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

Published by:
Labfacility Ltd
Middlesex
UK

Origination and Artwork by:
UKL Technical Services
Angmering
West Sussex. UK

Data Temperature handbook
TH0204 V2.0

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