

General principles of cathodic protection in sea water

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National foreword

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Reference should also be made to BS 7361, Code of Practice for land and marine applications, which will eventually be withdrawn when all the CEN Standards relating to Cathodic Protection currently being prepared, are published.

The UK participation in its preparation was entrusted to Technical Committee GEL/603, Cathodic Protection, which has the responsibility to:

- aid enquirers to understand the text;
- present to the responsible European committee any enquiries on the interpretation, or proposals for change, and keep the UK interests informed;
- monitor related international and European developments and promulgate them in the UK.

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Summary of pages

This document comprises a front cover, an inside front cover, the EN title page, pages 2 to 32, an inside back cover and a back cover.

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General principles of cathodic protection in sea water

Principes généraux de la protection cathodique en eau de mer

Allgemeine Grundsätze des katodischen Korrosionsschutzes in Meerwasser

This European Standard was approved by CEN on 3 December 1999.

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Contents		Page
Foreword		4
1	Scope	5
2	Normative references	5
3	Terms and definitions	5
4	Corrosion principles of buried or immersed metals	9
4.1	The nature of metallic corrosion	9
4.2	Polarization	10
5	Principles of cathodic protection	12
6	The application of cathodic protection	14
6.1	Sacrificial anode method	14
6.2	Impressed current method	14
6.3	Hybrid systems	15
7	Determination of level of cathodic protection	17
7.1	Measurement of protection level	17
7.2	Reference electrodes	17
7.3	Potentials of reference electrodes	17
7.4	Potential measurement	18
8	Guidance for protection	18
8.1	General	18
8.2	Steel	18
8.3	Other metallic materials	19
9	Design considerations	22
9.1	Introduction	22
9.2	Technical and operating data	23
9.3	Surfaces to be protected	23
9.4	Protective coatings	23
9.5	Availability of electrical power	23
9.6	Weight limitations	23
9.7	Adjacent structures	24

9.8	Installation considerations	24
9.9	Current demand	24
10	Effect of environmental factors on current demand	24
10.1	Introduction	24
10.2	Dissolved oxygen	24
10.3	Sea currents	25
10.4	Calcareous deposits	25
10.5	Temperature	25
10.6	Salinity	26
10.7	pH	26
10.8	Marine fouling	26
10.9	Effect of depth	26
10.10	Seasonal variations and storms	26
11	Secondary effects of cathodic protection	27
11.1	Alkalinity	27
11.2	Environmentally-assisted cracking	27
11.3	Chlorine	28
11.4	Stray currents and Interference effects	28
12	The use of cathodic protection in association with surface coatings	28
12.1	Introduction	28
12.2	Coating selection	29
12.3	Coating breakdown	29
	Annex A (normative) Reference electrodes	30
	Bibliography	32

Foreword

This European Standard has been prepared by Technical Committee CEN/TC 219, Cathodic protection, the Secretariat of which is held by BSI.

This European Standard shall be given the status of a national standard, either by publication of an identical text or by endorsement, at the latest by July 2000, and conflicting national standards shall be withdrawn at the latest by July 2000.

According to the CEN/CENELEC Internal Regulations, the national standards organizations of the following countries are bound to implement this European Standard: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

Annex A of this European Standard is normative.

1 Scope

This European Standard covers the general principles of cathodic protection including the criteria for protection, environmental and design considerations and secondary effects of cathodic protection and is intended as an introduction to other European Standards in the general series "Cathodic Protection of Steel Structures in Sea Water".

This European Standard provides a link between the theoretical aspects and the practical applications of cathodic protection as contained in the European Standards:

prEN 12474:1997, *Cathodic protection for submarine pipelines*.

EN 12495:2000, *Cathodic protection for fixed steel offshore structures*.

prEN 12496:1997, *Galvanic anodes for cathodic protection in sea water and saline mud*.

prEN 13173:1998, *Cathodic protection for steel offshore floating structures*.

This group of European Standards does not cover cathodic protection of steel in concrete, whether immersed or atmospherically exposed. These aspects are covered by prEN 12696-1:1997 and prEN 12696-2.

2 Normative references

This European Standard incorporates by dated or undated reference, provisions from other publications. These normative references are cited at the appropriate places in the text and the publications are listed hereafter. For dated references, subsequent amendments to or revisions of any of these publications apply to this European Standard only when incorporated in it by amendment or revision. For undated references the latest edition of the publication referred to applies.

EN ISO 8044, *Corrosion of metals and alloys – Basic terms and definitions (ISO 8044:1999)*.

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this European Standard the terms and definitions in EN ISO 8044 and the following apply.

3.1

acidity

presence of an excess of hydrogen ions over hydroxyl ions ($\text{pH} < 7$)

3.2

alkalinity

presence of an excess of hydroxyl ions over hydrogen ions ($\text{pH} > 7$)

3.3

anaerobic condition

absence of free oxygen in the electrolyte

3.4

anodic area

that part of a metal surface which acts as an anode

3.5

bond

metal conductor, usually of copper, connecting two points with the intention of making the points equipotential

3.6

calcareous deposits

minerals precipitated on the steel cathode because of the increased alkalinity caused by cathodic protection

3.7

calomel reference electrode

reference electrode consisting of mercury and mercurous chloride in a saturated solution of potassium chloride

3.8

cathodic area

that part of a metal surface which acts as a cathode

3.9

cathodic disbonding

failure of adhesion between a coating and a metallic surface that is directly attributable to the application of cathodic protection

3.10

cathodic protection system

entire installation, including active and passive elements, that provides cathodic protection

3.11

cell

complete electrolytic system comprising of a cathode and an anode in electrical contact and with an intervening electrolyte

3.12

coating breakdown factor

coating breakdown factor is the anticipated reduction in cathodic current density due to the application of an electrically insulating coating when compared to that of bare steel

3.13

coating defect

discontinuity in the protective coating

3.14

coating resistance

electrical resistance between a coated metal and the electrolyte. It is determined largely by the size and number of coating defects and coating pores and is, therefore, indicative of the condition of the coating

3.15

conductor

substance in which electric current flows

3.16

continuity bond

bond designed and installed specifically to ensure electrical continuity of a structure

3.17

copper/copper sulfate reference electrode

reference electrode consisting of copper in a saturated solution of copper sulfate

3.18

corrosion interference

increase or decrease in the rate of corrosion, or the tendency towards corrosion, of an immersed structure caused by the interception of part of the cathodic protection current applied to another immersed structure

3.19

depolarization

removal of factors resisting the flow of current in a cell

3.20

dielectric shield

alkali resistant organic coating applied to the structure being protected in the immediate vicinity of an impressed current anode to enhance the spread of cathodic protection and minimize the risk of hydrogen damage to the protected structure in the vicinity of the anode

3.21

drainage bond

bond to achieve electric drainage

3.22

driving potential

difference between the structure/electrolyte potential and the anode/electrolyte potential

3.23

electrical resistance of coating

see coating resistance

3.24

electronegative

qualification applied to a metallic electrode to indicate that its potential is negative with respect to another metallic electrode in the system

3.25

electro-osmosis

passage of a liquid through a porous medium under the influence of a potential difference

3.26

environmentally assisted cracking

brittle fracture of a normally ductile material in which the corrosive effect of the environment is a contributory factor

3.27

galvanic action

spontaneous electrochemical reaction which occurs in a system comprising a cathode and an anode in electrical contact and with an intervening electrolyte, resulting in corrosion of the anode

3.28

groundbed

system of immersed electrodes connected to the positive terminal of an independent source of direct current and used to direct the cathodic protection current onto the structure being protected

3.29

holiday

see coating defect

3.30

impressed current anode

anode in an impressed current installation

3.31

insulated flange

flanged joint between adjacent lengths of pipe in which the nuts and bolts are electrically insulated from one or both of the flanges and the gasket is non-conducting, so that there is an electrical discontinuity in the pipeline at that point

3.32

ion

atom, or group of atoms, carrying a charge of positive or negative electricity

3.33

isolating joint

electrically discontinuous joint or coupling between two lengths of pipe, inserted in order to provide electrical discontinuity between them

3.34

over polarization

when the structure to electrolyte potentials are more negative than those recommended for satisfactory cathodic protection. Over polarization provides no useful function and may even cause damage to the structure by excessive production of gases which may cause embrittlement or protective coating damage

3.35

polarization

change in the potential of an electrode as the result of current flow to or from that electrode

3.36

potential gradient

difference in potential between two separate points in the same electric field

3.37

protected structure

structure to which cathodic protection is effectively applied

3.38

protection current

current made to flow into a metallic structure from its electrolytic environment in order to effect cathodic protection of the structure

3.39

resistivity (of an electrolyte)

resistivity is the resistance of an electrolyte of unit cross section and unit length. It is expressed in ohm(s) metres (Ω m). The resistivity depends, amongst other things, upon the amount of dissolved salts in the electrolyte

3.40

scale precipitation

formation of insoluble chemical compounds on the surface of a cathodically protected structure. These are referred to as calcareous deposits (see 3.6)

3.41

silver/silver chloride reference electrode

reference electrode consisting of silver, coated with silver chloride, in an electrolyte containing chloride ions

3.42

slow strain rate test

this test involves the slow tensile loading of a specimen of a circular cross section under conditions of constant strain rate with the gauge area exposed to the test environment

3.43

standard hydrogen electrode

reference electrode consisting of an electro-positive metal, such as platinum, in an electrolyte containing hydrogen ions at unit activity and saturated with hydrogen gas at one standard atmosphere

3.44

structure to electrolyte potential

difference in potential between a structure and a specified reference electrode in contact with the electrolyte at a point sufficiently close to, but without actually touching the structure, to avoid error due to the voltage drop associated with any current flowing in the electrolyte

3.45**sulfate reducing bacteria**

group of bacteria found in most soils and natural waters, but active only in conditions of near neutrality and freedom from oxygen. They reduce sulfates in their environment, with the production of sulfides and accelerate the corrosion of structural materials

3.46**telluric currents**

electrical currents induced by time varying changes in the earth's magnetic field. These currents flow generally in the earth or in the oceans. They are able to flow in metallic conductors laid in the soil or in the sea

3.47**transformer rectifier**

transformer rectifier is a device that transforms the alternating voltage to a suitable value and then rectifies it to direct current. Direct current derived in this way is used as a power source for impressed current cathodic protection systems

4 Corrosion principles of buried or immersed metals**4.1 The nature of metallic corrosion**

When a metal corrodes in contact with an electrolyte neutral atoms pass into solution by forming positively charged ions and excess electrons are left in the metal. The process for iron may be expressed as:



Thus corrosion is accompanied by the flow of an electric current from metal to electrolyte due to the movement of positive ions into the electrolyte and of electrons into the metal. Any area to which current flows is referred to as an anodic area and the reaction is called an anodic reaction. The metallic ions may react with negative ions in the electrolyte to give insoluble corrosion products (for example, rust in the case of steel). Such reactions do not materially affect the corrosion process except where insoluble corrosion products stifle further corrosion attack.

For the corrosion reaction to proceed the overall electric neutrality has to be maintained. Therefore, the movement of electrons into the metal and positive ions into the electrolyte at the anodic areas has to be counterbalanced by the consumption of electrons at other areas, known as cathodic areas.

Various reactions can occur at cathodic areas and these are known as cathodic reactions.

The following equations show the most common reactions that occur at cathodes:



oxygen water electrons hydroxyl ions



hydrogen ions electrons hydrogen gas



The first of these reactions occurs in the presence of dissolved oxygen and near-neutral conditions.

The second is favoured by acidity (excess of hydrogen ions) while the third is dominant at pH values greater than neutral.

In aerated near neutral conditions, the iron ions produced at the anode react with the hydroxyl ions formed at the cathodic sites to produce ferrous hydroxide:

