

1                   **Evaluation of Various Turbulence Models in Predicting Airflow and**  
2                   **Turbulence in Enclosed Environments by CFD: Part-1:**  
3                   **Summary of Prevalent Turbulence Models**

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8   *Air distributions in enclosed environments are crucial to thermal comfort and air quality.*  
9   *Computational fluid dynamics (CFD) has been playing an important role in evaluating and*  
10 *designing various air distributions. Many factors can have influence on the applications of CFD*  
11 *for studying air distributions. The most critical factors are the selection of an appropriate CFD*  
12 *approach and a turbulence model. Recent advances in CFD approaches and turbulence models*  
13 *provide a great potential of improving prediction accuracy of air distributions in enclosed*  
14 *environments. This paper summarized recent progress in CFD turbulence modeling and*  
15 *applications to some practical indoor environment studies. This paper also described the*  
16 *turbulence models that either are commonly used or have been proposed and used recently for*  
17 *indoor environment modeling. Finally, this study further identified a few turbulence models that*  
18 *show great potential for modeling airflows in enclosed environments. A companion paper*  
19 *presents the evaluation of the selected models by using experimental data from the literature.*

20  
21   **INTRODUCTION**

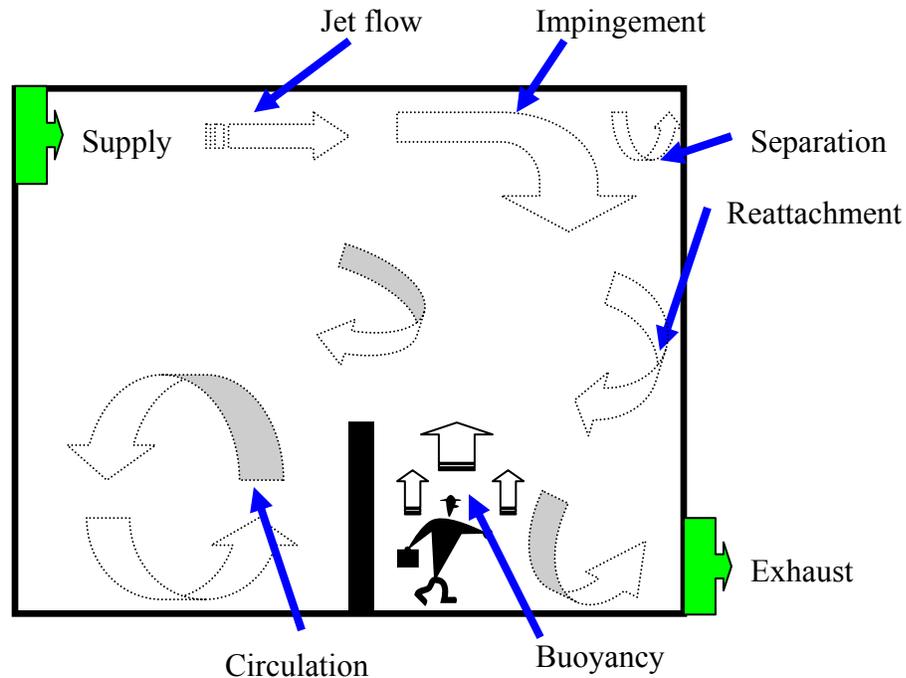
22       Enclosed environments, such as commercial, institutional, and residential buildings;  
23   healthcare facilities; sport facilities; manufacturing plants; animal facilities; transportation  
24   vehicles, are confined spaces with certain functionalities. It is essential to control air  
25   distributions in the enclosed environments. The parameters of air distribution include, but not  
26   limited to, air velocity, temperature, relative humidity, enclosure surface temperature, air  
27   turbulence intensity, and concentrations of airborne gaseous, particulate, and liquid droplet  
28   contaminants in the enclosed environments. The air distribution control is to create and maintain  
29   a comfortable and healthy environment required by occupants and/or thermo-fluid conditions for  
30   industrial processes in the enclosed environments.

31       Air distribution in an enclosed environment can be driven by different forces, for instance,  
32   natural wind, mechanical fan, and/or thermal buoyancy. The combination of these flow  
33   mechanisms (forced, natural, and mixed convection) creates complex indoor airflow  
34   characteristics with impingement, separation, circulation, reattachment, vortices, buoyancy etc.  
35   as illustrated in Figure 1. Most indoor environments have a low mean air velocity of less than  
36   0.2 m/s, and the Reynolds number,  $Re$ , is generally very low ( $\sim 10^5$ ). The corresponding flow  
37   regime may span from laminar, transitional, to turbulent flows or combination of all the flow  
38   regimes under transient conditions. The complexity of indoor airflow makes experimental  
39   investigation extremely difficult and expensive.

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1 With the rapid advance in computer capacity and speed, the Computational Fluid Dynamics  
 2 (CFD) technique has become a powerful alternative for predicting airflows in enclosed  
 3 environments. By solving the conservation equations of mass, momentum, energy, and species  
 4 concentrations, CFD can quantitatively calculate various air distribution parameters in an  
 5 enclosed environment. It offers richer details, a higher degree of flexibility, and lower cost than  
 6 experimental study. Nielsen (1974) was the first one who applied CFD for room airflow  
 7 prediction. Applications of CFD for airflows in enclosed spaces have been increasing since the  
 8 1980s. The International Energy Agency Annex 20, for instance, has sponsored a research  
 9 project on room airflow prediction with participants from 13 countries (Moser 1992).



10  
 11 **Figure 1. Typical flow characteristics in an enclosed environment with various flow**  
 12 **mechanisms.**

13  
 14 CFD applications to airflow simulation for enclosed environments have achieved  
 15 considerable successes, as reviewed by Whittle (1986), Nielsen (1989, 1998), Liddament (1991),  
 16 Jones and Whittle (1992), Chen and Jiang (1992), Moser (1992), Lemaire et al. (1993), Ladeinde  
 17 and Nearon (1997), Emmerich (1997), Spengler and Chen (2000), Chen and Zhai (2004), and  
 18 Zhai (2006). These reviews concluded that CFD is a valuable tool for predicting air distributions  
 19 in enclosed environments. However, there are many factors influencing the results predicted.  
 20 Different users may obtain different results for the same problem even with the same computer  
 21 program. The accuracy of the simulation heavily depends on user's knowledge in fluid dynamics  
 22 and experience and skills in numerical techniques. Among various CFD influential factors,  
 23 proper selection of turbulence modeling method is a key issue that will directly affect the  
 24 simulation accuracy and efficiency.

25 Recent advance in CFD turbulence modeling methods may bring new potential of improving

1 the accuracy and efficiency of indoor airflow modeling. It is thus of great interest and value to  
2 review the progress in CFD turbulence modeling and provide solid suggestions on proper  
3 application of the models for indoor airflow simulation. The study consists of two parts. Part 1  
4 (this paper) is to identify the most popular (and/or new) turbulence models that have been  
5 (and/or have potential to be) used for modeling air distributions in enclosed environments by  
6 searching the most recent literatures. Part 2 (a companion paper from Zhang et al. 2007) will  
7 then evaluate systematically the identified models by comparing their prediction performance  
8 against a series of benchmark experimental results so as to recommend appropriate turbulence  
9 models for indoor environment modeling.

## 10 **CFD APPROACHES**

11 Generally, CFD predicts turbulent flows through three approaches: Direct Numerical  
12 Simulation (DNS), Large Eddy Simulation (LES), and Reynolds-Averaged Navier-Stokes  
13 (RANS) equation simulation with turbulence models.

14 DNS computes a turbulent flow by directly solving the highly reliable Navier-Stokes  
15 equation without approximations. DNS resolves the whole range of spatial and temporal scales  
16 of the turbulence, from the smallest dissipative scales (Kolmogorov scales) to the integral scale,  
17  $L$  (case characteristic length), which is associated with the motions containing most of the kinetic  
18 energy. As a result, DNS requires a very fine grid resolution to capture the smallest eddies in the  
19 turbulent flow. According to the turbulence theory (Nieuwstadt, 1990), the number of grid  
20 points required to describe turbulent motions should be at least  $N \sim Re^{9/4}$ . The computer systems  
21 must become rather large (memory at least  $10^{10}$  words and peak performance at least  $10^{12}$  flops)  
22 in order to compute the flow (Nieuwstadt et al., 1994). In other words, since the smallest eddy  
23 size is about 0.01 m to 0.001 m in an enclosed environment, at least  $1000 \times 1000 \times 1000$  grids  
24 are needed to solve airflow in a room. In addition, the DNS method requires very small time  
25 steps, which makes the simulation extremely long. Neither existing nor near-future personal  
26 computers can meet the needs so that application of DNS for indoor flows is not feasible now or  
27 in the near future.

28 According to the Kolmogorov's theory of self similarity (Kolmogorov, 1941), large eddies of  
29 turbulent flows depend on the geometry while the smaller scales are more universal.  
30 Smagorinsky (1963) and Deardorff (1970) developed LES with the hypothesis that the turbulent  
31 motion could be separated into large-eddies and small-eddies such that the separation between  
32 the two does not have a significant impact on the evolution of large-eddies. The large-eddies  
33 corresponding to the three-dimensional, time-dependent equations can be directly simulated on  
34 existing computers. Turbulent transport approximations are made for small-eddies, which  
35 eliminates the need for a very fine spatial grid and small time step. The philosophy behind this  
36 approach is that the macroscopic structure is characteristic for a turbulent flow. Moreover, the  
37 large scales of motion are primarily responsible for all transport processes, such as the exchange  
38 of momentum and heat. The success of the method stems from the fact that the main contribution  
39 to turbulent transport comes from the large-eddy motion. Thus the large-eddy simulation is  
40 clearly superior to turbulent transport closure wherein the transport terms (e.g. Reynolds stresses,  
41 turbulent heat fluxes, etc.) are treated with full empiricism. In the last decade, rapid advance in  
42 computer capacity and speed has made it possible to use LES for some airflows related to  
43 enclosed environments. LES provides detailed information of instantaneous airflow and  
44 turbulence with the compensation of still considerable computing time.

1 For design and study of air distributions in enclosed environments, the mean air parameters  
2 are more useful than instantaneous turbulent flow parameters. Thus the interest is stronger in  
3 solving the RANS equations with turbulence models that can quickly predict air distributions.  
4 The RANS approach calculates statistically averaged (Reynolds-averaged) variables for both  
5 steady-state and dynamic flows and simulates turbulence fluctuation effect on the mean airflow  
6 by using different turbulence models. Many turbulence models have been developed since the  
7 1970s but very few of them are for enclosed environment. A few turbulence models developed  
8 for other engineering applications, such as the standard k- $\epsilon$  model (Launder and Spalding, 1974),  
9 have been adopted for indoor air modeling. Despite the challenges associated with turbulence  
10 modeling, the RANS approach has become very popular in modeling airflows in enclosed  
11 environments due to its significantly small requirements on computer resources and user skills.

## 12 **TURBULENCE MODEL DEVELOPMENTS AND APPLICATIONS FOR ENCLOSED** 13 **ENVIRONMENTS**

14 As stated previously, the laminar to turbulent flow characteristics in enclosed environments  
15 are very complicated (Ferrey and Aupoix 2006) and impose significant challenges on turbulence  
16 models. This paper reviews the recent development and application of the major turbulence  
17 models for predicting air distribution in enclosed environments. Instead of developing an  
18 inclusive review article, this study focuses on identifying popular and/or most recently proposed  
19 turbulence models for indoor environments. The review focused on recent applications with  
20 model validation and comparison. Brief introduction of key model evolutions is also included to  
21 make the paper complete.

22 The following part of this paper gives an overall review of various popular turbulence models  
23 for indoor airflow simulations, including both RANS and LES models. RANS turbulence  
24 models are divided into two primary categories: eddy-viscosity models and Reynolds-stress  
25 models. Among the turbulence models studied, some are well-known and in widespread use  
26 while others may be undergoing development. For those popular models, this study emphasizes  
27 their applicability to various indoor flows without detailing the fundamentals. For more recent  
28 models, this investigation discusses their development and potential in predicting indoor airflows.  
29 The paper is not intended to judge or criticize the conclusions from the references without  
30 knowing the simulation details. In fact, opposite results and conclusions were observed even for  
31 similar cases, which may be attributed to factors beyond turbulence models. This paper is solely  
32 to sense the application popularity of the models for indoor environment and to identify the  
33 prevailing models in practice. The popular models identified will then be evaluated against a  
34 series of benchmark experiments and be analyzed for their prediction performance in different  
35 indoor airflows as detailed in part 2 of this study (Zhang et al. 2007).

### 36 **RANS Eddy-Viscosity Models**

37 Eddy-viscosity models are normally classified according to the number of transport equations  
38 used. This section will review various eddy-viscosity models from the simplest to the most  
39 complex ones.

#### 40 • **Zero-equation eddy-viscosity models**

41 The zero-equation turbulence models are the simplest eddy viscosity models. The models  
42 have one algebra equation for turbulent viscosity, and no (zero) additional partial differential

1 transport equations (PDE) beyond the Reynolds-averaged equations for mass, momentum,  
2 energy, and species conservation. The earliest zero-equation model was developed by Prandtl  
3 (1925) with the mixing-length hypothesis. Although the mixing-length model is not theoretically  
4 sound and the mixing-length need calibrations for each specific type of flow, the model has  
5 yielded good results in predicting simple turbulent flows. Some simple zero-equation models,  
6 once calibrated, may even provide surprisingly good results for mean-flow quantities of some  
7 complex flows. For instance, Nielsen's study (1998) revealed that the constant eddy-viscosity  
8 model provides results closer to the measured data than the standard k- $\epsilon$  model for the prediction  
9 of smoke movement in a tunnel. Nilsson (2007) also used the constant eddy-viscosity model to  
10 study the comfort conditions around a thermal manikin, which provided acceptable accuracy  
11 with significantly less computing efforts.

12 One important development in zero-equation models for modeling airflows in enclosed  
13 environments is the zero-equation model developed by Chen and Xu (1998). By using the  
14 assumption of uniform turbulence intensity, they derived an algebraic formula to express  
15 turbulent viscosity  $\nu_t$  as a function of local mean velocity,  $U$ , and the distance to the nearest wall,  
16  $L$ :

$$17 \quad \nu_t = 0.03874 UL \quad (1)$$

18 The equation has an empirical constant of 0.03874 for different flows. The validations  
19 conducted by Chen and Xu (1998), Srebric et al. (1999), and Morrison (2000) have demonstrated  
20 the feasibility of this model in predicting general room airflows. The model has been widely  
21 used for simulating airflows in different indoor environments with acceptable accuracy and  
22 significant reduction in computing time (e.g., Kameel and Khalil 2003, Chen et al. 2005). Li et  
23 al. (2005) further applied this zero-equation model for outdoor thermal environment simulations,  
24 which also provided reasonable predictions when compared with the measured data. Airpak, a  
25 commercial CFD software for HVAC applications, has adopted this model as its default. This  
26 model is the most popular zero-equation model for enclosed environments.

### 27 • One-equation eddy-viscosity models

28 The turbulent viscosity correlations of zero-equation models may sometimes fail due to the  
29 inherent physical deficiencies such as not considering non-local and flow-history effects on  
30 turbulent eddy-viscosity. One-equation turbulence models use additional turbulence variables

31 (such as the turbulent kinetic energy  $k = \frac{1}{2} \overline{u'_i u'_i}$ ) to calculate eddy viscosity  $\nu_t$  such as:

$$32 \quad \nu_t = Ck^{1/2}l \quad (2)$$

33 where  $k$  is obtained by solving a transport equation,  $l$  is a turbulence length scale, and  $C$  is a  
34 constant coefficient. The one-equation models need to prescribe the length scale  $l$  in a similar  
35 manner as that for the zero-equation models.

36 Most one-equation models solve the transport equation for turbulent kinetic energy  $k$ . Some  
37 one-equation models derive transport equations for other turbulent variables, such as the  
38 turbulent Reynolds number (Baldwin and Barth, 1990). Spallart and Allmaras (1992) proposed  
39 to directly solve a transport equation for eddy viscosity (the S-A model). Unlike most other one-  
40 equation models, the S-A model is local so that the solution at one point is independent of the  
41 solutions at neighboring cells and thus compatible with grids of any structure. This model is

1 most accurate for free shear and boundary layer flows. The literature review shows that the S-A  
 2 model, among very few one-equation models used for indoor environment simulation, is a  
 3 relatively popular and reliable one-equation model at present. Toraño et al. (2006) simulated  
 4 ventilation in tunnels and galleries with the constant turbulent eddy viscosity, the k-ε, and the S-  
 5 A models. The comparison of simulation results with detailed experimental data shows great  
 6 performance of the k-ε and the S-A models. In addition, the S-A model has been incorporated  
 7 by one of the newest turbulence modeling methods – detached eddy simulation (DES), which  
 8 will be discussed below.

9 • **Two-equation eddy-viscosity models**

10 In addition to the k-equation, two-equation eddy-viscosity models solve a second partial  
 11 differential transport equation for z ( $z = k^\alpha l^\beta$ ) to represent more turbulence physics. Different α  
 12 and β values form various kinds of two-equation models. Two-equation models are generally  
 13 superior to zero- and one-equation models because they do not need prior knowledge of  
 14 turbulence structure. The eddy viscosity can be calculated from the k and the length scale, l.  
 15 Table 1 lists some typical two-equation models.

16  
 17 **Table 1. Typical Forms of z Variable in Two-Equation Eddy-Viscosity Models**

| z         | $k^{1/2} / l$        | $k^{3/2} / l$  | $k / l^2$          | $k / l$                     |
|-----------|----------------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Symbol    | ω                    | ε              | W                  | kl                          |
| Reference | Kolmogorov<br>(1942) | Chou<br>(1945) | Spalding<br>(1972) | Rodi and Spalding<br>(1984) |

18  
 19 **(1) k-ε two-equation eddy-viscosity model**

20 The k-ε model family is the most popular turbulence model and has the largest number of  
 21 variants. The “standard” k-ε model developed by Launder and Spalding (1974) is one of the  
 22 most prevalent models for indoor airflow simulation due to its simple format, robust performance,  
 23 and wide validations. The turbulent eddy viscosity  $\nu_t$  is calculated in the k-ε model as:

24 
$$\nu_t = C_\mu \frac{k^2}{\varepsilon} \quad (3)$$

25 where k is the turbulence kinetic energy, ε is the dissipation rate of turbulence energy, and  $C_\mu =$   
 26 0.09 is an empirical constant. The standard k-ε model was developed for high Reynolds number  
 27 flows. To apply the model for low Reynolds number flows, such as near wall flows, wall  
 28 functions (Launder and Spalding, 1974) are usually used to connect the outer-wall free stream  
 29 and the near-wall flow. The use of wall functions avoids modeling the rapid changes of flow and  
 30 turbulence near the walls with a fine grid and thus saves the computing time.

31 The standard k-ε model with wall functions can predict reasonably well the airflow and  
 32 turbulence in enclosed environments. For example, Holmes et al. (2000) simulated two ideal  
 33 rooms with several one- and two-equation models and found the standard k-ε model provides a  
 34 reasonably good prediction. Gadgil et al. (2003) also verified that the k-ε model predicted fairly  
 35 well the indoor pollutant mixing time in an isothermal closed room. Nahor et al. (2005)

1 simulated a complex airflow case in an empty and a loaded cool store with agricultural product  
2 by using the standard  $k-\epsilon$  model. They concluded that the model was capable of predicting both  
3 the air and product temperature with reasonable accuracy. Zhang and Chen (2006) successfully  
4 applied the standard  $k-\epsilon$  model to predict the airflow and particle distribution in a room with an  
5 under-floor air distribution system.

6 Meanwhile, the Re-Normalization Group (RNG)  $k-\epsilon$  model (Yakhot and Orszag, 1986) has  
7 also been widely used for predicting indoor airflows with many successes. For instance, Yuan et  
8 al. (1999a and 1999b) simulated airflow, temperature and gas concentration distribution in a  
9 room with displacement ventilation and obtained good agreement with the experimental data.  
10 Sekhar and Willem (2004) successfully used the RNG  $k-\epsilon$  model to study flow in a large office  
11 area. Craven and Settles (2006) modeled the thermal plume from a highly simplified human  
12 model with the RNG  $k-\epsilon$  model and the results agreed quite well with the PIV data. Zhang et al.  
13 (2005) conducted a comprehensive validation of the RNG  $k-\epsilon$  model for air distributions in an  
14 individual office, a cubicle office, and a quarter of a classroom with displacement ventilation.  
15 The study found that the computed air temperature and velocity agreed reasonably well with the  
16 measured data.

17 Another high Reynolds number  $k-\epsilon$  model family is realizable  $k-\epsilon$  models. Realizable  $k-\epsilon$   
18 models usually provide much improved results for swirling flows and flows involving separation  
19 when compared to the standard  $k-\epsilon$  model. For example, Van Maele and Merci (2006) indicated  
20 that the realizable  $k-\epsilon$  model (Shih et al., 1995) performs better than the standard  $k-\epsilon$  model for  
21 predicting various buoyancy plumes. It was observed that the model developed by Shih et al.  
22 (1995) is the mostly used realizable model for indoor environment.

23 The high Reynolds number models may usually fail when the near-wall region is of great  
24 concern (Chen, 1995) due to the equilibrium assumption of turbulence production and  
25 dissipation in wall functions. One method to remedy the near-wall problem is to use two-layer or  
26 even three-layer turbulence models. The two-layer models divide the wall vicinity into a  
27 viscosity-affected near-wall region resolved with a one-equation model and an outer region  
28 simulated with the standard  $k-\epsilon$  model. Another approach for handling near-wall flows is to use  
29 a low-Reynolds-number (LRN) turbulence model to solve the governing equations all the way  
30 down to the solid surfaces. LRN models request very fine grid near the walls so that the  
31 computing time is much longer. Tens of LRN models have been proposed since the 1970s while  
32 most of them have the similar form. The observation of the applications of LRN models for  
33 indoor simulation reveals that the LRN model may only improve model accuracy for specific  
34 cases and lack wide applicability. For instance, Bosbach et al. (2006) simulated airflows in a  
35 generic airplane cabin with a group of high and low Reynolds  $k-\epsilon$  turbulence models and two-  
36 layer  $k-\epsilon$  models. Comparison with PIV measurements showed that for reliable prediction of  
37 isothermal cabin flow, LRN turbulence models had to be used. However, Costa et al. (1999)  
38 tested eight LRN  $k-\epsilon$  models to simulate the mixed convection airflow generated by two non-  
39 isothermal plane wall jets and found that some LRN models may be able to provide good overall  
40 performance but suffer from singular defects occurring near separation/reattachment points of  
41 the flow. Hsieh and Lien (2004) also indicated that most LRN models tend to relaminarize the  
42 core-region low turbulence flow and, as a consequence, significantly under-predict the near-wall  
43 turbulence intensities and boundary-layer thickness, when modeling buoyancy-driven turbulent  
44 flows in enclosures. By popularity, it was observed that the LRN models developed by Jones  
45 and Launder (1973) and Launder and Sharma (1974) are the most commonly used models, upon

1 which a few variation models were developed (e.g., Radmehr and Patankar, 2001) but less used.

2 Comparison studies of these models can be found in literature. Chen (1995) compared five  
3  $k$ - $\epsilon$  based turbulence models in predicting various convective airflows and an impinging flow.  
4 The results showed that the RNG  $k$ - $\epsilon$  model had the best overall performance in terms of  
5 accuracy, numerical stability, and computing time, while the standard  $k$ - $\epsilon$  model had competitive  
6 performance. Rouaud and Havet (2002) confirmed that both the standard  $k$ - $\epsilon$  and the RNG  $k$ - $\epsilon$   
7 model predict well the main features of the flow in clean rooms. Kameel and Khalil (2003) used  
8 the standard  $k$ - $\epsilon$  model, the RNG  $k$ - $\epsilon$  model and the zero-equation model (Chen and Xu, 1998) to  
9 calculate airflows in a surgical operating room and found both the  $k$ - $\epsilon$  models are superior in  
10 predicting flow characteristics in near wall and steep gradient zones. Gebremedhin and Wu  
11 (2003) used five RANS models to model a ventilated animal facility, and concluded that the  
12 RNG  $k$ - $\epsilon$  model is most appropriate for characterizing the flow field and is computationally  
13 stable. Posner et al. (2003) evaluated several  $k$ - $\epsilon$  models by simulating the airflow in a model  
14 room. They found that the simulation results with the laminar flow and the RNG  $k$ - $\epsilon$  models  
15 agreed better with the experimental data than those with the standard  $k$ - $\epsilon$  model. Yang (2004)  
16 investigated the mean ventilation flow rates through a naturally-ventilated building with the  
17 standard  $k$ - $\epsilon$  model and the RNG  $k$ - $\epsilon$  model and found that the predicted mean ventilation rates  
18 by both models agreed well with the measurements. Walsh and Leong (2004) assessed the  
19 performance of several commonly used turbulence models including the standard  $k$ - $\epsilon$ , the RNG  
20  $k$ - $\epsilon$  and a Reynolds stress model (RSM), in predicting heat transfer due to natural convection  
21 inside an air-filled cubic cavity. The study found that the standard  $k$ - $\epsilon$  model was the most  
22 effective model and the RSM did not improve on any results. It is clearly observed from the  
23 literature search that both the standard and the RNG  $k$ - $\epsilon$  models have been widely used for  
24 indoor environment simulation, and the majority of comparison studies indicated that the RNG  
25  $k$ - $\epsilon$  model is slightly better than the standard  $k$ - $\epsilon$  model in terms of the overall simulation  
26 performance.

## 27 *(2) $k$ - $\omega$ two-equation eddy-viscosity model*

28 The  $k$ - $\omega$  two-equation eddy-viscosity models (e.g., Wilcox, 1988 and Menter, 1994) have  
29 also received increasing attentions in many industrial applications in the last decade. In the  $k$ - $\omega$   
30 models,  $\omega$  is the ratio of  $\epsilon$  over  $k$ . Compared to the  $k$ - $\epsilon$  models, the  $k$ - $\omega$  models are superior in  
31 predicting equilibrium adverse pressure flows (Wilcox, 1988; Huang et al., 1992) while less  
32 robust in wake region and free shear flows (Menter, 1992). This led to the development of an  
33 integrated model that takes advantages of both models, a fairly successful model named shear  
34 stress transport (SST)  $k$ - $\omega$  model developed by Menter (1994). The SST  $k$ - $\omega$  model is  
35 essentially a  $k$ - $\omega$  model near wall boundaries and is equivalent to a transformed  $k$ - $\epsilon$  model in  
36 regions far from walls. The switch between the  $k$ - $\omega$  and  $k$ - $\epsilon$  formulations is controlled by  
37 blending functions.

38 The  $k$ - $\omega$  models have been recently used for a few indoor airflow simulations. Liu and  
39 Moser (2003) indicated that the SST  $k$ - $\omega$  model can predict the transient turbulent flow and heat  
40 transfer of forced ventilated fire in enclosures if the transient conjugate heat transfer and thermal  
41 radiation are properly modeled. Sharif and Liu (2003) used the LRN  $k$ - $\omega$  model from Wilcox  
42 (1994) and the LRN  $k$ - $\epsilon$  model from Lam and Bermhorst (1981) to simulate the buoyancy-driven  
43 flow in a two-dimensional square cavity. The performance of the  $k$ - $\omega$  model was found to be

1 better in capturing the flow physics such as the strong streamline curvature in the corner regions.  
2 However, both models failed to predict the boundary-layer transition from laminar to turbulent.  
3 Arun and Tulapurkara (2005) computed the turbulent flow inside an enclosure with central  
4 partition with three advanced turbulence models: the RNG  $k-\varepsilon$  model, a Reynolds stress model  
5 and the SST  $k-\omega$  model. They found that the SST  $k-\omega$  model can capture complex flow features  
6 like the movement of vortices downstream of the partition, flow in reverse direction in the top  
7 portion of the enclosure, and exit of flow with swirl. Hu et al. (2005) simulated cross-ventilation  
8 by using the standard  $k-\varepsilon$ , RNG  $k-\varepsilon$ , standard  $k-\omega$  and SST  $k-\omega$  models as well as LES and also  
9 concluded that the SST  $k-\omega$  model can depict the flow features satisfactorily. Stamou and  
10 Katsiris (2006) used the SST  $k-\omega$  model, the standard  $k-\varepsilon$  model, the RNG  $k-\varepsilon$  model and the  
11 laminar flow model to predict air velocity and temperature distributions in a model office room  
12 with a task ventilation system. By comparing with the experimental data, the study concluded all  
13 the three turbulent models predict satisfactorily the main qualitative features of the flow with  
14 slightly best performance from the SST  $k-\omega$  model. Kuznik et al. (2007) also evaluated the  
15 realizable  $k-\varepsilon$  model (Shih et al., 1995), the  $k-\varepsilon$  RNG model, the standard  $k-\omega$  model (Wilcox,  
16 1988), and the SST  $k-\omega$  model with experimental measurements of air temperature and velocity  
17 for a mechanically ventilated room with a strong jet inflow. The research found that all the  
18 models can accurately predict the global occupied zone temperature and velocity for the  
19 isothermal and hot cases, but none of the models is good and reliable for the cold cases. The  $k-\omega$   
20 model appears most reliable and can simulate the expansion rates in the highly anisotropic cold  
21 case at the same magnitude order as the measurements but not a match.

22 The  $k-\omega$  models undoubtedly present a new potential to model indoor environment with good  
23 accuracy and numerical stability. Many existing studies indicate that the SST  $k-\omega$  model has a  
24 better overall performance than the standard  $k-\varepsilon$  model and the RNG  $k-\varepsilon$  model. Recently, one  
25 of the commercial CFD software, CFX, has placed its emphasis on  $\omega$ -equation based turbulence  
26 models due to its multiple advantages, such as simple and robust formulation, accurate and  
27 robust wall treatment (low-Re formulation), high quality for heat transfer predictions, and easy  
28 combination with other models. However, a systematic model evaluation must be performed in  
29 order to reach a solid conclusion, especially for modeling indoor environment airflows.

### 30 • **Multiple-equation eddy-viscosity models**

31 Another noticed development in eddy-viscosity models is multiple-equation eddy-viscosity  
32 models. A multiple-equation eddy-viscosity model is often developed and used for near-wall  
33 flows. Durbin (1991) suggested that the wall blocking effect, i.e., zero normal velocity at walls,  
34 is much more crucial than the viscous effect on near-wall flows. Instead of using the turbulent  
35 kinetic energy to calculate near-wall turbulence eddy viscosity, he suggested the use of a more  
36 proper quantity, the fluctuation of normal velocity  $\overline{v'^2}$ , as the velocity scale in the near-wall eddy  
37 viscosity calculation. Durbin introduced a transport equation of  $\overline{v'^2}$  and a corresponding  
38 damping function  $f$  for the  $\overline{v'^2}$  equation, which thus created a three-equation eddy-viscosity  
39 model (named v2f model) including  $k$ ,  $\varepsilon$  and  $\overline{v'^2}$  transport equations. The model received  
40 continuous improvement and modification afterwards (e.g., Durbin, 1995; Lien and Durbin, 1996;  
41 Davidson et al., 2003; and Laurence et al., 2004).

42 The v2f model, as one of the most recently developed eddy viscosity models, has a more  
43 solid theoretical ground than LRN models but is less stable for segregated solvers. Choi et al.

1 (2004) tested the accuracy and numerical stability of the original v2f model (Durbin, 1995) and a  
2 modified v2f model (Lien and Kalitzin, 2001) along with a two-layer model (Chen and Patel  
3 1988) for natural convection in a rectangular cavity. The study found the original v2f model  
4 with the algebraic heat flux model best predicted the mean velocity, velocity fluctuation,  
5 Reynolds shear stress, turbulent heat flux, local Nusselt number, and wall shear stress. The  
6 predicted results agreed fairly well with the measurements. However, this model exhibits the  
7 numerical stiffness problem in a segregate solution procedure such as the SIMPLE algorithm,  
8 which requires remedy. Davidson et al. (2003) discovered that the v2f model could over-predict  
9  $\overline{v'^2}$  in regions far away from walls. They, therefore, analyzed the  $f$  equation in isotropic  
10 condition and postulated a simple but effective way to limit  $\overline{v'^2}$  in nearly isotropic flow regions.  
11 With this restriction function, the v2f model can improve the accuracy in regions far away from  
12 walls. The v2f model brings more turbulence physics especially for low speed near-wall flows,  
13 which are critical in enclosed environments. However, the model has not been well tested and  
14 evaluated for indoor environment modeling under different flow conditions. A comprehensive  
15 and quantitative evaluation is inevitable before the model can be recommended.

16 Other than the v2f models, some other multiple-equation eddy-viscosity models can be found  
17 in literature. For instance, Hanjalic (1996) proposed a new three-equation eddy-viscosity model  
18 by introducing a transport equation for RMS temperature fluctuation  $\overline{\theta'^2}$  for high Raleigh  
19 number flows. However, all these models become more complicated and have not been well  
20 accepted and applied for predicting air distributions in enclosed environments.

## 21 **RANS Reynolds Stress Models**

22 Most eddy viscosity models assume isotropic turbulence structures, which could fail for  
23 flows with strong anisotropic behaviors, such as swirling flows and flows with strong curvatures.  
24 Reynolds stress models (RSM), instead of calculating turbulence eddy viscosity, explicitly solve  
25 the transport equations of Reynolds stresses and fluxes. However, the derivation of the Reynolds  
26 stresses transport equations leads to higher order unsolved turbulence correlations, such as  
27  $\overline{u'_i u'_j u'_k}$ , which need be modeled to close the equations.

28 The development and application of Reynolds stress models can be traced back to the 1970s.  
29 Studies directed towards three-dimensional flows, however, began to appear in the 1990s. Early  
30 applications of RSM in room airflow computation include those by Murakami et al. (1990) and  
31 Renz and Terhaag (1990). They computed airflow patterns in a room with jets. The results  
32 showed that the Reynolds stress model is superior to the standard k- $\epsilon$  model, because anisotropic  
33 effects of turbulence are taken into account. The same conclusions were reached recently by  
34 Moureh and Flick (2003) who investigated the characteristic of airflow generated by a wall jet  
35 within a long and empty slot-ventilated enclosure. Dol and Hanjalic (2001) predicted the  
36 turbulent natural convection in a side-heated near-cubic enclosure. They found that the second-  
37 moment closure is better in capturing thermal three-dimensionality effects and strong streamline  
38 curvature in the corners while the k- $\epsilon$  model still provides reasonable predictions of the first  
39 moments away from the corners.

40 Chen (1996) compared three Reynolds-stress models with the standard k- $\epsilon$  model for natural  
41 convection, forced convection, mixed convection, and impinging jet in a room. He concluded  
42 that the Reynolds-stress models are only slightly better than the k- $\epsilon$  model but have a severe

1 penalty in computing time. Based on a large number of applications for engineering flows,  
 2 Leschziner (1990) concluded that Reynolds stress models is appropriate and beneficial when the  
 3 flow is dominated by a recirculation zone driven by a shear layer. Among various RSMs, the  
 4 model developed by Gibson and Launder (1978) and the one by Gatski and Speziale (1993) are  
 5 often used in practice. The models, however, still have some weaknesses that need to be  
 6 addressed. Tornstrom and Moshfegh (2006), for instance, found that the RSM with linear  
 7 pressure-strain approximation over-predicted the lateral spreading rate and the turbulent  
 8 quantities of 3-D cold wall jets. The RSM models are still receiving continuous study and  
 9 improvement, mostly related to the fundamental research of turbulence mechanism. The models  
 10 will need significant justification of application advantages before they can be soundly accepted  
 11 and used for room airflow prediction. Most existing room airflow studies indicated that the  
 12 marginal improvement on prediction quality of RSM is not well justified by the high  
 13 computational costs.

14 To reduce the computing time of the RSMs, algebraic Reynolds stress models (ASM) were  
 15 developed (e.g., Rodi, 1976) accordingly. The ASM derives algebraic equations for all Reynolds  
 16 stress and fluxes from the differential stress models, in which each Reynolds stress correlates  
 17 with others and the derivatives of velocity and temperature. Jouvray et al. (2007) tested several  
 18 ASMs against the standard k- $\epsilon$  and k- $l$  models (Wolfshtein, 1969) for two rooms with  
 19 displacement and mixing ventilation. The results showed that the nonlinear ASMs give  
 20 marginally better agreement with the measured data than did others. The application of the  
 21 nonlinear models may not be well justified due to the strong case-dependent stability  
 22 performance and the high additional computational costs.

### 23 **Large Eddy Simulation Models**

24 LES models have been receiving increased attention recently for modeling engineering flows  
 25 due to the rapid development of computer speed and power. LES is an intermediate modeling  
 26 technique between DNS and RANS. LES solves filtered (transformed) Navier-Stokes equations  
 27 for large-scale eddies while models small-scale (also known as subgrid scale) eddies. Filtering  
 28 of various variables in the Navier-Stokes equations is similar to the process of Reynolds  
 29 averaging and the resulting equations for incompressible flow can be written in a similar form as  
 30 the RANS equations. Smagorinsky (1963) proposed the first subgrid model correlating eddy  
 31 viscosity to the strain rate, which can be written in the form of eddy viscosity as follows,

$$32 \quad \tau_{ij} = \frac{1}{3} \tau_{kk} \delta_{ij} - 2\nu_t \bar{S}_{ij} \quad (4)$$

33 where,  $\bar{S}_{ij}$  is the strain rate tensor based on the filtered velocity field, the isotropic part  $\tau_{kk}$  is a  
 34 unknown scalar and is usually combined with  $\bar{p}$ . The eddy viscosity is expressed as

$$35 \quad \nu_t = (c_s \Delta)^2 |\bar{S}| \quad (5)$$

36 where,  $|\bar{S}| = \sqrt{2\bar{S}_{ij}\bar{S}_{ij}}$ ,  $\Delta$  is the filter width and  $C_s$  is the Smagorinsky constant. Different  
 37 Smagorinsky constants  $C_s$  were proposed by various researchers. Lilly (1966) suggested a value  
 38 of 0.17 for  $C_s$  in homogeneous isotropic turbulent flow. Many variants of Smagorinsky model  
 39 were proposed thereafter. In physics, the  $C_s$  may not be a constant. Thus, the dynamic

1 Smagorinsky-Lilly model based on the Germano identity (Germano et al., 1991; Lilly, 1992)  
2 calculates the  $C_s$  with the information from resolved scales of motion

$$3 \quad (C_s)^2 = \frac{\langle L_{ij} M_{ij} \rangle}{\langle M_{ij} M_{ij} \rangle} \quad (6)$$

4 where, the  $L_{ij}$  and  $M_{ij}$  are the resolved stress tensor, and  $\langle \rangle$  is an average operation on  
5 homogeneous region. Without the average, the dynamic model has been found to yield a highly  
6 variable eddy viscosity field with negative values, which caused the numerical instability.  
7 However, the average operation is difficult to implement when the flow field does not have  
8 statistical homogeneity direction. Meneveau et al. (1996) proposed the Lagrangian dynamic  
9 model, in which a Lagrangian time average was applied to Equation (6). Zhang and Chen (2000)  
10 proposed to apply an additional filter for Equation (6), which improved the simulation of indoor  
11 airflows. Other more complex models have been proposed to improve accuracy such as the  
12 dynamic models as reviewed by Meneveau and Katz (2000).

13 In the last decade, LES has been growingly applied to model airflows in enclosed  
14 environments due to its rich dynamic details compared with RANS models. Some representative  
15 applications include: forced convection flow in a room (Davidson and Nielsen, 1996; Emmerich  
16 and McGrattan, 1998) or an airliner cabin (Lin et al. 2005), fire-driven air and smoke flows  
17 (McGrattan et al., 2000), natural ventilation flow in buildings (Jiang and Chen, 2001), particle  
18 dispersion in buildings (Jiang and Chen, 2002; Béghein et al., 2005; Chang et al., 2006; Zhang  
19 and Chen, 2006).

20 Chow and Yin (2004) indicated that the  $k-\epsilon$  turbulence model is still a practical approach (the  
21 first choice) for simulating fire-induced airflows due to the short computing time and less  
22 knowledge demand of users, although the LES approach would give more detailed information  
23 that are important for understanding dynamic fire and smoke behaviors. Tian et al. (2006)  
24 compared the predictions of indoor particle dispersion and contaminant concentration  
25 distribution in a model room with LES and the standard  $k-\epsilon$  model and the RNG  $k-\epsilon$  model.  
26 Their study showed that all the three turbulence model predictions were in good agreement with  
27 the experimental data while the LES model yielded the best agreement. Their paper thus  
28 concluded that the LES prediction can be effectively employed to validate various  $k-\epsilon$  models  
29 that are widely applied in building simulations. Musser and McGrattan (2002) evaluated LES  
30 for indoor air quality modeling and smoldering fires, and indicated that LES can in general  
31 predict the experimental data reasonably well; however, care must be taken in defining  
32 convection from heated surfaces and grid resolution. As indicated by most studies, the LES  
33 model provides more detailed and accurate prediction of air distributions in enclosed  
34 environments, which could be important for understanding the flow mechanism; however, the  
35 high demand on computing time and user knowledge makes LES still mainly for research and  
36 RANS model development purposes.

### 37 **Detached Eddy Simulation Models**

38 Detached eddy simulation (DES) method presents the most recent development in turbulence  
39 modeling, which couples the RANS and LES models to solve problems when RANS is not  
40 sufficiently accurate while LES is not affordable. The earliest DES work includes Spalart et al.  
41 (1997) and Shur et al. (1999), in which the one-equation eddy-viscosity model (Spalart and

1 Allmaras, 1992) was used for the attached boundary layer flow while LES for free shear flows  
2 away from the walls. Since the formation of eddy viscosity in RANS and LES models is similar,  
3 the S-A model and the LES model can be coupled by using this similarity. In the near wall  
4 region, the wall distance  $d$  of a cell is normally much smaller than the stream-wise and span-wise  
5 grid size. In the regions far away from the wall, the wall distance is usually much larger than the  
6 cubic root of the cell volume,  $\Delta$ . Hence, the switch between the S-A model and the LES model  
7 can be determined by comparing  $d$  and  $\Delta$ . When  $d$  is much larger than  $\Delta$ , large eddy simulation  
8 is performed; Otherwise, the RANS (S-A) model is executed.

9 In practice, the switch between the RANS and LES models requires more programming and  
10 computing efforts rather than simply changing the calculation of the length scale. In fact, many  
11 implementations of the DES approach allow for regions to be explicitly designated as RANS or  
12 LES regions, overruling the distance function calculation. Squires (2004) reviewed and  
13 summarized the current status and perspectives of DES for aerospace applications. Keating and  
14 Piomelli (2006) combined a RANS near-wall layer with a LES outer flow with a dynamic  
15 stochastic forcing method, which can provide more accurate predictions of the mean velocity and  
16 velocity fluctuations.

17 Some comparison studies of DES, LES and RANS can be found in the recent literature (Roy  
18 et al., 2003, Jouvray et al., 2005 and 2007). These recent studies indicated that DES appears a  
19 promising model, giving the best velocity agreement and overall good agreement with measured  
20 Reynolds stresses. However, they also mentioned that the encouraging DES results could be  
21 fortuitous because the method has the potential for LES zones to occur downstream of RANS  
22 zones, and thus results in poor LES boundary conditions. In addition, the eddy resolving  
23 approaches (LES and DES) demanded extremely high computational costs and computer powers.  
24 As an emerging technology, DES still needs more studies before it can be applied for predictions  
25 of air distributions in enclosed environments.

## 26 SUMMARY REMARKS

27 This paper reviews the primary turbulence models that have been used for CFD prediction of  
28 air distributions in enclosed environments. The selective literature review shows that a large  
29 collection of turbulence models can be (and have been) applied for diverse indoor air simulations.  
30 Each turbulence model has its own pros and cons. There are no universal turbulence models for  
31 indoor airflow simulation. The selection of a suitable model depends mainly on accuracy needed  
32 and computing time afforded.

33 Table 2 presents the selected prevalent turbulence models for predicting airflows in enclosed  
34 environments, ranging from RANS to LES. The models are organized into eight sub-categories.  
35 Based on the perceived model popularity, we have identified one prevailing turbulence model  
36 from each of the eight sub-categories. The prediction performance of these models for indoor  
37 airflows has been further evaluated and analyzed by modeling a series of benchmark test cases.  
38 This evaluation is presented in the companion paper (Zhang et al. 2007).

39 Note that Table 2 is necessarily not a comprehensive representation of all previously  
40 developed turbulence models. Rather, this paper only reviews the turbulence models that  
41 consider the turbulence at single time and length scale at a point for simplicity needed in practice.  
42 Increasing knowledge of turbulence modeling has made it challenging to conduct a systematical  
43 classification and review of existing turbulence models.

1 As observed from the literature, the conclusions from past studies are not always consistent.  
2 Opposite observations can be attributed to the differences in cases simulated, numerical factors  
3 (e.g., scheme, grid and program), judging criteria, and user skills. Without knowledge of all  
4 details of the simulations and cases studied, it is difficult to pass judgment on the merits of each  
5 turbulence model based solely on the presentation in the literature. This study has instead  
6 identified turbulence models that are either popularly used or which have been proposed recently  
7 and which have some potential for indoor air flow applications. Part 2 of this study will then  
8 evaluate the selected models by comparing them to published experimental data. Despite the  
9 disparities among the studies in the literature, some general remarks for turbulence modeling of  
10 air distributions in enclosed environments can be stated as follows:

- 11 (1) The standard  $k$ - $\epsilon$  model with wall functions (Launder and Spalding, 1974) is still widely  
12 used and provides acceptable results (especially for global flow and temperature patterns)  
13 with good computational economy. The model may have difficulty dealing with special  
14 room situations (e.g., high buoyancy effect and/or large temperature gradient).
- 15 (2) The RNG  $k$ - $\epsilon$  model (Yakhot and Orszag, 1986) provides similar (or slightly better) results  
16 as the standard  $k$ - $\epsilon$  model and is also widely used for airflow simulations in enclosed  
17 environments.
- 18 (3) The zero- and one-equation models with specially tuned coefficients are appropriate  
19 (sometimes even better than significantly more detailed models) for the cases with similar  
20 flow characteristics as those used to develop the models.
- 21 (4) Most LRN  $k$ - $\epsilon$  models and nonlinear RANS models provide no or marginal improvements  
22 on prediction accuracy but suffer from strong case-dependent stability problems and has  
23 long computing time.
- 24 (5) The Reynolds-stress models can capture some flow details that cannot be modeled by the  
25 eddy viscosity models. The marginal improvements on the mean variables, however, are  
26 not well justified by the severe penalty on computing time.
- 27 (6) The  $k$ - $\omega$  model (Wilcox, 1988) presents a new potential to model airflows in enclosed  
28 environments with good accuracy and numerical stability. Most existing studies indicate  
29 that the SST  $k$ - $\omega$  model (Menter, 1994) has a better overall performance than the standard  
30  $k$ - $\epsilon$  and the RNG  $k$ - $\epsilon$  models, but a systematic evaluation (especially for modeling indoor  
31 airflows) is needed before a solid conclusion can be reached.
- 32 (7) The  $v2f$  model (Durbin, 1995) looks very promising for indoor environment simulations,  
33 but needs to resolve some inherent numerical problems and undergo a comprehensive  
34 evaluation.
- 35 (8) The LES model provides more detailed and maybe more accurate predictions for indoor  
36 airflows, which could be important for understanding the flow mechanism. However, the  
37 high demand on computing time and user knowledge still makes LES a tool mainly for  
38 research and RANS model developments.
- 39 (9) The DES model can be a valuable intermediate modeling approach but needs significant  
40 further study, improvement, and validation before it can be used for room airflow  
41 predictions.

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**Table 2. List of Popular and Prevalent Turbulence Models for Predicting Airflows in Enclosed Environments**

| Model classification |           | Primary turbulence models used in indoor air simulations   | Prevalent models identified  |                   |
|----------------------|-----------|--|--|-------------------|
| RANS                 | EVM       | Zero-eqn   | 0-eq. (Chen and Xu, 1998)  | Indoor zero eq.   |
|                      |           | Two-eqn  | Standard k- $\epsilon$ (Launder and Spalding, 1974)<br>RNG k- $\epsilon$ (Yakhot and Orszag, 1986)<br>Realizable k- $\epsilon$ (Shih et al., 1995) | RNG k- $\epsilon$ |
|                      |           |  | LRN-LS (Launder and Sharma, 1974)<br>LRN-JL (Jones and Launder, 1973)<br>LRN-LB (Lam and Bremhorst, 1981)  | LRN-LS            |
|                      |           |  | LRN k- $\omega$ (Wilcox, 1994)<br>SST k- $\omega$ (Menter, 1994)   | SST k- $\omega$   |
|                      | Multi-eqn | v2f-dav (Davidson et al., 2003)<br>v2f-lau (Laurence et al., 2004)   | v2f-dav  |                   |
|                      | RSM       | RSM-IP (Gibson and Launder, 1978)<br>RSM-EASM (Gatski and Speziale, 1993)  | RSM-IP   |                   |
| LES                  |           | LES-Sm (Smagorinsky, 1963)<br>LES-Dyn (Germano et al., 1991; Lilly, 1992)<br>LES-Filter (Zhang and Chen, 2000, 2005) | LES-Dyn  |                   |
| DES                  |           | DES (S-A) (Shur et al., 1999)<br>DES (ASM) (Batten et al., 2002)   | DES-SA   |                   |

6

7 **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

8

9 Z. Zhang and Q. Chen would like to acknowledge the financial support to the study presented in  
10 this paper by the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Office of Aerospace Medicine  
11 through the Air Transportation Center of Excellence for Airliner Cabin Environment Research  
12 under Cooperative Agreement 04-C-ACE-PU. Although the FAA has sponsored this study, it  
13 neither endorses nor rejects the findings of this research. The presentation of this information is  
14 in the interest of invoking technical community comment on the results and conclusions of the  
15 research.

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