

SHORT CIRCUIT CHARACTERISTICS OF INSULATED CABLE

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SHORT CIRCUIT CHARACTERISTICS

of

INSULATED CABLE

PREFACE

This publication is offered to enable the users of electric cable to determine the operability of cable under short circuit conditions. It may be used in the following ways:

1. To determine the maximum short circuit current permitted for a cable.
2. To determine the cable size necessary to withstand a particular short circuit load.
3. To determine the maximum time a cable may be subjected to a particular short circuit load without damage to the insulation.

A formula has been established for short circuit calculations with conductors of copper or aluminum. The insulations, which determine the maximum allowed short circuit temperatures, are described in ICEA Standards. The formula is based on the heat content of the conductor material and the temperature limit of the insulation with the assumption that the time interval is so short that the heat developed during the short circuit is contained in the conductor. At the time this document was originally published there was no standard mathematical method available to calculate heat flow from the conductor through the insulation at the cessation of the short circuit load. It was necessary to enlist the aid and facilities of member laboratories and Massachusetts Institute of Technology to obtain in cooperation a solution to this problem so that safe temperature limits could be established for the various types of insulation. The solution is still a viable, conservative approach to the calculation of short circuit capacity.

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SHORT CIRCUIT CHARACTERISTICS OF COVERED WIRE & CABLE

Introduction.

This publication discusses factors for consideration in approximating the operability of insulated and/or covered wire and cable under the influence of uninterrupted short circuit currents encountered as a result of cable or other equipment faults. The duration of such a fault is considered to be up to approximately 2 seconds. Calculations for single short circuits of longer durations yield increasingly conservative results.

The following items must be considered in order to estimate the short circuit performance of a specific circuit:

1. The magnitude and duration of the fault current including any fault current division due to available conducting paths.
2. The capability of joints, terminations and other accessories in the affected circuit to withstand the thermal and mechanical stresses created by the fault.
3. The interaction between the faulting circuit and surrounding equipment, such as supports, ties and clamps.
4. The capability of the affected cable circuit, as installed, to withstand the electromagnetic forces created during the fault.
5. The maximum temperature that cable components can withstand without incurring damage due to heating caused by fault current flow.
6. Damage to adjacent equipment due to arcing at the site of the fault.
7. For limitations imposed on the short-circuit capacity of the cable by the fault capacity of the cable metallic sheath/shield, see ICEA Publication P-45-482, *Short Circuit Characteristics of Metallic Sheaths and Shields on Insulated Cable*.

An important simplifying assumption in the formula is the adiabatic nature of the heat generated, *i. e., the duration of the fault is so short that all the heat developed by the fault current during this time is assumed to be completely contained within the conductor.* The amount of heat dissipated from the conductor during continuous, single fault occurrences of relatively short duration is small. A significant amount of heat may be dissipated because of the relatively long

cooling periods involved for faults interrupted and reestablished with automatic reclosing of circuit protective devices. A non-adiabatic calculation may be more suitable for these situations and for single, uninterrupted short circuits in excess of 2 seconds requiring close accuracy. Non-adiabatic calculation methods are described in several published works listed in the reference.

The formula described in this publication is based on the thermal capacity of the conductor material and the transient temperature limit of the insulation. The quantity of heat contained in the conductor is that created by the fault current and is also a function of the temperature rise in the conductor. The magnitude of the temperature rise is the difference between the limiting transient temperature of the insulation material and the operating temperature of the conductor immediately prior to the initiation of the fault. The limiting transient temperature is that temperature which causes no significant change in any cable component.

Scope.

Equations have been established for short circuit calculations for conductors made of copper or aluminum. The coverings and insulations, which determine the maximum allowable short circuit temperatures are: paper, varnished cloth and several thermoplastic and thermosetting materials presently appearing in ICEA standards. Temperature limits, considered safe, were established for the various covering and insulation materials.

The equations may be used to determine:

- the maximum short circuit current permitted for a specific conductor and short circuit duration.
- the conductor size necessary to carry a specific short circuit current for a given duration.
- the maximum duration a specific conductor can carry a specific short circuit current.

Results are sufficiently conservative to neglect conductor skin-effect except for very large conductors. Skin-effect can be taken into account by dividing the right hand member of the equations shown by the appropriate conductor AC/DC resistance ratio.