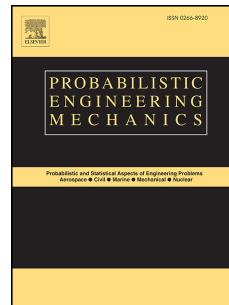


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# Numerical Investigation of Turbulence Effect on Flight Trajectory of Spherical Windborne Debris: A Multi-Layered Approach

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**ABSTRACT:** Accurate modeling of the turbulent wind field is a crucial component of risk analysis for structures to windborne debris damage. Existing studies typically simplify the complexities of wind turbulence, and the potential influence on the accuracy of debris flight modeling has not been systematically demonstrated. This study takes a multi-layered approach to numerically simulate the flight trajectory of spherical debris in a turbulent wind field. Complexities are incrementally added to the simulated wind field to systematically investigate the influence of spatial correlation and non-Gaussian features of turbulence on debris flight behavior. The sensitivity of debris flight behavior to turbulent wind features will inform the design of debris flight tracking wind tunnel tests and building facade debris vulnerability modeling efforts.

27 **KEYWORDS:** wind turbulence; spatial correlation; non-Gaussian turbulence; windborne debris;  
28 flight trajectory; numerical simulation

29 **1 INTRODUCTION**

30 Windborne debris poses a threat to building envelopes ranging from low-rise residential housing  
31 to tall buildings in an urban setting with glass facades/cladding systems (Minor, 1994; Gurley and  
32 Masters, 2011; Jain, 2015). Building envelope damage can lead to subsequent water intrusion,  
33 extensive interior damage, and additional debris further damaging the structure and potentially  
34 resulting in a risk to occupant safety (Pita et al., 2016; Johnson et al., 2018; Wei et al., 2024a). The  
35 resulting loss of building functionality (occupant dislocation and business interruption/closures)  
36 may last for extended periods, and hence compromise community resilience (Wei et al., 2024b),  
37 underscoring the importance of reducing the vulnerability of infrastructure to windborne debris.

38 The damage risk for building envelopes due to windborne debris depends on the debris  
39 type, flight initiation (e.g., Kordi and Kopp, 2011; Kakimpa et al., 2011), flight trajectory (e.g.,  
40 Holmes, 2004; Baker, 2007), and impact mechanism (e.g., Fernandez et al., 2010; Masters et al.,  
41 2010; Zhang et al., 2013). Among these factors that determine the risk of building envelopes,  
42 debris flight initiation and trajectory are sensitive to turbulent wind field. Hence, accurate  
43 modeling of debris impact risk depends on an accurate understanding of the turbulent wind field  
44 around buildings. The local wind field in the rooftop region significantly affects initial conditions  
45 of debris flight, while the turbulent wake wind field directly influences debris flight trajectory and  
46 contributes to uncertainties in final debris impact/landing location and momentum. Existing  
47 studies have taken the route of simplifying approaches to model this process. For example, initial  
48 location and velocity are either arbitrarily assumed as random variables (Ai et al., 2023; Lyu et al.,  
49 2023) or based on simple parametric models on roof top flows (Dong et al., 2023). For the wake  
50 flow, only the temporally constant mean wind field based on Reynolds-averaged Navier–Stokes  
51 equations (RANS) simulation (Ai et al., 2023; Lyu et al., 2023) and spatially fully correlated wind  
52 fluctuations (Dong et al., 2023) are considered in the existing numerical studies of debris flight

53 simulation. The simplifications in existing studies may not fully capture complex debris flight  
54 behavior in the spatiotemporally varying turbulent wake flow. Since these simplifications  
55 encompass multiple aspects of the flow, the relative influence of individual simplifications on  
56 simulation accuracy is not revealed.

57 A recent review of windborne debris simulation studies (Zhao et al., 2021) reveals the  
58 common use of simple unobstructed open terrain flow conditions without considering the influence  
59 of surrounding buildings on the wind field (i.e., open flow conditions). Several studies have  
60 investigated flight behavior in the mean wind field without fluctuations (e.g., Lin et al., 2006;  
61 Holmes et al., 2006), but fewer studies have incorporated the effects of turbulence. Holmes (2004)  
62 and Baker (2007) briefly discussed the effects of turbulence on the flight trajectory of compact and  
63 sheet debris. They found that turbulence can produce significant variability in individual  
64 trajectories but may have little effect on average trajectories. Karimpour and Kaye (2012) studied  
65 the stochastic nature of windborne debris, where the effects of vertical and along-wind wind  
66 fluctuations on flight distance and impact kinetic energy were investigated with a uniform two-  
67 dimensional background flow. With the authors noting the high computational cost of simulating  
68 wind fluctuations along the trajectories, the abovementioned studies assumed that all the spatial  
69 points undergo an identical fluctuation following a Gaussian distribution with a target spectrum.

70 Moghim and Caracoglia (2012a and 2012b) simulated a uniform (spatially identical)  
71 upward vertical gust with short duration and investigated its influence on the trajectory of compact  
72 debris as well as the impact risk for a proximate tall building. Moghim and Caracoglia (2014)  
73 extended this to a more complex turbulent wind field, where the Gaussian turbulence at discrete  
74 points on the “inlet boundary” are first simulated with prescribed cross-spectrum and then  
75 propagated through the field using Taylor’s frozen turbulence hypothesis to determine wind speed

76 at the time stepping instantaneous location of debris in flight. Some of these numerical simulations  
77 have been validated in the wind tunnel tests (Karimpour and Kaye, 2012; Moghim et al., 2015).

78 In addition to straight-line wind fields, existing studies have considered vortex wind fields  
79 such as tornadoes. Noting the simplifications from neglected turbulence in many existing studies  
80 (e.g., Baker and Sterling, 2017; Abdelhady et al., 2021), computational fluid dynamics (CFD)  
81 based on large eddy simulation (LES) has been used to include the tornado turbulence in debris  
82 flight computation (e.g., Maruyama, 2011; Huo et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2021a; Liu et al., 2021b).  
83 In addition, Liu et al. (2021c) compared four different modeling schemes of tornado turbulence  
84 for debris flight analysis: (1) using mean wind velocity only, (2) using the turbulence intensity to  
85 correct the aerodynamic load determined by the mean wind velocity, (3) assuming wind  
86 fluctuations experienced by the debris follow a sinusoidal wave and (4) assuming wind fluctuations  
87 experienced by the debris follow a Gaussian distribution.

88 The above literature review shows that existing studies simplify the complexities of wind  
89 turbulence, such as spatial correlation and non-Gaussian features, even for open flow conditions  
90 (unobstructed boundary layer flow). The potential effects of these simplifications on the accuracy  
91 and uncertainty of debris flight modeling have not been systematically quantified. The current lack  
92 of fundamental validation and uncertainty quantification of the existing simplified debris flight  
93 modeling in less complex open flow environments hinders the confident application of debris flight  
94 simulation to more realistic urban wind conditions.

95 To address the knowledge gap, this study numerically simulates the flight trajectory of  
96 spherical debris traveling in an unobstructed open flow turbulent boundary layer wind field. The  
97 influence of vertical and along-wind spatial correlations and non-Gaussian features in the wind  
98 fluctuations are investigated in isolation and in combination. The sensitivity of debris flight

99 behavior to these wind features will inform the design of debris flight tracking wind tunnel tests  
100 and building façade debris vulnerability modeling efforts that address more complex urban wind  
101 fields around mid/high-rise buildings with the presence of local vortices and wake regions.

102 The simulation methodology of this study is schematically shown in Fig. 1. For statistical  
103 analysis of debris flight characteristics requiring input of wind speed along the debris flight  
104 trajectory, the premise is to simulate time histories of longitudinal wind speed over a fixed spatial  
105 grid forming a vertical plane parallel to the horizontal mean wind direction. With the simulated  
106 wind field, the two-dimensional debris flight trajectories are computed by releasing  $N_{DR}$  debris at  
107 random time steps. This debris releasing process is repeated  $N_{WG}$  times, resulting in a total of  
108  $N_{DR} \times N_{WG}$  simulated debris flight trajectories for a reliable statistical estimate of the debris flight  
109 characteristics. The selection of proper values of  $N_{DR}$  and  $N_{WG}$  is discussed later in this paper.

110 The next two sections describe the debris flight model employed in this study and the  
111 stochastic wind field simulation approach to incorporate increasingly realistic spatial correlation  
112 features concurrent with Gaussian and then non-Gaussian probability content. The result analysis  
113 and implications for wind tunnel testing are subsequent, followed by the concluding remarks and  
114 future directions.

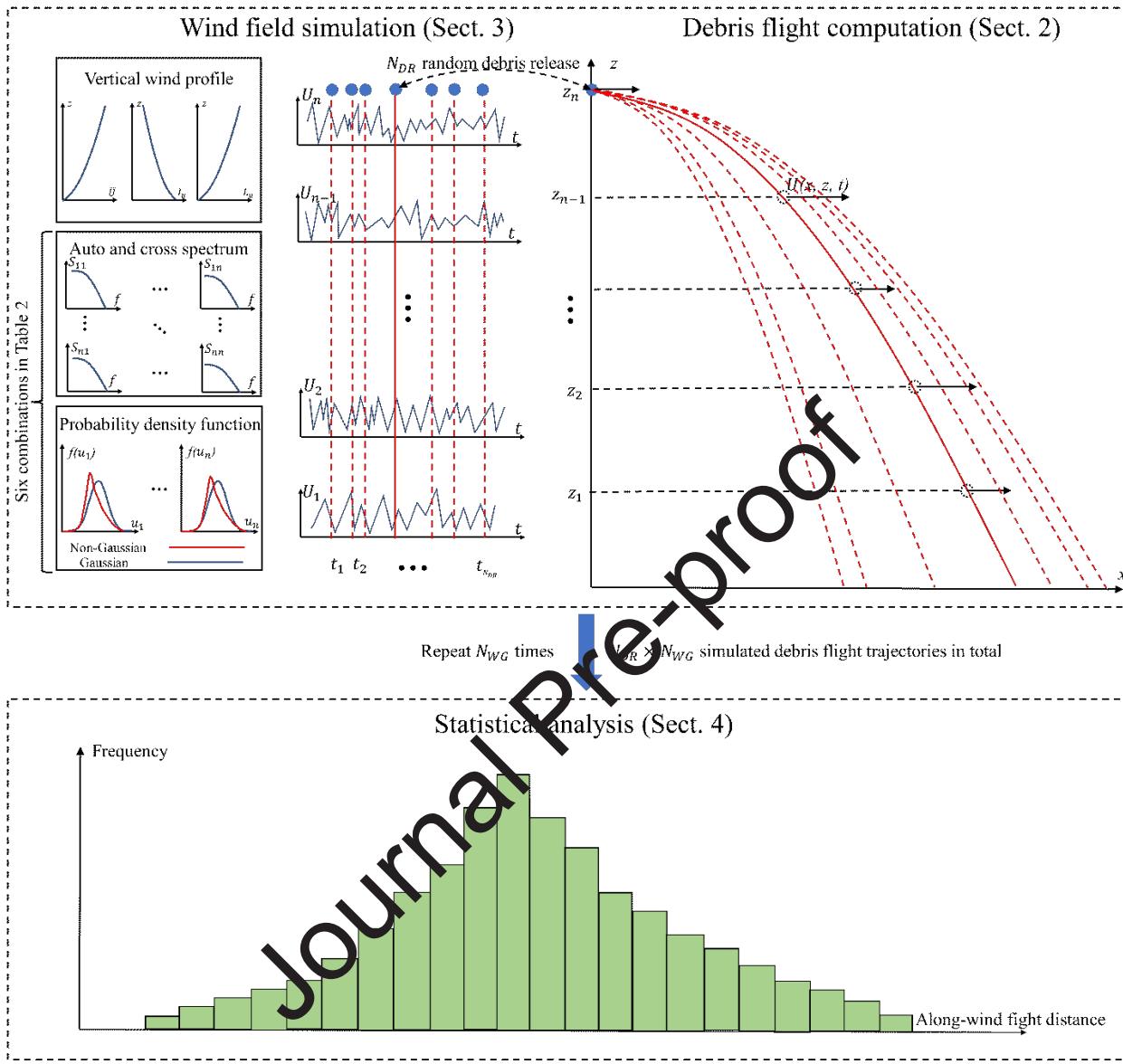


Figure 1. Schematic of the simulation methodology

115  
116

## 117 2 DEBRIS FLIGHT MODEL

118 This study considers two-dimensional flight trajectory of spherical debris. The adoption of  
 119 spherical debris allows for elimination of complex uncertainties from the time-varying  
 120 aerodynamic lift/drag as in debris of irregular shapes. The two-dimensional simplification of the  
 121 debris flight is justified by the open flow environment investigated in this study. The governing

122 equation of the debris flight (see Fig. 2), based on the quasi-steady aerodynamic load, can be  
 123 expressed as (Holmes, 2004):

$$124 \quad m \frac{d^2x}{dt^2} = \frac{1}{2} \rho_a A C_d \cos \alpha \left[ (U - \frac{dx}{dt})^2 + (W - \frac{dz}{dt})^2 \right] \quad (1a)$$

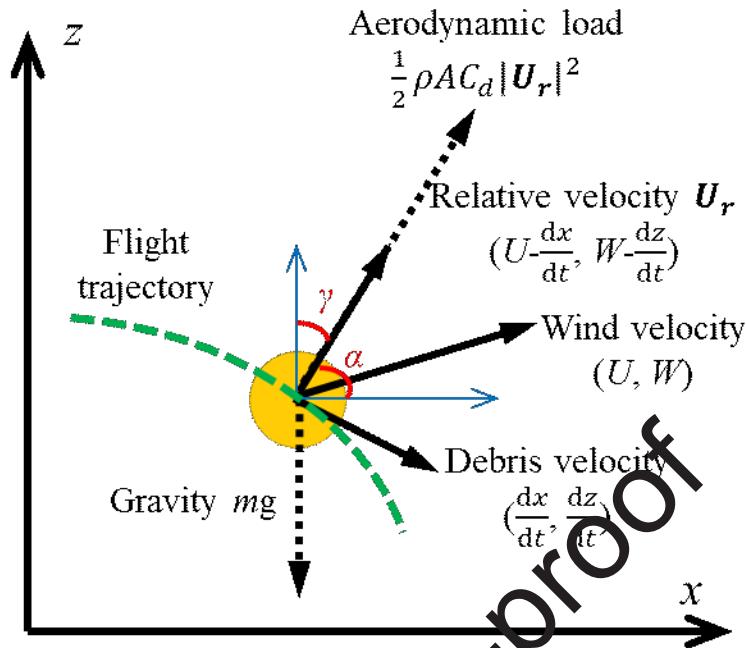
$$125 \quad m \frac{d^2z}{dt^2} = \frac{1}{2} \rho_a A C_d \cos \gamma \left[ (U - \frac{dx}{dt})^2 + (W - \frac{dz}{dt})^2 \right] - mg \quad (1b)$$

126 where  $x$  and  $z$  are the displacements in along-wind and vertical directions;  $t$  is the time;  $m$  is the  
 127 mass of the debris calculated as  $m = \frac{4}{3} \pi r^3 \rho$  ( $r$  is the debris radius and  $\rho$  is the debris density);  $g$   
 128 is the gravitational acceleration;  $\rho_a$  is the density of air;  $A$  is the projected frontal area for a  
 129 spherical debris  $A = \pi r^2$ ;  $C_d$  is the drag coefficient; the values of these parameters are listed in  
 130 Table 1, and some of them are determined by the practical considerations for the planned wind  
 131 tunnel tests where the flight trajectories of scaled debris will be tracked using high-speed cameras;  
 132  $U$  and  $W$  are the wind velocity along the debris flight trajectory, varying both spatially and  
 133 temporally [i.e.,  $U = U(x, z, t)$  and  $W = W(x, z, t)$ ]; The trigonometric functions of angles  
 134 between the relative wind speed and the two axis, denoted as  $\alpha$  and  $\gamma$ , can be calculated as  $\cos \alpha =$

$$135 \quad \frac{U - \frac{dx}{dt}}{\sqrt{(U - \frac{dx}{dt})^2 + (W - \frac{dz}{dt})^2}} \text{ and } \cos \gamma = \frac{W - \frac{dz}{dt}}{\sqrt{(U - \frac{dx}{dt})^2 + (W - \frac{dz}{dt})^2}}, \text{ which can be substituted into Eq. (1) to derive:}$$

$$136 \quad m \frac{d^2x}{dt^2} = \frac{1}{2} \rho_a A C_d (U - \frac{dx}{dt}) \sqrt{(U - \frac{dx}{dt})^2 + (W - \frac{dz}{dt})^2} \quad (2a)$$

$$137 \quad m \frac{d^2z}{dt^2} = \frac{1}{2} \rho_a A C_d (W - \frac{dz}{dt}) \sqrt{(U - \frac{dx}{dt})^2 + (W - \frac{dz}{dt})^2} - mg \quad (2b)$$



138  
139 **Figure 2.** Schematic of simulating compact-type debris flight trajectory

140 **Table 1.** Parameters for simulating debris flight trajectories

Parameters	Values
Debris radius $r$	1.5 cm
Debris density $\rho$	2.5 g/cm <sup>3</sup>
Debris mass $m$	35.3 g
Debris release height	20 m
Wind speed at release height	32.2 m/s
Drag coefficient $C_d$	0.5
Gravitational acceleration $g$	9.8 m/s <sup>2</sup>
Air density $\rho_a$	1.225 kg/m <sup>3</sup>

141

142 **3 SIMULATION OF TURBULENT WIND FIELD**

143 This section discusses the simulation of the turbulent wind field as the input to the debris flight  
144 model. Multiple schemes are employed to model the degree of correlation in the along-wind  
145 turbulence component among the spatially separated grid points, as well as the probabilistic  
146 turbulence properties. Table 2 describes the content and sequencing of six different combinations  
147 of spatial correlation and probabilistic turbulence properties used in this study, together with their

148 implementation in debris flight model (more details in the subsections of each wind field model).  
 149 To systematically analyze the influence of the spatial correlation of turbulence, Section 3.1 begins  
 150 with the two extremes of no correlation and full spatial correlation to establish debris flight  
 151 behavior boundaries (here the “full correlation” does not have a time delay). Considering that the  
 152 key factor is the fluctuation correlation between the points along the debris flight trajectory (with  
 153 coordinate variation in both vertical and along-wind direction), the cases of “no vertical and full  
 154 along-wind correlation” and “full vertical and no along-wind correlation” are equivalent to the  
 155 case of “no vertical and no along-wind correlation”, and hence are not included in Table 2. After  
 156 the two extreme cases, more realistic scenarios of partial vertical correlation and frozen turbulence-  
 157 based along-wind propagation (i.e., full correlation with time delay) are investigated. Wind  
 158 fluctuations in Section 3.1 are assumed to follow the Gaussian distribution, while non-Gaussian  
 159 wind turbulence will be introduced later in Section 3.2.

160 For all simulations considered, the mean wind speed  $\bar{U}(z)$  along the elevation  $z$  follows the  
 161 logarithmic law (ASCE/SEI 49-12):

$$162 \frac{\bar{U}(z)}{U_r} = \frac{\ln\left[\frac{z-d}{z_0}\right]}{\ln\left[\frac{z_r-d}{z_0}\right]} \quad (3)$$

163  $U_r$  is the reference wind speed at reference height  $z_r$ ;  $U_r = 32.2$  m/s is selected in this study with  
 164  $z_r = 20$  m (selected based on debris releasing height for a typical mid-rise building); the debris  
 165 release location is also at the reference height  $z_r$ ;  $z_0 = 0.3$  m is the roughness length for suburban  
 166 terrain;  $d = 0.94$  m is the displacement height.

167 The vertical profile of turbulence intensity  $I_u(z)$  is modeled following (ASCE/SEI 49-12):

$$168 I_u(z) = \frac{1}{\ln\left[\frac{z-d}{z_0}\right]} \quad (4)$$

169 The wind turbulence follows the von Karman spectrum:

170 
$$\frac{\omega S(\omega)}{2\pi\sigma_s^2} = \frac{4\left[\frac{\omega L_u(z)}{2\pi\bar{U}(z)}\right]}{\left\{1+70.8\left[\frac{\omega L_u(z)}{2\pi\bar{U}(z)}\right]\right\}^6} \quad (5)$$

171 where  $\sigma_s = \bar{U}(z)I_u(z)$  is the standard deviation of the wind fluctuation;  $L_u(z)$  is the turbulence  
172 integral length scale varying with elevation, which is calculated as (ASCE/SEI 7-16):

173 
$$L_u(z) = 97.54\left(\frac{z}{10}\right)^{1/3} \quad (6)$$

174 This study models open flow conditions (no proximity buildings) and assumes zero mean  
175 vertical wind speed, i.e.,  $\bar{W}=0$ . Furthermore, it is expected that compared to along-wind turbulence  
176 the influence of vertical turbulence on debris flight behavior is relatively weak due to: (1) vertical  
177 turbulence intensity is usually smaller than along-wind turbulence in open flow (Hui et al., 2009;  
178 He et al., 2020), and (2) vertical turbulence usually has fewer low-frequency components in the  
179 spectrum (Dyrbye and Hansen, 1996; Moghim and Caracoglia, 2014) and hence smaller spatial  
180 scales, indicating that its effect on debris motion can be more easily canceled out during the flight.  
181 In addition, currently there is a lack a standard accepted model for the correlation between vertical  
182 and along-wind fluctuation (Belovitz and Deodatis, 2015; Liu et al., 2023). Hence, vertical  
183 turbulence is not considered in this study but will be considered in follow up work that use particle  
184 image velocimetry (PIV) measurements as the baseline wind field.

185

186

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191

192 **Table 2.** The six combinations of spatial correlation and probabilistic turbulence properties along  
 193 with their implementations in debris flight model

Section number	Correlation		Probability density function	Implementation in debris flight model
	Vertical	Along-wind		
3.1.1	None	None		Simulate a single Gaussian white noise-based wind fluctuation as input to debris flight model
3.1.2	Full without time delay	Full without time delay		Simulate a single Karman spectrum-based Gaussian wind fluctuation as input to debris flight model
3.1.3.1	Partial: distance-decaying	Full without time delay	Gaussian	Simulate multiple correlated Karman spectrum-based Gaussian wind fluctuations at different vertical locations along the inlet; use the same fluctuation for along-wind propagation; use the fluctuations at nearest locations for vertical interpolation
3.1.3.2	Partial: distance-decaying	Full with time delay: Frozen turbulence		Simulate multiple correlated Karman spectrum-based Gaussian wind fluctuations at different vertical locations along the inlet; use frozen turbulence-based time delay for along-wind propagation; use the fluctuations at nearest locations for vertical interpolation
3.2	Partial: distance-decaying	Full with time delay: Frozen turbulence	Non-Gaussian	Simulate multiple correlated Karman spectrum-based non-Gaussian wind fluctuations at different vertical locations along the inlet; use frozen turbulence-based time delay for along-wind propagation; use the fluctuations at nearest locations for vertical interpolation

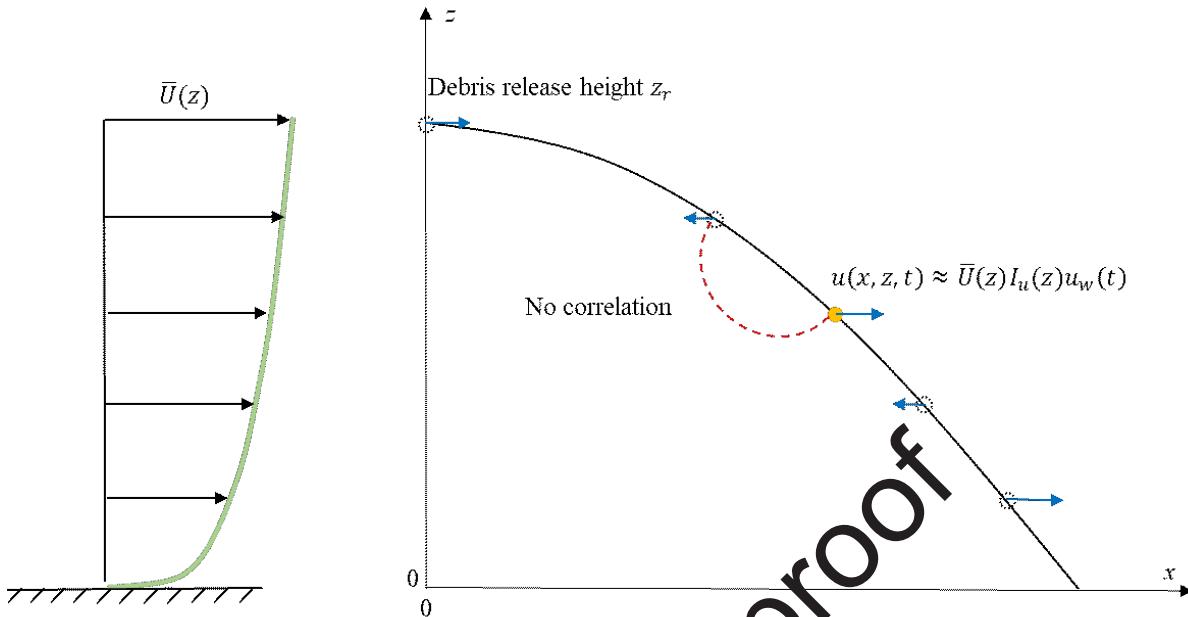
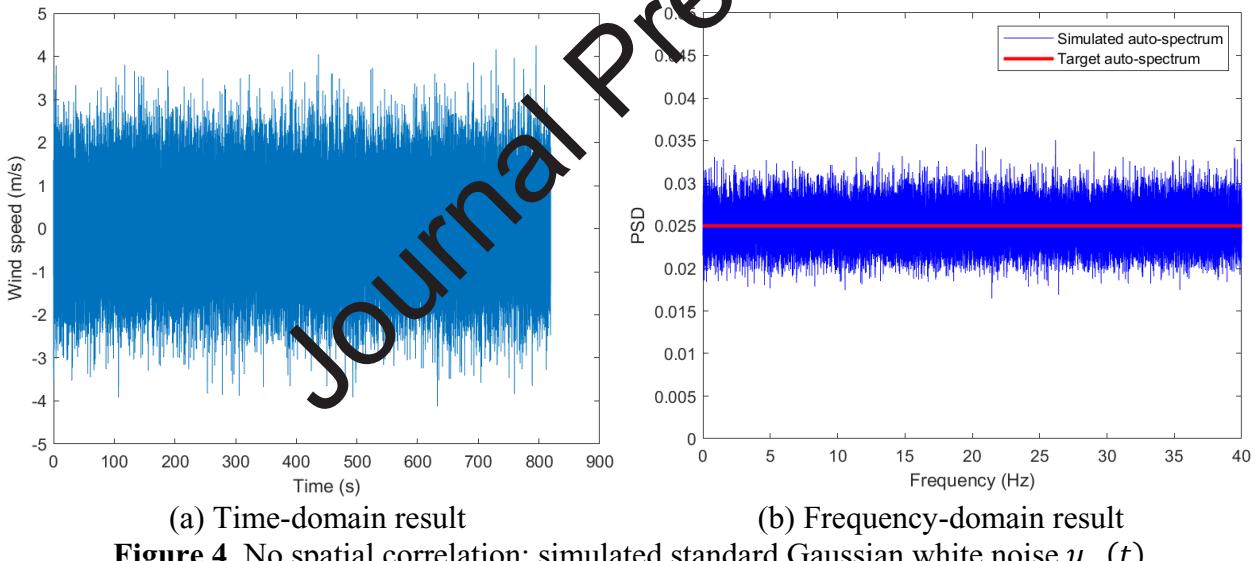
195 **3.1 Gaussian wind fluctuation with varying schemes for spatial correlation of turbulence**196 *3.1.1 Fluctuation with no spatial correlation*

197 When wind fluctuations at all spatial points on the grid are uncorrelated, the wind speed  
 198 experienced by the windborne debris at any location and time  $U(x, z, t)$  is simply:

199  $U(x, z, t) = \bar{U}(z) + u(x, z, t) \approx \bar{U}(z) + \bar{U}(z)I_u(z)u_w(t)$  with  $u_w(t) \sim N[0, 1]$  (7)

200 where  $u_w(t)$  is randomly drawn from standard Gaussian white noise distribution  $N[0, 1]$  at each  
 201 time  $t$ . Figure 3 illustrates the concept, where the instantaneous debris location (dashed circles) is  
 202 subjected to an instantaneous speed (Eq. 7) consisting of the mean  $\bar{U}(z)$  and superimposed  
 203 fluctuating component (blue arrows) described by scaled white noise.

204 The simulated standard Gaussian white noise  $u_w(t)$  is shown in Fig. 4(a), where the length  
 205 of the whole simulated time series is  $N_u = 2^{16}$  and time interval is  $\Delta t = 0.0125$  s. The duration  $T_u$   
 206 = 819.2 s (resulting frequency increment  $\Delta f = 0.00122$  Hz) is selected to capture sufficient low-  
 207 frequency turbulence, which is also larger than the 10 min wind duration used in the literature  
 208 (Karimpour and Kaye, 2012; Moshim et al., 2015).  $T_u$  is discussed further in the next section in  
 209 the context of the length scale of turbulence for spatially correlated flow. The ensemble of  $N_{WG} =$   
 210 128 realizations of wind fluctuations is used to obtain the spectrum in Fig. 4(b). The  $\Delta t$  and  $N_{WG}$ ,  
 211 used throughout this study, are based on the sensitivity analysis presented in Appendix A.

212  
213**Figure 3.** Wind fluctuation with no spatial correlation**Figure 4.** No spatial correlation: simulated standard Gaussian white noise  $u_w(t)$ 214 3.1.2 *Fluctuation with full spatial correlation*

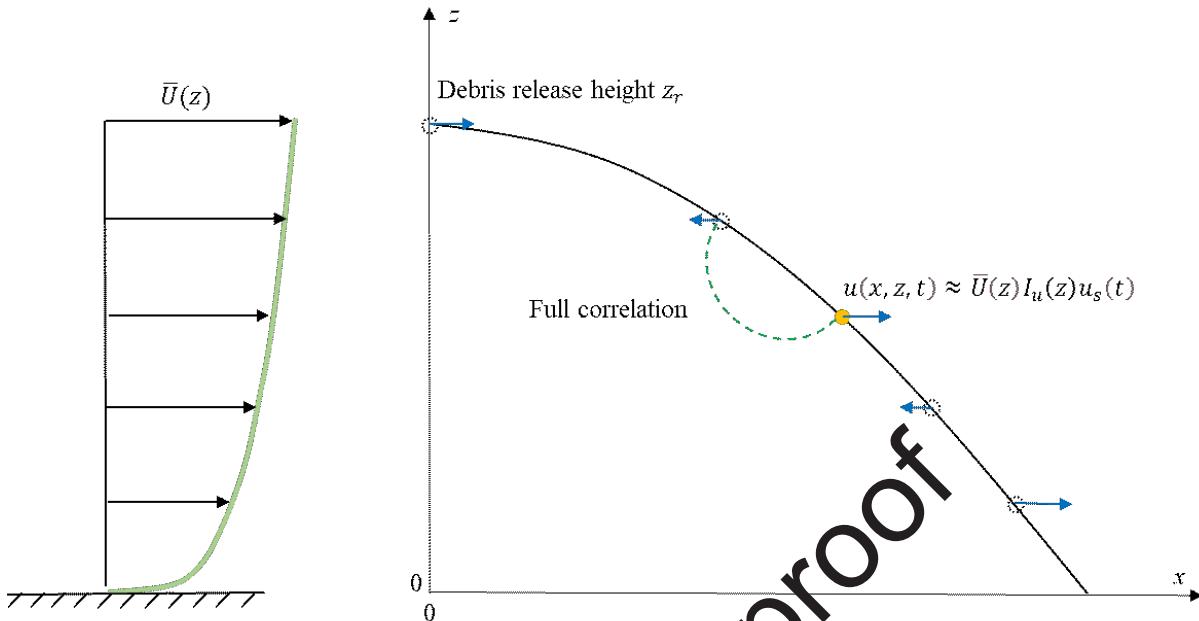
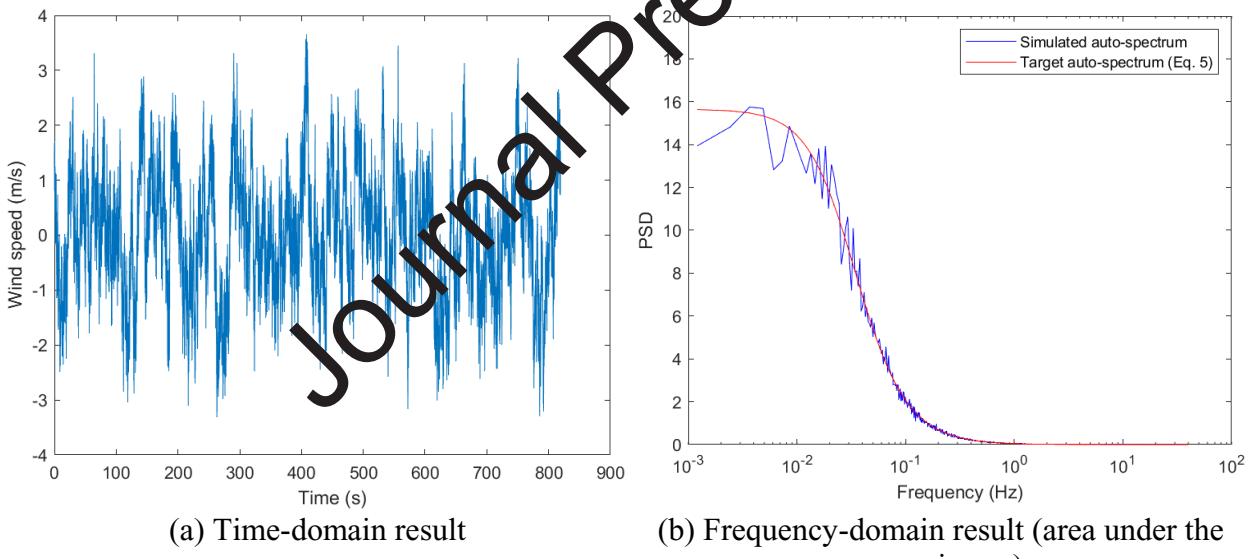
215 When wind fluctuations at all spatial points on the grid are fully correlated, a time history at a  
 216 single grid point (say  $z = z_r$  and  $x = 0$ ) is generated. That time history is then translated and dilated  
 217 to impart the appropriate mean and turbulence intensity at each height on the grid. For a given  
 218 height  $z$ , the time history of wind speed at every horizontal grid point  $x$  is identical and without

219 time lag. Under this description, the wind speed experienced by the windborne debris at any  
 220 location and time  $U(x, z, t)$  can be calculated as (see Fig. 5):

221 
$$U(x, z, t) = \bar{U}(z) + u(x, z, t) \approx \bar{U}(z) + \bar{U}(z)I_u(z)u_s(t) \text{ with } F_{PSD}[u_s(t)] = S(\omega) \quad (8)$$

222 where  $u_s(t)$  is a unit-variance wind fluctuation with prescribed power spectrum density (PSD)  
 223  $S(\omega)$  based on Eq. (5). For this case,  $\bar{U}(z)$  in Eq. (5) is set to be  $U_r$  while the integral length scale  
 224 is  $L_u(z_r)$ , essentially assuming all the spatial points in the wind field undergo scaled fluctuation  
 225 at reference elevation  $z_r$  (this is also the debris release location). The spectral representation  
 226 method (SRM) (Deodatis, 1996) is employed to simulate the wind fluctuation  $u_s(t)$  with target  
 227 spectrum  $S(\omega)$ . A sample of simulated unit-variance wind fluctuation  $u_s(t)$  is shown in Fig. 6.  
 228 The wind speed simulation duration of  $T_u = 819.2$  s was chosen to capture sufficient low frequency  
 229 contribution to the wind record interacting with the debris. From Eq. 6 it was determined that at  
 230 the turbulence integral length scale at the debris release height of 20 m is 122.9 m. At the employed  
 231 mean wind speed of 32.2 m/s, the simulated 819.2 s record permits the sequential passage of  
 232 approximately 215 integral length scales.

233 Through comparing Eq. (7) and Fig. 4 with Eq. (8) and Fig. 6, it is straightforward that the  
 234 only difference between the no-correlation and full-correlation scenarios is the PSD of the debris-  
 235 experienced fluctuation. The unit-variance wind fluctuation  $u_s(t)$  has more low-frequency energy  
 236 and less high-frequency energy compared to that of the standard Gaussian white noise  $u_w(t)$ . The  
 237 difference of spectral property of  $u_s(t)$  and  $u_w(t)$  allows revealing the influence of turbulence  
 238 frequency distribution on the debris flight, which will be discussed in the beginning of Section 4.1.

239  
240**Figure 5.** Wind fluctuation with full spatial correlation**Figure 6.** Full spatial correlation: simulated unit-variance wind fluctuations  $u_s(t)$ 

241

242 3.1.3 *Fluctuation with partial spatial correlation*

243 The upcoming results section will reveal clear differences in debris flight behaviors between the  
 244 two extreme scenarios of no and full spatial correlation of turbulence, illustrating the potential  
 245 importance of partial correlation on debris flight. The vertical spatial correlation of longitudinal

246 fluctuations has been widely studied, and well-accepted models, such as Davenport's distance-  
 247 decaying coherence (Davenport, 1961), are available. On the other hand, the along-wind spatial  
 248 correlation of longitudinal fluctuations is less standardized. Taylor's frozen turbulence hypothesis  
 249 (Taylor, 1938) is still widely presumed. In frozen turbulence-based correlation, the cross-  
 250 correlation coefficient function of longitudinal turbulence between two along-wind separated  
 251 locations peaks with a value of unity at the time lag determined by the distance between the two  
 252 separated locations divided by the mean wind speed.

253 This study maintains a consistent distance-decaying partial correlation scheme in the  
 254 vertical direction while considering two schemes for modeling along-wind correlation: (1) full  
 255 correlation without time delay, (2) full correlation with time delay based on frozen turbulence.  
 256 More realistic along-wind correlations will be considered in future work using PIV measurements  
 257 as the baseline wind field.

258 *3.1.3.1 Distance-decaying correlation in vertical direction and full correlation in along-wind  
 259 direction*

260 To generate wind fluctuations with partial correlation in the vertical direction and full correlation  
 261 in the along-wind direction, this study first generates wind fluctuations at  $n$  discrete vertical  
 262 locations along the inlet boundary from origin  $(0, 0)$  to debris release location  $(0, z_r)$  with equal  
 263 spacing  $\Delta z$  (see Fig. 7). Then, the debris-experienced wind speed can be conveniently simulated  
 264 based on the assumption of full correlation and the interpolation criteria ( $z \approx k\Delta z$ ):

$$265 U(x, z, t) = \bar{U}(z) + u(x, z, t) \approx \bar{U}(z) + u(0, k\Delta z, t) = \bar{U}(z) + \bar{U}(z)I_u(z)u_k(t) \quad (9)$$

266 The unit-variance wind fluctuations for the  $n$  locations can be simulated by the SRM using the  
 267 prescribed power spectrum density matrix (PSDM)  $\mathbf{S}(\omega)$  (Deodatis, 1996):

268 
$$\mathbf{S}(\omega) = \begin{bmatrix} S_{11}(\omega) & S_{12}(\omega) & \dots & S_{1n}(\omega) \\ S_{21}(\omega) & S_{22}(\omega) & \dots & \dots \\ \dots & \dots & \dots & \dots \\ S_{n1}(\omega) & \dots & \dots & S_{nn}(\omega) \end{bmatrix} \quad (10)$$

269 where the diagonal term is the auto-spectrum:

270  $S_{kk}(\omega) = S_k(\omega) \text{ with } k=1, 2, \dots, n \quad (11)$

271  $S_k(\omega)$  is defined by von Karman spectrum in Eq. (5); the off-diagonal term is the cross-spectrum:

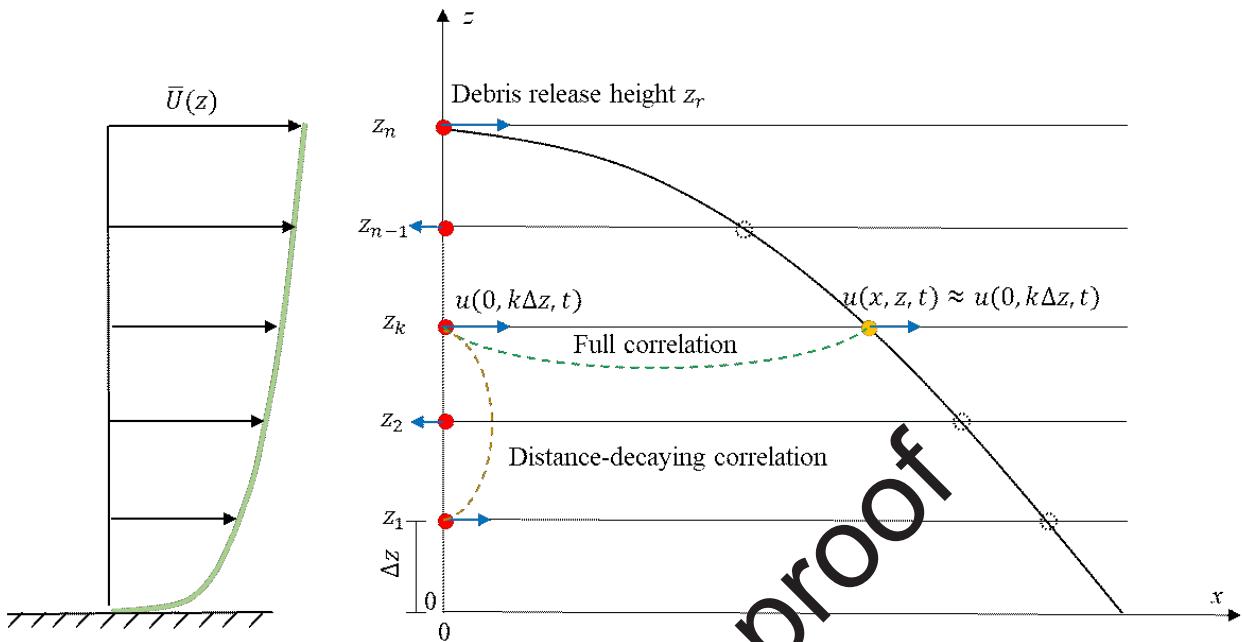
272  $S_{jk}(\omega) = \sqrt{S_j(\omega) S_k(\omega)} \gamma_{jk}(\omega) \text{ with } j, k=1, 2, \dots, n \text{ and } j \neq k \quad (12)$

273 where  $\gamma_{jk}(\omega)$  is the Davenport coherence function (Davenport, 1961) with a constant decay factor

274  $C_z = 10$ :

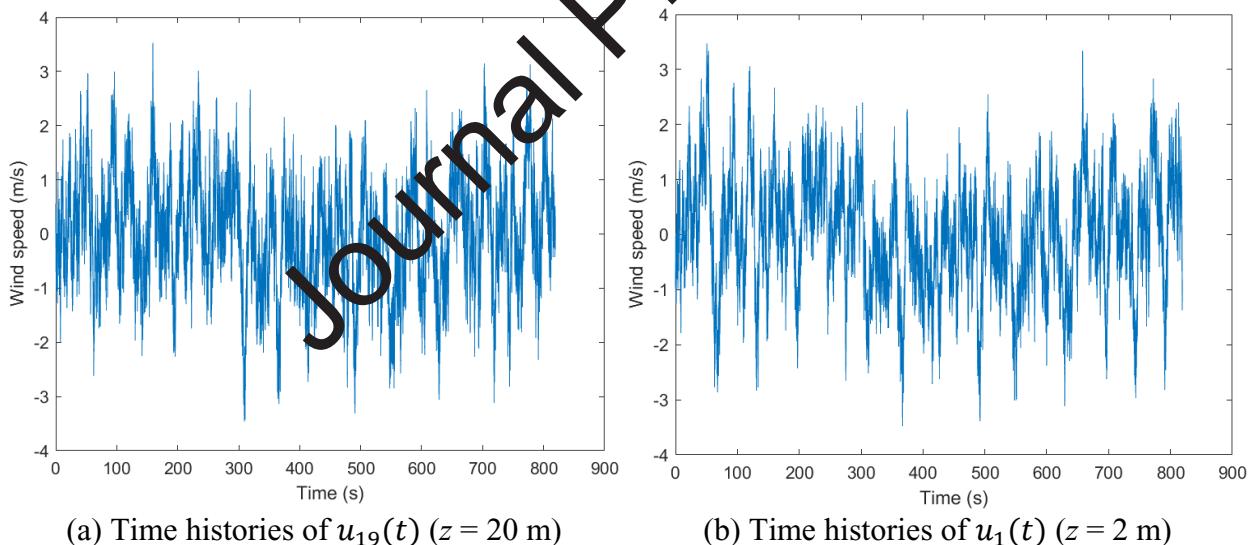
275 
$$\gamma_{jk}(\omega) = \exp \left\{ -\frac{\omega}{2\pi} \frac{C_z |z_i - z_k|}{\frac{1}{2} [\bar{U}(z_i) + \bar{U}(z_k)]} \right\} \quad (13)$$

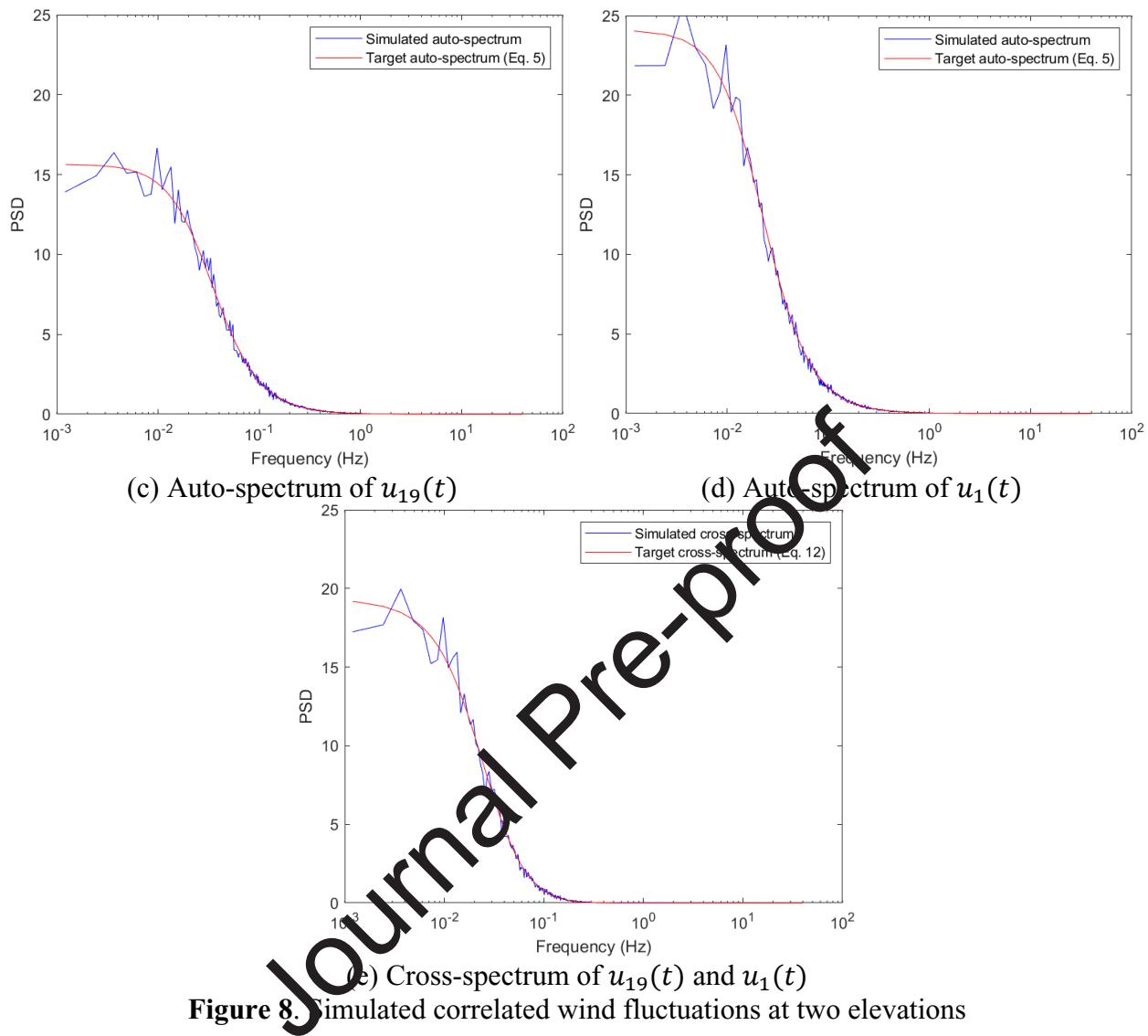
276 Wind fluctuations are simulated at 19 locations, from  $z = 2$  m (below which log law in Eq. 3 may  
 277 become invalid) to release height of 20 m, where  $\Delta z$  is 1 m (see the sensitivity analysis in  
 278 Appendix A). A sample of the simulated partially correlated wind fluctuations at elevations 20 m  
 279 and 2 m, i.e.,  $u_{19}(t)$  and  $u_2(t)$ , are shown in Fig. 8, together with their auto- and cross-spectrum.  
 280



281  
282  
283  
284

**Figure 7.** Wind fluctuation with partial correlation in vertical direction and full correlation in along-wind direction





**Figure 8.** Simulated correlated wind fluctuations at two elevations

285

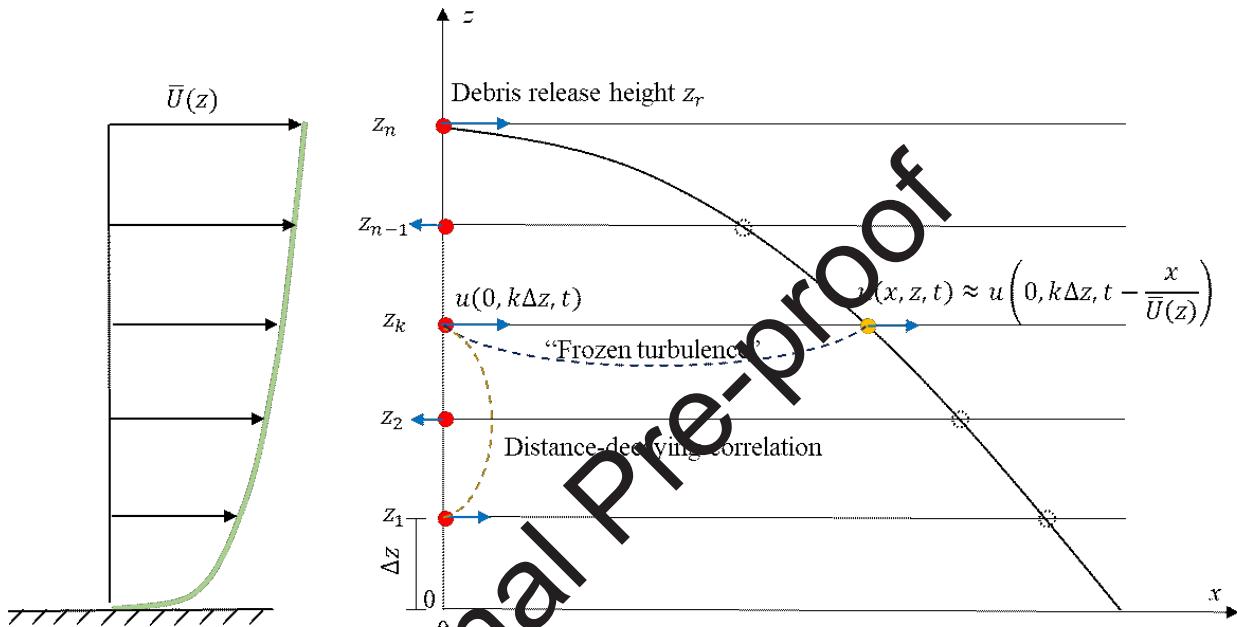
286 3.1.3.2 *Distance-decaying correlation in vertical direction and frozen turbulence-based*  
 287 *correlation in along-wind direction*

288 This section considers turbulence correlation in along-wind direction that is more realistic than full  
 289 correlation. One simple approach to use Taylor's hypothesis of frozen turbulence (Taylor, 1938),  
 290 which considers the downstream turbulence as the time-delayed version of upstream turbulence at  
 291 the inlet boundary (see Fig. 9). Under frozen turbulence, the debris-experienced wind speed is  
 292 calculated as:

293 
$$U(x, z, t) = \bar{U}(z) + u(x, z, t) \approx \bar{U}(z) + u\left(0, k\Delta z, t - \frac{x}{\bar{U}(z)}\right)$$

294 
$$= \bar{U}(z) + \bar{U}(z)I_u(z)u_k\left(t - \frac{x}{\bar{U}(z)}\right) \quad (14)$$

295 where  $u_k(t)$  is the same as that defined in the previous section.



296  
297 **Figure 9.** Wind fluctuation with partial correlation in vertical direction and frozen turbulence-  
298 based propagation in along-wind direction  
299

### 300 3.2 Non-Gaussian wind fluctuation

301 The SRM simulation method employed for all correlation variations (Section 3.1) result in  
302 Gaussian wind fluctuations, which does not align with full-scale and wind tunnel observations,  
303 including extreme winds (e.g., Balderrama et al., 2012; Fernández-Cabán and Masters, 2017; Zhao  
304 et al., 2019; Gurley et al., 2021; Ojeda-Tuz et al., 2023). Non-Gaussian wind fluctuations may  
305 change the debris flight trajectory and will be investigated in this section. As described in Table 2,  
306 only the distance-decaying vertical correlation and frozen turbulence-based along-wind correlation  
307 are considered, and maintained as:

308 
$$U(x, z, t) = \bar{U}(z) + u^N(x, z, t) \approx \bar{U}(z) + u^N\left(0, k\Delta z, t - \frac{x}{\bar{U}(z)}\right)$$

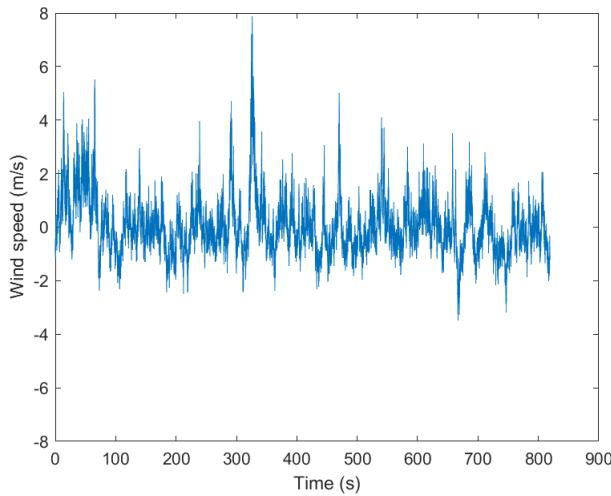
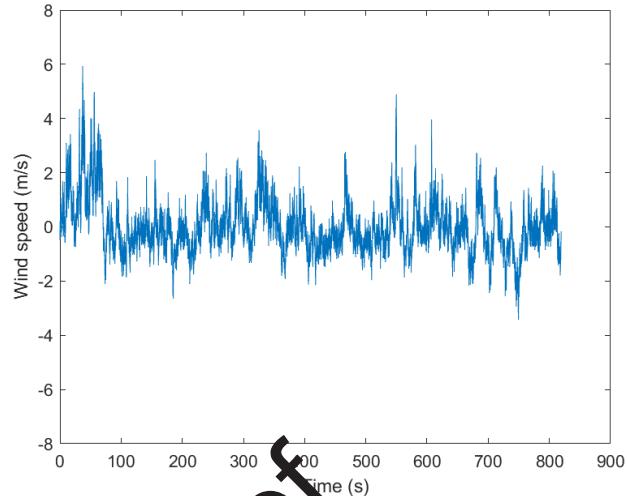
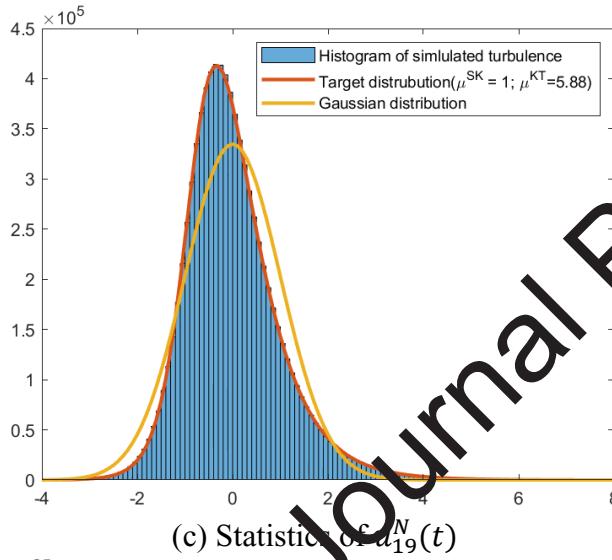
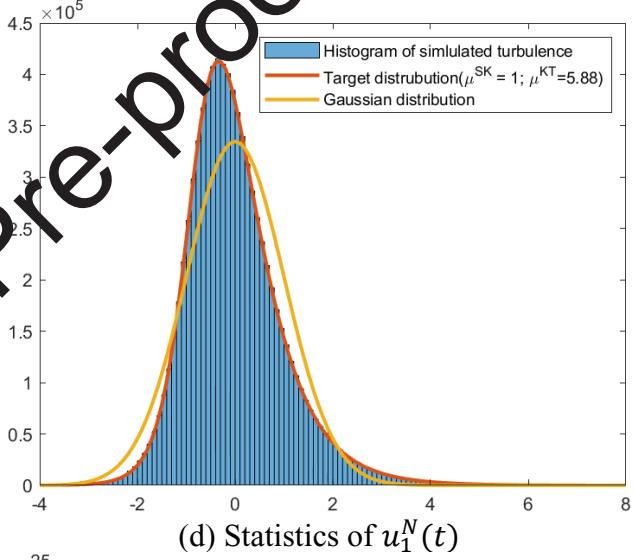
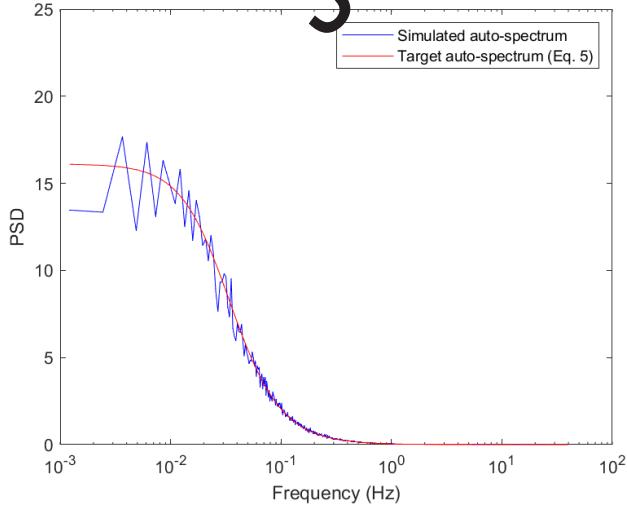
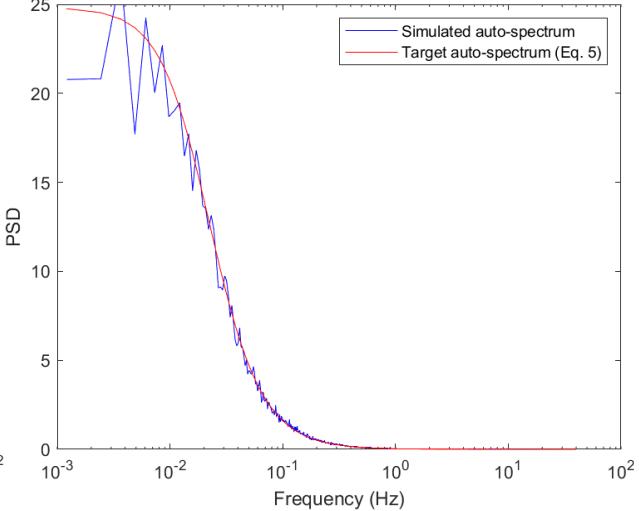
309 
$$= \bar{U}(z) + \bar{U}(z)I_u(z)u_k^N\left(t - \frac{x}{\bar{U}(z)}\right) \quad (15)$$

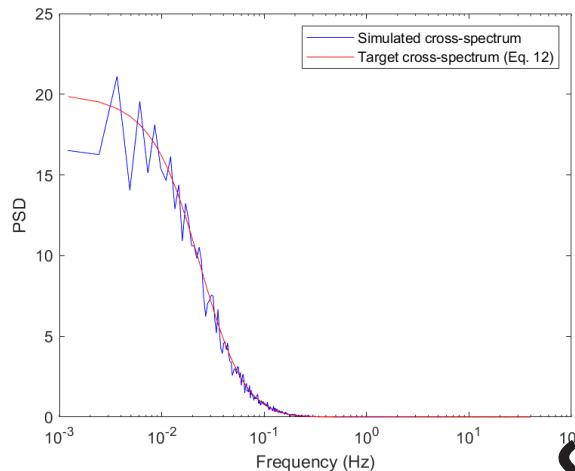
310 The approach to simulating  $u_k^N(t)$  utilizes the translation method (Grigoriu, 1984; Grigoriu, 1998)  
 311 to impart the desired marginal probability density function (MPDF) and adopts a third order  
 312 Hermite polynomial probability model (Yang et al., 2013; Yang and Gurley, 2015) to describe the  
 313 MPDF as a function of desired skewness and kurtosis in the turbulence. In summary, the method  
 314 employs a static polynomial transform of a SRM simulated Gaussian process to simultaneously  
 315 achieve the desired PSD and MPDF characteristics. The approach is non-iterative and  
 316 computationally efficient. Although no new contributions to this method are developed in the  
 317 current study, it is briefly described in Appendix K for the sake of completeness.

318 Since the purpose of this section is to determine whether debris flight is sensitive to non-  
 319 Gaussian turbulence features, a simple approach is employed. A uniform skewness profile with a  
 320 value of  $\mu^{SK}(z) = 1$  is assumed, which is relatively extreme in the context of field measurements  
 321 (e.g., Balderrama et al., 2012; Fernández-Cabán and Masters, 2017; Zhao et al., 2019). The  
 322 kurtosis is obtained from the empirical relationship  $\mu^{KT}(z) = 2.86|\mu^{SK}(z)|^2 + 3.02 = 5.88$   
 323 from hurricane field measurement (Zhao et al., 2019). The second order characteristic follows the  
 324 identical spectral and coherence models defined in the previous section. Samples of simulated non-  
 325 Gaussian wind fluctuations are shown in Fig. 10, together with their skewness and kurtosis as well  
 326 as the auto- and cross-spectrum.

327

328

(a) Time histories of  $u_{19}^N(t)$ (b) Time histories of  $u_1^N(t)$ (c) Statistics of  $u_{19}^N(t)$ (d) Statistics of  $u_1^N(t)$ (e) Auto-spectrum of  $u_{19}^N(t)$ (f) Auto-spectrum of  $u_1^N(t)$



(g) Cross-spectrum of  $u_{19}^N(t)$  and  $u_1^N(t)$   
**Figure 10.** Simulated non-Gaussian wind fluctuations

329

#### 330 4 ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

331 The six combinations of spatial correlation and probability content (see Table 2) are employed  
 332 individually to compute the flight trajectories of spherical debris using the model described in  
 333 Section 2. This allows the systematic investigation of the influence of spatial correlation and the  
 334 non-Gaussian probability on debris flight.

335 To obtain a reliable estimate on the statistical properties of simulated debris flight, the  
 336 following parameters need to be properly selected for the balance of computational accuracy and  
 337 efficiency: (1) the temporal discretization size,  $\Delta t$ , for wind field simulation and debris flight  
 338 computation, (2) the spatial discretization size,  $\Delta z$ , for wind field simulation, (3) the number of  
 339 realizations,  $N_{WG}$ , for wind field simulation, and (4) the number of debris releases,  $N_{DR}$ , for  
 340 uncertainty quantification of debris flight. Sensitivity analysis is presented in Appendix A to  
 341 determine appropriate values for these parameters. As a result, the values  $\Delta t = 0.0125$  s,  $\Delta z = 1$  m,  
 342  $N_{WG} = 128$ , and  $N_{DR} = 2^{15}$  are adopted for this study. Zero initial velocity of debris is assumed  
 343 for all scenarios. This study focuses on the statistical properties, i.e., mean, standard deviation  
 344 (STD), skewness, and kurtosis, of the along-wind flight distances  $L_x$  that are important for debris

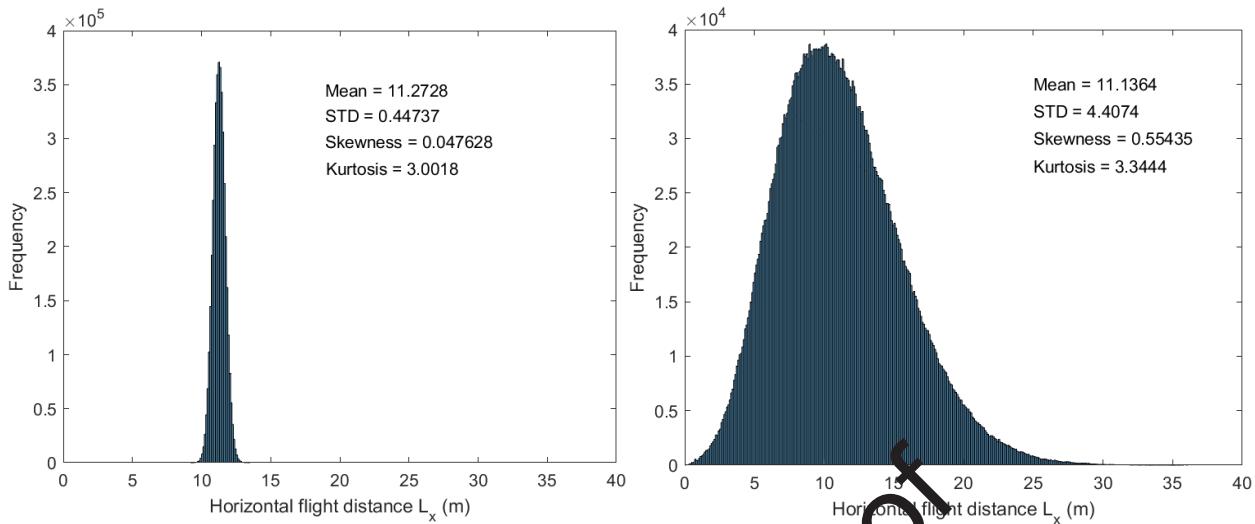
345 risk analysis. In the following presentations, histograms of debris flight distance are presented and  
346 compared among the different experiments in Table 2. The probabilistic distribution of debris  
347 flight distance is not normalized to an empirical probability density function but kept as a  
348 histogram format to allow easier comparisons among figures.

349 **4.1 Influence of turbulence spatial correlation on debris flight**

350 The simulation results of the two extreme scenarios for no and full spatial correlations are shown  
351 in Fig. 11(a) and 11(b), respectively. While the mean value of flight distance is very similar, the  
352 standard deviation of the debris flight distance for the full-correlation case is almost 10 times larger  
353 than that of the no-correlation case. In addition, the distribution of along-wind flight distance is  
354 approximately Gaussian for no spatial correlation of turbulence. When full spatial correlation is  
355 introduced, the debris flight distribution becomes slightly non-Gaussian with positive skewness  
356 and kurtosis larger than 3. These results also demonstrate the influence of low-frequency  
357 fluctuations on computing debris flight, considering the differences between the flat white noise  
358 spectrum (Fig. 4b) and frequency-decaying von Karman spectrum (Fig. 6b).

359 It is known that an actual wind field is neither uncorrelated nor fully correlated, and so this  
360 comparison is intended to set the boundaries of correlation influence on debris flight behavior  
361 within the context of the selected conditions (release height, open flow, spherical debris, etc.). It  
362 can be concluded that the presence of correlation is a significant contributor to simulated debris  
363 flight behavior. It remains to be determined how sensitive simulated debris flight is to the layered  
364 complexities of correlation that span no-correlation through full correlation, as well as the  
365 influence of non-Gaussian turbulence.

366



(a) Gaussian turbulence; No spatial correlation (b) Gaussian turbulence; Full spatial correlation  
**Figure 11.** Influence of turbulence spatial correlation on debris flight

367

368 4.1.1.1 *Influence of vertical correlation*

369 The influence of vertical correlation is investigated through comparing the result of (1) full spatial  
 370 correlation (Section 3.1.2) and (2) distance-decaying vertical correlation and full along-wind  
 371 correlation (Section 3.1.3.1). The results in Fig. 12 show that the difference between the two  
 372 scenarios is very small. To further investigate the underlying mechanism, two hypotheses are  
 373 proposed here.

374 Hypothesis A: Spatial correlation is large over the relatively short distance between debris  
 375 release elevation and the ground (as per the Davenport coherence function). That is, this example  
 376 contrasts full vertical correlation with very large but not full vertical correlation, and little  
 377 difference is observed.

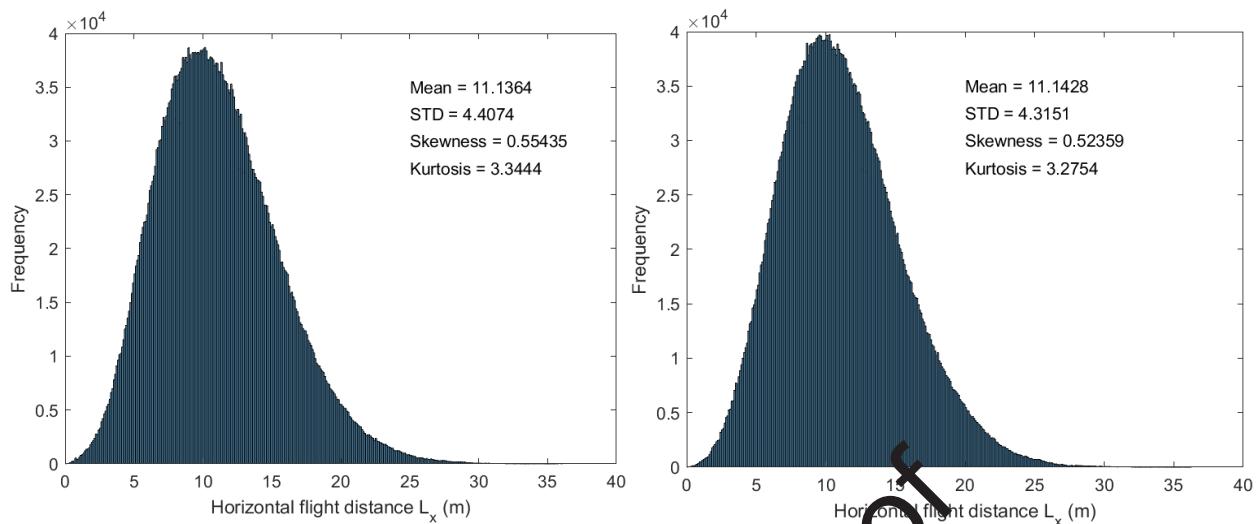
378 Hypothesis B: Debris flight trajectories are mostly sensitive to the turbulence at the early  
 379 stage of flight, and the local wind field covering the initial portion of the debris flight is highly  
 380 correlated to the wind fluctuation at the debris release location.

381 Hypothesis A is tested by conducting simulations of debris released at 100 m elevation,  
382 where the turbulence correlation between debris release elevation and the ground is much smaller  
383 than the case of a 20 m release elevation. The simulation results (not shown) yield insignificant  
384 differences between (1) full spatial correlation and (2) distance-decaying vertical correlation and  
385 full along-wind correlation, which disproves Hypothesis A.

386 To test Hypothesis B, two additional cases, deviating from baseline of distance-decaying  
387 vertical correlation and full along-wind correlation, are considered: (1) no turbulence for debris  
388 traveling between  $z = 0$  m and  $z = 10$  m, (2) no turbulence for debris traveling between  $z = 10$  m  
389 and  $z = 20$  m. The simulation results are shown in Fig. 13. For the case of no turbulence for lower  
390 portion of debris flight, the debris flight characteristics (Fig. 13c and 13d) are very close to the  
391 baseline (Fig. 13a and 13b). The debris has proved the importance of turbulence in the initial flight,  
392 which supports Hypothesis B. In contrast, the case of no turbulence for upper portion of debris  
393 flight (Fig. 13e and 13f) has significantly smaller variation in debris flight distance, which  
394 reconfirms the higher importance of turbulence in the initial stage of debris flight. This finding of  
395 higher importance of turbulence in the initial stage is also consistent with that reported in the  
396 literature (Dong et al., 2023). Additional simulations using the “temporal” half to partition the  
397 initial and later flight stage have also been conducted in Appendix C to complement the result in  
398 Fig. 13 using “spatial” half.

399

400

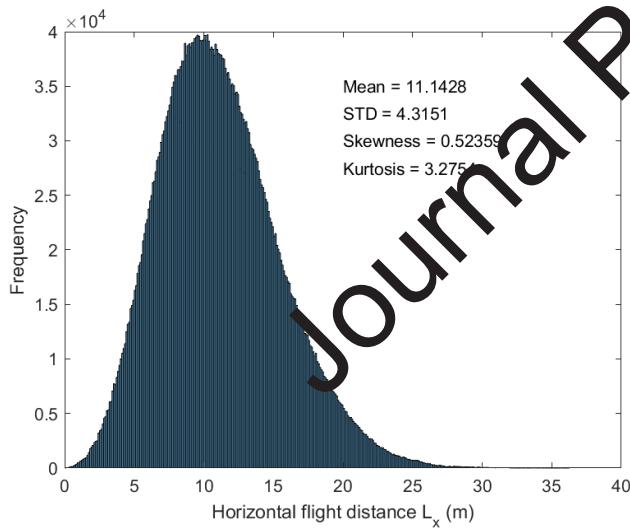


(a) Gaussian turbulence; Full spatial correlation

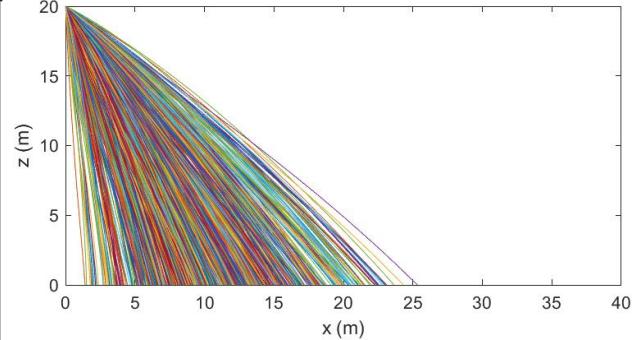
(b) Gaussian turbulence; Distance-decaying vertical correlation and full along-wind correlation

**Figure 12.** Influence of vertical correlation on debris flight

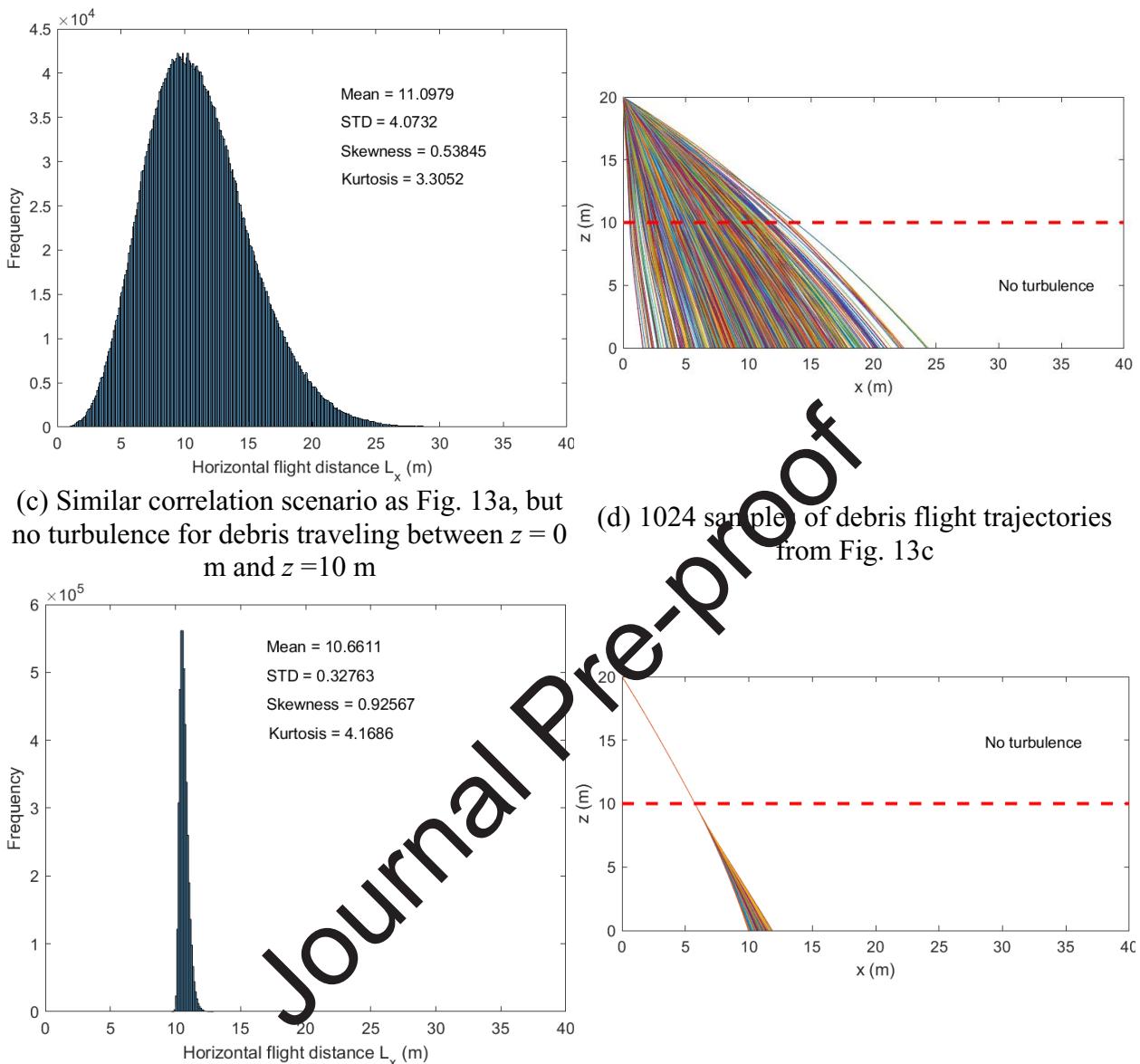
401



(a) Baseline: repeat of Figure 12b



(b) 1024 samples of debris flight trajectories from Fig. 13a / 12b



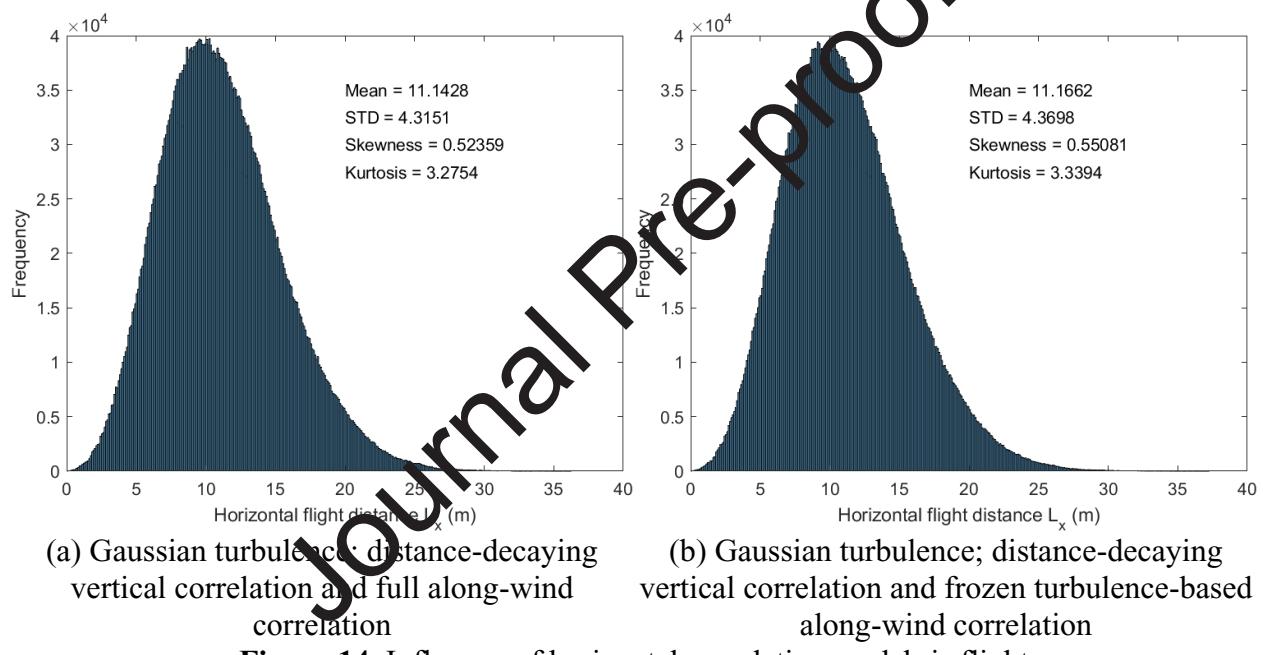
**Figure 13.** Dissection of vertical correlation's influence on debris flight

402

403 4.1.1.2 *Influence of along-wind correlation*

404 The influence of along-wind correlation is investigated by comparing the result of (1) distance-  
 405 decaying vertical correlation and full along-wind correlation (Section 3.1.3.1) and (2) distance-  
 406 decaying vertical correlation and frozen turbulence-based along-wind correlation (Section

407 3.1.3.2). The results in Fig. 14 suggest very small differences between the two scenarios. This  
 408 negligible difference can be attributed to the short time delay calculated in the frozen turbulence-  
 409 based assumption (Eq. 14) due to the small flight distance and high wind speed. This short time  
 410 delay (e.g., in the order of 0.25s for the flying debris at  $x = 6\text{m}$  and  $z = 10\text{m}$ ) is smaller than the  
 411 large period of low-frequency turbulence (e.g., the passage time of an integral length scale for the  
 412 wind turbulence at  $z = 10\text{m}$  is in the order of 4s), and the resulting variation in wind speed is not  
 413 significant for debris flight.



**Figure 14. Influence of horizontal correlation on debris flight**

414

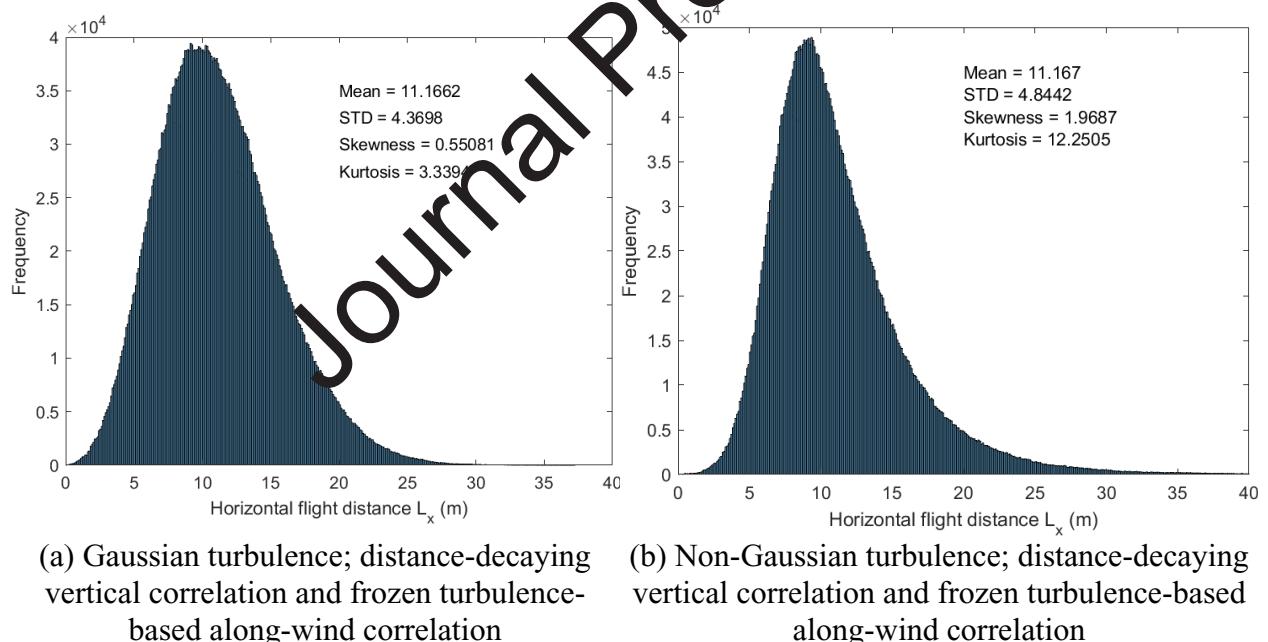
#### 415 **4.2 Influence of turbulence high-order statistics on debris flight**

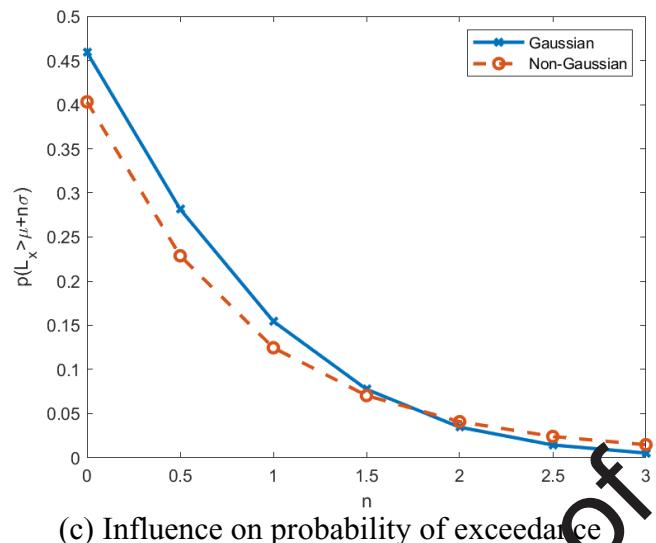
416 This section investigates influence of high-order turbulence behavior on debris flight by comparing  
 417 the result of Gaussian (Section 3.1.3.2) and non-Gaussian turbulence (Section 3.2) while  
 418 maintaining the same spatial correlation and power spectral characteristics in both cases (distance-  
 419 decaying vertical correlation and frozen turbulence-based along-wind correlation). Fig. 15a and  
 420 15b shows that the mean value of the horizontal flight distance remains unchanged, while the

421 standard deviation slightly increases due to the non-Gaussian turbulence. The most pronounced  
 422 difference is that the skewness and kurtosis of debris flight distance are much larger compared to  
 423 the Gaussian counterparts. The probability of exceedance  $p(L_x > \mu^{MN} + n\mu^{SD})$  for debris flying  
 424 beyond  $n$  times the standard deviation,  $\mu^{SD}$ , from the mean value,  $\mu^{MN}$ , is shown in Fig. 15c, which  
 425 shows that a Gaussian simulation underestimates the debris flight distance for the extreme cases  
 426 (the tail region beyond two standard deviation away from mean). These results demonstrate the  
 427 potential importance of considering non-Gaussian wind fields in debris risk analysis.

428 For the sake of clarity, the simulation results of all the investigated scenarios are  
 429 summarized in Fig. 16.

430





(c) Influence on probability of exceedance

Figure 15. Influence of turbulence high-order statistics on debris flight

431

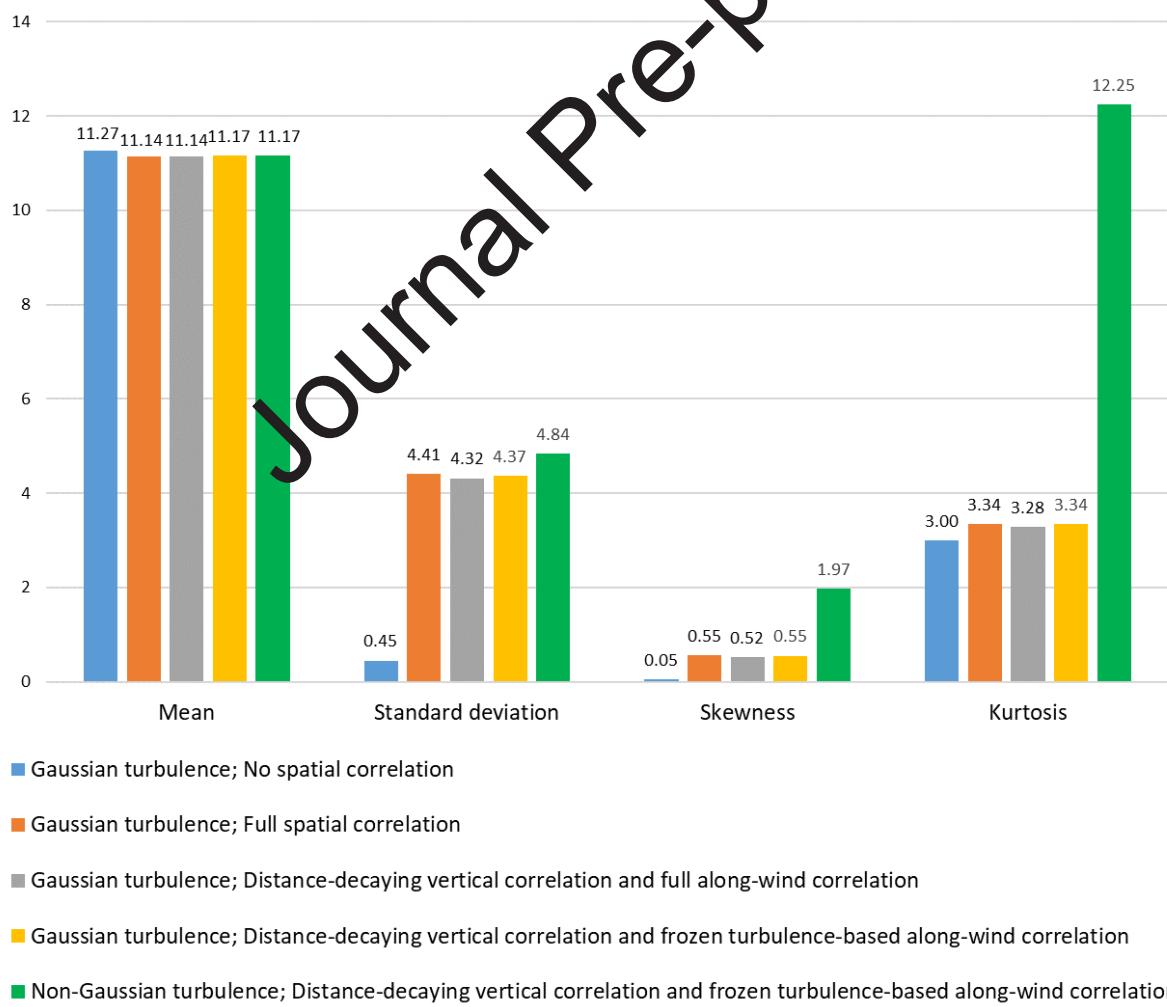
432  
433

Figure 16. Summary of simulation results

434 **5 IMPLICATIONS FOR WIND TUNEL TESTING**

435 Noting that the debris shape, size and density, release height, wind speed and spectral model used  
436 in this study are selected to emulate the conditions feasible in a boundary layer wind tunnel, the  
437 obtained results can effectively inform decisions regarding experimental studies of tracking  
438 spherical debris flight. The main implications for wind tunnel testing are summarized in the  
439 following.

440 (1) The significant influence of low-frequency turbulence on debris flight demonstrates the  
441 value of introducing active turbulence generation such as active controlled fans (e.g., Catarelli et  
442 al., 2020; Li et al., 2021) to address the low-frequency turbulence deficit in conventional wind  
443 tunnels that employ only passive turbulence generation mechanisms.

444 (2) Considering the limited number of debris flight tracking tests in the wind tunnel, debris  
445 should be sequentially released to the turbulent flow with a relatively large interval so that enough  
446 number of low-frequency turbulence can be covered (i.e., avoid the case that all debris are trapped  
447 in one single gust).

448 (3) Based on the statistics of the debris horizontal flight distance,  $L_x$ , the view window of  
449 the debris tracking system (e.g., high-speed cameras) under the wind speed considered in this study  
450 should cover twice the distance of the debris release elevation in the along-wind direction so that  
451 the extreme values of debris landing locations can be captured.

452 (4) Noting the higher importance of turbulence in the initial region of debris flight, it is  
453 critical to deploy more velocity probes and/or PIV measurements near the debris release location  
454 for the future validation of numerical debris flight model against experimental results.

455

456 **6 CONCLUDING REMARKS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

457 This study systematically investigates the influence of spatial correlation and high-order statistics  
458 of wind field turbulence on the flight of spherical windborne debris via numerical stochastic  
459 simulations of the wind field and debris flight. The results show that capturing partial vertical  
460 correlation and the application of Taylor's frozen turbulence in the horizontal produce results  
461 similar but not identical to the simplifying assumption of full correlation. Proper modeling of  
462 spatial correlation during the initial stages of the flight was far more critical than the modeling of  
463 turbulence after sufficient debris momentum was achieved. When spatial correlation is non-zero,  
464 Gaussian wind fluctuations produced slightly non-Gaussian distribution of debris flight distance  
465 with positive skewness and kurtosis larger than 3. The non-Gaussian features of debris flight  
466 distance are amplified when using non-Gaussian turbulence statistics (skewness and kurtosis) with  
467 values informed by field measurements of extreme winds, and the extreme values of flight distance  
468 have larger occurrence probabilities compared to the Gaussian counterpart.

469 Future directions may include consideration of different debris type (e.g., rod or plate) and  
470 properties (e.g., size, density, and release height) in the sensitivity analysis. The uncertainties in  
471 aerodynamic drag on the debris needs to be addressed. Experimental studies involving PIV-based  
472 wind field measurement and high-speed camera-based debris tracking will be useful to validate  
473 the model of wind field and debris flight. Moving beyond the simple open flow condition to  
474 consider the interfering effects of buildings is also a critical step to conduct debris risk analysis for  
475 realistic urban wind environment. Potential challenges that need to overcome include (1) efficient  
476 and accurate simulations of urban wind environments, (2) clear understanding of debris generation  
477 mechanism, and (3) faithful characterization of aerodynamic load on debris with irregular shapes.

478 **7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

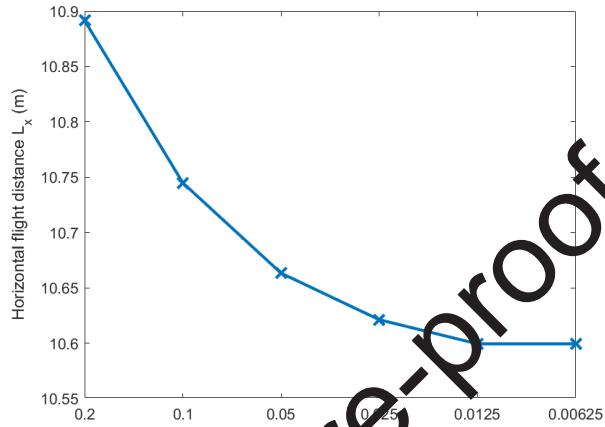
479 The support from NSF grant nos. 2153751 and 2153762, as well as the NSF NHERI shared use  
 480 facility award no. 2037725 is gratefully acknowledged. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions  
 481 or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not necessarily  
 482 reflect the views of NSF.

483 **APPENDIX A: SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS FOR NUMERICAL ACCURACY**

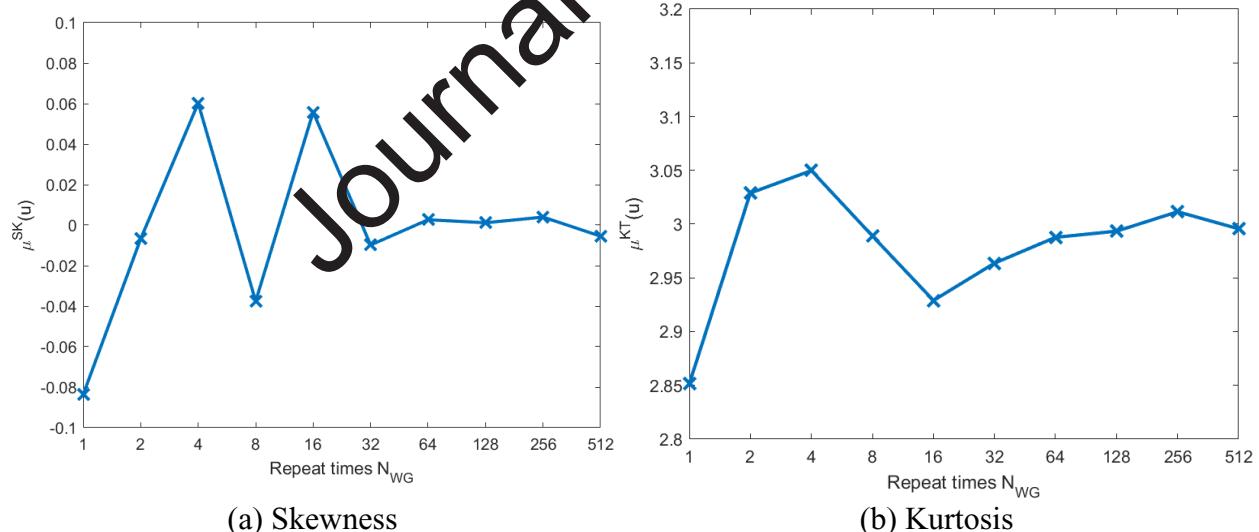
484 This Appendix conducts the sensitivity analysis regarding the effect of spatial ( $\Delta z$ ) and temporal  
 485 discretization ( $\Delta t$ ) as well as the number of repeating wind fluctuation generation ( $N_{WG}$ ) and debris  
 486 release ( $N_{DR}$ ) on the computed flight trajectories based on Monte Carlo simulations. The proper  
 487 values of these four parameters are sequentially determined in the following fashion. First,  
 488 sensitivity analysis regarding  $\Delta t$  is conducted based on the debris flight distance in along-wind  
 489 direction  $L_x$  under only mean wind speed without turbulence. Then, the proper value of  $N_{WG}$  is  
 490 determined when the ensemble of  $N_{WG}$  realizations of wind fluctuations  $u$  (using the SRM in  
 491 Section 3.1.2) achieves target Gaussian statistics (i.e., skewness  $\mu^{SK}(u)$  and kurtosis  $\mu^{KT}(u)$  are  
 492 0 and 3 respectively). After that,  $N_{DR}$  debris is randomly released at different time steps of the  
 493 simulated winds with full spatial correlation (as in Section 3.1.1 with no need for spatial  
 494 discretization), where the results of interest are selected as mean  $\mu^{MN}$ , standard deviation  $\mu^{SD}$ ,  
 495 skewness  $\mu^{SK}$ , and kurtosis  $\mu^{KT}$  of  $L_x$ . With the selected  $\Delta t$ ,  $N_{WG}$  and  $N_{DR}$ , the proper size of  $\Delta z$   
 496 is obtained using the wind fluctuations with distance-decaying vertical correlation and full along-  
 497 wind correlation (Section 3.1.3.1).

498 The results of the sensitivity analysis are shown in Fig. A1 to A 4. Fig. A1 shows that the  
 499 temporal discretization can be selected as  $\Delta t = 0.0125$  s, beyond which the value of  $L_x$  stabilizes.

500 Fig. A2 reveals that the repeat times of wind generation can determined as  $N_{WG} = 128$ . Similarly,  
 501 Fig. A3 indicate that number of debris release can be determined as  $N_{DR} = 2^{15}$ , while Fig. A4  
 502 suggests that the spatial discretization of  $\Delta z = 1$  m to sufficient to obtain a reliable estimate of the  
 503 statistics.

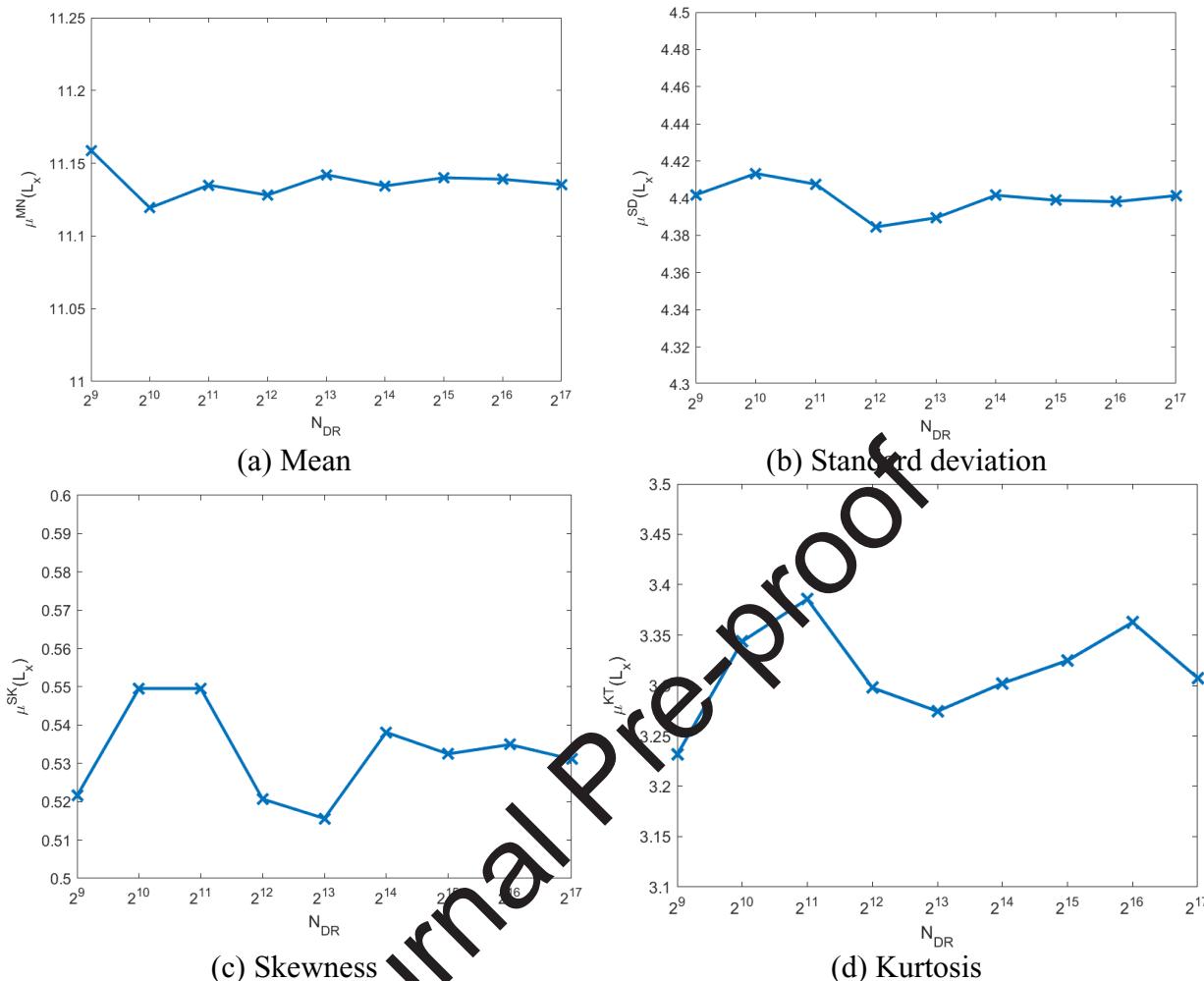
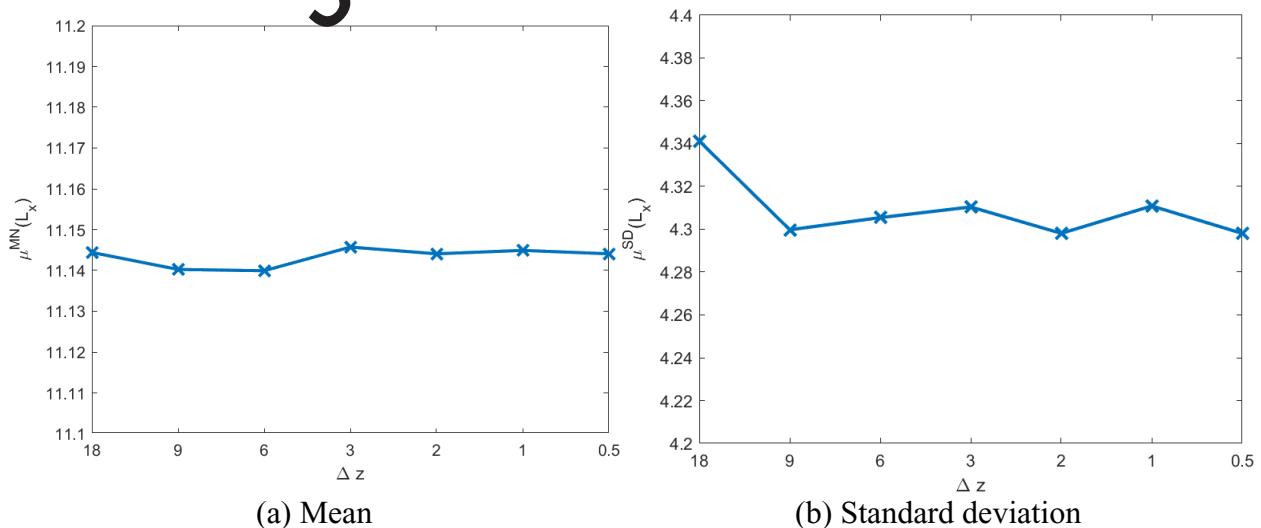


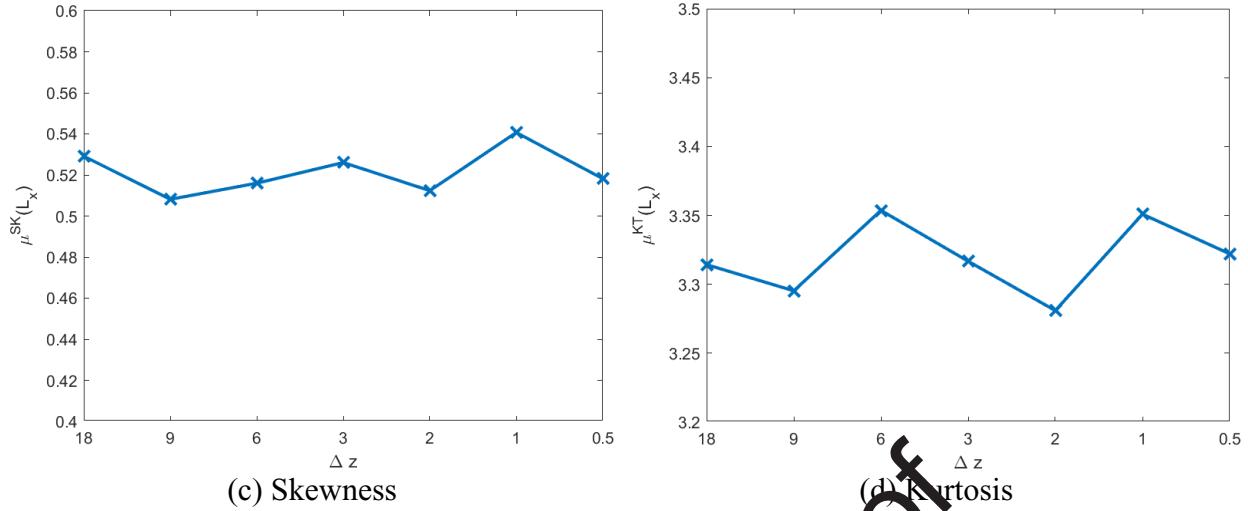
**Figure A1.** Sensitivity analysis on  $\Delta t$



**Figure A2.** Sensitivity analysis on  $N_{WG}$

508  
 509

Figure A3. Sensitivity analysis on  $N_{DR}$ 510  
511

**Figure A4.** Sensitivity analysis on  $\Delta z$ 

512

**513 APPENDIX B: NON-GAUSSIAN WIND SIMULATION BASED ON HERMITE MODEL**

514 The target high-order statistics of skewness and kurtosis are specified respectively as  $\mu_k^{SK}$  and  $\mu_k^{KT}$   
 515 for different spatial locations  $k$  (with  $k = 1, 2, \dots, n$ ). The corresponding Hermite parameters  $c_k$  and  
 516  $d_k$  can be determined by solving a set of nonlinear equations so that these high-order moments  
 517 will be matched after translation (Gurley et al., 1997):

$$518 \quad \mu_k^{SK} = E_k^3 (8c_k^3 + 108c_k d_k^2 + 36c_k d_k + 6c_k) \quad (B-1a)$$

$$519 \quad \mu_k^{KT} = E_k^4 (60c_k^4 + 3348d_k^4 + 2232c_k^2d_k^2 + 60c_k^2 + 252d_k^2 + 1296d_k^3 + 576c_k^2d_k + \\ 520 \quad 24d_k + 3) \quad (B-1b)$$

521 with  $E_k = \frac{1}{\sqrt{1+2c_k^2+6d_k^2}}$ . Eq. (B-1) can be solved numerically or via close form approximations

522 (Yang et al., 2013). On the other hand, the target PSDM of the non-Gaussian wind fluctuation is  
 523 prescribed as  $\mathbf{S}^N(\omega)$ , where each element  $S_{jk}^N(\omega)$  (with  $j$  and  $k = 1, 2, \dots, n$ ) is obtained using the  
 524 same method as in Eq. (11)-(13) for effective comparison with the Gaussian counterpart (i.e., vary  
 525 skewness and kurtosis, while keeping PSDM unchanged). Without loss of generality, each term is  
 526 normalized as:

527  $S_{jk}^N(\omega) = \frac{S_{jk}^N(\omega)}{\sqrt{\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} S_{jj}^N(\omega) d\omega \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} S_{kk}^N(\omega) d\omega}}$  (B-2)

528 Based on the target PSDM  $\mathbf{S}^N(\omega)$ , each element  $\rho_{jk}^N(\tau)$  in the equivalent correlation coefficient  
529 function matrix (CCFM)  $\boldsymbol{\rho}^N(\tau)$  can be obtained by the inverse Winener-Khintchine relationship:

530  $\rho_{jk}^N(\tau) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} S_{jk}^N(\omega) e^{I\omega\tau} d\omega$  (B-3)

531 where  $I$  is the imaginary unit. The corresponding correlation coefficient function for the underlying  
532 Gaussian process can be obtained via the explicit correlation distortion function (Yang and Gurley,  
533 2015):

534  $\rho_{jk}^G(\tau) = B - \frac{A}{B} - \frac{c_j c_k}{9d_j d_k}$  (B-4a)

535 with

536  $A = \frac{1}{18d_j d_k} - \frac{c_j^2 c_k^2}{81d_j^2 d_k^2}$  (B-4b)

537  $B =$

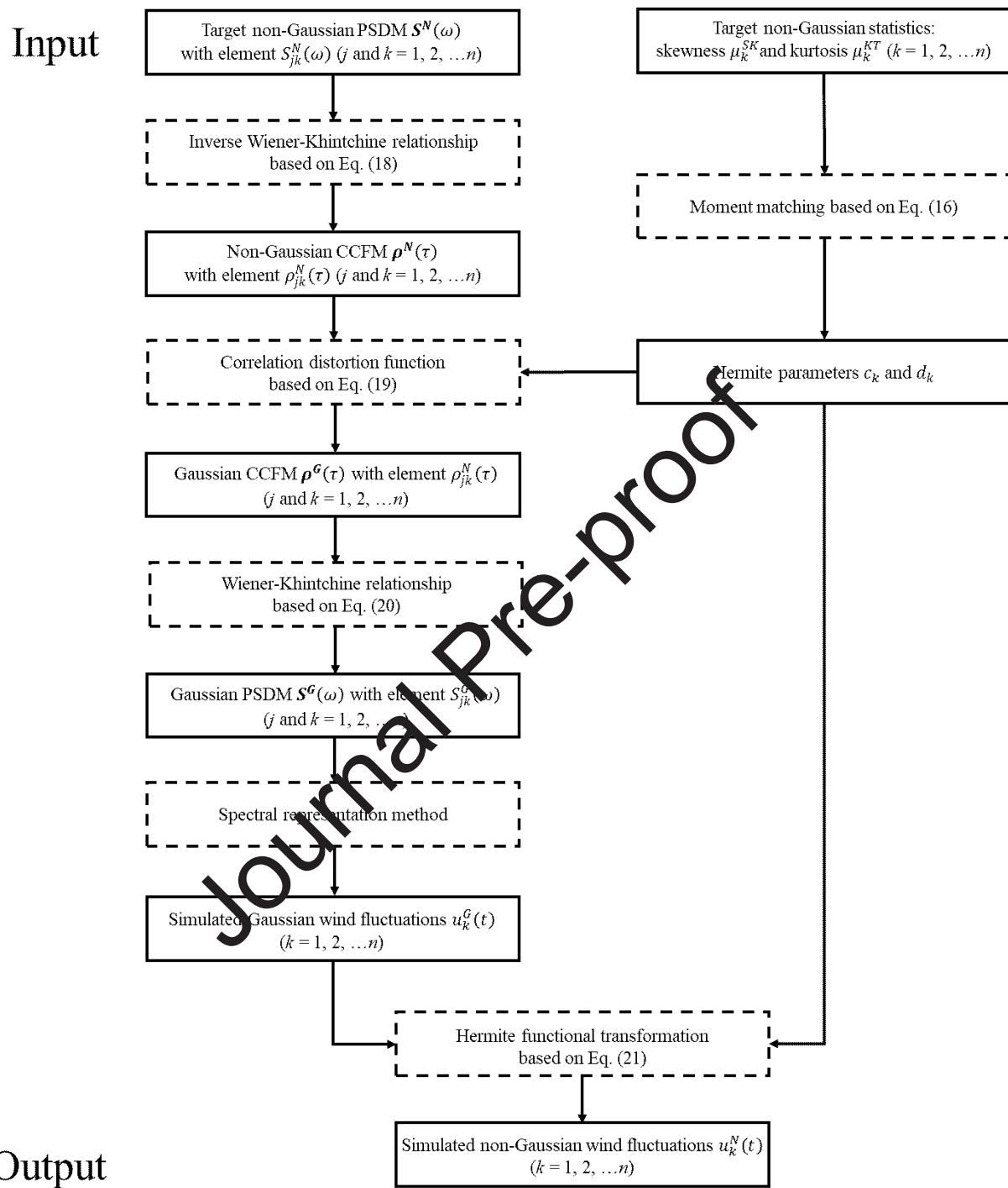
538  $\left[ \frac{\rho_{jk}^G(\tau)}{12d_j d_k E_j E_k} + \frac{c_j c_k}{108d_j^2 d_k^2} - \frac{c_j^3 c_k^3}{729d_j^3 d_k^3} + \sqrt{\left( \frac{\rho_{jk}^G(\tau)}{12d_j d_k E_j E_k} + \frac{c_j c_k}{108d_j^2 d_k^2} - \frac{c_j^3 c_k^3}{729d_j^3 d_k^3} \right)^2 + A^3} \right]^{1/3}$  (B-4c)

539 The corresponding spectral term  $S_{jk}^G(\omega)$  in the PSDM for the underlying Gaussian process  $\mathbf{S}^G(\omega)$   
540 can be then obtained by the Winener-Khintchine relationship:

541  $S_{jk}^G(\omega) = \frac{1}{2\pi} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \rho_{jk}^G(\tau) e^{-I\omega\tau} d\tau$  (B-5)

542 With the obtained  $\mathbf{S}^G(\omega)$ , the spatially correlated Gaussian wind fluctuations  $u_k^G(t)$  can be  
543 conveniently simulated for different locations using the SRM (e.g., Deodatis, 1996). The non-  
544 Gaussian wind fluctuations can then be obtained by the third order Hermite functional  
545 transformation with previously calculated parameters:

546  $u_k^N(t) = E_k \left\{ u_k^G(t) + c_k [u_k^{G^2}(t) - 1] + d_k [u_k^{G^3}(t) - 3u_k^G(t)] \right\}$  (B-6)



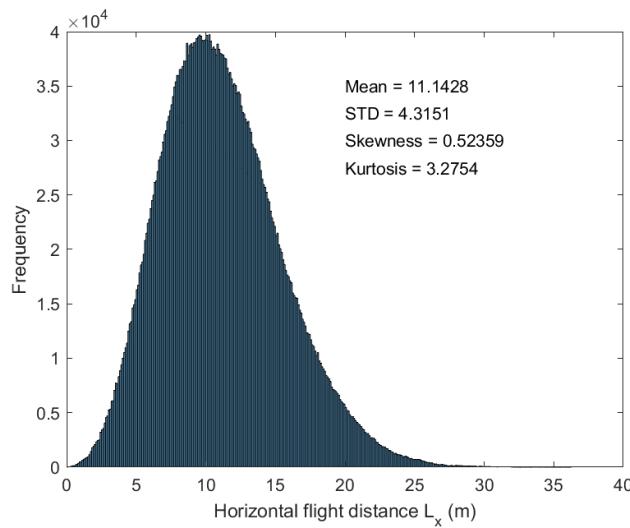
**Figure B1.** Schematic description of simulating non-Gaussian wind fluctuations based on Hermite model

550    **APPENDIX C: FURTHER INVESTIGATION ON INITIAL-STAGE AND LATER-**  
551    **STAGE TURBULENCE**

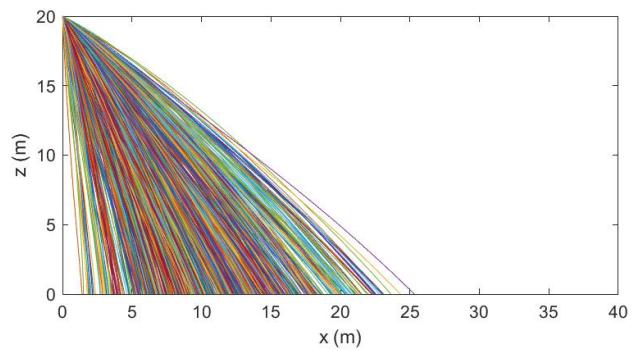
552    It is straightforward in Fig. 13 to select the “spatial” half to partition the initial and later stage of  
553    debris flight, considering the focus of this study is the effect of “spatial” correlation on debris  
554    flight. Noting that debris tend to spend less time on the latter “spatial” half of the flight due to the  
555    higher vertical travel speed, it is worthwhile to conduct additional analysis using the “temporal”  
556    half with equal travel time for the two stages. The results are shown in Fig. C1. Approximately,  
557    the first “temporal” half covers  $z = 20\text{m}$  to  $z = 15\text{m}$ , while the second “temporal” half covers  $z =$   
558     $15\text{m}$  to  $z = 0\text{m}$ . The results are similar to that using the “spatial” half in Fig 13, which proves that  
559    turbulence at the initial stage of the flight is more critical!

560       For effective comparison, Fig. C2 depicts 1024 samples of debris flight for the two cases  
561    of considering only the initial-stage turbulence and only the later-stage turbulence. As shown in  
562    Fig. C2, given the same flight time, the variations in the debris location immediately after the  
563    action of turbulence are close for the two cases (the two red boxes). However, even without the  
564    action of turbulence in the later stage, the variation in the debris location caused by the turbulence  
565    at the initial stage (the red box in the bottom figure) can continue to develop. In this sense, the  
566    turbulence effect at the initial stage has twice the “developing” time compared to that of the later-  
567    stage turbulence.

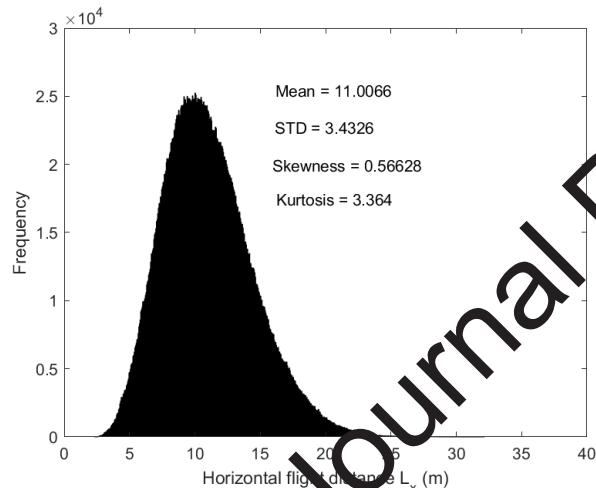
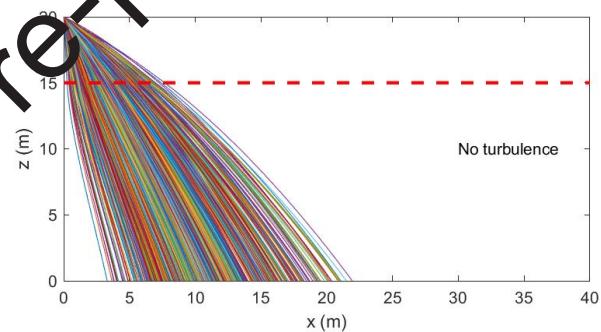
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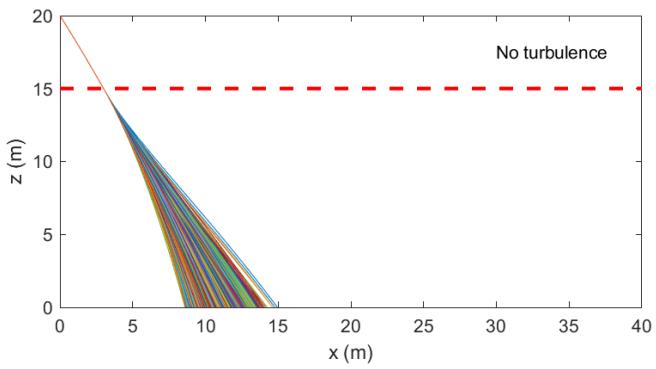
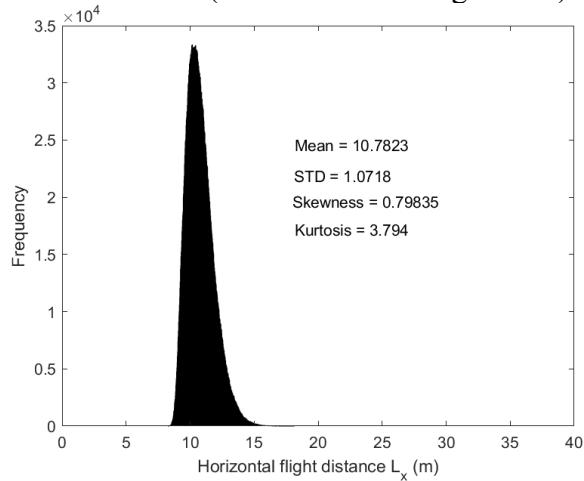
(a) Baseline: repeat of Figure 12(b)



(b) 1024 samples of debris flight trajectories from Fig. C1(a)

(c) Similar correlation scenario as Fig. C1(a), but no turbulence for debris traveling between  $z = 15$  m and  $z = 0$  m (half of the total flight time)

(d) 1024 samples of debris flight trajectories from Fig. C1(c)

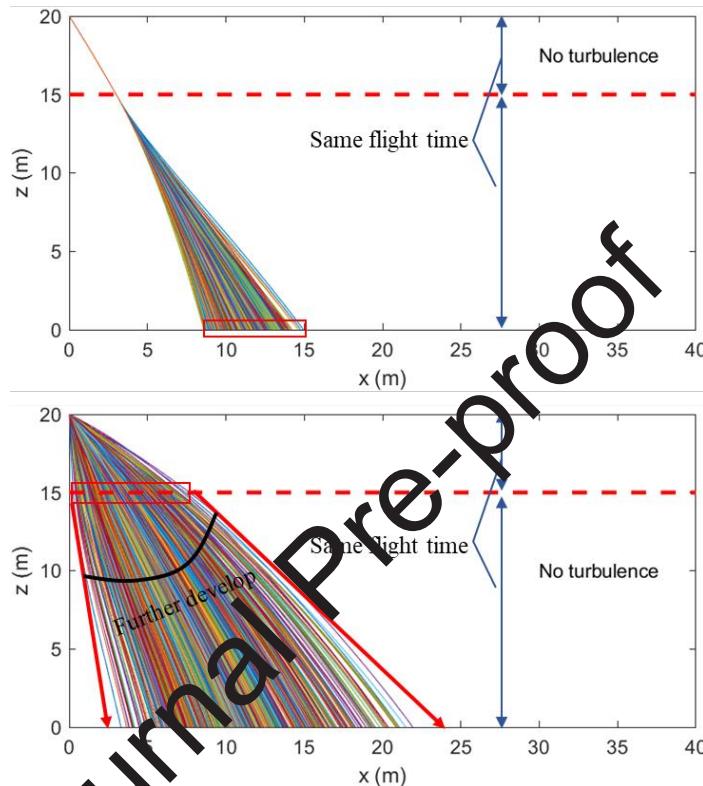


(e) Similar correlation scenario as Fig. C1(a), but no turbulence for debris traveling between  $z = 20$  m to  $z = 15$  m (half of the total flight time)

(f) 1024 samples of debris flight trajectories from Fig. C1(e)

**Figure C1.** Dissection of vertical correlation's influence on debris flight using "temporal" half

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**Figure C2.** Effect of initial and later-stage turbulence on debris flight

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**Declaration of interests**

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

The authors declare the following financial interests/personal relationships which may be considered as potential competing interests:

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