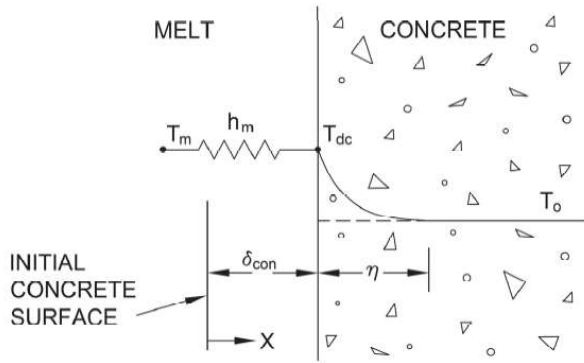
Fig. 1. Schematic of fully developed concrete ablation model

3. Analysis results

To confirm the effect of the concrete ablation model on the results, CCI-2 test [4] was analyzed using COCCI. Concrete decomposition temperature, initial corium temperature, and weight percent of gases in concrete were assumed as 1800 K, 2150 K, and 0.275 % respectively as initial conditions. The analysis was done for 360 minutes, and the water is injected to the top of the corium at 300 minutes.

The comparison of bulk melt temperature and the ablation depth are shown in Fig. 2 and Fig. 3. In this analysis, 1.0 and 0.1 were assumed as the thermal boundary layer thickness. As shown in figures, there are not much difference between the results of CCI-2 test and COCCI analysis. The bulk melt temperature results are almost same, however, the ablated depth decreases when the fully developed model is used. When small value of thermal boundary layer thickness is assumed, the ablated depth decreases. It is because decomposition heat decreases and heat conduction into concrete increases when small value of thermal boundary layer thickness is used following the equation (6).
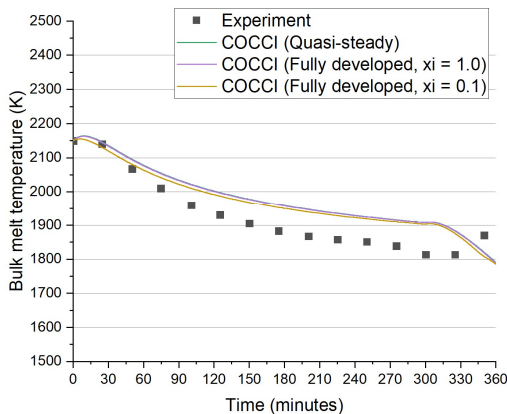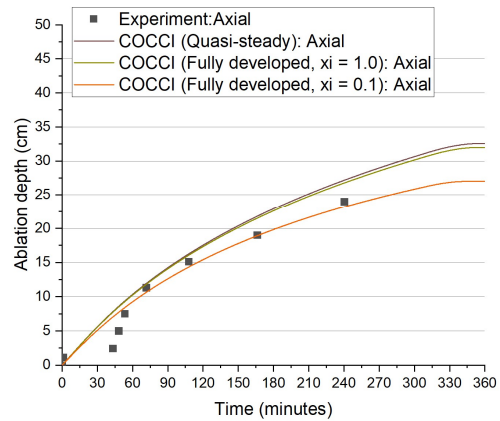

Fig. 2. Comparison of bulk melt temperature

Fig. 3. Comparison of ablation depth

4. Conclusion

The model options for the concrete ablation module of COCCI, and analysis results of CCI-2 test were presented in this research. For now, the quasi-steady and the fully developed model were covered in the module, the difference between these models is consideration of heat conduction into concrete. The effect of the heat conduction according to the thermal layer thickness was shown in the analysis results. For further work, the module will include transient dry-out model as an option so that the concrete heat-up phase can be considered.

Acknowledgement

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