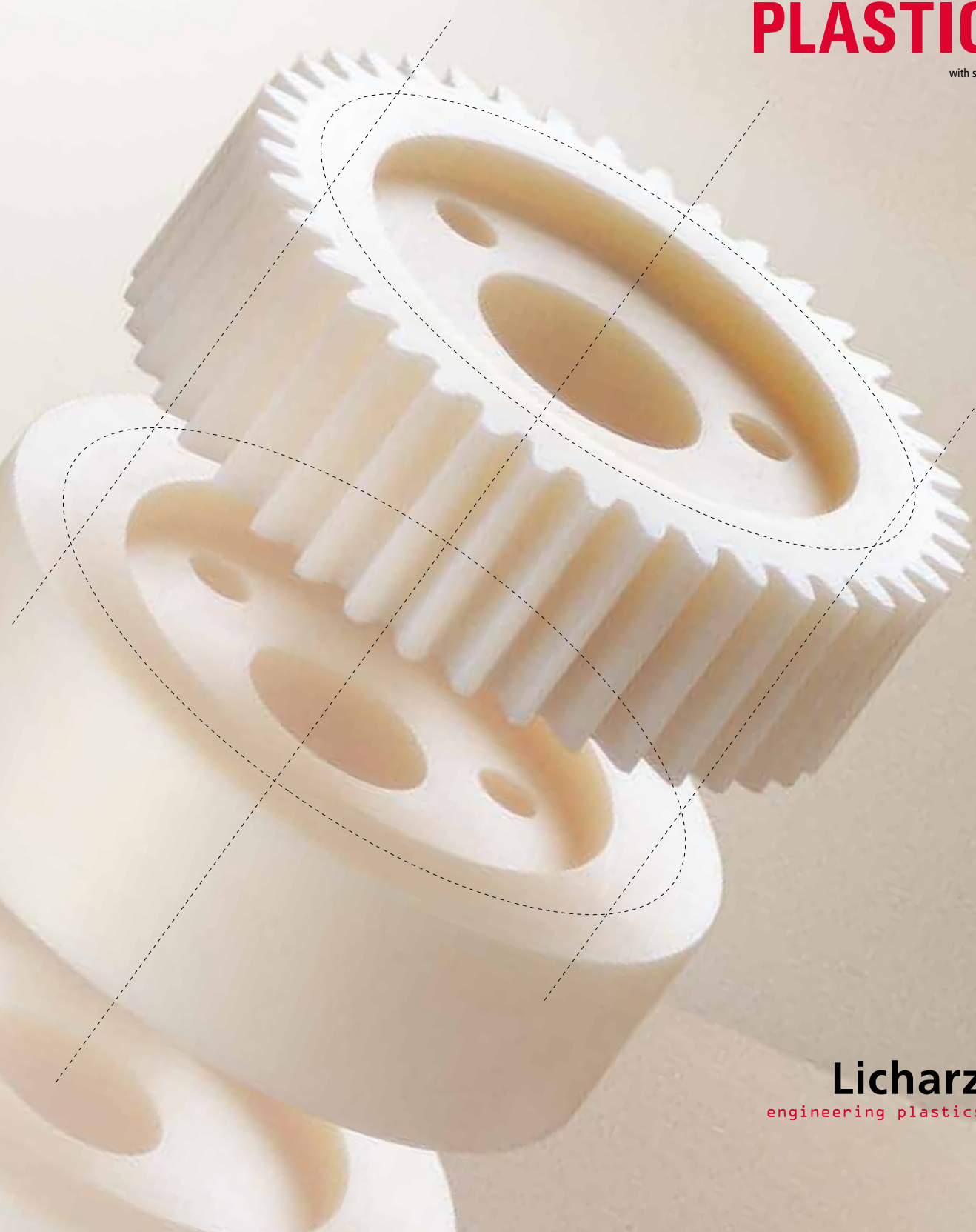


DESIGNING WITH ENGINEERING

# PLASTICS

with survey tables





**LICHARZ**

**PLASTIC CASTORS**

*The competitive edge through engineered components made of plastic*

# Plastic castors

---

## 1. Plastics as castor materials

Plastic wheels and castors are increasingly used in plants and material flow systems, replacing conventional materials. This is because of advantages such as

- Cost-effective manufacturing
- Very quiet running
- High wear resistance
- Good vibration and noise damping
- Low weight
- Protection of the tracks
- Corrosion resistance

In addition to the soft-elastic wheels made from polyurethanes, hard elastic wheels and castors made from cast polyamide, POM and PET are popular for higher loads. However, compared to conventional metal wheel and castor materials, several plastic-specific properties must be considered when calculating and dimensioning.

### 1.1 Materials

**LINNOTAM**, **LINNOTAM***HiPERFORMANCE 612* and **LINNOTAM***HiPERFORMANCE 1200* have proved to be ideal materials. POM and PET can also be used. However, experience has shown that although these have a similar load bearing capacity to the cast polyamides, they are subject to much more wear. The recovery capacity of these materials is lower than that of polyamides. In dynamic operation, flattening that occurs under static loading does not form back as easily as with polyamide castors.

### 1.2 Differences between steel and plastic

Plastic has a much lower modulus of elasticity than steel, which leads to a relatively greater deformation of plastic wheels when they are subjected to loads. But at the same time, this produces a larger pressure area and consequently a lower specific surface pressure, which protects the track. If the loading of the wheel remains within the permissible range, the deformation quickly disappears due to the elastic properties of the plastics.

In spite of the larger pressure area, plastic wheels are not as loadable as steel wheels with the same dimensions. One reason for this is that plastic wheels can only withstand much smaller compressive strain (compression) in the contact area, another reason is the transverse strain that occurs due to the very different degrees of rigidity of the castor and track materials. These hinder the wheel from deforming and have a negative influence on the compressive strain distribution in the wheel.

### 1.3 Manufacture

There are several production processes that can be used to manufacture plastic castors.

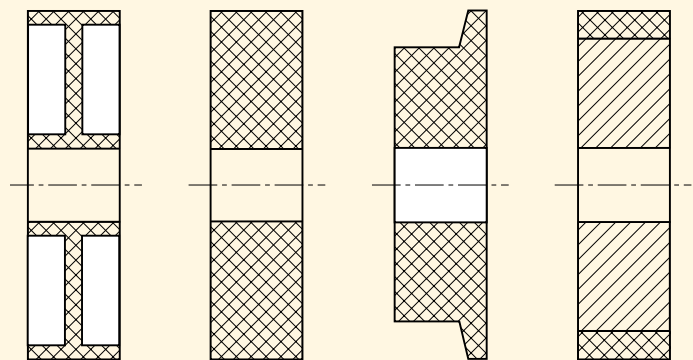
If high volumes of wheels with small dimensions are to be produced, injection moulding is a suitable method. As a rule, for production-engineering reasons, larger dimensions can only be produced by injection moulding as recessed and ribbed profile castors. It must also be noted that these only have half the load bearing capacity of a solid castor with the same dimensions. It is also a very complex procedure to calculate a castor such as this compared to a solid castor, and rolling speeds of more than 3m/s are not recommended because of production-related eccentricity. An economic and technical alternative to injection moulding is to machine semi-finished products. In the small dimensional range up to Ø 100 mm, the castors are manufactured on automatic lathes from rods. Sizes above this are produced on CNC lathes from blanks.

Manufacture by machining from semi-finished products deserves a mention as an economic and technical alternative to injection moulding. In the small dimension range of up to  $\varnothing$  100 mm the castors are produced on automatic lathes from bar stock and for products above this size on CNC lathes from round blanks. The centrifugal casting process can also be employed. In this process the outer contours of the part are cast to size and then the bearing seats or axle bores are machined to the required finished dimensions. This also enables larger dimensions in higher quantities to be produced particularly economically.

With this process a degree concentricity can be achieved that enables the castors to be used with rolling speeds of up to 5 m/s.

### 1.4 Castor design

In addition to the four basic castor body shapes, castors differ mainly in the type and design of their bearings. Like sheaves, solid castors can also be fitted with friction bearings. A prerequisite is that the material-specific max. loading parameters are not exceeded. How to calculate friction bearings and the significant factors for safe operation of the bearing are contained in the chapter on "Friction bearings". If it is not possible to use a friction bearing because the load is too high or because of other factors, the use of antifriction bearings is recommended. The chapter on "Tolerances", section 2.5.2 deals with the material related design of bearing seats in detail. Compression-set antifriction bearings used at temperatures above 50 °C can loosen. This can be counteracted by design measures such as pressing the bearing into a steel flange sleeve screwed to the body of the castor.



Alternatively we recommend the use of our **LINNOTAMDRIVE** materials (PA with a metal core), which combines the advantages of plastic as a castor material and steel as a bearing seat material. Because of its form and frictional connection of the steel core with the plastic, this material is also recommended for applications where driving torque has to be transferred. For castor diameters > 250 mm, a lined castor design is advantageous. The plastic lining is fixed to the metallic core of the castor through shrinkage. Details of this design alternative will be described in a separate section.

Alternatively we recommend the use of our **LINNOTAMDRIVE** materials (PA with a metal core), which combines the advantages of plastic as a castor material and steel as a bearing seat material. Because of its form and frictional connection of the steel core with the plastic, this material is also recommended for applications where driving torque has to be transferred. For castor diameters > 250 mm, a lined castor design is advantageous.

The plastic lining is fixed to the metallic core of the castor through shrinkage. Details of this design alternative will be described in a separate section.

### 2. Calculation

When calculating plastic castors, several important points must be remembered. The material has visco-elastic properties, which become visible through decrease in rigidity as the load duration increases. The result of this is that when the contact area of the static wheel is continuously loaded, it becomes larger the longer this load continues. However, as a rule because of the materials' elastic properties, they are quickly able to return to their original shape when they begin rolling. Hence, no negative behaviour is to be expected during operation. But if the permissible yield stress of the material is exceeded the material can "flow" and lead to permanent deformation.

# Plastic castors

---

This causes increased start-up forces when the castor or wheel is restarted and eccentricity in the rolling movement. High ambient temperatures and, especially for polyamides, high humidity promote this behaviour, as they reduce the maximum yield stress. An exception to this is **LiNOTAM HiPERFORMANCE 1200**, as it has less tendency to absorb water.

It should also be noted that because of the material's good damping properties, the body of the castor can heat up as a result of high running speeds or other loading factors. In extreme cases, temperatures can occur that cause the plastic wheel to malfunction. However, if the loads remain within the permissible limits, plastic castors and wheels will operate safely and reliably.

## 2.1 Calculation basics

It would appear practical to apply the Hertzian relationships when calculating castors, but plastic wheels do not fulfil all the conditions for this approach. For example, there is no linear connection between stress and expansion, and because of the elasticity of the material, shear stresses occur in the contact area while the wheel is rolling. Nevertheless, it is possible to make an adequately precise calculation on the basis of Hertz' theory. The compression parameter  $p'$  is determined with the following calculations. This parameter is generally calculated with short-time modulus of elasticity determined at room temperature and therefore does not reflect the actual compression in the contact area. Because of this, the determined values are only expressive in combination with Diagrams 1 to 4.

The calculated values are usually higher than those that actually occur during operation and therefore contain a certain degree of safety. Still, castors or wheels can malfunction as it is not possible to consider all the unknown parameters that can occur during operation to an adequate extent in the calculation.

For castors with friction bearings, the load limit of the friction bearing is decisive. As a rule, the full load bearing capacity of the running surface cannot be utilised, as the load limit of the friction bearing is reached beforehand (see chapter "Friction bearings").

## 2.2 Cylindrical castor/flat track

Under load, a projected contact area is formed with length  $2a$  and width  $B$ , with compression distributed over the area in a semi ellipsoidal form. Noticeable is that the stress increases at the edges of the castor. This stress increase is generated by shear stresses that occur across the running direction. These have their origins in the elastic behaviour of the castor material. The stress increases become larger the greater the differences in rigidity between the track and the castor materials. As stress increase in a castor made from hard-elastic plastic is quite small and can therefore be ignored for operating purposes and as the shear stresses cannot be calculated with Hertz' theory, these are not considered.

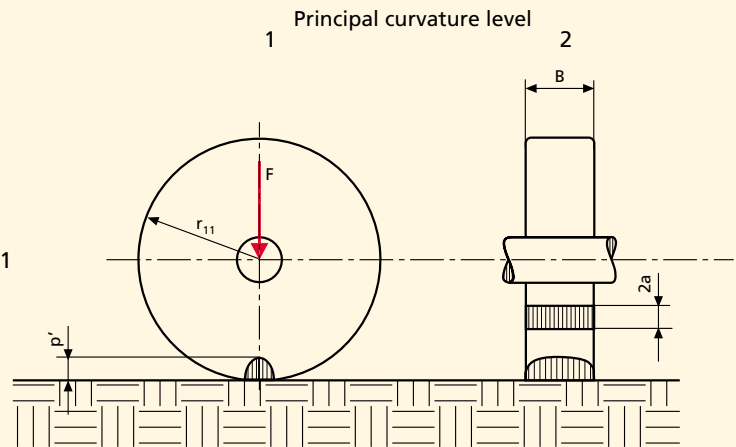


Assuming that the track material has a much higher modulus of elasticity than the castor material and that the radii in the principal curvature level (PCL) 2 are infinite, the compression parameter  $p'$  is

$$p' = f_w \sqrt{\frac{F}{r_{11} \cdot B}} \quad [\text{MPa}]$$

where

- $F$  = wheel load in N
- $r_{11}$  = castor radius in mm from PCL 1
- $B$  = wheel width in mm
- $f_w$  = material factor
  - LINNOTAM** = 25.4
  - PA 6 = 38
  - POM = 33.7



If the moduli of elasticity of the castor and track materials are known, the following equations can be used:

$$p' = \sqrt{\frac{F \cdot E_e}{2 \cdot \pi \cdot r_{11} \cdot B}} \quad [\text{MPa}]$$

and

$$\frac{1}{E_e} = \frac{1}{2} \left[ \frac{1 - v_1^2}{E_1} + \frac{1 - v_2^2}{E_2} \right]$$

For identical track and castor materials  $E_e$  is:

$$E_e = \frac{E}{1 - v^2}$$

where

- $F$  = wheel load in N
- $E_e$  = replacement module in MPa
- $r_{11}$  = castor radius in mm from PCL 1
- $B$  = wheel width in mm
- $E_1$  = modulus of elasticity of the castor body in MPa
- $v_1$  = transversal contraction coefficient of the castor body from Table 1
- $E_2$  = modulus of elasticity of the track material in MPa
- $v_2$  = transversal contraction coefficient of the track material from Table 1

# Plastic castors

Table 1: Transversal contraction coefficients for various materials

	PA 6 Linnotam POM PET	Ferritic steels	Steel with approx. 12% Cr	Austenitic steels	Cast iron				Aluminium alloys	Titanium alloys
					GG 20	GG 30	GG 40	GGG 38 to 72		
Transversal contraction coefficient $\mu$ at 20 °C	0.4 up to 0.44	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.25 up to 0.26	0.24 up to 0.26	0.24 up to 0.26	0.28 up to 0.29	0.33	0.23 up to 0.38

The half contact area length required to estimate flattening is calculated from

$$a = \sqrt{\frac{8 \cdot F \cdot r_{11}}{\pi \cdot E_e \cdot B}} \quad [\text{mm}]$$

where

$F$  = wheel load in N

$E_e$  = replacement module in MPa

$r_{11}$  = castor radius in mm from PCL 1

$B$  = wheel width in mm

### 2.3 Cylindrical castor/ curved track

Also in this system a projected contact area is formed with length  $2a$  and width  $B$ , with compression distributed over the area in a semi ellipsoidal form. The previously described stress increases also form in the edge zones. The calculation is carried out in the same way as for the "cylindrical castor/flat track" from section 2.2. However, because of the second radius in PCL 1, a replacement radius  $r_e$  is formed from the radii  $r_{11}$  and  $r_{21}$ . This is used in the equation corresponding to relationships of the moduli of elasticity to calculate the compression parameter.

If the castor runs on a curved track the replacement radius is

$$r_e = \frac{r_{11} \cdot r_{21}}{r_{11} + r_{21}} \quad [\text{mm}]$$

For castors running on a curved track the replacement radius is:

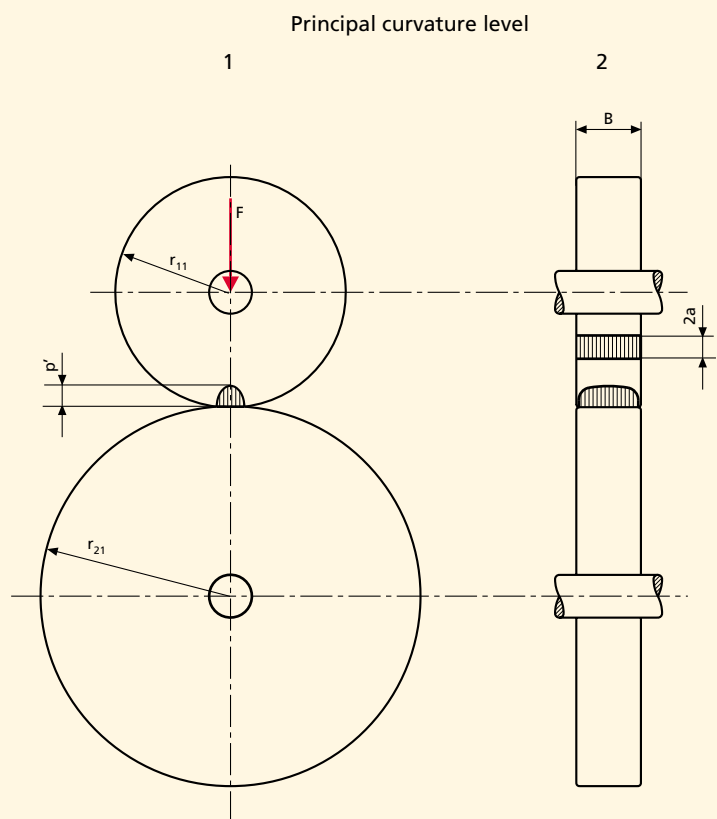
$$r_e = \frac{r_{11} \cdot r_{21}}{r_{11} - r_{21}} \quad [\text{mm}]$$

where

$r_{11}$  = castor radius in mm from PCL 1

$r_{21}$  = track radius in mm from PCL 1

The replacement radius  $r_e$  is also used in the equation to calculate half the contact area length  $a$ .



### 2.4 Curved castor/flat track castor system

The phenomenon described in section 2.2, where stress increases at the edges, can be reduced with design changes of the shape of the wheel. If the track is furthermore slightly curved across the rolling direction, only minor stress increases are observed. It has proven practical to use the diameter of the wheel as the radius of the curvature. This measure also counteracts the evolution of excess edge pressure that could arise from alignment errors during assembly.

A castor with curves in PCL 1 and 2 forms an elliptical contact area with axes 2a and 2b across which the compression is distributed in the form of an ellipsoid. The semi axis of the elliptical contact area are calculated from

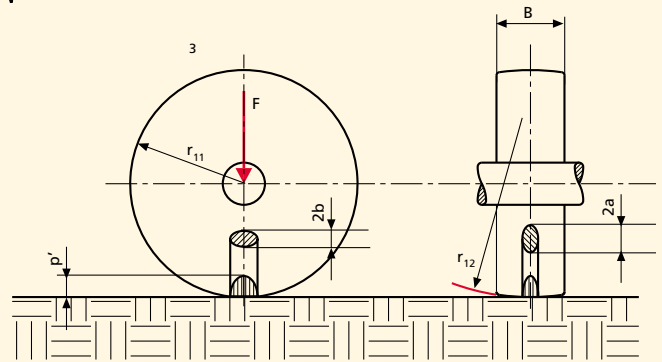
$$a = s \cdot \sqrt[3]{3 \cdot F \cdot r_e \cdot \frac{1}{E_e}} \text{ [mm]} \text{ und } b = l \cdot \sqrt[3]{3 \cdot F \cdot r_e \cdot \frac{1}{E_e}} \text{ [mm]}$$

and

$$r_e = \frac{r_{11} \cdot r_{12}}{r_{11} + r_{12}} \text{ [mm]}$$

where

- F = wheel load in N
- E<sub>e</sub> = replacement module in MPa
- s = Hertz correction value from Table 2
- r<sub>e</sub> = substitute radius
- l = Hertz correction value from Table 2



The replacement module is determined as described in section 2.2.

To determine the Hertz correction values s and l the value cos τ must be determined mathematically.

$$\cos \tau = \frac{\left( \frac{1}{r_{11}} - \frac{1}{r_{12}} \right)}{\left( \frac{1}{r_{11}} + \frac{1}{r_{12}} \right)}$$

where

- r<sub>11</sub> = castor radius in mm from PCL 1
- r<sub>12</sub> = castor radius in mm from PCL 2

The Hertz correction values in relation to cos τ can be taken from Table 2. Intermediate values must be interpolated.

Table 2: Hertz correction values in relation to cos τ

cos τ	1	0.985	0.940	0.866	0.766	0.643	0.500	0.342	0.174	0
s	∞	6.612	3.778	2.731	2.136	1.754	1.486	1.284	1.128	1
l	0	0.319	0.408	0.493	0.567	0.641	0.717	0.802	0.893	1
ψ	∞	2.80	2.30	1.98	1.74	1.55	1.39	1.25	1.12	1



# Plastic castors

With these calculated values the compression parameter can be determined as follows:

$$p' = \frac{3 \cdot F}{2 \cdot \pi \cdot a \cdot b} \quad [\text{MPa}]$$

where

F = wheel load in N

a = semi axis of the contact area longitudinally to the running direction

b = semi axis of the contact area transversely to the running direction

## 2.5 Curved castor/curved track castor system

Both the shape of the contact area and the calculation correspond to section 2.3. However, when the replacement radius r and the value for cos τ are being calculated, it should be considered that the track also has curvature radii in PCL 1 and 2.

Consequently the replacement radius for castors that roll on a curved track is

$$\frac{1}{r_e} = \frac{1}{r_{11}} + \frac{1}{r_{12}} + \frac{1}{r_{21}} + \frac{1}{r_{22}} \quad [\text{mm}]$$

and for castors that roll in a curved track

$$\frac{1}{r_e} = \frac{1}{r_{11}} + \frac{1}{r_{12}} + \frac{1}{-r_{21}} + \frac{1}{-r_{22}} \quad [\text{mm}]$$

where

$r_{11}$  = castor radius in mm from PCL 1

$r_{12}$  = castor radius in mm from PCL 2

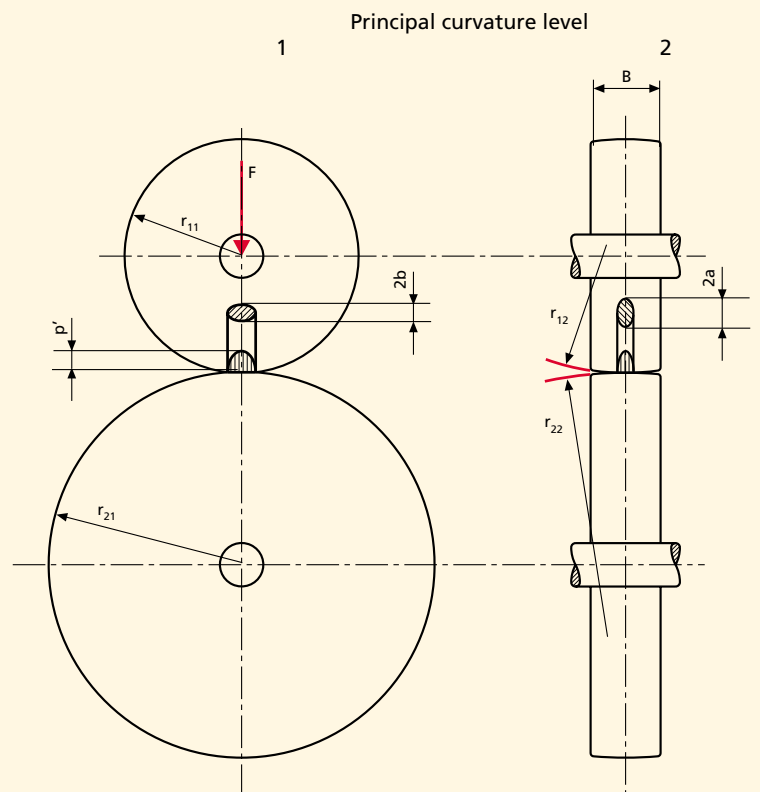
$r_{21}$  = track radius in mm from PCL 1

$r_{22}$  = track radius in mm from PCL 2

When determining cos τ it should be remembered that the value should be considered independently of whether the castor runs on or in a track. Therefore in the equation a positive value is always used for the radii.

$$\cos \tau = \frac{\left( \frac{1}{r_{11}} - \frac{1}{r_{12}} \right) + \left( \frac{1}{r_{21}} - \frac{1}{r_{22}} \right)}{\left( \frac{1}{r_{11}} + \frac{1}{r_{12}} \right) + \left( \frac{1}{r_{21}} + \frac{1}{r_{22}} \right)}$$

To calculate the semi axis a and b and the compression parameter the method described in section 2.4 can be applied.



## 2.6 Cylindrical plastic castor lining

### 2.6.1 Calculation

Castor linings can only be calculated according to the equations in sections 2.2 to 2.5 if specific ratios between the half contact area length  $a$ , the wheel width  $B$  and the height of the lining  $h$  are fulfilled. The ratios  $h/a \geq 5$  and  $B/a \geq 10$  must be fulfilled as a condition. As soon as these limiting values are not met, the evolving contact area is reduced despite the same load and outer wheel dimensions. The result is that the compression of the contact area increases and becomes greater, the smaller the lining thickness. In spite of this, it is possible to determine the compression ratios approximately.

The half contact area length  $a$  becomes

$$a = \sqrt[3]{1,5 \cdot r_e \cdot \frac{F}{B} \cdot \frac{E'_1 \cdot h_2 + E'_2 \cdot h_1}{E'_1 \cdot E'_2}} \quad [\text{mm}]$$

For castor linings that run on or in a curved track, the replacement radius  $r_e$  is determined as described in section 2.3.

The compression parameter then becomes

$$p' = \sqrt[3]{\frac{9}{32} \cdot \frac{1}{r_e} \cdot \left(\frac{F}{B}\right)^2 \cdot \frac{E'_1 \cdot E'_2}{E'_1 \cdot h_2 + E'_2 \cdot h_1}} \quad [\text{MPa}]$$

where

$F$  = wheel load in N

$E'_1$  = calculation module of wheel material in MPa

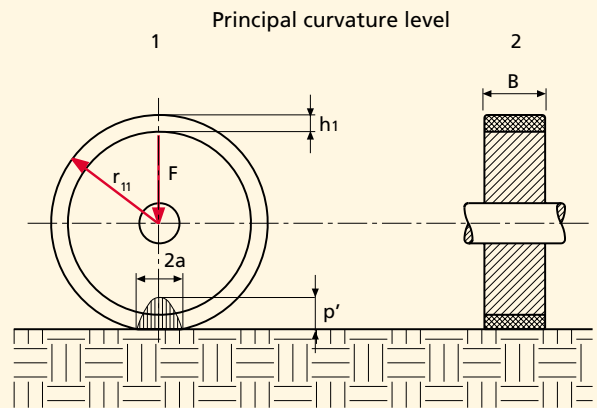
$E'_2$  = calculation module of track material in MPa

$r_e$  = replacement radius in mm

$h_1$  = castor lining thickness in mm

$h_2$  = track thickness in mm

$B$  = wheel width in mm



The calculation moduli of the materials must be determined taking account of the transversal contraction coefficients:

$$E'_1 = \frac{E_1}{1 - v_1^2} \cdot \frac{(1 - v_1)^2}{1 - 2v_1} \quad \text{und} \quad E'_2 = \frac{E_2}{1 - v_2^2} \cdot \frac{(1 - v_2)^2}{1 - 2v_2} \quad [\text{MPa}]$$

where

$E_1$  = modulus of elasticity of the castor material in MPa

$v_1$  = transversal contraction coefficient of the castor material from Table 1

$E_2$  = modulus of elasticity of the track material in MPa

$v_2$  = transversal contraction coefficient of the track material from Table 1

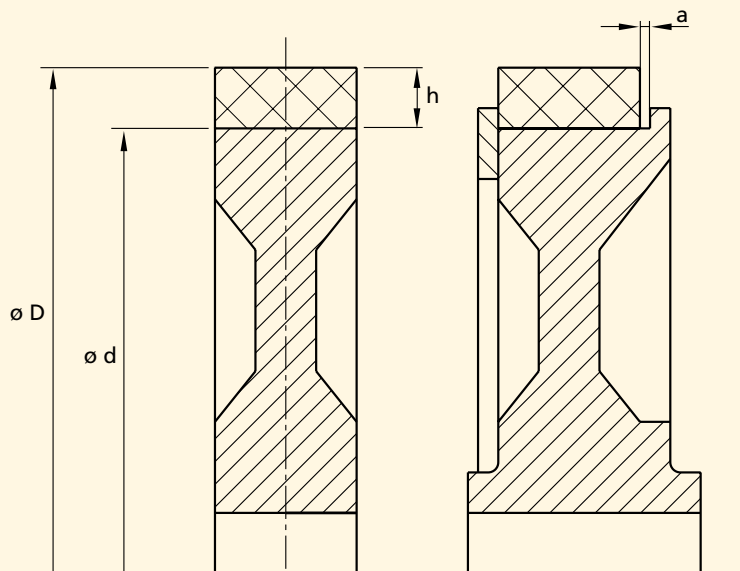
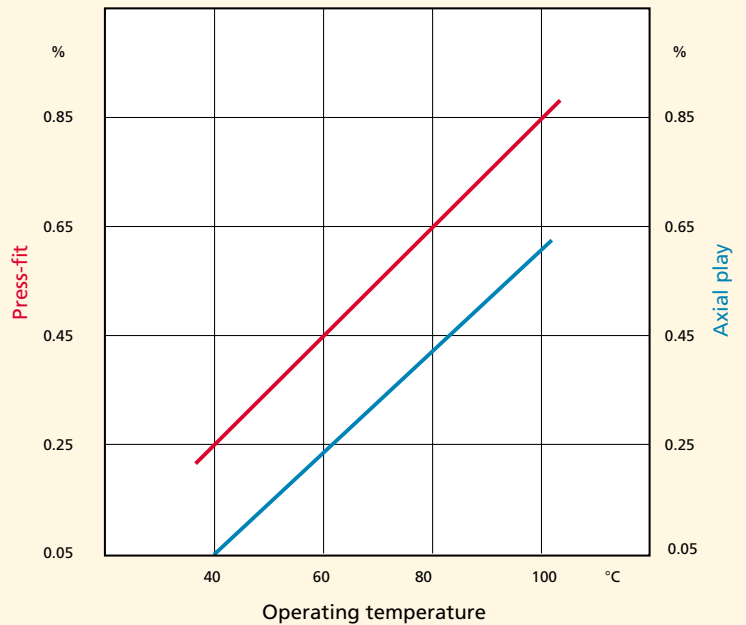
# Plastic castors

## 2.6.2 Design and assembly information

The shape of the plastic castor linings and the metallic core is generally dependent on the type of load that the castor will be subjected to. For castors with a low load where no axial shear is expected and where the diameter is < 400 mm, it is possible to choose a core shape with no side support. The operating temperatures may not exceed 40 °C. If it is expected that axial forces may affect the castor, that the lining will be subjected to high pressures or that operating temperatures will exceed 40 °C for short or long periods, the linings must be secured against sliding down by a side collar on the core or with a flange. The same applies for castor diameters  $\geq 400$  mm.

No special demands are placed on the metal core in the area of support for the lining in regard to surface quality and dimensional stability. A cleanly machined surface and a diameter tolerance of  $d \pm 0.05$  mm are adequate. Grooves in the axial direction (e.g. knurls with grooves parallel to the axis and broken tips) are permissible. Approximately 0.1 to 0.15 d of d has proven to be a suitable height for the plastic lining. The lining is generally fixed to the metal core by heating it and then shrinking it on to the cold core. The lining can be heated either with circulating hot air (approx. 120 to 140 °C) or in a water bath (approx. 90 to 100 °C). The lining is heated to an extent that it can be easily drawn on to the cold core with a gap between the core and the lining all the way around. This process should be carried out quickly so that the lining does not become cold before it sits properly on the core. Rapid or uneven cooling should be avoided at all costs, as otherwise stresses will form in the lining.

Diagram 1: Press-fit and axial play in relation to operating temperature



The press-fit for manufacturing the lining depends on the operating temperature and the diameter of the metal core. Diagram 1 shows the proportional press-fit in relation to the diameter of the metal core for castors with a diameter of > 250 mm. For castors with a securing collar/flange a slight axial play must be considered to absorb the changes in width resulting from thermal expansion. The proportional axial play in relation to the width of the lining can also be seen in Diagram 1.

### 2.7 Maximum permissible compression parameters

Diagrams 2 to 5 show the limit loads of castor materials for various temperatures and in relation to the rolling speed. The results for compression parameters gained from the calculations have to be compared with these limits and may not exceed the maximum values. The curves in relation to the rolling speed reflect the load limits in continuous use. In intermittent operation, higher values may be permitted. Unallowable high loads must be avoided when the castor is stationary, as these could cause irreversible deformation (flattening) of the contact area.

Diagram 2

Load limit for ball bearing solid castors made from **LINNOTAM**

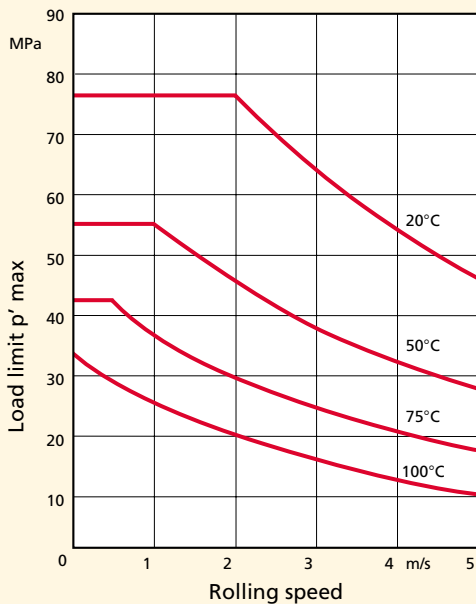
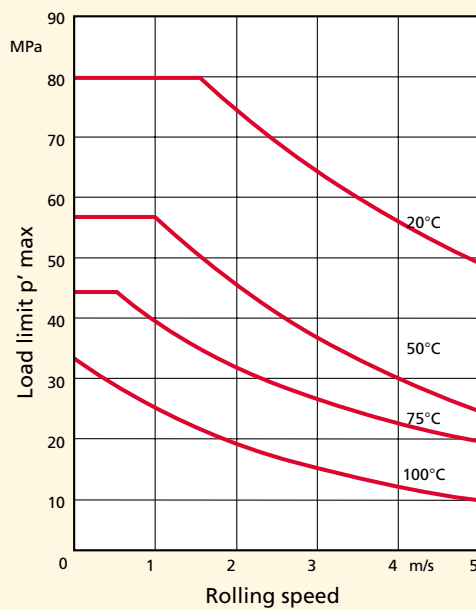


Diagram 3

Load limit for ball bearing solid castors made from **POM**



# Plastic castors

Diagram 4

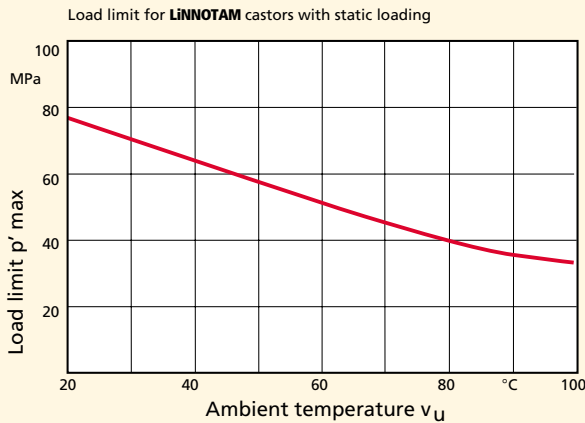
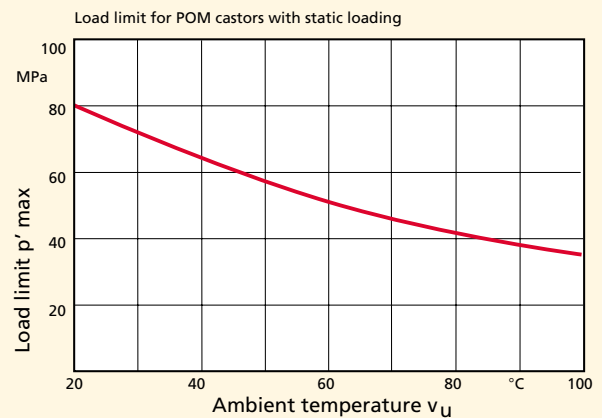


Diagram 5



### 3. Estimating the elastic deformation of the castor body

Often the function of castors and wheels is dependent on the deformation of the running surface (flattening) while the wheel or castor is stationary. This is determined immediately after the load has taken effect with the modulus of elasticity of the material. However, because of the viscoelastic behaviour of the plastic, the time-related deformation behaviour must be determined with the part-specific creep modulus. The creep modulus is determined by carrying out creep experiments with castors and can be seen in Diagrams 6 and 7. On the basis of the values determined in experiments, the time-related flattening can only be estimated with the following equations. It is virtually impossible to make an exact calculation due to the often unknown operating parameters and the special properties of the plastic. But the values obtained from the equations allow the flattening to be determined approximately enough to assess the functioning efficiency. The following is used to estimate the cylindrical castor/cylindrical track:

$$o_A = \frac{1,5 \cdot \psi \cdot F}{E_e \cdot a} \quad [\text{mm}]$$

and the cylindrical castor/flat track

$$o_A = \frac{F}{\pi \cdot E_e \cdot B} \cdot \left( 2 \cdot \ln \left( \frac{2 \cdot r_{11}}{a} \right) + 0,386 \right) \quad [\text{mm}]$$

where

F = wheel load in N

ψ = Hertz correction value from Table 2

E<sub>e</sub> = modulus of elasticity or creep modulus in MPa

a = semi axis of the contact area longitudinal to the running direction

B = wheel width in mm

r<sub>11</sub> = castor radius in mm from PCL 1

Diagram 6

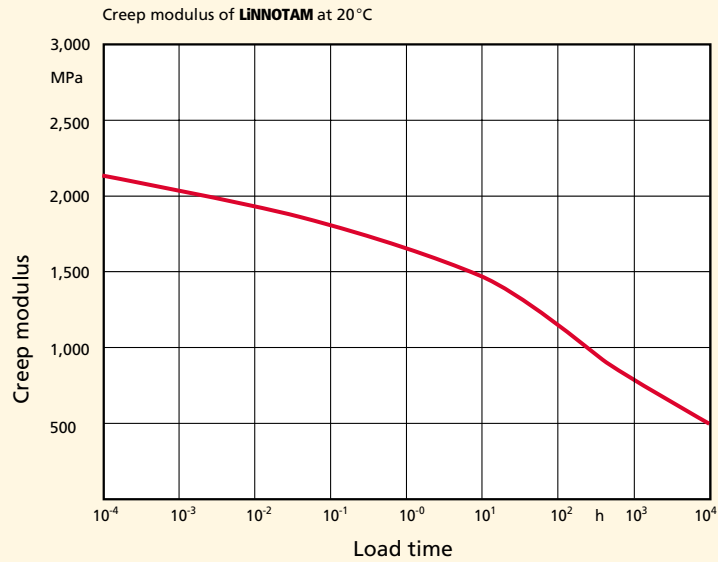
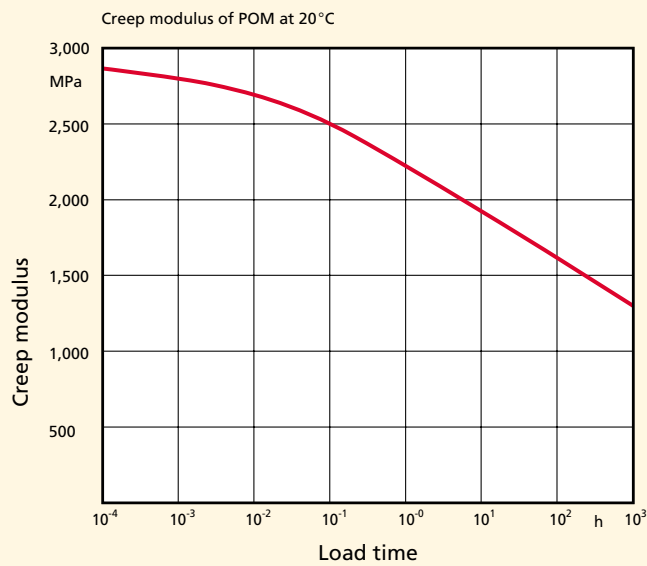


Diagram 7



As in castor systems with curvature radii quite considerable shear stresses occur in the PCL 2, it is not possible to analytically estimate the systems with curvature radii in the PCL 2. These can only be determined numerically with a three-dimensional FE model.



**Germany:** Licharz GmbH  
Industriepark Nord | D-53567 Buchholz | Germany  
Telefon: +49 (0) 2683 - 977 0 | Fax: +49 (0) 2683 - 977 111  
Internet: [www.licharz.com](http://www.licharz.com) | E-Mail: [info@licharz.com](mailto:info@licharz.com)

**France:** Licharz eurl.  
Z.I. de Leveau – Entrée G | F-38200 Vienne | France  
Téléphone: +33 (0) 4 74 31 87 08 | Fax: +33 (0) 4 74 31 87 07  
Internet: [www.licharz.fr](http://www.licharz.fr) | E-Mail: [info@licharz.fr](mailto:info@licharz.fr)

**Great Britain:** Licharz Ltd  
34 Lanchester Way | Royal Oak Industrial Estate | Daventry, NN11 8PH | Great Britain  
Phone: +44 (0) 1327 877 500 | Fax: +44 (0) 1327 877 333  
Internet: [www.licharz.co.uk](http://www.licharz.co.uk) | E-Mail: [sales@licharz.co.uk](mailto:sales@licharz.co.uk)

**USA:** Timco Inc  
2 Greentown Rd | Buchanan NY 10511 | USA  
Phone: +1 914 - 736 0206 | Fax: +1 914 - 736 0395  
Internet: [www.timco-eng.com](http://www.timco-eng.com) | E-Mail: [sales@timco-eng.com](mailto:sales@timco-eng.com)

## LICHARZ

### EXACTLY YOUR SOLUTION:

*We think with you from the beginning!*

We offer advice on how to utilise plastics and develop your component together with you:

- we check application conditions on your machine
- we check your design drawing
- we recommend the material and the process
- we manufacture a prototype for you if required

You will receive your product quickly and economically, exactly as you need it!



nominal charge 18.00 Euro