

Temperature

In 1848, Sir William Thomson (Lord Kelvin) stated the zero principle of dynamics. This principle enabled him to define thermodynamic temperature and to establish an objective method of measuring it.

When two systems are each in thermal equilibrium with a third, they are in thermal equilibrium with each other. This equilibrium is expressed by their equal temperatures. If a conventional value is ascribed to the temperature of a system in a given physical state, other temperatures can be determined by thermodynamic measures.

In 1961, the General Conference on Weights and Measures chose as the standard unit of thermodynamic temperature the Kelvin (K), defined as the degree on the thermodynamic scale of absolute temperatures at which the triple point of water is 273.16K (the equivalent of 0°C). At this temperature ice, water and water vapour can co-exist in equilibrium.

According to this convention the freezing and boiling points of water under atmospheric pressure are respectively 273.15K and 373.15K. The temperature interval measured by one Kelvin is equal to that which measures 1°C.

Without the facilities of highly specialised laboratories, it is extremely difficult to use thermodynamic thermometers (gas and radiation types) and other phenomena are utilised for practical convenience:

- i) Change in electrical resistance with temperature in metals
- ii) thermoelectric activity (e.m.f. produced by thermocouples)

On this basis, resistance thermometers and thermocouples have been developed. In order to define the relationship between temperature and the electrical properties of such sensors, they have to be measured and compared at given temperature values. Temperature scales were devised to this end based on "fixed points", temperatures at which pure elements change their physical states (solid/liquid/gas). Interpolations between these points are made by highly precise thermometers for specified temperature ranges. The international temperature scale -ITS 90 provides the current, practical reference.

Introduction

THE NEW LABFACILITY TEMPERATURE HANDBOOK

A comprehensive reference text and user guide for anyone involved in temperature measurement and control

The new Labfacility Temperature Handbook is a budget priced comprehensive, up to date reference text for users of thermocouples, PRTs and thermistors and associated instrumentation. Detailed enough for engineers and scientists, it is also suitable for technicians and students. Written with practical bias, the handbook contains considerable reference data and basic theory and is therefore of great value as a training aid for those entering the field of temperature measurement and control.

The handy A5 size book contains 139 pages, 40 of them being reference data and uses 65 illustrations. The broad scope of the handbook includes detailed temperature sensor guidance, sensor theory and practice and comprehensive applications guidance. Additional chapters describe temperature control, transmitters, instrumentation and data acquisition and a 40 page reference section carries a wealth of data on thermocouple and platinum resistance thermometry.

This handbook is designed to be of particular value to those technicians and engineers involved with electrical temperature measurement and control. The emphasis is on practical aspects but the basic theory and applications aspects will be of particular interest to students and apprentices.

Information provided in this publication is intended as general guidance and not necessarily deemed definitive. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of information presented but the reader should refer to manufacturer/supplier data and relevant published standards when procuring or using any sensors, materials or equipment.

Specifications and data included in this handbook may be subject to change

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INTRODUCTION

- 1. TEMPERATURE MEASUREMENT USING ELECTRICAL TECHNIQUES8**
- 2. THERMOCOUPLE THEORY AND PRACTICE.....10**
 - 2.1. BASIC THEORY10
 - 2.2. THERMOCOUPLE PRACTICE11
 - 2.2.1. Terminating the thermocouple.....11
 - 2.2.2. External Reference Junction Techniques.....13
 - 2.3. THERMOCOUPLE INSTALLATION AND APPLICATION.....14
 - 2.3.1. Sheathed Thermocouples – Measuring Junctions.....14
 - 2.3.2. Connecting Thermocouples to Instruments15
 - 2.3.3. Guide to Wire and Cable Insulation and Coverings17
 - 2.3.4. Performance considerations when Connecting Thermocouples 17
 - 2.4. DIFFERENT THERMOCOUPLE TYPES19
 - 2.5. THERMOCOUPLE CONSTRUCTION21
 - 2.6. ACCURACY AND RESPONSE.....22
 - 2.6.1. High Accuracy Thermocouple Measurement22
 - 2.6.2. Thermocouple Response Times.....22
 - 2.6.3. Immersion Length23
 - 2.6.4. Surface Temperature Measurement24
- 3. RESISTANCE THERMOMETER THEORY AND PRACTICE25**
 - 3.1. BASIC THEORY25
 - 3.2. ADOPTION OF Pt100 THERMOMETERS27
 - 3.3. RESISTANCE THERMOMETER PRACTICE27
 - 3.3.1. Terminating the Resistance Thermometer.....27
 - 3.3.2. Transmitters.....30
 - 3.4. RESISTANCE THERMOMETER INSTALLATION AND APPLICATION30
 - 3.4.1. Sheathed Resistance Thermometers – Pt100 Sensing Resistors.30
 - 3.4.2. Connecting Resistance Thermometers to Instruments32
 - 3.4.3. Guide to Cable Insulation and Coverings.....33
 - 3.4.4. Performance Considerations when Using Resistance Thermometers33
 - 3.4.5. Surface Temperature Measurement35
 - 3.4.6. High Accuracy Measurement.....35

4. NTC THERMISTOR & INFRARED (NON-CONTACT) SENSORS.....	37
4.1. RESISTANCE / TEMPERATURE CHARACTERISTICS OF NTC THERMISTORS	37
4.1.1. Electrical Resistivity	38
4.1.2. Self-heating	39
4.2. INFRARED TEMPERATURE MEASUREMENT	39
4.2.1. Principles of Infrared Sensing	39
4.2.2. Methods of Measurement	39
5. SHEATH MATERIALS, THERMOWELLS, FITTINGS AND TERMINATIONS	41
5.1. CONSTRUCTION OF INDUSTRIAL TEMPERATURE PROBES	41
5.2. TERMINAL HEADS	42
5.3. SHEATH MATERIALS	43
5.3.1. Thermocouple Sheath Materials – Application Guide	43
5.3.2. Metallic and Non-metallic sheath materials	45
5.4. THERMOWELLS	46
5.5. FITTINGS	49
5.6. INTERCONNECTIONS	50
6. TEMPERATURE CALIBRATION	53
6.1. CERTIFICATION	54
6.2. THERMAL TEMPERATURE CALIBRATION	54
6.2.1. Equipment Required for a Calibration System	54
6.2.2. Fixed Points	57
6.2.3. Electrical Calibration – Simulators and Sources	58
7. TRANSMITTERS AND INSTRUMENTATION	59
7.1. SENSOR CONSIDERATIONS WITH INSTRUMENTATION	60
7.2. TRANSMITTERS AND SIGNAL CONDITIONING	61
7.3. INSTRUMENTATION & DATA COMMUNICATIONS & EMC	62
7.3.1. Temperature Measurement & Control	62
7.3.2. Data Acquisition & Logging	66
7.3.3. Data Communications & Analogue retransmission	67
7.3.4. Electro-magnetic compatibility (EMC)	68
8. TEMPERATURE CONTROL	69
8.1. CONTROL LOOPS EXPLAINED	69
8.2. PID EXPLAINED	70

8.3.	OPTIMISING CONTROL TERMS (TUNING).....	74
8.4.	CONTROL OUTPUTS & ALARMS	75
9.	REFERENCE SECTION	77
9.1.	THERMOCOUPLE THERMOMETRY	77
9.1.1.	Thermocouple Accuracies IEC 584-2:1982	77
9.1.2.	Base Metal Extension and Compensating Wires and Cable Types and tolerances IEC 584-3:1989	78
9.1.3.	Wire and Cable Data	80
	Colour Codes IEC 584-3:1989 (inside back cover)	
9.2.	PLATINUM RESISTANCE THERMOMETRY.....	83
9.2.1.	Tolerances for Pt100 Thermometers to IEC 751:1983	83
9.2.2.	Connection Configurations and Termination Colour Codes IEC 751:1983	83
9.3.	THERMOCOUPLE AND Pt100 CHARACTERISTICS	84
9.3.1.	Pt100 Characteristics IEC 751:1983.....	84
9.3.2.	Thermocouple Characteristics IEC 584-1:1995	86
9.4.	GENERAL THERMOMETRY DATA AND OTHER REFERENCE INFORMATION	109
9.4.1.	Temperature Conversion Table °C / °F	109
9.4.2.	Fixed Temperature Points	110
9.4.3.	International Temperature Scale ITS-90	110
9.4.4.	Grades of Protection for Enclosures	111
9.4.5.	Problem Solving in Temperature Measurement & Control Using Thermocouples or Resistance Thermometers	113
9.4.6.	International and National Standard Specifications	114
10.	GLOSSARY OF TERMS	117
10.1	Abbreviations and Acronyms for Standards & Standard Bodies	117
10.2	Calibration.....	117
10.3	Control	118
10.4	Instrumentation – General.....	119
10.5	Thermometry – General	122
11.	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS and REFERENCES	127
12.	FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS.....	128
13.	INDEX.....	133