Appendix C: Incident Energy and Arc Flash Boundary Calculations: NFPA 70E Informative Annex D

Informative Annex D Incident Energy and Arc Flash Boundary Calculation Methods

This informative annex is not a part of the requirements of this NFPA document but is included for informational purposes only.

D.1 Introduction. Informative Annex D summarizes calculation methods available for calculating arc flash boundary and incident energy. It is important to investigate the limitations of any methods to be used. The limitations of methods summarized in Informative Annex D are described in Table D.1.

D.2 Ralph Lee Calculation Method.

D.2.1 Basic Equations for Calculating Arc Flash Boundary Distances. The short-circuit symmetrical ampacity, I_{sc}, from a bolted three-phase fault at the transformer terminals is calculated with the following formula:

[D.2.1(a)]

$$I_{sc} = \{[MVA \text{ Base} \times 10^6] \div [1.732 \times V]\} \times \{100 \div \%Z\}$$

where I_{sc} is in amperes, V is in volts, and $\%Z$ is based on the transformer MVA.

A typical value for the maximum power, P (in MW) in a three-phase arc can be calculated using the following formula:

[D.2.1(b)]

$$P = [\text{maximum bolted fault, in } MVA_{bf}] \times 0.707^2$$

[D.2.1(c)]

$$P = 1.732 \times V \times I_{sc} \times 10^{-6} \times 0.707^2$$

The arc flash boundary distance is calculated in accordance with the following formulae:

[D.2.1(d)]

$$D_c = [2.65 \times MVA_{bf} \times t]^{1/2}$$

[D.2.1(e)]

$$D_c = [53 \times MVA \times t]^{1/2}$$

where:

D_c = distance in feet of person from arc source for a just curable burn (that is, skin temperature remains less than 80°C).

MVA_{bf} = bolted fault MVA at point involved.

MVA = MVA rating of transformer. For transformers with MVA ratings below 0.75 MVA, multiply the transformer MVA rating by 1.25.

t = time of arc exposure in seconds.

The clearing time for a current-limiting fuse is approximately ¼ cycle or 0.004 second if the arcing fault current is in the fuse's current-limiting range. The clearing time of a 5-kV and 15-kV circuit breaker is approximately 0.1 second or 6 cycles if the instantaneous function is installed and operating. This can be broken down as follows: actual breaker time (approximately 2 cycles), plus relay operating time of approximately 1.74 cycles, plus an additional safety margin of 2 cycles, giving a total time of approximately 6 cycles. Additional time must be added if a time delay function is installed and operating.

The formulas used in this explanation are from Ralph Lee, "The Other Electrical Hazard: Electrical Arc Flash Burns," in *IEEE Trans. Industrial Applications.* The calculations are based on the worst-case arc impedance. *(See Table D.2.1.)*

D.2.2 Single-Line Diagram of a Typical Petrochemical Complex. The single-line diagram *(see Figure D.2.2)* illustrates the complexity of a distribution system in a typical petrochemical plant.

Table D.1 Limitation of Calculation Methods

Section	Source	Limitations/Parameters
D.2	Lee, "The Other Electrical Hazard: Electrical Arc Flash Burns"	Calculates incident energy and arc flash boundary for arc in open air; conservative over 600 V and becomes more conservative as voltage increases
D.3	Doughty, et al., "Predicting Incident Energy to Better Manage the Electrical Arc Hazard on 600 V Power Distribution Systems"	Calculates incident energy for three-phase arc on systems rated 600 V and below; applies to short-circuit currents between 16 kA and 50 kA
D.4	IEEE 1584, *Guide for Performing Arc Flash Calculations*	Calculates incident energy and arc flash boundary for: 208 V to 15 kV; three-phase; 50 Hz to 60 Hz; 700 A to 106,000 A short-circuit current; and 13 mm to 152 mm conductor gaps
D.5	Doan, "Arc Flash Calculations for Exposure to DC Systems"	Calculates incident energy for dc systems rated up to 1000 V dc