

Technical data

Transformer terminology and FAQs

What is a transformer?

A transformer is a passive electrical device which is designed to change one voltage to another by magnetic induction.

What is an isolation transformer?

An isolation transformer, also referred to as an insulating transformer, is one where the primary and secondary windings are separate, as opposed to an autotransformer where the primary and secondary share a common winding.

What is a control transformer?

A control transformer is an isolation transformer designed to provide a high degree of secondary voltage stability (regulation) during a short period overload condition typically referred to as inrush. Control transformers are also referred to as Industrial Control Transformers, Machine Tool Transformers or Control Power Transformers (CPTs).

Can a control transformer be reversed connected?

A control transformer can be reverse connected. However, the output voltage will be less than nameplate due to the compensation factor of the windings.

Can a single phase transformer be used with a three phase source?

A single phase transformer can be used with a three phase source by connecting the primary leads to any two wires of the three phase system. The transformer output will be single phase.

Can a transformer be used at higher frequencies?

A transformer designed for 50/60HZ operation can be utilized at frequencies up to 400 HZ. However, at 400 HZ, the inrush capability will be reduced.

What is regulation?

Regulation is the change in output voltage when the load is reduced from rated value (full load) to zero (no load) with input voltage remaining constant.

Can transformers be used at ambients other than 40°C?

Transformers may be used at ambients less than 40°C at full nameplate capacity. For ambients above 40°C, they must be derated as follows:

Max. ambient temperature	Max. percent of load	
	180°C Units	105°C Units
40°C	100%	100%
50°C	90%	78%
60°C	79%	50%

What is the effect of altitude on a transformer?

A transformer may be used at full nameplate capacity up to 3300 feet (1000 meters). Above that altitude, the capacity of the transformer should be derated by 0.3% for each 300 feet of elevation above 3300 feet.

What is the effect of load on a control transformer?

A control transformer is designed to provide rated output voltage at full VA. As the load decreases, the output voltage will go up. Conversely, increases in load will result in lower output voltages. Typically, the smaller the VA size of the unit, the greater difference there is between no-load and full-load voltage.

What is temperature class?

Temperature class is the rating of the transformer insulation system. It is determined by adding the ambient temperature, temperature rise and hottest spot temperature. The standard insulation system classification per UL506, are as follows:

Ambient temperature	Average winding temperature rise*	Hot spot temperature	Temperature class
40°C	55°C	10°C	105°C
40°C	80°C	10°C	130°C
40°C	100°C	15°C	155°C
40°C	120°C	20°C	180°C

*Measured by change-in-resistance method

What is temperature rise?

Temperature rise is the difference between the average temperature of the transformer windings and the ambient temperature.

What is hot spot?

The hot spot is an allowance selected to approximate the difference between the highest temperature inside the transformer coil and the average temperature of the transformer coil.

Is one insulation system better than another?

One insulation system is not necessarily better than another. Each will typically provide a comparable life expectancy. The choice of an insulation system depends upon application, performance and cost considerations.

Why is a control transformer needed?

A control transformer is required to supply voltage to a load which requires significantly more current when initially energized than under normal steady state operating conditions. A control transformer is designed to provide secondary voltage stability under a short period of specific overload referred to as inrush.

Are control transformers current limiting?

A control transformer is not current limiting and will allow as much current to pass through as is demanded by the load. As such, a secondary overcurrent device should be utilized.

Will a control transformer regulate output voltage?

Control transformers are not voltage regulating. Because voltage changes are a function of the transformer's turns ratio, variations in input voltage will be proportionally reflected to the output.

What is duty cycle?

Duty cycle is the period and duration when a transformer will be loaded. The transformer is designed to run continuously at full load without exceeding the temperature limits. Transformers may also be operated for short time duty. Depending upon the time and cycle of the maximum load, the transformer VA size may be smaller than for continuous duty.

What is the value of encapsulation in control transformers?

Encapsulating the coils of a control transformer will help to protect the unit from moisture, dust, dirt and industrial contaminants. Encapsulation helps provide maximum protection in hostile environments while allowing the unit to run cooler than a non-encapsulated unit.

What effect does a control transformer have on electrical disturbances found on the line?

Because a control transformer has isolated primary and secondary windings, it will provide some degree of "clean-up" with regard to electrical noise, spikes, surges and transients. It will not, however, provide the same degree of power conditioning found in products designed for that purpose.