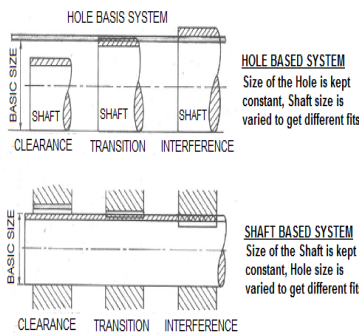


HOLE AND SHAFT BASIS SYSTEM



Steel Bars & Wires – Understanding Hole and Shaft Tolerances

Description

Precision is the backbone of mechanical design – and nowhere is it more critical than in the **fit between holes and shafts**. When you’re working with **steel bars or drawn wires**, the choice of tolerance can make or break the success of your application.

In this post, we explain **what hole and shaft tolerances are**, why they matter, and how **steel bar suppliers like Steelmet Industries** help ensure your assemblies go together perfectly, every time.

What Are Hole and Shaft Tolerances?

In mechanical design, **fit** refers to how tightly or loosely a shaft goes into a hole. Because manufacturing cannot produce exact sizes every time, tolerances are defined to ensure interchangeability.

- The **hole** is usually stationary (e.g., in a housing)
- The **shaft** is the rotating or sliding part (e.g., steel bar, pin, axle)

Tolerances control the **maximum and minimum allowable dimensions** of the hole or shaft, ensuring that they can **mate as intended**.

Types of Fits Based on Tolerance Classes

| Fit Type | Result | Typical Use |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Clearance Fit | Shaft is always smaller than the hole | Bearings, gears, moving parts |
| Interference Fit | Shaft is always larger than the hole | Press fits, permanent assemblies |

| Fit Type | Result | Typical Use |
|----------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Transition Fit | Depending on limits, may be tight or loose | Balanced fits, alignment parts |

ISO Tolerance System for Holes & Shafts

Tolerances are classified using the **ISO system** with letters and numbers:

- **Holes:** Capital letters (e.g., **H7**)
- **Shafts:** Lowercase letters (e.g., **h8**)

The number indicates the **grade of tolerance**, and smaller numbers mean **tighter tolerance**.

Example: H7/h6 Fit

| Element | Tolerance Code | Type | Typical Range (mm) | Application |
|---------|----------------|-----------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Hole | H7 | Clearance | +0.000 / +0.025 | Standard housing bore |
| Shaft | h6 | Clearance | -0.010 / 0.000 | Bright round steel shaft |

Result: Consistent **sliding fit** with minimal play common in **motor shafts, bearing seats,** and **precision guides**.

Why It Matters in Steel Bars & Wires

If you're using steel bars or wires as shafts, **dimensional control** is everything. The **wrong tolerance** can lead to:

- **Loose fits** cause vibration, wear, and noise
- **Tight fits** cause assembly failure, press damage
- **Inconsistent fits** cause rework, sorting, and delay

For example:

- A **bright drawn bar** at **h9** tolerance might still be too loose for a **H7 hole**

- A **ground bar** at **h6** or **h5** ensures better repeatability and lower failure rate

• How Steelmet Industries Ensures Proper Fit

At Steelmet Industries, we supply steel bars and wires in **engineered tolerance classes**:

• **Cold drawn and ground bars** in h5, h6, h7, h8, h9

• **Bright flats, hexes, rounds** produced with minimal variation

• **Profile bars** (e.g., round corner squares, D-shapes) tailored to fit your assembly

We maintain **tight control of dimensional variation**, ensuring consistent fits **within and across batches**.

All measuring instruments are **calibrated**, and materials are **traceable with test certificates**.

• Tips for Selecting the Right Fit

- For **sliding parts** (shafts in bushings): use **H7/h6** or **H8/h7**
- For **press fits**: use **H7/p6** or **H7/m6**
- For **location fits**: use **H7/k6** or **H8/k7**
- For **steel wires used as axles or pins**, choose **drawn wires** with **h8** or **h9** tolerance and consistent straightness

• Conclusion

Understanding **hole and shaft tolerances** is key to successful assembly, smooth operation, and long service life. With precision steel bars and wires supplied in the **right tolerance classes**, you can avoid rework, improve speed, and reduce machine wear.

At Steelmet Industries, we deliver **precision bright bars and wires** tailored to your tolerance and application — backed by documentation and repeatability you can trust.

• © Need help selecting the right shaft tolerance?

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