



IEEE Guide for the Electromagnetic Characterization of Conductive Gaskets in the Frequency Range of DC to 40 GHz

IEEE Electromagnetic Compatibility Society

Developed by the
Standards Development Committee

IEEE Std 1302™-2019
(Revision of IEEE Std 1302-2008)



STANDARDS

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of the
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Approved 7 November 2019

IEEE SA Standards Board

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Abstract: Information to assist users of gaskets in evaluating gasket measurement techniques to determine which exhibit the properties critical to the intended application, to highlight limitations and sources of error of the competing measurement techniques, and to provide a basis for comparing the techniques is provided in this guide. Emphasis is placed on those measurement techniques that have been adopted through incorporation into standards, both commercial and military, or that have been used extensively.

Keywords: aperture transmission, electromagnetic shielding, EMI gaskets, IEEE 1302™, measurement techniques, reverberation chamber, shielding effectiveness, stirred mode, transfer impedance

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Introduction

This introduction is not part of IEEE Std 1302-2019, IEEE Guide for the Electromagnetic Characterization of Conductive Gaskets in the Frequency Range of DC to 40 GHz.

An EMI gasket is a conductive material used to improve the electrical bonding between metallic parts of an electronic chassis, equipment enclosure, or electromagnetic shield. A wide variety of materials and techniques is used to produce EMI gaskets. The effectiveness of gaskets in the closing of seams and joints is dependent upon the properties of the gasket and the method of installation. Several techniques are available to measure the electromagnetic properties of EMI gaskets. Unfortunately, measurement results are often inconsistent between techniques.

This guide provides guidance on the use of recognized techniques for the electromagnetic performance characterization of EMI gaskets. It does not recommend one technique over another. It is recognized that some or all of the “alternative” techniques may, at some time in the future, become widely accepted and practiced. At such time, the guide will be revised to reflect their adoption. It is also recognized that efforts are currently underway to revise the measurement techniques currently covered in this guide. These revisions will be included in future updates of this document.

The theory of gasket behavior given in this guide is highly simplified and is intended to illustrate primary principles only. For a greater understanding of the electromagnetic interactions occurring in a gasketed joint, the reader is advised to consult the many excellent mathematical treatments in books and papers available through the IEEE and other technical publishers.

Contents

1. Overview.....	12
1.1 Scope.....	12
1.2 Purpose.....	12
1.3 Word usage.....	12
1.4 Background.....	13
2. Normative references.....	14
3. Definitions, acronyms, and abbreviations.....	15
3.1 Definitions.....	15
3.2 Acronyms and abbreviations.....	16
4. Factors affecting gasket performance.....	16
5. Gasket measurement techniques.....	19
6. Standardized gasket measuring techniques.....	20
6.1 Transfer impedance.....	20
6.2 Relative aperture transmission.....	23
6.3 Stripline method SAE ARP 6248-2016.....	26
7. Alternative techniques, derived from standardized methods.....	28
7.1 General.....	28
7.2 Effective transmission aperture.....	28
7.3 Slot aperture.....	29
7.4 (Nested) reverberation chambers.....	30
8. Alternative, non-standardized methods.....	32
8.1 General.....	32
8.2 Far-field TEM- <i>t</i> fixture.....	33
8.3 Near-field H- <i>t</i> fixture.....	34
8.4 DC resistance measurement.....	35
9. Selecting a gasket measurement technique.....	35
9.1 General.....	35
9.2 Measurement reference.....	36
9.3 Sample configuration.....	36
9.4 Frequency range.....	37
9.5 Dynamic range.....	37
9.6 Other considerations.....	38
10. Repeatability and measurement uncertainty.....	39
10.1 Repeatability.....	39
10.2 Measurement uncertainty.....	40
11. Test plan.....	40
11.1 General.....	40
11.2 Test plan parameters to be defined.....	40
11.3 Calibration.....	41
11.4 Reference level and dynamic range.....	41

12. Technical report.....	41
12.1 General	41
12.2 Status letter	41
12.3 Full test report.....	42
Annex A (normative) Summary of measuring techniques for gasket.....	43
Annex B (normative) Introduction to the electromagnetic behavior of gasketed joints.....	46
Annex C (informative) Detailed tabulation of standardized aperture transmission methods.....	52
Annex D (informative) Some in-depth discussion on the use of reverberation chambers.....	55
Annex E (informative) VIRC (Vibrating Intrinsic Reverberation Chamber) as an alternative	58
Annex F (informative) Test methods for on-board gasket applications	60
Annex G (informative) Bibliography	62

List of Figures

Figure 1—Typical gasket application.....	17
Figure 2—Equivalent circuit of current path through a gasket	18
Figure 3—Cross section of a gasketed seam with uniform separation between base materials	20
Figure 4—Principle diagram of coaxial transfer impedance test fixture as per SAE ARP 1705-2006 (Rev. A)	21
Figure 5—Simplified representation of the transfer impedance measurement technique.....	21
Figure 6—Principle of SE reference level establishment as described by IEEE Std 299-2006	23
Figure 7—Test setup as used by MIL-DTL-83528G-2017.....	24
Figure 8—Test setup as used by SAE ARP 1173-1975.....	25
Figure 9—Two coupled transmission lines as the basic principle of the stripline set up.....	26
Figure 10—General view of the stripline set up	27
Figure 11—Detailed view of the stripline (left) and the embedded μ strip (right)	27
Figure 12—Clamping plate to hold the sample around the embedded μ strip	27
Figure 13—Broadband radial injection system for measurement of transmitted power	29
Figure 14—Gasket fixture for slot aperture	29
Figure 15—Gasket measurement using reverberation chambers	31
Figure 16—Nested stirred-mode method for characterizing EMI gaskets.....	31
Figure 17—Options for mounting the gasket under test	32
Figure 18—Block diagram of the electromagnetic SE test.....	32
Figure 19—(a) External view (one side) of a newly devised electric field SE measuring device (b) Measuring cell plus gasket holder for measuring the electric field	33
Figure 20—Example of gasket holders	34
Figure 21—(a) External view of the test instrument for the magnetic field (b) Internal construction of the test instrument for magnetic field (c) Measuring cell plus gasket holder for measuring the magnetic field	34
Figure 22—Figure explaining difference between different cross sections under low pressure	36
Figure B.1—Field impedance as a function of distance from the source	47
Figure B.2—Relationship between output voltage and input current in a uniform gasket.....	49
Figure B.3—Cross section of a gasketed seam with uniform separation between base materials.....	50
Figure E.1—Principle of a single VIRC	58
Figure E.2—Setup of the nested reverb room.....	58

Figure E.3—Principle of a dual VIRC.....	59
Figure E.4—Example of a dual VIRC for SE testing of materials (left) and fixing structure of materials under test (right).....	59
Figure F.1—Principle of setup for characterization of gaskets applied to small enclosure on board of PCBs	60
Figure F.2—Schematic drawing for setup of near-field SE characterization, using terminated loop antennae	61

List of Tables

Table A.1—Measurement techniques for SE of conductive gaskets.....	44
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IEEE Guide for the Electromagnetic Characterization of Conductive Gaskets in the Frequency Range of DC to ~~40~~ 18 GHz

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1. Overview

1.1 Scope

The scope of this guide is to provide manufacturers of gaskets and designers of electronic systems appropriate methods for the characterization of gaskets. This document ~~guides~~ ~~will guide~~ the user in the selection of the appropriate test method in order to determine the level of electromagnetic shielding provided in the intended application.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to provide guidance on the strengths and weaknesses of each of the recommended methods, and provide in-depth documentation for each method. Therefore, it identifies limitations and sources of errors of the commonly accepted techniques for measuring gaskets, and provides a basis for comparing the various accepted techniques. It encompasses measurements of the as-installed behavior of gaskets as well as manufacturing-related quality control measurements.

Special attention is also given to test methods for small samples of gaskets (also above 1 GHz), correlation between different methods, and [identification of](#) ~~to identify~~ possible measuring methods for near-field characterization of gaskets [as used on printed circuit board (PCB) board applications].

1.3 Word usage

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1.4 Background

The ideal electromagnetic shield is an infinitely conductive enclosure with no apertures or penetrations of any kind. Functional requirements and practicalities of design and construction prevent this ideal from being realized. Penetrations for power, signals, and ventilation as well as must be provided, access apertures for calibrations, controls, and adjustments could be incorporated into an must exist. ~~The different pieces of chassis and~~ enclosure preventing it from being an ideal enclosure. An enclosure should include all of the intended design features when evaluating it must be joined for its shielding effectiveness ~~the final product~~.

Electromagnetic energy exits or enters the shield at apertures, along conductive penetrations, and through imperfect seams. To restrict this coupling of energy to levels sufficiently low to comply with regulations and to permit interference-free operation, these unwanted coupling paths shall must be closed. Filters are used on the penetrations; screens and covers may be used over apertures. Seams and joints require special attention, however. For shielding, metal flow processes such as welding, brazing, and soldering are the preferred methods for making joints and seams. Many situations arise, however, where these techniques cannot be used and direct metal-to-metal contact does not provide an adequate electromagnetic seal. In these cases, an electromagnetic interference (EMI) gasket should be installed in the joint.

EMI gaskets are conductive materials designed to conform to joint surfaces and provide a low-impedance path. EMI gaskets are made from a wide variety of materials: beryllium copper, galvanized steel, stainless steel, electroplated steel, aluminum, and conductively loaded polymers.

Gasket types include spring fingers, spiraled bands, perforated sheets, knitted wire mesh, conductive fabric, reinforced foil, and oriented wires. Materials added to polymeric binders to achieve conductivity include copper, silver, carbon, aluminum, and nickel as flakes, powders, wires, and coated spheres. The shapes available include sheets, strips, washers, tubes, and customized geometries.

The term “EMI gasket” is consistent with the generic industrial definition of a gasket. The electromagnetic fields being shielded impinge on the conductive materials of the enclosure. The incident field induces currents in the enclosure walls. Seams represent discontinuities in shield current paths with resulting voltage differentials across the seams. The purpose of the EMI gasket is to reduce the voltage differential across the seam because the strength of the field emanating from the seam is directly proportional to this voltage.

Depending upon function and application, electronic equipment operates in an extremely wide range of electromagnetic environments (EMEs) in terms of both intensity and frequency. The environments can vary from that of the home to the battlefield. ~~Because~~ ~~Since~~ there is no “one size/type fits all” gasket, the challenge facing equipment designers is that of choosing the most efficient and cost-effective gasket for their particular application.

An essential parameter in this selection process is the degree to which the gasket prevents electromagnetic energy impinging on one side of the metal joint containing the gasket from coupling through the joint to the other side (i.e., the gasket’s electromagnetic shielding capability). Many factors determine the electromagnetic seal provided by an EMI gasket, including the following:

- a) Gasket material
- b) Gasket construction and geometry
- c) Geometry of the joint
- d) Condition of the contact surfaces
- e) Method of fastening
- f) Closure pressure
- g) Nature of the impinging field
- h) Environmental conditions (e.g., temperature and humidity)

The ideal EMI gasket measurement technique would reveal the full range of effects caused by mounting surface variations, aging, and fasteners and would provide results that indicate the behavior expected from the gasket as installed. Currently, no single measurement technique does this over the frequency range of direct current (dc) to ~~40~~¹⁸ GHz.

2. Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document (i.e., they ~~shall~~^{must} be understood and used, so each referenced document is cited in text and its relationship to this document is explained). For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated referenced, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments or corrigenda) applies.

ANSI/NCSL Z540.1-1994 (Reaff 2002), American National Standard for Calibration—Calibration Laboratories and Measuring and Test Equipment—General Requirements. ~~3~~¹

ANSI/NCSL Z540.2-1997 (Reaff 2007), American National Standard for Expressing Uncertainty—U.S. Guide to the Expression of Uncertainty in Measurement.

ASTM D4935-1989, Standard Test Method for Measuring the Electromagnetic Shielding Effectiveness of Planar Materials. ~~4~~²

Def Stan 59-103 (9 July 1992), EMI/EMP Gasket Components. ~~5~~³

~~³1~~ANSI publications are available from the ~~Sales Department~~, American National Standards Institute (<https://www.ansi.org/>), ~~25 West 43rd Street, 4th Floor, New York, NY 10036, USA (http://www.ansi.org/).~~

~~⁴2~~ASTM publications are available from the American Society for Testing and Materials (<https://www.astm.org/>), ~~100 Barr Harbor Drive, West Conshohocken, PA 19428-2959, USA (http://www.astm.org/).~~

~~⁵3~~Def Stan 59-103 has been withdrawn; however, copies can be obtained from Ministry of Defense, Directorate of Standardization, Kentigern House, 65 Brown Street, Glasgow G2 8EX, Scotland (<http://www.dstan.mok.uk/>). They are also available in the United States from IHS Inc., 15 Inverness Way East, Englewood, CO 80112, USA, tel. (800) 525-7052 (<http://www.ihs.com/>).

IEEE Std 299TM-2006, IEEE Standard Method for Measuring the Effectiveness of Electromagnetic Shielding Enclosures. [6,7](#) ~~4,5~~

MIL-DTL-[83528G-2017](#) ~~83528C-2001~~, General Specification for Gasketing Material, Conductive, Shielding Gasket, Electronic, Elastomer, EMI/RFI. [8](#) ~~6~~

SAE ARP 1173-1975 (Reaff 2004), Test Procedure to Measure the RF Shielding Characteristics of EMI Gaskets. [9,10](#) ~~7,8~~

SAE ARP 1705-2006 (Rev. A), Coaxial Test Procedure to Measure the RF Shielding Characteristics of EMI Gasket Materials.

[SAE ARP 1705-2015 \(Rev. B/C\), Coaxial Test Procedure to Measure the RF Shielding Characteristics of EMI Gasket Materials.](#)

[SAE ARP 1705-2017 \(Rev. C\), Coaxial Test Procedure to Measure the RF Shielding Characteristics of EMI Gasket Materials.](#)

[SAE ARP 6248-2016, Stripline Test Method to Characterize the Shielding Effectiveness of Conductive EMI Gaskets up to 40 GHz.](#)

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⁹~~7~~SAE ARP 1173-1975 is currently under major revision.

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3. Definitions, acronyms, and abbreviations

3.1 Definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply. The *IEEE Standards Dictionary Online* should be consulted for terms not defined in this clause.¹¹

decibel (dB): Ten times the logarithm to base 10 of a ratio of two powers.

dBμA/m: Decibels above a microampere per meter.

dBμV/m: Field strength in decibels referenced to one microvolt per meter.

dBm: Decibels relative to a milliwatt.

dynamic range (DR): The range of amplitudes over which the receive system operates linearly. For a measurement, the DR is the difference between the reference level and the minimum discernable signal above the noise floor, normally with an amplitude of 3 dB (or more) above the noise floor.

electromagnetic compatibility (EMC): The ability of a device, equipment, or system to function satisfactorily in its electromagnetic environment without introducing intolerable electromagnetic disturbances to anything in that environment.

electromagnetic interference (EMI): Any conducted or radiated electromagnetic energy that interrupts, obstructs, or otherwise degrades or limits the effective performance of telecommunications or other electrical and electronic equipment.

far field: The electric and magnetic field of an antenna at distances more than one sixth ($\lambda/2\pi$) the wavelength of the carrier signal being used for communications. In this region, waves are dominated by planar wave mode transmission.

¹¹IEEE Standards Dictionary Online is available at: <http://dictionary.ieee.org>.

gasket (RF): A flexible component made of electrically conductive material, used to form a low impedance connection between two pieces of electrically conductive materials to seal an aperture in a conductive enclosure.

measurement uncertainty: The limits of error about a measured value between which the true value lies with the confidence stated.

mode stirred chamber (MSC): An electromagnetic reverberation chamber (e.g., a non-anechoic shielded chamber) used to generate an average, uniformly homogeneous electromagnetic field that is achieved by rotating an irregularly-shaped mode stirrer or tuner.

near field: The electric and magnetic field of an antenna at distances less than one sixth ($\lambda/2\pi$) the wavelength of the carrier signal being used for communications. In this region, waves are dominated by capacitive and magnetic coupling modes.

repeatability: The closeness of agreement among a number of consecutive measurements of the output for the same value of the input under the same operating conditions.

shielding effectiveness (SE): The ratio of the signal received (from a transmitter) without the shield to the signal received inside the shield; the insertion loss when the shield is placed between the transmitting antenna and the receiving antenna.

TEM cell: A measuring device that is designed to utilize the transverse electromagnetic mode (TEM) over the frequency range of interest. Common examples are the two-port TEM cell (also known as the Crawford Cell) and the wideband TEM cell.

VIRC: Vibrating intrinsic reverberation chamber is a reverberation chamber without mode stirrer, but with moving (vibrating) walls, so that the resonant patterns are disturbed. Is used as an alternative for the mode stirred chamber.

3.2 Acronyms and abbreviations

ARP	Aerospace Recommended Practice
dB μ A/m	decibels above a microampere per meter
dB μ V/m	decibels above a microvolt per meter
DR	dynamic range
EMC	electromagnetic compatibility
EME	electromagnetic environment
EMI	electromagnetic interference
MSC	mode stirred chamber
PCB	printed circuit board
RoHS	restriction of hazardous substances
SAE	Society of Automotive Engineers
SE	shielding effectiveness
TEM	transverse electromagnetic mode
VIRC	vibrating intrinsic reverberation chamber

4. Factors affecting gasket performance

Figure 1 illustrates a typical application where the EMI gasket is placed underneath the lip of a cover to close the gap between it and the base enclosure. Other similar applications are under connector shells, waveguide flanges, filter cans and meter flanges, and in seams. The objective of the gasket is to provide an electrical path across the gap in the shield such that the impedance of the path through the gasket approaches that of a comparable span of the base shield. The impedance of the gasket is a function of its materials and construction, its geometry, and the interface between it and the shield.

All gasket materials have resistive, inductive, and capacitive properties that may exhibit themselves over different portions of the frequency band. The property, which determines the gasket's predominant characteristic, depends on the materials and construction of the gasket as well as the geometry of the joint.

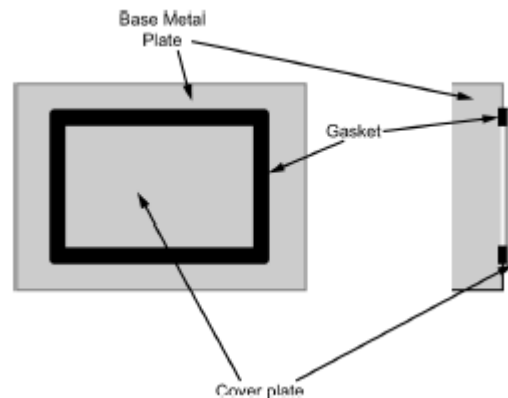


Figure 1—Typical gasket application

Most gaskets can be considered resistive at low frequencies. Those gaskets constructed of metal filaments (oriented wires or wire meshes) and fingers or spirals typically appear as an inductance in series with a resistance. Gaskets formed from conductively loaded polymers typically appear as a shunt capacitance in parallel with a resistance. These complex impedances determine the effectiveness of the gaskets as frequency increases. Therefore, reliance on volume resistivity data taken at dc or at power frequencies can be very misleading.

All gaskets behave as a complex network of resistors, inductors, and capacitors at frequencies where their physical dimensions become significant fractions of a wavelength, or the spacing between constituent elements approach or exceed resonant dimensions. Further, the gasketed joint is polarized. This polarization is the consequence of the joint being long and narrow and of the gasket conductors being preferentially aligned with a field component of the incident wave.

Furthermore, the cross section of the gasket (circular, rectangular) and the mechanical design of application (flat/flat surfaces, groove structure, compression~~-rate~~, or closing pressure, etc.) may have a dominant effect on the final behavior of the gasketed joint. Also, special care [shall](#) ~~must~~ be taken for the mating surfaces, concerning possible corrosion over the lifetime and the requirements set by the [restriction of hazardous substances \(RoHS\)](#) restrictions.

The gasketed joint can behave like a section of waveguide filled with conductive materials. When this happens, the gasket and aperture~~-will~~ exhibit complex radiation and transmission properties, and coupling through this aperture is likely to be of greater importance to shielding effectiveness (SE) than the enclosure itself. Where the gasket does not appear homogeneous, it is not safe to assume that the current through the gasket is uniform or that it is determined by the shield. The characteristics of the incident field should also be considered, the radiation characteristics of the total aperture [shall](#) ~~must~~ be recognized, and the propagation of the coupled wave through the “loaded” aperture [shall](#) ~~must~~ be taken into account.

Shield current encounters both the contact impedance between the gasket and the impedance of the gasket itself. On the contact surfaces, there are often films of metal oxides and sulfides, paints, cleaners, dust, dirt, and environmental deposits. Such films will likely be present on gasket surfaces as well.

NOTE—Many surface films or treatments are nonconductive. Depending on the compression-deflection properties of the gasket material, the nature of its conductive elements (~~e.g.,~~ “gritty” particles, oriented wires, knitted wires, etc.), and the closure force applied, certain gaskets [may](#) ~~will~~ “bite” through such films more effectively than others. This “biting” may or may not be desirable depending on the application environment as it may open a site for corrosion or galvanic action over the life of the equipment. Environmental testing should be considered for every application.¹²

WARNING

Special attention [shall](#) ~~must~~ be given to the requirements as set by the RoHS restrictions.

¹²[Notes in text, tables, and figures of a guide are given for information only and do not contain requirements needed to implement this guide.](#)

The path for current from the shield to the gasket ~~is~~ ~~will be~~ through the ridges and valleys on the mating surface that result from machining or casting imperfections to the contacted portions of the gasket materials. The contact impedance between the gasket and the parent shield can be a significant factor in the overall behavior of the gasket. This contact impedance ~~has~~ ~~will have~~ reactive components in addition to resistance. For example, there is usually some capacitive coupling between the contact surface and the conductors in the gasket.

In addition to the impedance of the gasket and the gasket-to-shield interface, the shield current encounters the resistive and inductive elements of the shield itself, and a portion flows around the gasket via the stray capacitance between the two pieces of parent material. This capacitor is labeled as “shield-to-shield impedance” in Figure 2.

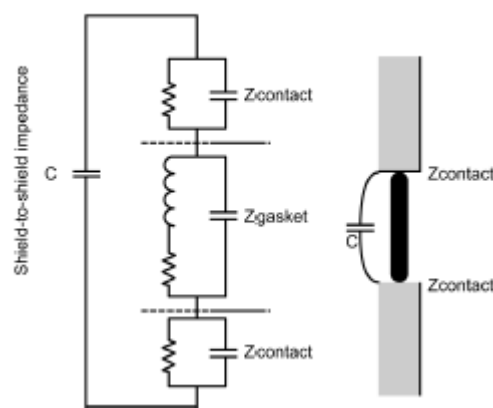


Figure 2—Equivalent circuit of current path through a gasket

In some cases, the gasket characteristics may be masked by the behavior of the test fixtures, and care ~~shall~~ ~~must~~ be taken when making the interpretation about the applicability for an actual design, starting from measured data, collected from a measuring setup performing under other electromagnetic conditions.

Thus, the current path through a gasket is a complex network like that illustrated in Figure 2. As complex as this network appears, it is actually somewhat of a simplification. Particularly at very short wavelengths, the gasketed joint ~~will~~ also behaves ~~behave~~ in somewhat the same way as the braid of a coaxial shield, which permits energy to “leak” through. Depending upon the specific configuration of the conducting elements of the gasket, these openings can render the gasket practically transparent at particular frequencies or over certain frequency ranges (see Quine, et al. [B37]).¹³ ~~[B28]~~.

Coupling through the gasketed joint is ~~will~~ also ~~be~~ influenced by the length of the joint and the number and spacing of fasteners, and the degree to which the gasket material conforms to the joint’s gaps and irregularities and maintains electrical continuity between the shield members. As the joint or seam approaches a resonant length, or as the spacing between fasteners approaches resonance, coupling through the aperture can be maximized or minimized according to the impedance match to the incident field.

Minimal power transfer from a source to a load occurs when their impedances are severely mismatched, that is i.e., high-to-low or low-to-high. Typically, the maximum mismatch is provided by an open or short circuit. Because ~~Since~~ the goal of a shield is to help minimize the power transfer from a radiating source to a susceptible load or to the environment, the shield, including any gaskets, shall ~~must~~ present a high degree of mismatch to the impinging wave or to its “load,” which is likely to be free space. Both the impedance of the shield-gasket combination and that of the incident field affect this match. A more in-depth analysis is given in Annex B.

5. Gasket measurement techniques

Standardized measurement techniques consist of the transfer impedance measurement of SAE ARP 1705- 2006 (Rev. A) and the aperture transmission implementations of SAE ARP 1173-1975, Def Stan 59-103 (9 July 1992) (obsolete since 1996), and MIL-DTL-83528G-2017.¹⁴ ~~83528C-2001.~~

¹³The ⁹~~In this annex,~~ numbers in brackets correspond to those of the bibliography in Annex G. ~~supporting material in E.3.~~

¹⁴Information on references can be found in Clause 2.

Other methods are based on alternative ways of ~~testing~~ ~~acting~~ but are directly related to these standards, such as effective transmission aperture, slot aperture, and the use of (nested) reverberation room techniques (see IEC 61000-4-21:2011 2003 [B17 B14] for the use of reverberation chambers).

~~Even~~ Other methods are not related to any standard at all. They are all based on the characterization of shielding materials or small boxes.

In Clause 6, Clause 7, and Clause 8, these methods are discussed in more detail, and references are made to more fundamental papers and documents that may provide an in-depth understanding of the different methods.

Each method possesses particular strengths and offers unique advantages in specific situations. [An overview is summarized in Annex A and in Annex F, as well as similar methods for on-board applications.](#)

For example, the ~~techniques~~ ~~technique~~ of SAE ARP 1705-2006 (Rev. A) [and SAE ARP 1705-2017 \(rev. C\) provide](#) ~~provides~~ a direct indication of the transfer impedance of the gasket, and, consequently, the conductivity of the shield-gasket combination.

The aperture transmission measurement technique provides shielding results that are very attractive to equipment and system designers who tend to visualize gasket performance in such terms. However, the field attenuation exhibited by a gasketed seam is strongly dependent upon the nature of the electromagnetic field applied.

The effects of the aperture used for measurements can also overshadow the attenuation provided by the gasket alone. Because of the many factors that can affect measurement results, data taken under different test conditions can be markedly different. Further, test results are hard to relate to the gasket's intrinsic transfer impedance.

The standardized aperture transmission techniques measure the signal coupled through the gasketed aperture at specific antenna orientations and look angles. As previously noted, however, the signal coupled through the gasket is strongly influenced by the measurement antenna locations relative to the aperture and by the surrounding enclosures. To fully characterize the coupling through the gasket, the illuminating antenna should be moved about so as to expose the seam to various incident field conditions. ~~Because~~ ~~Since~~ each possible antenna pairing involves a measurement of the coupling with and without a gasket present, the effort to perform the evaluation is high.

The effects of enclosure and fixture resonances ~~shall~~ ~~must~~ be recognized. Fixture resonances currently limit the transfer impedance technique to below about 2000 MHz. The chambers used with the radiated techniques are resonant cavities. Once their longest dimension (typically the distance between diagonally opposite corners) reaches one-half wavelength, resonant modes exist from that frequency upward. Some of these resonances can be very sharp. Consequently, very small changes in antenna position inside the chamber can produce very large changes in the measured signal level. In addition, the size of the aperture influences the attenuation of the field coupled through it. If the aperture is significantly less than one wavelength, the attenuation through it is very high and is inversely proportional to frequency. This attenuation limits the lowest frequencies that can be effectively measured and can restrict the types of gaskets that can be accurately evaluated.

Chamber resonances and aperture dynamic range requirements tend to restrict radiated tests to above about 200 MHz for the size chambers and apertures typically used in the measurement of gaskets. New techniques taking into account these effects by the characterization of the Q -factors of the chambers have been developed by Holloway ~~et al.~~ [B16B13].

Between about 200 MHz and 2000 MHz, the potential for direct comparison between the standardized techniques exists. However, both below and above these overlap regions, direct comparison is difficult. For example, below the overlap region, the transfer impedance technique provides information on the plane wave and magnetic field behavior of the gasket, whereas the radiated techniques largely provide information on electric and magnetic field behavior. Above the overlap region, the transfer impedance fixture exhibits strong resonances that make comparison of its results with the plane-wave data of the radiated techniques difficult.

6. Standardized gasket measuring techniques

6.1 Transfer impedance

6.1.1 SAE ARP 1705-2006 (Rev. A)

6.1.1.1 Measuring principle

The gasket illustrated in Figure 3 shows a typical application of a gasket in between two parts of a shielding enclosure. It is important to note that not only the conductive part of the joint ~~is~~ ~~will be~~ characterized, but also that the stray capacitances formed by the overlapping parts with lengths $L1$ and $L2$ may influence the total behavior of the gasketed joint.

The thickness, t , of the gasket between the plates is depending on the cross section of the gasket itself, but also on the compression ~~rate~~ (or pressure) applied.

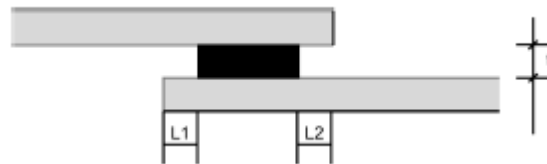


**Figure 3—Cross section of a gasketed seam with uniform separation
between base materials**

The concept of the test fixture of SAE ARP 1705-2006 (Rev. A) simulates this application~~7~~ by measuring the total impedance between both metal parts of a gasket holder, and is shown in Figure 4.

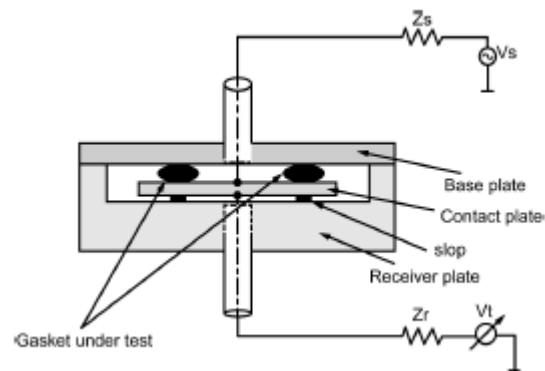
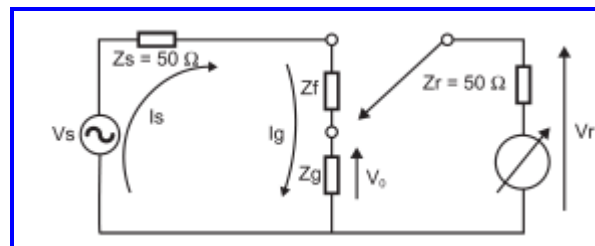


Figure 4—Principle diagram of coaxial transfer impedance test fixture as per SAE ARP 1705- 2006 (Rev. A)

The coaxial transfer impedance test fixture characterizes the Z_t of the gasket by forcing a current to pass through an outside boundary of the gasket and measuring the voltage drop across the inside boundary. Transfer impedance provides the user with an accurate measure of the impedance of a gasketed joint, where the impedance is normalized to a meter length of gasket.

If the dimensions of the gasket are small relative to wavelength, Z_t may be viewed as a simple resistor. Figure 5 is the equivalent circuit of the transfer impedance test fixture of SAE ARP 1705- 2006 (Rev. A). The gasket under test is represented by Z_g . The fixture is driven with a signal generator having a source voltage, V_s , and an impedance of Z_s .



(New)