

CHAPTER 7

Thermal Management

7.1 Thermal Considerations

Thermal Considerations

7.1.1 Thermal Considerations for Power Semiconductors

The perfect power switch is not yet available. All power semiconductors dissipate power internally both during the on-state and during the transition between the on and off states. The amount of power dissipated internally generally speaking increases in line with the power being switched by the semiconductor. The capability of a switch to operate in a particular circuit will therefore depend upon the amount of power dissipated internally and the rise in the operating temperature of the silicon junction that this power dissipation causes. It is therefore important that circuit designers are familiar with the thermal characteristics of power semiconductors and are able to calculate power dissipation limits and junction operating temperatures.

This chapter is divided into two parts. Part One describes the essential thermal properties of semiconductors and explains the concept of a limit in terms of continuous mode and pulse mode operation. Part Two gives worked examples showing junction temperature calculations for a variety of applied power pulse waveforms.

PART ONE

The power dissipation limit

The maximum allowable power dissipation forms a limit to the safe operating area of power transistors. Power dissipation causes a rise in junction temperature which will, in turn, start chemical and metallurgical changes. The rate at which these changes proceed is exponentially related to temperature, and thus prolonged operation of a power transistor above its junction temperature rating is liable to result in reduced life. Operation of a device at, or below, its power dissipation rating (together with careful consideration of thermal resistances associated with the device) ensures that the junction temperature rating is not exceeded.

All power semiconductors have a power dissipation limitation. For rectifier products such as diodes, thyristors and triacs, the power dissipation rating can be easily translated in terms of current ratings; in the on-state the voltage drop is well defined. Transistors are, however, somewhat more complicated. A transistor, be it a power MOSFET or a bipolar, can operate in its on-state at any voltage up to its maximum rating depending on the circuit conditions. It is therefore necessary to specify a Safe Operating Area (SOA) for transistors which specifies the power dissipation limit in terms of a series of boundaries in the current and voltage plane. These operating areas are usually presented for mounting base temperatures of 25 °C. At higher temperatures, operating conditions must be checked to ensure that junction temperatures are not exceeding the desired operating level.

Continuous power dissipation

The total power dissipation in a semiconductor may be calculated from the product of the on-state voltage and the forward conduction current. The heat dissipated in the junction of the device flows through the thermal resistance between the junction and the mounting base, R_{thj-mb} . The thermal equivalent circuit of Fig. 1 illustrates this heat flow; P_{tot} can be regarded as a thermal current, and the temperature difference between the junction and mounting base ΔT_{j-mb} as a thermal voltage. By analogy with Ohm's law, it follows that:

$$P_{tot} = \frac{T_j - T_{mb}}{R_{thj-mb}} \quad 1$$

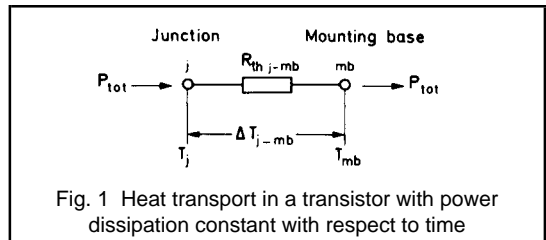


Fig. 1 Heat transport in a transistor with power dissipation constant with respect to time

Fig. 2 shows the dependence of the maximum power dissipation on the temperature of the mounting base. $P_{tot max}$ is limited either by a maximum temperature difference:

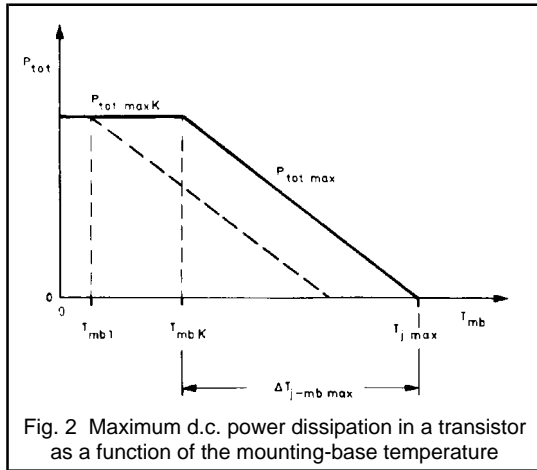
$$\Delta T_{j-mb max} = T_{jmax} - T_{mbK} \quad 2$$

or by the maximum junction temperature T_{jmax} (T_{mbK} is usually 25°C and is the value of T_{mb} above which the maximum power dissipation must be reduced to maintain the operating point within the safe operating area).

In the first case, $T_{mb} \leq T_{mbK}$:

$$P_{tot maxK} = \frac{\Delta T_{j-mb max}}{R_{thj-mb}}; \quad 3$$

that is, the power dissipation has a fixed limit value ($P_{tot maxK}$ is the maximum d.c. power dissipation *below* T_{mbK}). If the transistor is subjected to a mounting-base temperature T_{mb1} , its junction temperature will be less than T_{jmax} by an amount ($T_{mbK} - T_{mb1}$), as shown by the broken line in Fig. 2.



In the second case, $T_{mb} > T_{mb K}$:

$$P_{tot \max} = \frac{T_{j \max} - T_{mb}}{R_{thj-mb}}; \quad 4$$

that is, the power dissipation must be reduced as the mounting base temperature increases along the sloping straight line in Fig. 2. Equation 4 shows that the lower the thermal resistance R_{thj-mb} , the steeper is the slope of the line. In this case, T_{mb} is the maximum mounting-base temperature that can occur in operation.

Example

The following data is provided for a particular transistor.

$$P_{tot \max K} = 75 \text{ W}$$

$$T_{j \max} = 175 \text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$$

$$R_{thj-mb} \leq 2 \text{ K/W}$$

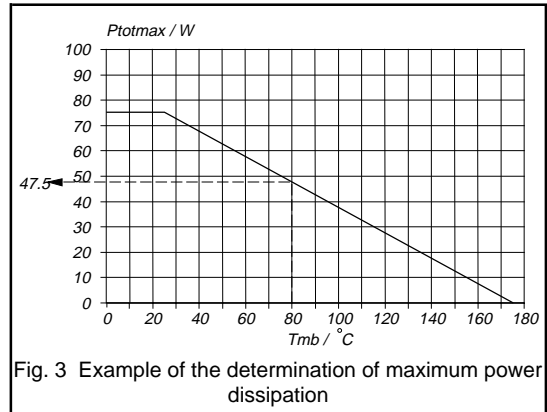
The maximum permissible power dissipation for continuous operation at a maximum mounting-base temperature of $T_{mb} = 80 \text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ is required.

Note that the maximum value of T_{mb} is chosen to be significantly higher than the maximum ambient temperature to prevent an excessively large heatsink being required.

From Eq. 4 we obtain:

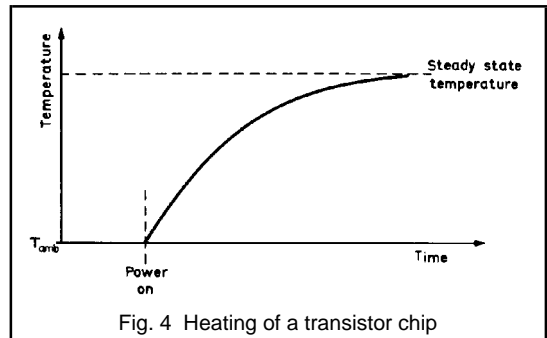
$$P_{tot \max} = \frac{175 - 80}{2} \text{ W}, = 47.5 \text{ W}$$

Provided that the transistor is operated within SOA limits, this value is permissible since it is below $P_{tot \max K}$. The same result can be obtained graphically from the $P_{tot \max}$ diagram (Fig. 3) for the relevant transistor.



Pulse power operation

When a power transistor is subjected to a pulsed load, higher peak power dissipation is permitted. The materials in a power transistor have a definite thermal capacity, and thus the critical junction temperature will not be reached instantaneously, even when excessive power is being dissipated in the device. The power dissipation limit may be extended for intermittent operation. The size of the extension will depend on the duration of the operation period (that is, pulse duration) and the frequency with which operation occurs (that is, duty factor).



If power is applied to a transistor, the device will immediately start to warm up (Fig. 4). If the power dissipation continues, a balance will be struck between heat generation and removal resulting in the stabilisation of T_j and ΔT_{j-mb} . Some heat energy will be stored by the thermal capacity of the device, and the stable conditions will be determined by the thermal resistances associated with the transistor and its thermal environment. When the power dissipation ceases, the device will cool (the heating and cooling laws will be identical, see Fig. 5). However, if the power dissipation ceases before the temperature of the transistor stabilises, the peak values of T_j and ΔT_{j-mb} will be less than the values

reached for the same level of continuous power dissipation (Fig. 6). If the second pulse is identical to the first, the peak temperature attained by the device at the end of the second pulse will be greater than that at the end of the first pulse. Further pulses will build up the temperature until some new stable situation is attained (Fig. 7). The temperature of the device in this stable condition will fluctuate above and below the mean. If the upward excursions extend into the region of excessive T_j then the life expectancy of the device may be reduced. This can happen with high-power low-duty-factor pulses, even though the *average* power is below the d.c. rating of the device.

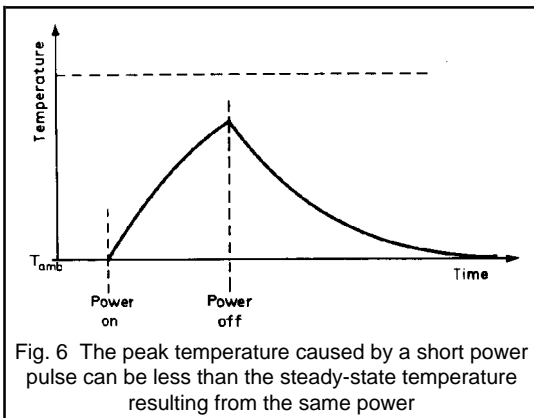
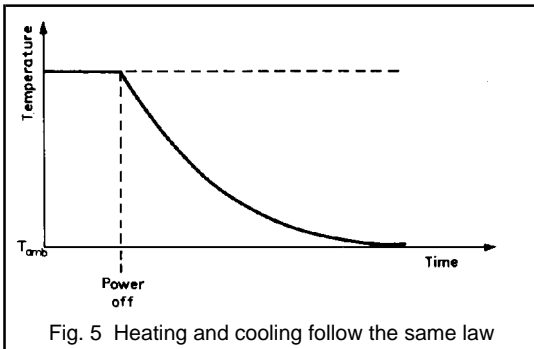
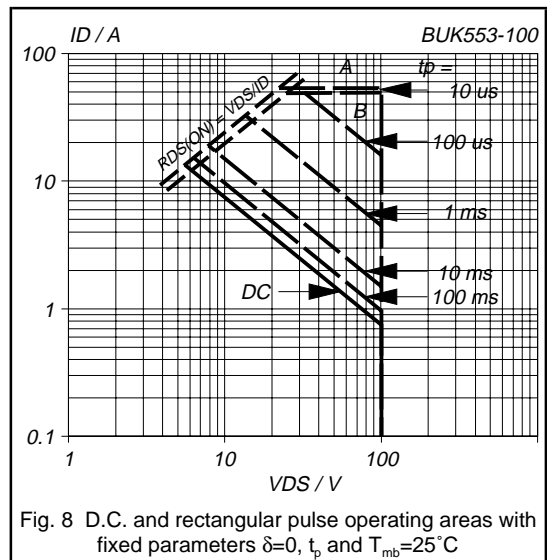
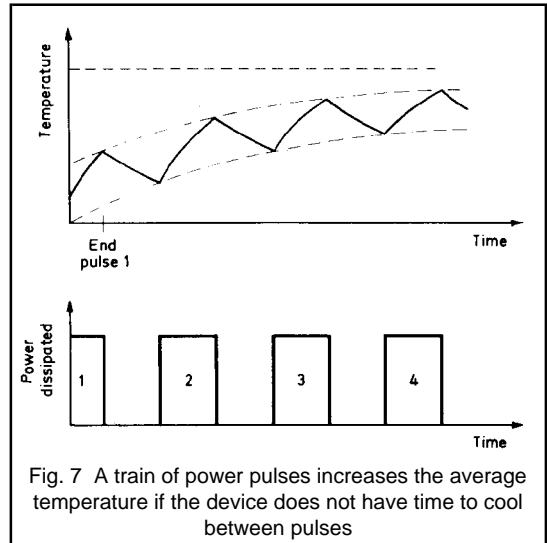


Fig. 8 shows a typical safe operating area for d.c. operation of a power MOSFET. The corresponding rectangular-pulse operating areas with a fixed duty factor, $\delta = 0$, and the pulse time t_p as a parameter, are also shown. These boundaries represent the largest possible extension of the operating area for particular pulse times. When the pulse time becomes very short, the power dissipation does not have a limiting action and the pulse current and maximum voltage form the only limits. This rectangle represents the largest possible pulse operating area.



In general, the shorter the pulse and the lower the frequency, the lower the temperature that the junction reaches. By analogy with Eq. 3, it follows that:

$$P_{tot M} = \frac{T_j - T_{mb}}{Z_{thj-mb}}, \quad 5$$

where Z_{thj-mb} is the transient thermal impedance between the junction and mounting base of the device. It depends on the pulse duration t_p , and the duty factor δ , where:

$$\delta = \frac{t_p}{T}$$

6

and T is the pulse period. Fig. 9 shows a typical family of curves for thermal impedance against pulse duration, with duty factor as a parameter.

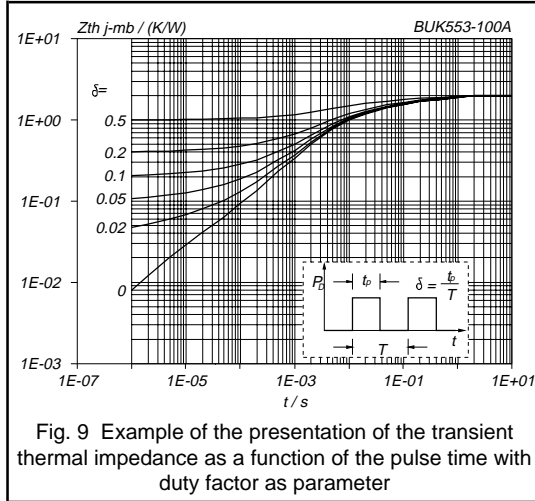


Fig. 9 Example of the presentation of the transient thermal impedance as a function of the pulse time with duty factor as parameter

Again, the maximum pulse power dissipation is limited either by the maximum temperature difference $\Delta T_{j-mb \max}$ (Eq. 2), or by the maximum junction temperature $T_{j \max}$, and so by analogy with Eqs. 3 and 4:

$$P_{\text{tot max K}} = \frac{\Delta T_{j-mb \max}}{Z_{thj-mb}}, \quad 7$$

when $T_{mb} \leq T_{mb K}$, and:

$$P_{\text{tot M max}} = \frac{T_{j \max} - T_{mb}}{Z_{thj-mb}}, \quad 8$$

when $T_{mb} > T_{mb K}$. That is, below a mounting-base temperature of $T_{mb K}$, the maximum power dissipation has a fixed limit value; and above $T_{mb K}$, the power dissipation must be reduced linearly with increasing mounting-base temperature.

Short pulse duration (Fig. 10a)

As the pulse duration becomes very short, the fluctuations of junction temperature become negligible, owing to the internal thermal capacity of the transistor. Consequently, the only factor to be considered is the heating of the junction by the average power dissipation; that is:

$$P_{\text{tot(av)}} = \delta P_{\text{tot M}} \quad 9$$

The transient thermal impedance becomes:

$$\lim_{t_p \rightarrow 0} Z_{thj-mb} = \delta R_{thj-mb}$$

10

The Z_{thj-mb} curves approach this value asymptotically as t_p decreases. Fig. 9 shows that, for duty factors in the range 0.1 to 0.5, the limit values given by Eq. 10 have virtually been reached at $t_p = 10^{-6}$ s.

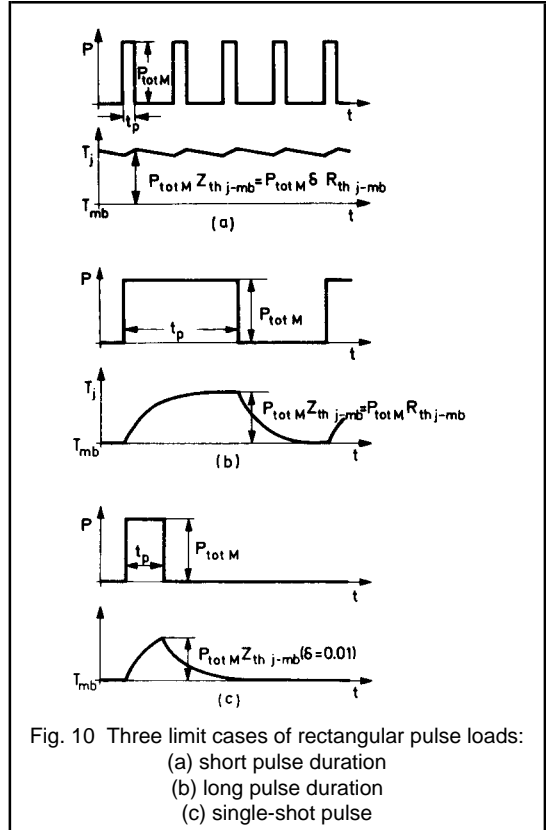


Fig. 10 Three limit cases of rectangular pulse loads:
(a) short pulse duration
(b) long pulse duration
(c) single-shot pulse

Long pulse duration (Fig. 10b)

As the pulse duration increases, the junction temperature approaches a stationary value towards the end of a pulse. The transient thermal impedance tends to the thermal resistance for continuous power dissipation; that is:

$$\lim_{t_p \rightarrow \infty} Z_{thj-mb} = R_{thj-mb} \quad 11$$

Fig. 9 shows that Z_{thj-mb} approaches this value as t_p becomes large. In general, transient thermal effects die out in most power transistors within 0.1 to 1.0 seconds. This time depends on the material and construction of the case, the size of the chip, the way it is mounted, and other factors. Power pulses with a duration in excess of this time have approximately the same effect as a continuous load.

Single-shot pulses (Fig. 10c)

As the duty factor becomes very small, the junction tends to cool down completely between pulses so that each pulse can be treated individually. When considering single pulses, the Z_{thj-mb} values for $\delta = 0$ (Fig. 9) give sufficiently accurate results.

PART TWO

Calculating junction temperatures

Most applications which include power semiconductors usually involve some form of pulse mode operation. This section gives several worked examples showing how junction temperatures can be simply calculated. Examples are given for a variety of waveforms:

- (1) Periodic Waveforms
- (2) Single Shot Waveforms
- (3) Composite Waveforms
- (4) A Pulse Burst
- (5) Non Rectangular Pulses

From the point of view of reliability it is most important to know what the peak junction temperature will be when the power waveform is applied and also what the average junction temperature is going to be.

Peak junction temperature will usually occur at the end of an applied pulse and its calculation will involve transient thermal impedance. The average junction temperature (where applicable) is calculated by working out the average power dissipation using the d.c. thermal resistance.

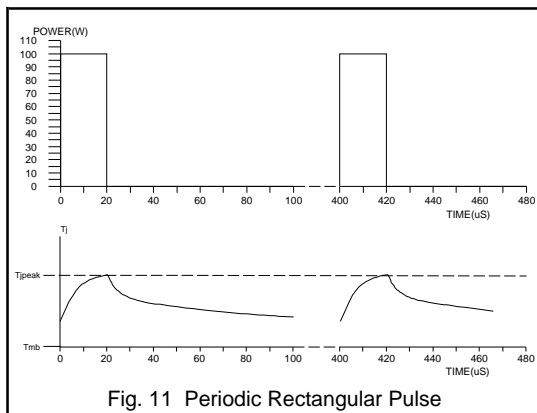


Fig. 11 Periodic Rectangular Pulse

When considering the junction temperature in a device, the following formula is used:

$$T_j = T_{mb} + \Delta T_{j-mb}$$

14

where ΔT_{j-mb} is found from a rearrangement of equation 7. In all the following examples the mounting base temperature (T_{mb}) is assumed to be 75°C.

Periodic rectangular pulse

Fig. 11 shows an example of a periodic rectangular pulse. This type of pulse is commonly found in switching applications. 100W is dissipated every 400μs for a period of 20μs, representing a duty cycle (δ) of 0.05. The peak junction temperature is calculated as follows:

Peak T_j :

$$t = 2 \times 10^{-5} \text{ s}$$

$$P = 100 \text{ W}$$

$$\delta = \frac{20}{400} = 0.05$$

$$Z_{thj-mb} = 0.12 \text{ K/W}$$

$$\Delta T_{j-mb} = P \times Z_{thj-mb} = 100 \times 0.12 = 12^\circ \text{C}$$

$$T_j = T_{mb} + \Delta T_{j-mb} = 75 + 12 = 87^\circ \text{C}$$

Average T_j :

$$P_{av} = P \times \delta = 100 \times 0.05 = 5 \text{ W}$$

$$\Delta T_{j-mb(av)} = P_{av} \times Z_{thj-mb(\delta=1)} = 5 \times 2 = 10^\circ \text{C}$$

$$T_{j(av)} = T_{mb} + \Delta T_{j-mb(av)} = 75 + 10 = 85^\circ \text{C}$$

The value for Z_{thj-mb} is taken from the $\delta=0.05$ curve shown in Fig. 12 (This diagram repeats Fig. 9 but has been simplified for clarity). The above calculation shows that the peak junction temperature will be 85°C.

Single shot rectangular pulse

Fig. 13 shows an example of a single shot rectangular pulse. The pulse used is the same as in the previous example, which should highlight the differences between periodic and single shot thermal calculations. For a single shot pulse, the time period between pulses is infinity, ie the duty cycle $\delta=0$. In this example 100W is dissipated for a period of 20μs. To work out the peak junction temperature the following steps are used:

$$t = 2 \times 10^{-5} \text{ s}$$

$$P = 100 \text{ W}$$

$$\delta = 0$$

$$Z_{thj-mb} = 0.04 \text{ K/W}$$

$$\Delta T_{j-mb} = P \times Z_{thj-mb} = 100 \times 0.04 = 4^\circ \text{C}$$

The value for Z_{thj-mb} is taken from the $\delta=0$ curve shown in Fig. 12. The above calculation shows that the peak junction temperature will be 4°C above the mounting base temperature.

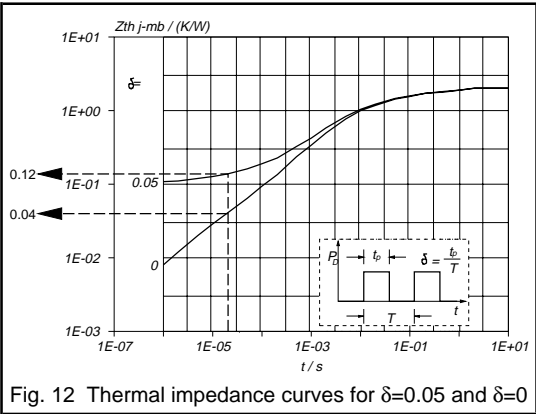


Fig. 12 Thermal impedance curves for $\delta=0.05$ and $\delta=0$

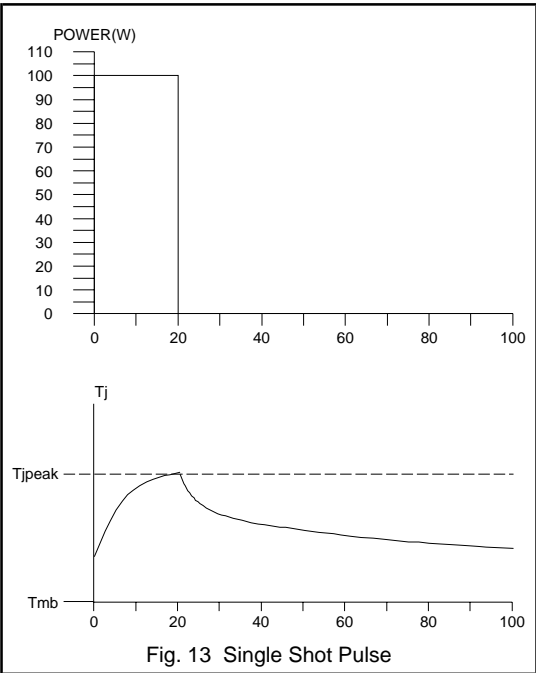


Fig. 13 Single Shot Pulse

For a single shot pulse, the average power dissipated and average junction temperature are not relevant.

Composite rectangular pulse

In practice, a power device frequently has to handle composite waveforms, rather than the simple rectangular pulses shown so far. This type of signal can be simulated by superimposing several rectangular pulses which have a common period, but both positive and negative amplitudes, in addition to suitable values of t_p and δ .

By way of an example, consider the composite waveform shown in Fig. 14. To show the way in which the method used for periodic rectangular pulses is extended to cover composite waveforms, the waveform shown has been chosen to be an extension of the periodic rectangular pulse example. The period is $400\mu s$, and the waveform consists of three rectangular pulses, namely $40W$ for $10\mu s$, $20W$ for $150\mu s$ and $100W$ for $20\mu s$. The peak junction temperature may be calculated at any point in the cycle. To be able to add the various effects of the pulses at this time, all the pulses, both positive and negative, must end at time t_x in the first calculation and t_y in the second calculation. Positive pulses increase the junction temperature, while negative pulses decrease it.

Calculation for time t_x

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta T_{j-mb@x} = & P_1 \cdot Z_{thj-mb}(t1) + P_2 \cdot Z_{thj-mb}(t3) \\ & + P_3 \cdot Z_{thj-mb}(t4) - P_1 \cdot Z_{thj-mb}(t2) \\ & - P_2 \cdot Z_{thj-mb}(t4) \end{aligned} \tag{15}$$

In equation 15, the values for P_1 , P_2 and P_3 are known: $P_1=40W$, $P_2=20W$ and $P_3=100W$. The Z_{th} values are taken from Fig. 9. For each term in the equation, the equivalent duty cycle must be worked out. For instance the first superimposed pulse in Fig. 14 lasts for a time $t1 = 180\mu s$, representing a duty cycle of $180/400 = 0.45 = \delta$. These values can then be used in conjunction with Fig. 9 to find a value for Z_{th} , which in this case is $0.9K/W$. Table 1a gives the values calculated for this example.

		t1	t2	t3	t4
		180μs	170μs	150μs	20μs
Repetitive T=400μs	δ	0.450	0.425	0.375	0.050
	Z _{th}	0.900	0.850	0.800	0.130
Single Shot T=∞	δ	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Z _{th}	0.130	0.125	0.120	0.040

Table 1a. Composite pulse parameters for time t_x

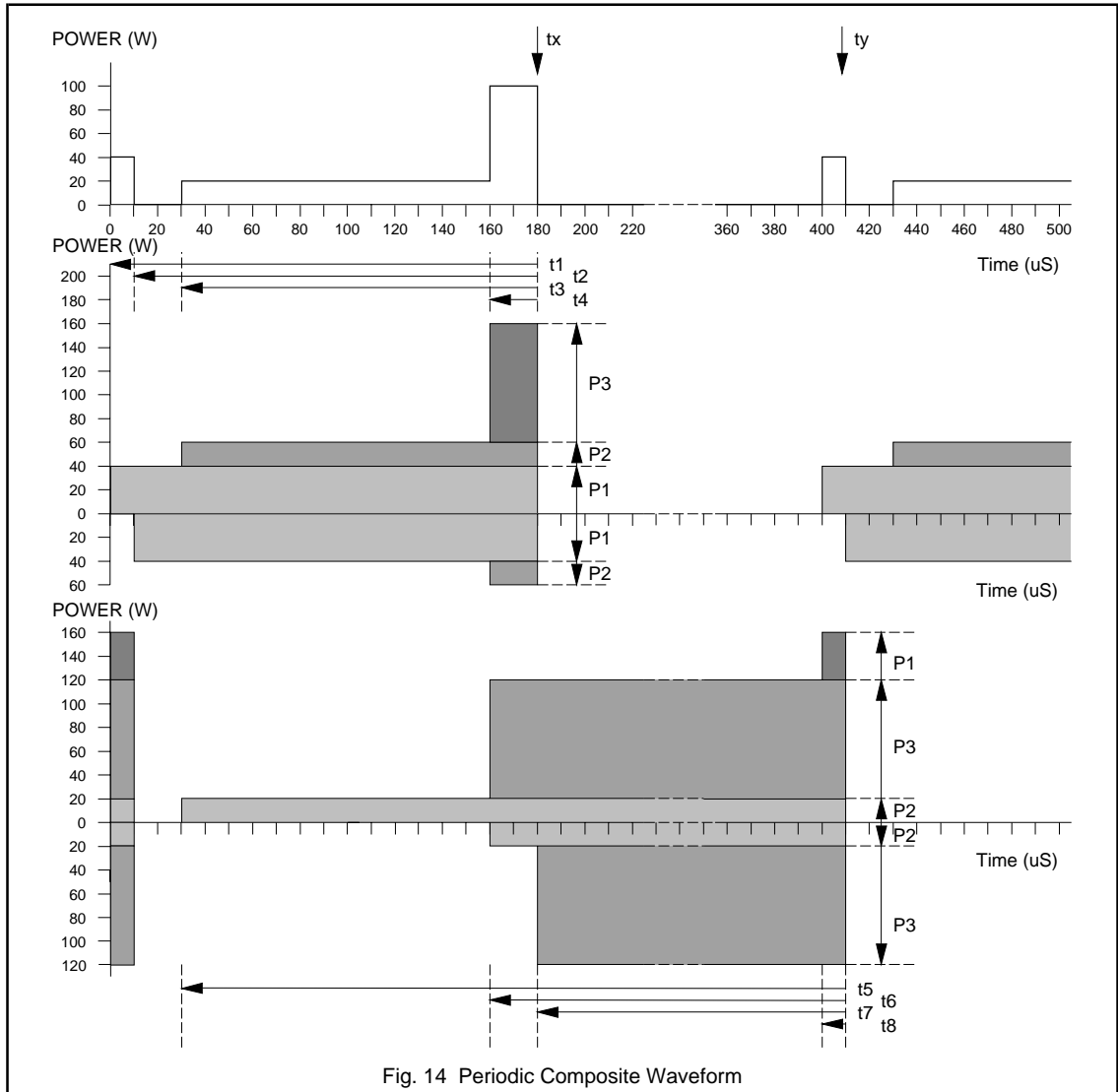


Fig. 14 Periodic Composite Waveform

Substituting these values into equation 15 for $T_{j-mb@x}$ gives

Repetitive: $\Delta T_{j-mb@x} = 40 \times 0.9 + 20 \times 0.85$
 $+ 100 \times 0.13 - 40 \times 0.85$
 $- 20 \times 0.13$
 $= 29.4^\circ\text{C}$

$$T_j = T_{mb} + \Delta T_{j-mb} = 75 + 29.4 = 104.4^\circ\text{C}$$

Single Shot: $\Delta T_{j-mb@x} = 40 \times 0.13 + 20 \times 0.125$
 $+ 100 \times 0.04 - 40 \times 0.125$
 $- 20 \times 0.04$
 $= 5.9^\circ\text{C}$

$$T_j = T_{mb} + \Delta T_{j-mb} = 75 + 5.9 = 80.9^\circ\text{C}$$

Hence the peak values of T_j are 104.4°C for the repetitive case, and 80.9°C for the single shot case.

Calculation for time t_y

$$\begin{aligned}\Delta T_{j-mb@y} = & P_2 \cdot Z_{thj-mb(t5)} + P_3 \cdot Z_{thj-mb(t6)} \\ & + P_1 \cdot Z_{thj-mb(t8)} - P_2 \cdot Z_{thj-mb(t6)} \\ & - P_3 \cdot Z_{thj-mb(t7)}\end{aligned}\quad 16$$

where $Z_{thj-mb(t)}$ is the transient thermal impedance for a pulse time t .

		t5 380μs	t6 250μs	t7 230μs	t8 10μs
Repetitive T=400μs	δ	0.950	0.625	0.575	0.025
	Z_{th}	1.950	1.300	1.250	0.080
Single Shot T=∞	δ	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Z_{th}	0.200	0.160	0.150	0.030

Table 1b. Composite pulse parameters for time t_y

Substituting these values into equation 16 for $T_{j-mb@y}$ gives

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Repetitive: } \Delta T_{j-mb@y} &= 20 \times 1.95 + 100 \times 1.3 \\ &+ 40 \times 0.08 - 20 \times 1.3 \\ &- 100 \times 1.25 \\ &= 21.2^\circ\text{C} \\ T_j &= T_{mb} + \Delta T_{j-mb} = 75 + 21.2 = 96.2^\circ\text{C}\end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Single Shot: } \Delta T_{j-mb@y} &= 20 \times 0.2 + 100 \times 0.16 \\ &+ 40 \times 0.03 - 20 \times 0.16 \\ &- 100 \times 0.15 \\ &= 3^\circ\text{C} \\ T_j &= T_{mb} + \Delta T_{j-mb} = 75 + 3 = 78^\circ\text{C}\end{aligned}$$

Hence the peak values of T_j are 96.2°C for the repetitive case, and 78°C for the single shot case.

The average power dissipation and the average junction temperature can be calculated as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}P_{av} &= \frac{25 \times 10 + 5 \times 130 + 20 \times 100}{400} \\ &= 7.25\text{W} \\ \Delta T_{j-mb(av)} &= P_{av} \times Z_{thj-mb(\delta=1)} = 7.25 \times 2 = 14.5^\circ\text{C} \\ T_{j(av)} &= T_{mb} + \Delta T_{j-mb(av)} = 75 + 14.5 = 89.5^\circ\text{C}\end{aligned}$$

Clearly, the junction temperature at time t_x should be higher than that at time t_y , and this is proven in the above calculations.

Burst pulses

Power devices are frequently subjected to a burst of pulses. This type of signal can be treated as a composite waveform and as in the previous example simulated by superimposing several rectangular pulses which have a common period, but both positive and negative amplitudes, in addition to suitable values of t_p and δ .

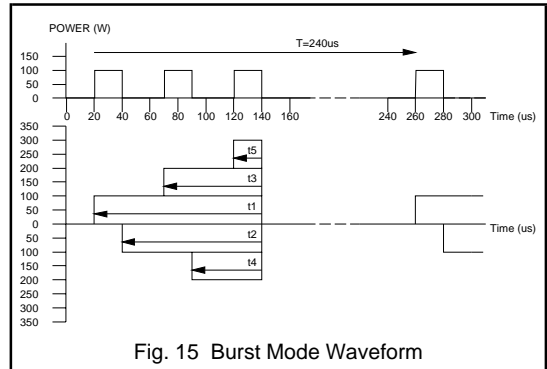


Fig. 15 Burst Mode Waveform

Consider the waveform shown in Fig. 15. The period is $240\mu\text{s}$, and the burst consists of three rectangular pulses of $100\mu\text{W}$ power and $20\mu\text{s}$ duration, separated by $30\mu\text{s}$. The peak junction temperature will occur at the end of each burst at time $t = t_x = 140\mu\text{s}$. To be able to add the various effects of the pulses at this time, all the pulses, both positive and negative, must end at time t_x . Positive pulses increase the junction temperature, while negative pulses decrease it.

$$\begin{aligned}\Delta T_{j-mb@x} &= P \cdot Z_{thj-mb(t1)} + P \cdot Z_{thj-mb(t3)} \\ &+ P \cdot Z_{thj-mb(t5)} - P \cdot Z_{thj-mb(t2)} \\ &- P \cdot Z_{thj-mb(t4)}\end{aligned}\quad 17$$

where $Z_{thj-mb(t)}$ is the transient thermal impedance for a pulse time t .

The Z_{th} values are taken from Fig. 9. For each term in the equation, the equivalent duty cycle must be worked out. These values can then be used in conjunction with Fig. 9 to find a value for Z_{th} . Table 2 gives the values calculated for this example.

		t1 120μs	t2 100μs	t3 70μs	t4 50μs	t5 20μs
Repetitive T=240μs	δ	0.500	0.420	0.290	0.210	0.083
	Z_{th}	1.100	0.800	0.600	0.430	0.210
Single Shot T=∞	δ	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Z_{th}	0.100	0.090	0.075	0.060	0.040

Table 2. Burst Mode pulse parameters

Substituting these values into equation 17 gives

Repetitive:

$$\begin{aligned}\Delta T_{j-mb@x} &= 100 \times 1.10 + 100 \times 0.60 \\ &\quad + 100 \times 0.21 - 100 \times 0.80 \\ &\quad - 100 \times 0.43 \\ &= 68^\circ\text{C} \\ T_j &= 75 + 68 = 143^\circ\text{C}\end{aligned}$$

Single Shot:

$$\begin{aligned}\Delta T_{j-mb@x} &= 100 \times 0.10 + 100 \times 0.075 \\ &\quad + 100 \times 0.04 - 100 \times 0.09 \\ &\quad - 100 \times 0.06 \\ &= 6.5^\circ\text{C} \\ T_j &= 75 + 6.5 = 81.5^\circ\text{C}\end{aligned}$$

Hence the peak value of T_j is 143°C for the repetitive case and 81.5°C for the single shot case. To calculate the average junction temperature $T_{j(av)}$:

$$P_{av} = \frac{3 \times 100 \times 20}{240}$$

$$= 25\text{W}$$

$$\Delta T_{j-mb(av)} = P_{av} \times Z_{thj-mb}(\delta=1) = 25 \times 2 = 50^\circ\text{C}$$

$$T_{j(av)} = 75 + 50 = 125^\circ\text{C}$$

The above example for the repetitive waveform highlights a case where the average junction temperature (125°C) is well within limits but the composite pulse calculation shows the peak junction temperature to be significantly higher. For reasons of improved long term reliability it is usual to operate devices with a peak junction temperature below 125°C .

Non-rectangular pulses

So far, the worked examples have only covered rectangular waveforms. However, triangular, trapezoidal and sinusoidal waveforms are also common. In order to apply the above thermal calculations to non rectangular waveforms, the waveform is approximated by a series of rectangles. Each rectangle represents part of the waveform. The equivalent rectangle must be equal in area to the section of the waveform it represents (ie the same energy) and also be of the same peak power. With reference to Fig. 16, a triangular waveform has been approximated to one rectangle in the first example, and two rectangles in the second. Obviously, increasing the number of sections the waveform is split into will improve the accuracy of the thermal calculations.

In the first example, there is only one rectangular pulse, of duration $50\mu\text{s}$, dissipating 50W . So again using equation 14 and a rearrangement of equation 7:

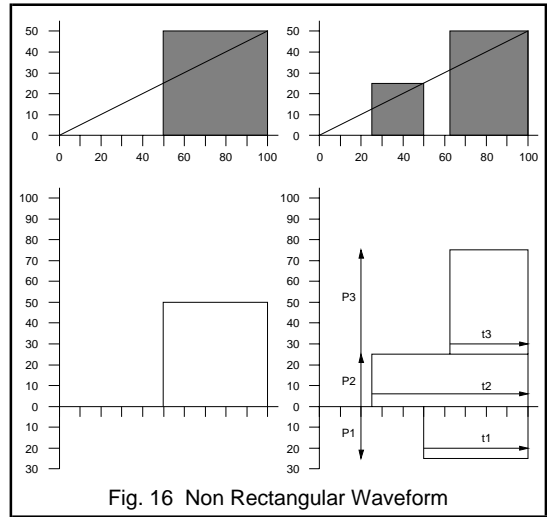


Fig. 16 Non Rectangular Waveform

$$\Delta T_{j-mb} = P_{tot} M \times Z_{thj-mb}$$

Single Shot

$$\Delta T_{j-mb} = 50 \times 0.065 = 3.25^\circ\text{C}$$

$$T_{jpeak} = 75 + 3.25 = 78.5^\circ\text{C}$$

10% Duty cycle

$$\Delta T_{j-mb} = 50 \times 0.230 = 11.5^\circ\text{C}$$

$$T_{jpeak} = 75 + 11.5 = 86.5^\circ\text{C}$$

50% Duty cycle

$$\Delta T_{j-mb} = 50 \times 1.000 = 50^\circ\text{C}$$

$$T_{jpeak} = 75 + 50 = 125^\circ\text{C}$$

When the waveform is split into two rectangular pulses:

$$\Delta T_{j-mb} = P_3 \cdot Z_{thj-mb}(t_3) + P_1 \cdot Z_{thj-mb}(t_1) - P_2 \cdot Z_{thj-mb}(t_2) \quad 18$$

For this example $P_1 = 25\text{W}$, $P_2 = 25\text{W}$, $P_3 = 50\text{W}$. Table 3 below shows the rest of the parameters:

		t1 75μs	t2 50μs	t3 37.5μs
Single Shot $T=\infty$	D	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Z_{th}	0.085	0.065	0.055
10% Duty Cycle $T=1000\mu\text{s}$	D	0.075	0.050	0.037
	Z_{th}	0.210	0.140	0.120
50% Duty Cycle $T=200\mu\text{s}$	D	0.375	0.250	0.188
	Z_{th}	0.700	0.500	0.420

Table 3. Non Rectangular Pulse Calculations

Sustituting these values into equation 18 gives:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Single shot} \quad \Delta T_{j-mb} &= 50 \times 0.055 + 25 \times 0.085 - 25 \times 0.065 \\ &= 3.25^\circ\text{C}\end{aligned}$$

$$T_{jpeak} = 75 + 3.25 = 78.5^\circ\text{C}$$

$$\begin{aligned}\text{10\% Duty cycle} \quad \Delta T_{j-mb} &= 50 \times 0.12 + 25 \times 0.21 - 25 \times 0.14 \\ &= 7.75^\circ\text{C}\end{aligned}$$

$$T_{jpeak} = 75 + 7.75 = 82.5^\circ\text{C}$$

$$\begin{aligned}\text{50\% Duty cycle} \quad \Delta T_{j-mb} &= 50 \times 0.42 + 25 \times 0.7 - 25 \times 0.5 \\ &= 26^\circ\text{C}\end{aligned}$$

$$T_{jpeak} = 75 + 26 = 101^\circ\text{C}$$

To calculate the average junction temperature:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{10\% Duty Cycle} \quad P_{av} &= \frac{50 \times 50}{1000} \\ &= 2.5\text{W}\end{aligned}$$

$$\Delta T_{j-mb(av)} = P_{av} \times Z_{thj-mb(\delta=1)} = 2.5 \times 2 = 5^\circ\text{C}$$

$$T_{j(av)} = 75 + 5 = 80^\circ\text{C}$$

50% Duty Cycle

$$P_{av} = \frac{50 \times 50}{200}$$

$$= 12.5\text{W}$$

$$\Delta T_{j-mb(av)} = P_{av} \times Z_{thj-mb(\delta=1)} = 12.5 \times 2 = 25^\circ\text{C}$$

$$T_{j(av)} = 75 + 25 = 100^\circ\text{C}$$

Conclusion

A method has been presented to allow the calculation of average and peak junction temperatures for a variety of pulse types. Several worked examples have shown calculations for various common waveforms. The method for non rectangular pulses can be applied to any wave shape, allowing temperature calculations for waveforms such as exponential and sinusoidal power pulses. For pulses such as these, care must be taken to ensure that the calculation gives the peak junction temperature, as it may not occur at the end of the pulse. In this instance several calculations must be performed with different endpoints to find the maximum junction temperature.

7.1.2 Heat Dissipation

All semiconductor failure mechanisms are temperature dependent and so the lower the junction temperature, the higher the reliability of the circuit. Thus our data specifies a maximum junction temperature which should not be exceeded under the worst probable conditions. However, derating the operating temperature from T_{jmax} is always desirable to improve the reliability still further. The junction temperature depends on both the power dissipated in the device and the thermal resistances (or impedances) associated with the device. Thus careful consideration of these thermal resistances (or impedances) allows the user to calculate the maximum power dissipation that will keep the junction temperature below a chosen value.

The formulae and diagrams given in this section can only be considered as a guide for determining the nature of a heatsink. This is because the thermal resistance of a heatsink depends on numerous parameters which cannot be predetermined. They include the position of the transistor on the heatsink, the extent to which air can flow unhindered, the ratio of the lengths of the sides of the heatsink, the screening effect of nearby components, and heating from these components. It is always advisable to check important temperatures in the finished equipment under the worst probable operating conditions. The more complex the heat dissipation conditions, the more important it becomes to carry out such checks.

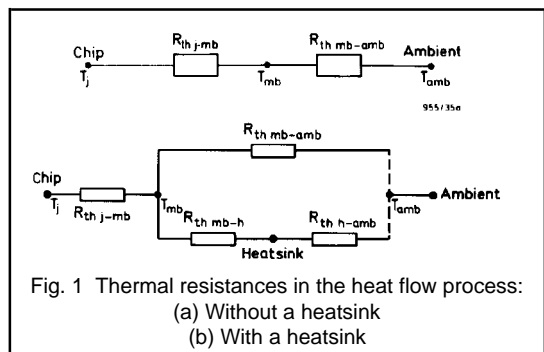
Heat flow path

The heat generated in a semiconductor chip flows by various paths to the surroundings. Small signal devices do not usually require heatsinking; the heat flows from the junction to the mounting base which is in close contact with the case. Heat is then lost by the case to the surroundings by convection and radiation (Fig. 1a). Power transistors, however, are usually mounted on heatsinks because of the higher power dissipation they experience. Heat flows from the transistor case to the heatsink by way of contact pressure, and the heatsink loses heat to the surroundings by convection and radiation, or by conduction to cooling water (Fig. 1b). Generally air cooling is used so that the ambient referred to in Fig.1 is usually the surrounding air. Note that if this is the air inside an equipment case, the additional thermal resistance between the inside and outside of the equipment case should be taken into account.

Contact thermal resistance $R_{th\,mb-h}$

The thermal resistance between the transistor mounting base and the heatsink depends on the quality and size of the contact areas, the type of any intermediate plates used, and the contact pressure. Care should be taken when drilling holes in heatsinks to avoid burring and distorting the

metal, and both mating surfaces should be clean. Paint finishes of normal thickness, up to 50 μm (as a protection against electrolytic voltage corrosion), barely affect the thermal resistance. Transistor case and heatsink surfaces can never be perfectly flat, and so contact will take place on several points only, with a small air-gap over the rest of the area. The use of a soft substance to fill this gap lowers the contact thermal resistance. Normally, the gap is filled with a heatsinking compound which remains fairly viscous at normal transistor operating temperatures and has a high thermal conductivity. The use of such a compound also prevents moisture from penetrating between the contact surfaces. Proprietary heatsinking compounds are available which consist of a silicone grease loaded with some electrically insulating good thermally conducting powder such as alumina. The contact thermal resistance $R_{th\,mb-h}$ is usually small with respect to $(R_{th\,j-mb} + R_{th\,h-amb})$ when cooling is by natural convection. However, the heatsink thermal resistance $R_{th\,h-amb}$ can be very small when either forced ventilation or water cooling are used, and thus a close thermal contact between the transistor case and heatsink becomes particularly important.



Thermal resistance calculations

Fig. 1a shows that, when a heatsink is not used, the total thermal resistance between junction and ambient is given by:

$$R_{th\,j-amb} = R_{th\,j-mb} + R_{th\,mb-amb} \quad 1$$

However, power transistors are generally mounted on a heatsink since $R_{th\,j-amb}$ is not usually small enough to maintain temperatures within the chip below desired levels.

Fig. 1b shows that, when a heatsink is used, the total thermal resistance is given by:

$$R_{th\,j-amb} = R_{th\,j-mb} + R_{th\,mb-h} + R_{th\,h-amb} \quad 2$$

Note that the direct heat loss from the transistor case to the surroundings through $R_{th\,mb-amb}$ is negligibly small.

The first stage in determining the size and nature of the required heatsink is to calculate the maximum heatsink thermal resistance $R_{th\,h-amb}$ that will maintain the junction temperature below the desired value

Continuous operation

Under dc conditions, the maximum heatsink thermal resistance can be calculated directly from the maximum desired junction temperature.

$$R_{thj-amb} = \frac{T_j - T_{amb}}{P_{tot(av)}} \quad 3$$

and

$$R_{thj-mb} = \frac{T_j - T_{mb}}{P_{tot(av)}} \quad 4$$

Combining equations 2 and 3 gives:

$$R_{thh-amb} = \frac{T_j - T_{amb}}{P_{tot(av)}} - R_{thj-mb} - R_{thmb-h} \quad 5$$

and substituting Eq 4 into Eq 5 gives:

$$R_{thh-amb} = \frac{T_{mb} - T_{amb}}{P_{tot(av)}} - R_{thmb-h} \quad 6$$

The values of R_{thj-mb} and R_{thmb-h} are given in the published data. Thus, either Eq. 5 or Eq.6 can be used to find the maximum heatsink thermal resistance.

Intermittent operation

The thermal equivalent circuits of Fig. 1 are inappropriate for intermittent operation, and the thermal impedance Z_{thj-mb} should be considered.

$$P_{totM} = \frac{T_j - T_{mb}}{Z_{thj-mb}}$$

thus:

$$T_{mb} = T_j - P_{totM} \cdot Z_{thj-mb} \quad 7$$

The mounting-base temperature has always been assumed to remain constant under intermittent operation. This assumption is known to be valid in practice provided that the pulse time is less than about one second. The mounting-base temperature does not change significantly under these conditions as indicated in Fig. 2. This is because heatsinks have a high thermal capacity and thus a high thermal time-constant.

Thus Eq.6 is valid for intermittent operation, provided that the pulse time is less than one second. The value of T_{mb} can be calculated from Eq. 7, and the heatsink thermal resistance can be obtained from Eq.6.

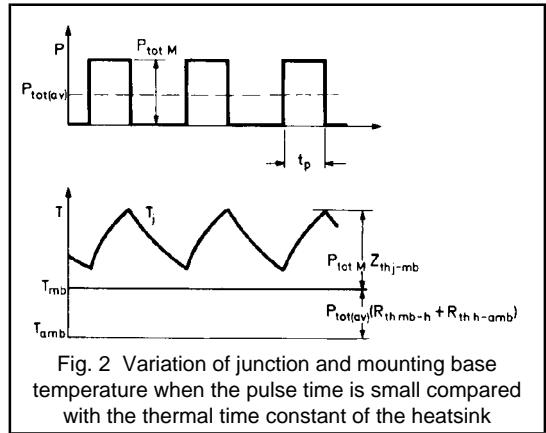


Fig. 2 Variation of junction and mounting base temperature when the pulse time is small compared with the thermal time constant of the heatsink

The thermal time constant of a transistor is defined as that time at which the junction temperature has reached 70% of its final value after being subjected to a constant power dissipation at a constant mounting base temperature.

Now, if the pulse duration t_p exceeds one second, the transistor is temporarily in thermal equilibrium since such a pulse duration is significantly greater than the thermal time-constant of most transistors. Consequently, for pulse times of more than one second, the temperature difference $T_j - T_{mb}$ reaches a stationary final value (Fig. 3) and Eq.7 should be replaced by:

$$T_{mb} = T_j - P_{totM} \cdot R_{thj-mb} \quad 8$$

In addition, it is no longer valid to assume that the mounting base temperature is constant since the pulse time is also no longer small with respect to the thermal time constant of the heatsink.

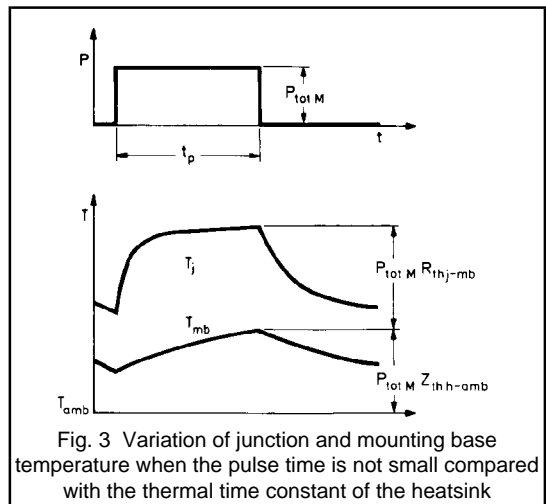


Fig. 3 Variation of junction and mounting base temperature when the pulse time is not small compared with the thermal time constant of the heatsink

Smaller heatsinks for intermittent operation

In many instances, the thermal capacity of a heatsink can be utilised to design a smaller heatsink for intermittent operation than would be necessary for the same level of continuous power dissipation. The average power dissipation in Eq. 6 is replaced by the peak power dissipation to obtain the value of the thermal impedance between the heatsink and the surroundings

$$Z_{thh-amb} = \frac{T_{mb} - T_{amb}}{P_{totM}} - R_{thmb-h} \quad 9$$

The value of $Z_{thh-amb}$ will be less than the comparable thermal resistance and thus a smaller heatsink can be designed than that obtained using the too large value calculated from Eq.6.

Heatsinks

Three varieties of heatsink are in common use: flat plates (including chassis), diecast finned heatsinks, and extruded finned heatsinks. The material normally used for heatsink construction is aluminium although copper may be used with advantage for flat-sheet heatsinks. Small finned clips are sometimes used to improve the dissipation of low-power transistors.

Heatsink finish

Heatsink thermal resistance is a function of surface finish. A painted surface will have a greater emissivity than a bright unpainted one. The effect is most marked with flat plate heatsinks, where about one third of the heat is dissipated by radiation. The colour of the paint used is relatively unimportant, and the thermal resistance of a flat plate heatsink painted gloss white will be only about 3% higher than that of the same heatsink painted matt black. With finned heatsinks, painting is less effective since heat radiated from most fins will fall on adjacent fins but it is still worthwhile. Both anodising and etching will decrease the thermal resistivity. Metallic type paints, such as aluminium paint, have the lowest emissivities, although they are approximately ten times better than a bright aluminium metal finish.

Flat-plate heatsinks

The simplest type of heatsink is a flat metal plate to which the transistor is attached. Such heatsinks are used both in the form of separate plates and as the equipment chassis itself. The thermal resistance obtained depends on the thickness, area and orientation of the plate, as well as on the finish and power dissipated. A plate mounted horizontally will have about twice the thermal resistance of a vertically mounted plate. This is particularly important where the equipment chassis itself is used as the heatsink.

In Fig. 4, the thermal resistance of a blackened heatsink is plotted against surface area (one side) with power dissipation as a parameter. The graph is accurate to within 25% for nearly square plates, where the ratio of the lengths of the sides is less than 1.25:1.

Finned heatsinks

Finned heatsinks may be made by stacking flat plates, although it is usually more economical to use ready made diecast or extruded heatsinks. Since most commercially available finned heatsinks are of reasonably optimum design, it is possible to compare them on the basis of the overall volume which they occupy. This comparison is made in Fig. 5 for heatsinks with their fins mounted vertically; again, the graph is accurate to 25%.

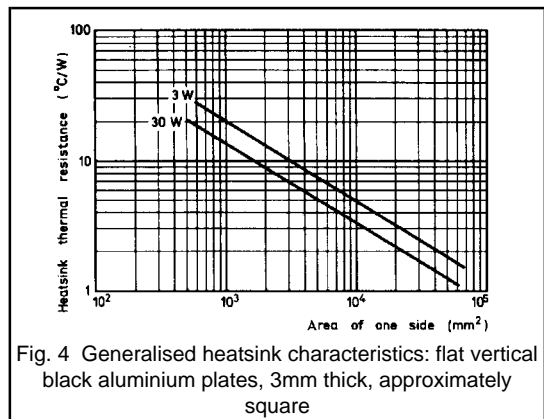


Fig. 4 Generalised heatsink characteristics: flat vertical black aluminium plates, 3mm thick, approximately square

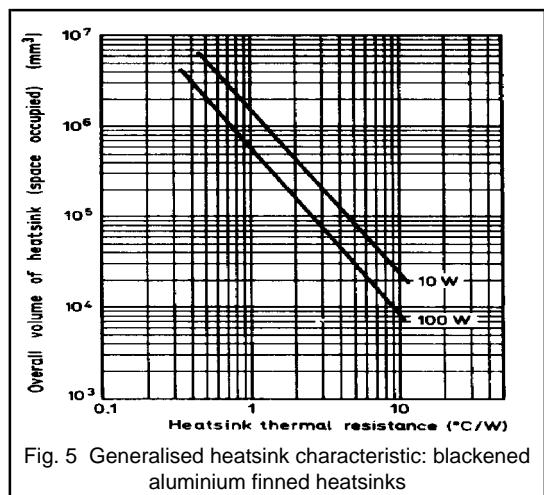


Fig. 5 Generalised heatsink characteristic: blackened aluminium finned heatsinks

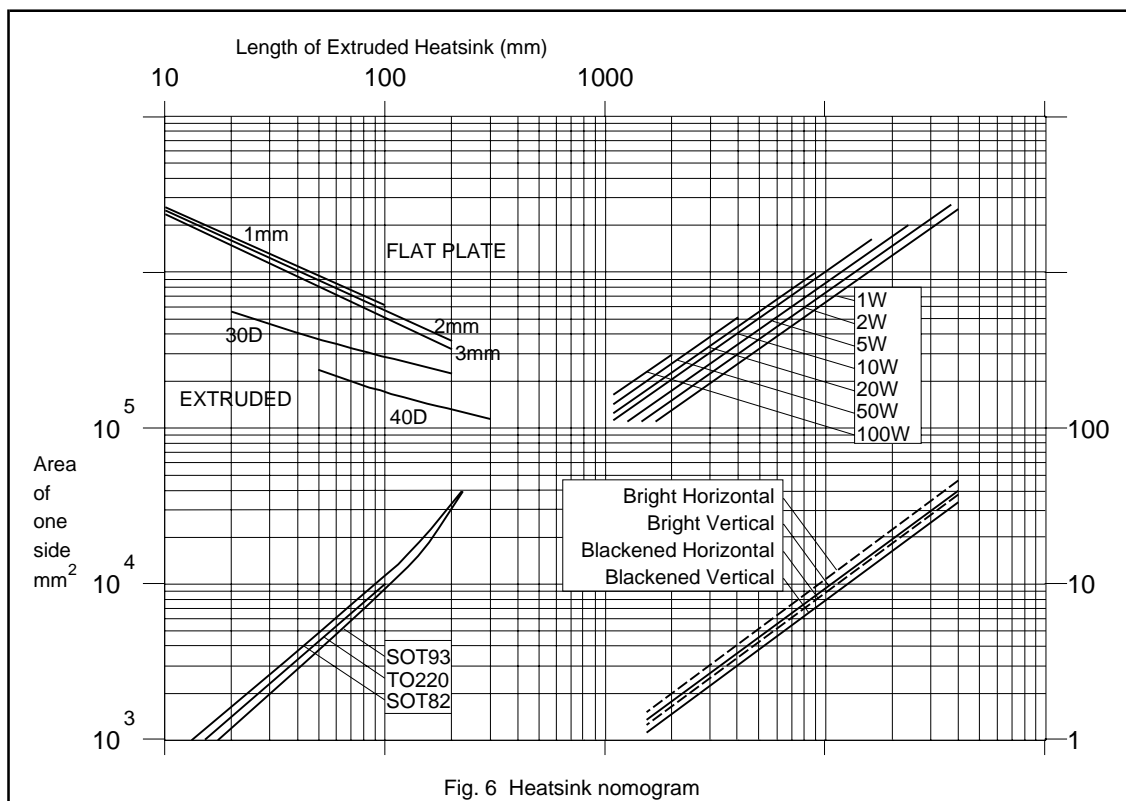


Fig. 6 Heatsink nomogram

Heatsink dimensions

The maximum thermal resistance through which sufficient power can be dissipated without damaging the transistor can be calculated as discussed previously. This section explains how to arrive at a type and size of heatsink that gives a sufficiently low thermal resistance.

Natural air cooling

The required size of aluminium heatsinks - whether flat or extruded (finned) can be derived from the nomogram in Fig. 6. Like all heatsink diagrams, the nomogram does not give exact values for $R_{th\ h-amb}$ as a function of the dimensions since the practical conditions always deviate to some extent from those under which the nomogram was drawn up. The actual values for the heatsink thermal resistance may differ by up to 10% from the nomogram values. Consequently, it is advisable to take temperature measurements in the finished equipment, particularly where the thermal conditions are critical.

The conditions to which the nomogram applies are as follows:

- natural air cooling (unimpeded natural convection with no build up of heat);
- ambient temperature about 25°C, measured about 50mm below the lower edge of the heatsink (see Fig. 7);
- atmospheric pressure about 10 N/m²;
- single mounting (that is, not affected by nearby heatsinks);
- distance between the bottom of the heatsink and the base of a draught-free space about 100mm (see Fig. 7);
- transistor mounted roughly in the centre of the heatsink (this is not so important for finned heatsinks because of the good thermal conduction).

The appropriately-sized heatsink is found as follows.

1. Enter the nomogram from the right hand side of section 1 at the appropriate $R_{th\ h-amb}$ value (see Fig. 8). Move horizontally to the left, until the appropriate curve for orientation and surface finish is reached.
2. Move vertically upwards to intersect the appropriate power dissipation curve in section 2.

3. Move horizontally to the left into section 3 for the desired thickness of a flat-plate heatsink, or the type of extrusion.
4. If an extruded heatsink is required, move vertically upwards to obtain its length (Figs. 9a and 9b give the outlines of the extrusions).
5. If a flat-plate heatsink is to be used, move vertically downwards to intersect the appropriate curve for envelope type in section 4.
6. Move horizontally to the left to obtain heatsink area.
7. The heatsink dimensions should not exceed the ratio of 1.25:1.

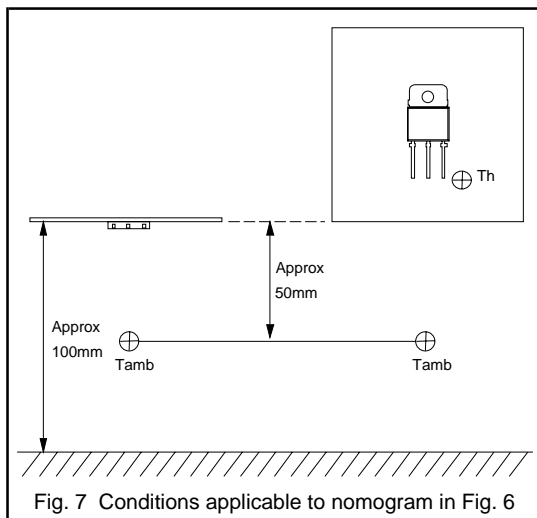


Fig. 7 Conditions applicable to nomogram in Fig. 6

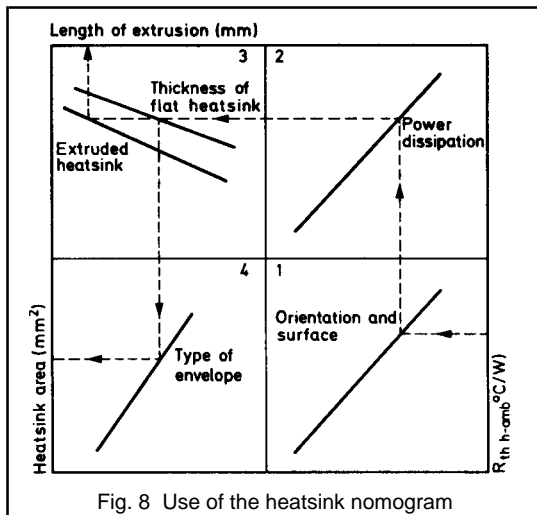


Fig. 8 Use of the heatsink nomogram

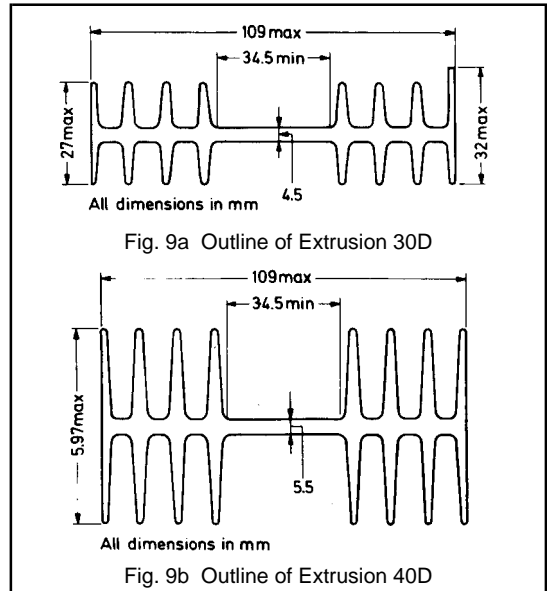


Fig. 9a Outline of Extrusion 30D

Fig. 9b Outline of Extrusion 40D

The curves in section 2 take account of the non linear nature of the relationship between the temperature drop across the heatsink and the power dissipation loss. Thus, at a constant value of the heatsink thermal resistance, the greater the power dissipation, the smaller is the required size of heatsink. This is illustrated by the following example.

Example

An extruded heatsink mounted vertically and with a painted surface is required to have a maximum thermal resistance of $R_{th\ h-amb} = 2.6\ ^\circ\text{C/W}$ at the following powers:

$$(a) P_{tot(av)} = 5W \quad (b) P_{tot(av)} = 50W$$

Enter the nomogram at the appropriate value of the thermal resistance in section 1, and via either the 50W or 5W line in section 2, the appropriate lengths of the extruded heatsink 30D are found to be:

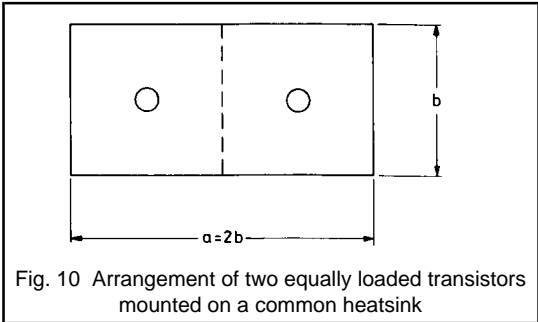
$$(a) \text{ length} = 110\text{mm} \text{ and } (b) \text{ length} = 44\text{mm}.$$

Case (b) requires a shorter length since the temperature difference is ten times greater than in case (a).

As the ambient temperature increases beyond 25°C , so does the temperature of the heatsink and thus the thermal resistance (at constant power) decreases owing to the increasing role of radiation in the heat removal process. Consequently, a heatsink with dimensions derived from Fig. 6 at $T_{amb} > 25^\circ\text{C}$ will be more than adequate. If the maximum ambient temperature is less than 25°C , then the thermal resistance will increase slightly. However, any

increase will lie within the limits of accuracy of the nomogram and within the limits set by other uncertainties associated with heatsink calculations.

For heatsinks with relatively small areas, a considerable part of the heat is dissipated from the transistor case. This is why the curves in section 4 tend to flatten out with decreasing heatsink area. The area of extruded heatsinks is always large with respect to the surface of the transistor case, even when the length is small.



If several transistors are mounted on a common heatsink, each transistor should be associated with a particular section of the heatsink (either an area or length according to type) whose maximum thermal resistance is calculated from equations 5 or 6; that is, without taking the heat produced by nearby transistors into account. From the sum

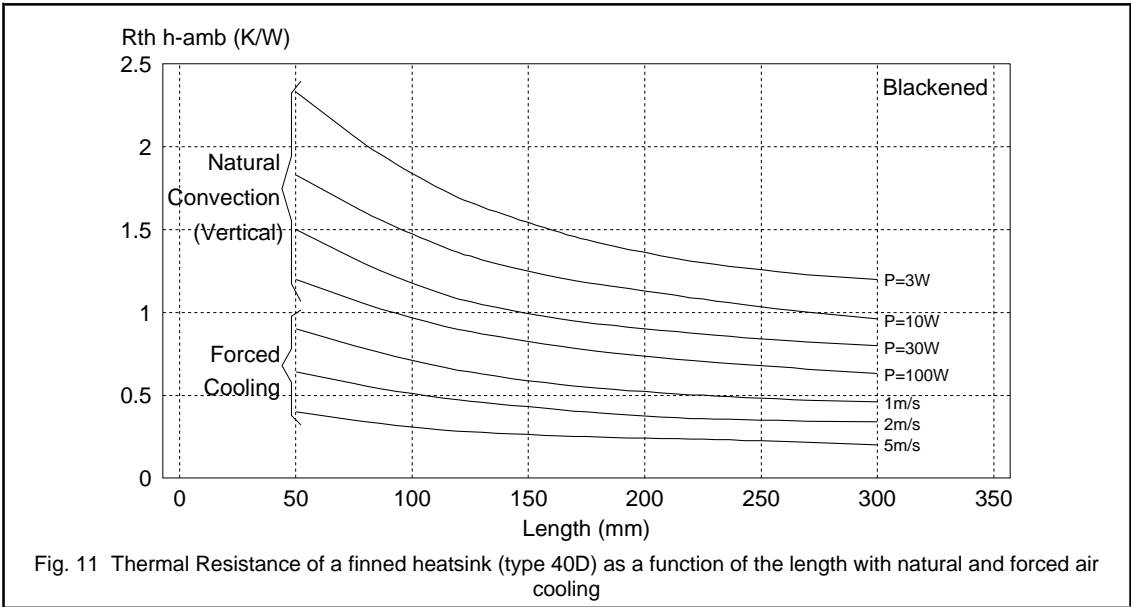
of these areas or lengths, the size of the common heatsink can then be obtained. If a flat heatsink is used, the transistors are best arranged as shown in Fig. 10. The maximum mounting base temperatures of transistors in such a grouping should always be checked once the equipment has been constructed.

Forced air cooling

If the thermal resistance needs to be much less than $1^{\circ}\text{C}/\text{W}$, or the heatsink not too large, forced air cooling by means of fans can be provided. Apart from the size of the heatsink, the thermal resistance now only depends on the speed of the cooling air. Provided that the cooling air flows parallel to the fins and with sufficient speed ($>0.5\text{m/s}$), the thermal resistance hardly depends on the power dissipation and the orientation of the heatsink. Note that turbulence in the air current can result in practical values deviating from theoretical values.

Fig. 11 shows the form in which the thermal resistances for forced air cooling are given in the case of extruded heatsinks. It also shows the reduction in thermal resistance or length of heatsink which may be obtained with forced air cooling.

The effect of forced air cooling in the case of flat heatsinks is seen from Fig. 12. Here, too, the dissipated power and the orientation of the heatsink have only a slight effect on the thermal resistance, provided that the air flow is sufficiently fast.



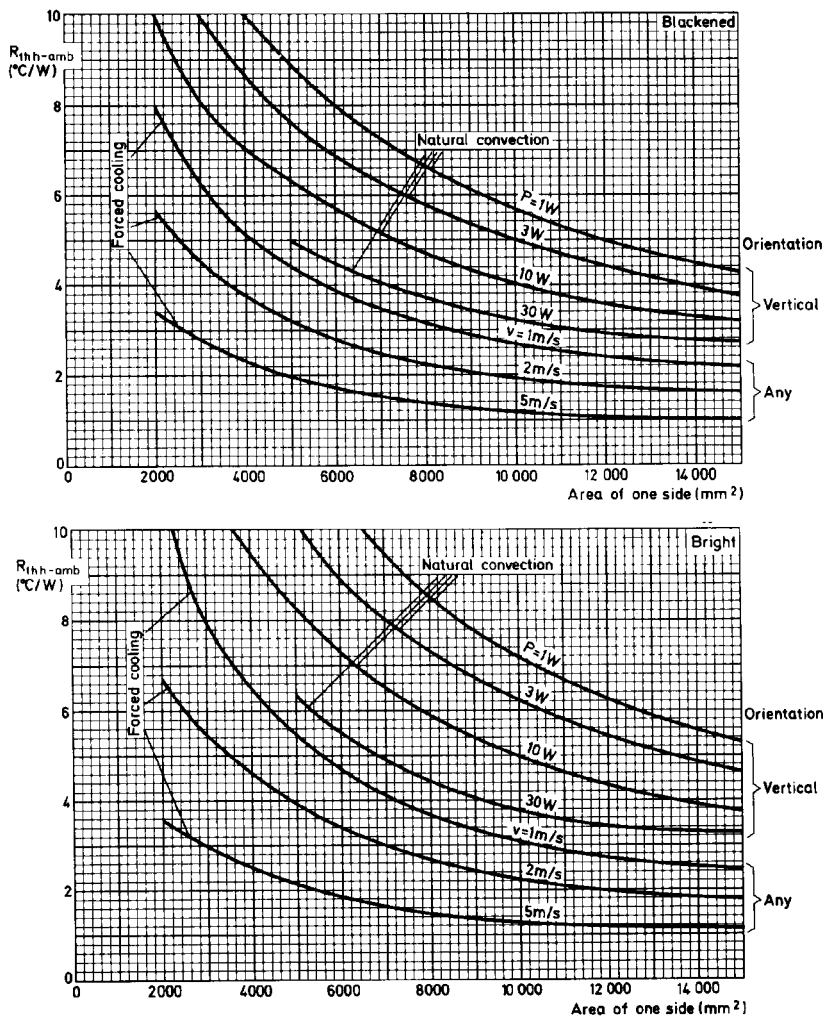


Fig. 12 Thermal Resistances of heatsinks (2mm thick copper or 3mm thick aluminium) under natural convection and forced cooling conditions, with a SOT93 envelope.

(a) blackened

(b) bright

Summary

The majority of power transistors require heatsinking, and once the maximum thermal resistance that will maintain the device's junction temperature below its rating has been calculated, a heatsink of appropriate type and size can be chosen. The practical conditions under which a transistor will be operated are likely to differ from the theoretical

considerations used to determine the required heatsink, and thus temperatures should always be checked in the finished equipment. Finally, some applications require a small heatsink, or one with a very low thermal resistance, in which case forced air cooling by means of fans should be provided.

Acknowledgments

We are grateful for all the contributions from our colleagues within Philips and to the Application Laboratories in Eindhoven and Hamburg.

We would also like to thank Dr.P.H.Mellor of the University of Sheffield for contributing the application note of section 3.1.5.

The authors thank Mrs.R.Hayes for her considerable help in the preparation of this book.

The authors also thank Mr.D.F.Haslam for his assistance in the formatting and printing of the manuscripts.

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Preface

This book was prepared by the Power Semiconductor Applications Laboratory of the Philips Semiconductors product division, Hazel Grove. The book is intended as a guide to using power semiconductors both efficiently and reliably in power conversion applications. It is made up of eight main chapters each of which contains a number of application notes aimed at making it easier to select and use power semiconductors.

CHAPTER 1 forms an introduction to power semiconductors concentrating particularly on the two major power transistor technologies, Power MOSFETs and High Voltage Bipolar Transistors.

CHAPTER 2 is devoted to Switched Mode Power Supplies. It begins with a basic description of the most commonly used topologies and discusses the major issues surrounding the use of power semiconductors including rectifiers. Specific design examples are given as well as a look at designing the magnetic components. The end of this chapter describes resonant power supply technology.

CHAPTER 3 describes motion control in terms of ac, dc and stepper motor operation and control. This chapter looks only at transistor controls, phase control using thyristors and triacs is discussed separately in chapter 6.

CHAPTER 4 looks at television and monitor applications. A description of the operation of horizontal deflection circuits is given followed by transistor selection guides for both deflection and power supply applications. Deflection and power supply circuit examples are also given based on circuits designed by the Product Concept and Application Laboratories (Eindhoven).

CHAPTER 5 concentrates on automotive electronics looking in detail at the requirements for the electronic switches taking into consideration the harsh environment in which they must operate.

CHAPTER 6 reviews thyristor and triac applications from the basics of device technology and operation to the simple design rules which should be followed to achieve maximum reliability. Specific examples are given in this chapter for a number of the common applications.

CHAPTER 7 looks at the thermal considerations for power semiconductors in terms of power dissipation and junction temperature limits. Part of this chapter is devoted to worked examples showing how junction temperatures can be calculated to ensure the limits are not exceeded. Heatsink requirements and designs are also discussed in the second half of this chapter.

CHAPTER 8 is an introduction to the use of high voltage bipolar transistors in electronic lighting ballasts. Many of the possible topologies are described.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1 Introduction to Power Semiconductors	1
<i>General</i>	3
1.1.1 An Introduction To Power Devices	5
<i>Power MOSFET</i>	17
1.2.1 PowerMOS Introduction	19
1.2.2 Understanding Power MOSFET Switching Behaviour	29
1.2.3 Power MOSFET Drive Circuits	39
1.2.4 Parallel Operation of Power MOSFETs	49
1.2.5 Series Operation of Power MOSFETs	53
1.2.6 Logic Level FETS	57
1.2.7 Avalanche Ruggedness	61
1.2.8 Electrostatic Discharge (ESD) Considerations	67
1.2.9 Understanding the Data Sheet: PowerMOS	69
<i>High Voltage Bipolar Transistor</i>	77
1.3.1 Introduction To High Voltage Bipolar Transistors	79
1.3.2 Effects of Base Drive on Switching Times	83
1.3.3 Using High Voltage Bipolar Transistors	91
1.3.4 Understanding The Data Sheet: High Voltage Transistors	97
CHAPTER 2 Switched Mode Power Supplies	103
<i>Using Power Semiconductors in Switched Mode Topologies</i>	105
2.1.1 An Introduction to Switched Mode Power Supply Topologies	107
2.1.2 The Power Supply Designer's Guide to High Voltage Transistors	129
2.1.3 Base Circuit Design for High Voltage Bipolar Transistors in Power Converters	141
2.1.4 Isolated Power Semiconductors for High Frequency Power Supply Applications	153
<i>Output Rectification</i>	159
2.2.1 Fast Recovery Epitaxial Diodes for use in High Frequency Rectification	161
2.2.2 Schottky Diodes from Philips Semiconductors	173
2.2.3 An Introduction to Synchronous Rectifier Circuits using PowerMOS Transistors	179



<i>Design Examples</i>	185
2.3.1 Mains Input 100 W Forward Converter SMPS: MOSFET and Bipolar Transistor Solutions featuring ETD Cores	187
2.3.2 Flexible, Low Cost, Self-Oscillating Power Supply using an ETD34 Two-Part Coil Former and 3C85 Ferrite	199
<i>Magnetics Design</i>	205
2.4.1 Improved Ferrite Materials and Core Outlines for High Frequency Power Supplies	207
<i>Resonant Power Supplies</i>	217
2.5.1. An Introduction To Resonant Power Supplies	219
2.5.2. Resonant Power Supply Converters - The Solution For Mains Pollution Problems	225
CHAPTER 3 Motor Control	241
<i>AC Motor Control</i>	243
3.1.1 Noiseless A.C. Motor Control: Introduction to a 20 kHz System	245
3.1.2 The Effect of a MOSFET's Peak to Average Current Rating on Inverter Efficiency	251
3.1.3 MOSFETs and FREDFETs for Motor Drive Equipment	253
3.1.4 A Designers Guide to PowerMOS Devices for Motor Control	259
3.1.5 A 300V, 40A High Frequency Inverter Pole Using Paralleled FREDFET Modules	273
<i>DC Motor Control</i>	283
3.2.1 Chopper circuits for DC motor control	285
3.2.2 A switched-mode controller for DC motors	293
3.2.3 Brushless DC Motor Systems	301
<i>Stepper Motor Control</i>	307
3.3.1 Stepper Motor Control	309
CHAPTER 4 Televisions and Monitors	317
<i>Power Devices in TV & Monitor Applications (including selection guides)</i>	319
4.1.1 An Introduction to Horizontal Deflection	321
4.1.2 The BU25XXA/D Range of Deflection Transistors	331



4.1.3 Philips HVT's for TV & Monitor Applications	339
4.1.4 TV and Monitor Damper Diodes	345
<i>TV Deflection Circuit Examples</i>	349
4.2.1 Application Information for the 16 kHz Black Line Picture Tubes	351
4.2.2 32 kHz / 100 Hz Deflection Circuits for the 66FS Black Line Picture Tube	361
<i>SMPS Circuit Examples</i>	377
4.3.1 A 70W Full Performance TV SMPS Using The TDA8380	379
4.3.2 A Synchronous 200W SMPS for 16 and 32 kHz TV	389
<i>Monitor Deflection Circuit Example</i>	397
4.4.1 A Versatile 30 - 64 kHz Autosync Monitor	399

CHAPTER 5 Automotive Power Electronics 421

<i>Automotive Motor Control (including selection guides)</i>	423
5.1.1 Automotive Motor Control With Philips MOSFETS	425
<i>Automotive Lamp Control (including selection guides)</i>	433
5.2.1 Automotive Lamp Control With Philips MOSFETS	435
<i>The TOPFET</i>	443
5.3.1 An Introduction to the 3 pin TOPFET	445
5.3.2 An Introduction to the 5 pin TOPFET	447
5.3.3 BUK101-50DL - a Microcontroller compatible TOPFET	449
5.3.4 Protection with 5 pin TOPFETs	451
5.3.5 Driving TOPFETs	453
5.3.6 High Side PWM Lamp Dimmer using TOPFET	455
5.3.7 Linear Control with TOPFET	457
5.3.8 PWM Control with TOPFET	459
5.3.9 Isolated Drive for TOPFET	461
5.3.10 3 pin and 5 pin TOPFET Leadforms	463
5.3.11 TOPFET Input Voltage	465
5.3.12 Negative Input and TOPFET	467
5.3.13 Switching Inductive Loads with TOPFET	469
5.3.14 Driving DC Motors with TOPFET	471
5.3.15 An Introduction to the High Side TOPFET	473
5.3.16 High Side Linear Drive with TOPFET	475

<i>Automotive Ignition</i>	477
5.4.1 An Introduction to Electronic Automotive Ignition	479
5.4.2 IGBTs for Automotive Ignition	481
5.4.3 Electronic Switches for Automotive Ignition	483
CHAPTER 6 Power Control with Thyristors and Triacs	485
<i>Using Thyristors and Triacs</i>	487
6.1.1 Introduction to Thyristors and Triacs	489
6.1.2 Using Thyristors and Triacs	497
6.1.3 The Peak Current Handling Capability of Thyristors	505
6.1.4 Understanding Thyristor and Triac Data	509
<i>Thyristor and Triac Applications</i>	521
6.2.1 Triac Control of DC Inductive Loads	523
6.2.2 Domestic Power Control with Triacs and Thyristors	527
6.2.3 Design of a Time Proportional Temperature Controller	537
<i>Hi-Com Triacs</i>	547
6.3.1 Understanding Hi-Com Triacs	549
6.3.2 Using Hi-Com Triacs	551
CHAPTER 7 Thermal Management	553
<i>Thermal Considerations</i>	555
7.1.1 Thermal Considerations for Power Semiconductors	557
7.1.2 Heat Dissipation	567
CHAPTER 8 Lighting	575
<i>Fluorescent Lamp Control</i>	577
8.1.1 Efficient Fluorescent Lighting using Electronic Ballasts	579
8.1.2 Electronic Ballasts - Philips Transistor Selection Guide	587
8.1.3 An Electronic Ballast - Base Drive Optimisation	589

Index

- Airgap, transformer core, 111, 113
- Anti saturation diode, 590
- Asynchronous, 497
- Automotive
 - fans
 - see motor control
 - IGBT, 481, 483
 - ignition, 479, 481, 483
 - lamps, 435, 455
 - motor control, 425, 457, 459, 471, 475
 - resistive loads, 442
 - reverse battery, 452, 473, 479
 - screen heater, 442
 - seat heater, 442
 - solenoids, 469
 - TOPFET, 473
- Avalanche, 61
- Avalanche breakdown
 - thyristor, 490
- Avalanche multiplication, 134

- Baker clamp, 138, 187, 190
- Ballast
 - electronic, 580
 - fluorescent lamp, 579
 - switchstart, 579
- Base drive, 136
 - base inductor, 147
 - base inductor, diode assisted, 148
 - base resistor, 146
 - drive transformer, 145
 - drive transformer leakage inductance, 149
 - electronic ballast, 589
 - forward converter, 187
 - power converters, 141
 - speed-up capacitor, 143
- Base inductor, 144, 147
- Base inductor, diode assisted, 148
- Boost converter, 109
 - continuous mode, 109
 - discontinuous mode, 109
 - output ripple, 109
- Bootstrap, 303
- Breakback voltage
 - diac, 492
- Breakdown voltage, 70
- Breakover current
 - diac, 492
- Breakover voltage
 - diac, 492, 592
 - thyristor, 490

- Bridge circuits
 - see Motor Control - AC
- Brushless motor, 301, 303
- Buck-boost converter, 110
- Buck converter, 108 - 109
- Burst firing, 537
- Burst pulses, 564

- Capacitance
 - junction, 29
- Capacitor
 - mains dropper, 544
- CENELEC, 537
- Charge carriers, 133
 - triac commutation, 549
- Choke
 - fluorescent lamp, 580
- Choppers, 285
- Clamp diode, 117
- Clamp winding, 113
- Commutation
 - diode, 164
 - Hi-Com triac, 551
 - thyristor, 492
 - triac, 494, 523, 529
- Compact fluorescent lamp, 585
- Continuous mode
 - see Switched Mode Power Supplies
- Continuous operation, 557
- Converter (dc-dc)
 - switched mode power supply, 107
- Cookers, 537
- Cooling
 - forced, 572
 - natural, 570
- Crest factor, 529
- Critical electric field, 134
- Cross regulation, 114, 117
- Current fed resonant inverter, 589
- Current Mode Control, 120
- Current tail, 138, 143

- Damper Diodes, 345, 367
 - forward recovery, 328, 348
 - losses, 347
 - outlines, 345
 - picture distortion, 328, 348
 - selection guide, 345
- Darlington, 13
- Data Sheets
 - High Voltage Bipolar Transistor, 92,97,331
 - MOSFET, 69

- dc-dc converter, 119
- Depletion region, 133
- Desaturation networks, 86
 - Baker clamp, 91, 138
- di/dt
 - triac, 531
- Diac, 492, 500, 527, 530, 591
- Diode, 6
 - double diffused, 162
 - epitaxial, 161
 - schottky, 173
 - structure, 161
- Diode Modulator, 327, 367
- Disc drives, 302
- Discontinuous mode
 - see Switched Mode Power Supplies
- Domestic Appliances, 527
- Dropper
 - capacitive, 544
 - resistive, 544, 545
- Duty cycle, 561
- EFD core
 - see magnetics
- Efficiency Diodes
 - see Damper Diodes
- Electric drill, 531
- Electronic ballast, 580
 - base drive optimisation, 589
 - current fed half bridge, 584, 587, 589
 - current fed push pull, 583, 587
 - flyback, 582
 - transistor selection guide, 587
 - voltage fed half bridge, 584, 588
 - voltage fed push pull, 583, 587
- EMC, 260, 455
 - see RFI, ESD
- TOPFET, 473
- Emitter shorting
 - triac, 549
- Epitaxial diode, 161
 - characteristics, 163
 - di/dt, 164
 - forward recovery, 168
 - lifetime control, 162
 - operating frequency, 165
 - passivation, 162
 - reverse leakage, 169
 - reverse recovery, 162, 164
 - reverse recovery softness, 167
 - selection guide, 171
 - snap-off, 167
 - softness factor, 167
 - stored charge, 162
 - technology, 162
- ESD, 67
 - see Protection, ESD
 - precautions, 67
- ETD core
 - see magnetics
- F-pack
 - see isolated package
- Fall time, 143, 144
- Fast Recovery Epitaxial Diode (FRED)
 - see epitaxial diode
- FBSOA, 134
- Ferrites
 - see magnetics
- Flicker
 - fluorescent lamp, 580
- Fluorescent lamp, 579
 - colour rendering, 579
 - colour temperature, 579
 - efficacy, 579, 580
 - triphosphor, 579
- Flyback converter, 110, 111, 113
 - advantages, 114
 - clamp winding, 113
 - continuous mode, 114
 - coupled inductor, 113
 - cross regulation, 114
 - diodes, 115
 - disadvantages, 114
 - discontinuous mode, 114
 - electronic ballast, 582
 - leakage inductance, 113
 - magnetics, 213
 - operation, 113
 - rectifier circuit, 180
 - self oscillating power supply, 199
 - synchronous rectifier, 156, 181
 - transformer core airgap, 111, 113
 - transistors, 115
- Flyback converter (two transistor), 111, 114
- Food mixer, 531
- Forward converter, 111, 116
 - advantages, 116
 - clamp diode, 117
 - conduction loss, 197
 - continuous mode, 116
 - core loss, 116
 - core saturation, 117
 - cross regulation, 117
 - diodes, 118
 - disadvantages, 117
 - duty ratio, 117
 - ferrite cores, 116
 - magnetics, 213
 - magnetisation energy, 116, 117

- operation, 116
- output diodes, 117
- output ripple, 116
- rectifier circuit, 180
- reset winding, 117
- switched mode power supply, 187
- switching frequency, 195
- switching losses, 196
- synchronous rectifier, 157, 181
- transistors, 118
- Forward converter (two transistor), 111, 117
- Forward recovery, 168
- FREDFET, 250, 253, 305
 - bridge circuit, 255
 - charge, 254
 - diode, 254
 - drive, 262
 - loss, 256
 - reverse recovery, 254
- FREDFETs
 - motor control, 259
- Full bridge converter, 111, 125
 - advantages, 125
 - diodes, 126
 - disadvantages, 125
 - operation, 125
 - transistors, 126
- Gate
 - triac, 538
- Gate drive
 - forward converter, 195
- Gold doping, 162, 169
- GTO, 11
- Guard ring
 - schottky diode, 174
- Half bridge, 253
- Half bridge circuits
 - see also Motor Control - AC
- Half bridge converter, 111, 122
 - advantages, 122
 - clamp diodes, 122
 - cross conduction, 122
 - diodes, 124
 - disadvantages, 122
 - electronic ballast, 584, 587, 589
 - flux symmetry, 122
 - magnetics, 214
 - operation, 122
 - synchronous rectifier, 157
 - transistor voltage, 122
 - transistors, 124
 - voltage doubling, 122
- Heat dissipation, 567
- Heat sink compound, 567
- Heater controller, 544
- Heaters, 537
- Heatsink, 569
- Heatsink compound, 514
- Hi-Com triac, 519, 549, 551
 - commutation, 551
 - di/dt , 552
 - gate trigger current, 552
 - inductive load control, 551
- High side switch
 - MOSFET, 44, 436
 - TOPFET, 430, 473
- High Voltage Bipolar Transistor, 8, 79, 91, 141, 341
 - 'bathtub' curves, 333
 - avalanche breakdown, 131
 - avalanche multiplication, 134
 - Baker clamp, 91, 138
 - base-emitter breakdown, 144
 - base drive, 83, 92, 96, 136, 336, 385
 - base drive circuit, 145
 - base inductor, 138, 144, 147
 - base inductor, diode assisted, 148
 - base resistor, 146
 - breakdown voltage, 79, 86, 92
 - carrier concentration, 151
 - carrier injection, 150
 - conductivity modulation, 135, 150
 - critical electric field, 134
 - current crowding, 135, 136
 - current limiting values, 132
 - current tail, 138, 143
 - current tails, 86, 91
 - d-type, 346
 - data sheet, 92, 97, 331
 - depletion region, 133
 - desaturation, 86, 88, 91
 - device construction, 79
 - di/dt , 139
 - drive transformer, 145
 - drive transformer leakage inductance, 149
 - dV/dt , 139
 - electric field, 133
 - electronic ballast, 581, 585, 587, 589
 - Fact Sheets, 334
 - fall time, 86, 99, 143, 144
 - FBSOA, 92, 99, 134
 - hard turn-off, 86
 - horizontal deflection, 321, 331, 341
 - leakage current, 98
 - limiting values, 97
 - losses, 92, 333, 342
 - Miller capacitance, 139
 - operation, 150

- optimum drive, 88
- outlines, 332, 346
- over current, 92, 98
- over voltage, 92, 97
- overdrive, 85, 88, 137, 138
- passivation, 131
- power limiting value, 132
- process technology, 80
- ratings, 97
- RBSOA, 93, 99, 135, 138, 139
- RC network, 148
- reverse recovery, 143, 151
- safe operating area, 99, 134
- saturation, 150
- saturation current, 79, 98, 341
- secondary breakdown, 92, 133
- smooth turn-off, 86
- SMPS, 94, 339, 383
- snubber, 139
- space charge, 133
- speed-up capacitor, 143
- storage time, 86, 91, 92, 99, 138, 144, 342
- sub emitter resistance, 135
- switching, 80, 83, 86, 91, 98, 342
- technology, 129, 149
- thermal breakdown, 134
- thermal runaway, 152
- turn-off, 91, 92, 138, 142, 146, 151
- turn-on, 91, 136, 141, 149, 150
- underdrive, 85, 88
- voltage limiting values, 130
- Horizontal Deflection, 321, 367
 - base drive, 336
 - control ic, 401
 - d-type transistors, 346
 - damper diodes, 345, 367
 - diode modulator, 327, 347, 352, 367
 - drive circuit, 352, 365, 406
 - east-west correction, 325, 352, 367
 - line output transformer, 354
 - linearity correction, 323
 - operating cycle, 321, 332, 347
 - s-correction, 323, 352, 404
 - TDA2595, 364, 368
 - TDA4851, 400
 - TDA8433, 363, 369
 - test circuit, 321
 - transistors, 331, 341, 408
 - waveforms, 322
- IGBT, 11, 305
 - automotive, 481, 483
 - clamped, 482, 484
 - ignition, 481, 483
- Ignition
 - automotive, 479, 481, 483
 - darlington, 483
- Induction heating, 53
- Induction motor
 - see Motor Control - AC
- Inductive load
 - see Solenoid
- Inrush current, 528, 530
- Intrinsic silicon, 133
- Inverter, 260, 273
 - see motor control ac
 - current fed, 52, 53
 - switched mode power supply, 107
- Irons, electric, 537
- Isolated package, 154
 - stray capacitance, 154, 155
 - thermal resistance, 154
- Isolation, 153
- J-FET, 9
- Junction temperature, 470, 557, 561
 - burst pulses, 564
 - non-rectangular pulse, 565
 - rectangular pulse, composite, 562
 - rectangular pulse, periodic, 561
 - rectangular pulse, single shot, 561
- Lamp dimmer, 530
- Lamps, 435
 - di/dt, 438
 - inrush current, 438
 - MOSFET, 435
 - PWM control, 455
 - switch rate, 438
 - TOPFET, 455
- Latching current
 - thyristor, 490
- Leakage inductance, 113, 200, 523
- Lifetime control, 162
- Lighting
 - fluorescent, 579
 - phase control, 530
- Logic Level FET
 - motor control, 432
- Logic level MOSFET, 436
- Magnetics, 207
 - 100W 100kHz forward converter, 197
 - 100W 50kHz forward converter, 191
 - 50W flyback converter, 199
 - core losses, 208
 - core materials, 207
 - EFD core, 210
 - ETD core, 199, 207

- flyback converter, 213
- forward converter, 213
- half bridge converter, 214
- power density, 211
- push-pull converter, 213
- switched mode power supply, 187
- switching frequency, 215
- transformer construction, 215
- Mains Flicker, 537
- Mains pollution, 225
 - pre-converter, 225
- Mains transient, 544
- Mesa glass, 162
- Metal Oxide Varistor (MOV), 503
- Miller capacitance, 139
- Modelling, 236, 265
- MOS Controlled Thyristor, 13
- MOSFET, 9, 19, 153, 253
 - bootstrap, 303
 - breakdown voltage, 22, 70
 - capacitance, 30, 57, 72, 155, 156
 - capacitances, 24
 - characteristics, 23, 70 - 72
 - charge, 32, 57
 - data sheet, 69
 - di/dt , 36
 - diode, 253
 - drive, 262, 264
 - drive circuit loss, 156
 - driving, 39, 250
 - dV/dt , 36, 39, 264
 - ESD, 67
 - gate-source protection, 264
 - gate charge, 195
 - gate drive, 195
 - gate resistor, 156
 - high side, 436
 - high side drive, 44
 - inductive load, 62
 - lamps, 435
 - leakage current, 71
 - linear mode, parallelling, 52
 - logic level, 37, 57, 305
 - loss, 26, 34
 - maximum current, 69
 - motor control, 259, 429
 - modelling, 265
 - on-resistance, 21, 71
 - package inductance, 49, 73
 - parallel operation, 26, 47, 49, 265
 - parasitic oscillations, 51
 - peak current rating, 251
 - Resonant supply, 53
 - reverse diode, 73
 - ruggedness, 61, 73
 - safe operating area, 25, 74
 - series operation, 53
 - SMPS, 339, 384
 - solenoid, 62
 - structure, 19
 - switching, 24, 29, 58, 73, 194, 262
 - switching loss, 196
 - synchronous rectifier, 179
 - thermal impedance, 74
 - thermal resistance, 70
 - threshold voltage, 21, 70
 - transconductance, 57, 72
 - turn-off, 34, 36
 - turn-on, 32, 34, 35, 155, 256
- Motor, universal
 - back EMF, 531
 - starting, 528
- Motor Control - AC, 245, 273
 - anti-parallel diode, 253
 - antiparallel diode, 250
 - carrier frequency, 245
 - control, 248
 - current rating, 262
 - dc link, 249
 - diode, 261
 - diode recovery, 250
 - duty ratio, 246
 - efficiency, 262
 - EMC, 260
 - filter, 250
 - FREDFET, 250, 259, 276
 - gate drives, 249
 - half bridge, 245
 - inverter, 250, 260, 273
 - line voltage, 262
 - loss, 267
 - MOSFET, 259
 - Parallel MOSFETs, 276
 - peak current, 251
 - phase voltage, 262
 - power factor, 262
 - pulse width modulation, 245, 260
 - ripple, 246
 - short circuit, 251
 - signal isolation, 250
 - snubber, 276
 - speed control, 248
 - switching frequency, 246
 - three phase bridge, 246
 - underlap, 248
- Motor Control - DC, 285, 293, 425
 - braking, 285, 299
 - brushless, 301
 - control, 290, 295, 303
 - current rating, 288

- drive, 303
- duty cycle, 286
- efficiency, 293
- FREDFET, 287
- freewheel diode, 286
- full bridge, 287
- half bridge, 287
- high side switch, 429
- IGBT, 305
- inrush, 430
- inverter, 302
- linear, 457, 475
- logic level FET, 432
- loss, 288
- MOSFET, 287, 429
- motor current, 295
- overload, 430
- permanent magnet, 293, 301
- permanent magnet motor, 285
- PWM, 286, 293, 459, 471
- servo, 298
- short circuit, 431
- stall, 431
- TOPFET, 430, 457, 459, 475
- topologies, 286
- torque, 285, 294
- triac, 525
- voltage rating, 288
- Motor Control - Stepper, 309
 - bipolar, 310
 - chopper, 314
 - drive, 313
 - hybrid, 312
 - permanent magnet, 309
 - reluctance, 311
 - step angle, 309
 - unipolar, 310
- Mounting, transistor, 154
- Mounting base temperature, 557
- Mounting torque, 514
- Parasitic oscillation, 149
- Passivation, 131, 162
- PCB Design, 368, 419
- Phase angle, 500
- Phase control, 546
 - thyristors and triacs, 498
- triac, 523
- Phase voltage
 - see motor control - ac
- Power dissipation, 557
 - see High Voltage Bipolar Transistor loss, MOSFET loss
- Power factor correction, 580
 - active, boost converted, 581
- Power MOSFET
 - see MOSFET
- Proportional control, 537
- Protection
 - ESD, 446, 448, 482
 - overvoltage, 446, 448, 469
 - reverse battery, 452, 473, 479
 - short circuit, 251, 446, 448
 - temperature, 446, 447, 471
 - TOPFET, 445, 447, 451
- Pulse operation, 558
- Pulse Width Modulation (PWM), 108
- Push-pull converter, 111, 119
 - advantages, 119
 - clamp diodes, 119
 - cross conduction, 119
 - current mode control, 120
 - diodes, 121
 - disadvantages, 119
 - duty ratio, 119
 - electronic ballast, 582, 587
 - flux symmetry, 119, 120
 - magnetics, 213
 - multiple outputs, 119
 - operation, 119
 - output filter, 119
 - output ripple, 119
 - rectifier circuit, 180
 - switching frequency, 119
 - transformer, 119
 - transistor voltage, 119
 - transistors, 121
- Qs (stored charge), 162
- RBSOA, 93, 99, 135, 138, 139
- Rectification, synchronous, 179
- Reset winding, 117
- Resistor
 - mains dropper, 544, 545
- Resonant power supply, 219, 225
 - modelling, 236
 - MOSFET, 52, 53
 - pre-converter, 225
- Reverse leakage, 169
- Reverse recovery, 143, 162
- RFI, 154, 158, 167, 393, 396, 497, 529, 530, 537
- Ruggedness
 - MOSFET, 62, 73
 - schottky diode, 173
- Safe Operating Area (SOA), 25, 74, 134, 557
 - forward biased, 92, 99, 134
 - reverse biased, 93, 99, 135, 138, 139

- Saturable choke
 - triac, 523
- Schottky diode, 173
 - bulk leakage, 174
 - edge leakage, 174
 - guard ring, 174
 - reverse leakage, 174
 - ruggedness, 173
 - selection guide, 176
 - technology, 173
- SCR
 - see Thyristor
- Secondary breakdown, 133
- Selection Guides
 - BU25XXA, 331
 - BU25XXD, 331
 - damper diodes, 345
 - EPI diodes, 171
 - horizontal deflection, 343
 - MOSFETs driving heaters, 442
 - MOSFETs driving lamps, 441
 - MOSFETs driving motors, 426
 - Schottky diodes, 176
 - SMPS, 339
- Self Oscillating Power Supply (SOPS)
 - 50W microcomputer flyback converter, 199
 - ETD transformer, 199
- Servo, 298
- Single ended push-pull
 - see half bridge converter
- Snap-off, 167
- Snubber, 93, 139, 495, 502, 523, 529, 549
 - active, 279
- Softness factor, 167
- Solenoid
 - TOPFET, 469, 473
 - turn off, 469, 473
- Solid state relay, 501
- SOT186, 154
- SOT186A, 154
- SOT199, 154
- Space charge, 133
- Speed-up capacitor, 143
- Speed control
 - thyristor, 531
 - triac, 527
- Starter
 - fluorescent lamp, 580
- Startup circuit
 - electronic ballast, 591
 - self oscillating power supply, 201
- Static Induction Thyristor, 11
- Stepdown converter, 109
- Stepper motor, 309
- Stepup converter, 109
- Storage time, 144
- Stored charge, 162
- Suppression
 - mains transient, 544
- Switched Mode Power Supply (SMPS)
 - see also self oscillating power supply
 - 100W 100kHz MOSFET forward converter, 192
 - 100W 500kHz half bridge converter, 153
 - 100W 50kHz bipolar forward converter, 187
 - 16 & 32 kHz TV, 389
 - asymmetrical, 111, 113
 - base circuit design, 149
 - boost converter, 109
 - buck-boost converter, 110
 - buck converter, 108
 - ceramic output filter, 153
 - continuous mode, 109, 379
 - control ic, 391
 - control loop, 108
 - core excitation, 113
 - core loss, 167
 - current mode control, 120
 - dc-dc converter, 119
 - diode loss, 166
 - diode reverse recovery effects, 166
 - diode reverse recovery softness, 167
 - diodes, 115, 118, 121, 124, 126
 - discontinuous mode, 109, 379
 - epitaxial diodes, 112, 161
 - flux swing, 111
 - flyback converter, 92, 111, 113, 123
 - forward converter, 111, 116, 379
 - full bridge converter, 111, 125
 - half bridge converter, 111, 122
 - high voltage bipolar transistor, 94, 112, 115, 118, 121, 124, 126, 129, 339, 383, 392
 - isolated, 113
 - isolated packages, 153
 - isolation, 108, 111
 - magnetics design, 191, 197
 - magnetisation energy, 113
 - mains filter, 380
 - mains input, 390
 - MOSFET, 112, 153, 33, 384
 - multiple output, 111, 156
 - non-isolated, 108
 - opto-coupler, 392
 - output rectifiers, 163
 - parasitic oscillation, 149
 - power-down, 136
 - power-up, 136, 137, 139
 - power MOSFET, 153, 339, 384
 - pulse width modulation, 108
 - push-pull converter, 111, 119

- RBSOA failure, 139
- rectification, 381, 392
- rectification efficiency, 163
- rectifier selection, 112
- regulation, 108
- reliability, 139
- resonant
 - see resonant power supply
- RFI, 154, 158, 167
- schottky diode, 112, 154, 173
- snubber, 93, 139, 383
- soft start, 138
- standby, 382
- standby supply, 392
- start-up, 391
- stepdown, 109
- stepup, 109
- symmetrical, 111, 119, 122
- synchronisation, 382
- synchronous rectification, 156, 179
- TDA8380, 381, 391
- topologies, 107
- topology output powers, 111
- transformer, 111
- transformer saturation, 138
- transformers, 391
- transistor current limiting value, 112
- transistor mounting, 154
- transistor selection, 112
- transistor turn-off, 138
- transistor turn-on, 136
- transistor voltage limiting value, 112
- transistors, 115, 118, 121, 124, 126
- turns ratio, 111
- TV & Monitors, 339, 379, 399
- two transistor flyback, 111, 114
- two transistor forward, 111, 117
- Switching loss, 230
- Synchronous, 497
- Synchronous rectification, 156, 179
 - self driven, 181
 - transformer driven, 180
- Temperature control, 537
- Thermal
 - continuous operation, 557, 568
 - intermittent operation, 568
 - non-rectangular pulse, 565
 - pulse operation, 558
 - rectangular pulse, composite, 562
 - rectangular pulse, periodic, 561
 - rectangular pulse, single shot, 561
 - single shot operation, 561
- Thermal capacity, 558, 568
- Thermal characteristics
 - power semiconductors, 557
- Thermal impedance, 74, 568
- Thermal resistance, 70, 154, 557
- Thermal time constant, 568
- Thyristor, 10, 497, 509
 - 'two transistor' model, 490
 - applications, 527
 - asynchronous control, 497
 - avalanche breakdown, 490
 - breakover voltage, 490, 509
 - cascading, 501
 - commutation, 492
 - control, 497
 - current rating, 511
 - di/dt , 490
 - dI/dt , 491
 - dV/dt , 490
 - energy handling, 505
 - external commutation, 493
 - full wave control, 499
 - fusing I^2t , 503, 512
 - gate cathode resistor, 500
 - gate circuits, 500
 - gate current, 490
 - gate power, 492
 - gate requirements, 492
 - gate specifications, 512
 - gate triggering, 490
 - half wave control, 499
 - holding current, 490, 509
 - inductive loads, 500
 - inrush current, 503
 - latching current, 490, 509
 - leakage current, 490
 - load line, 492
 - mounting, 514
 - operation, 490
 - overcurrent, 503
 - peak current, 505
 - phase angle, 500
 - phase control, 498, 527
 - pulsed gate, 500
 - resistive loads, 498
 - resonant circuit, 493
 - reverse characteristic, 489
 - reverse recovery, 493
 - RFI, 497
 - self commutation, 493
 - series choke, 502
 - snubber, 502
 - speed controller, 531
 - static switching, 497
 - structure, 489
 - switching, 489

- switching characteristics, 517
- synchronous control, 497
- temperature rating, 512
- thermal specifications, 512
- time proportional control, 497
- transient protection, 502
- trigger angle, 500
- turn-off time, 494
- turn-on, 490, 509
- turn-on di/dt , 502
- varistor, 503
- voltage rating, 510
- Thyristor data, 509
- Time proportional control, 537
- TOPFET
 - 3 pin, 445, 449, 461
 - 5 pin, 447, 451, 457, 459, 463
 - driving, 449, 453, 461, 465, 467, 475
 - high side, 473, 475
 - lamps, 455
 - leadforms, 463
 - linear control, 451, 457
 - motor control, 430, 457, 459
 - negative input, 456, 465, 467
 - protection, 445, 447, 451, 469, 473
 - PWM control, 451, 455, 459
 - solenoids, 469
- Transformer
 - triac controlled, 523
- Transformer core airgap, 111, 113
- Transformers
 - see magnetics
- Transient thermal impedance, 559
- Transient thermal response, 154
- Triac, 497, 510, 518
 - 400Hz operation, 489, 518
 - applications, 527, 537
 - asynchronous control, 497
 - breakover voltage, 510
 - charge carriers, 549
 - commutating di/dt , 494
 - commutating dV/dt , 494
 - commutation, 494, 518, 523, 529, 549
 - control, 497
 - dc inductive load, 523
 - dc motor control, 525
 - di/dt , 531, 549
 - dI_{com}/dt , 523
 - dV/dt , 523, 549
 - emitter shorting, 549
 - full wave control, 499
 - fusing I^2t , 503, 512
 - gate cathode resistor, 500
 - gate circuits, 500
 - gate current, 491
 - gate requirements, 492
 - gate resistor, 540, 545
 - gate sensitivity, 491
 - gate triggering, 538
 - holding current, 491, 510
 - Hi-Com, 549, 551
 - inductive loads, 500
 - inrush current, 503
 - isolated trigger, 501
 - latching current, 491, 510
 - operation, 491
 - overcurrent, 503
 - phase angle, 500
 - phase control, 498, 527, 546
 - protection, 544
 - pulse triggering, 492
 - pulsed gate, 500
 - quadrants, 491, 510
 - resistive loads, 498
 - RFI, 497
 - saturable choke, 523
 - series choke, 502
 - snubber, 495, 502, 523, 529, 549
 - speed controller, 527
 - static switching, 497
 - structure, 489
 - switching, 489
 - synchronous control, 497
 - transformer load, 523
 - transient protection, 502
 - trigger angle, 492, 500
 - triggering, 550
 - turn-on di/dt , 502
 - varistor, 503
 - zero crossing, 537
- Trigger angle, 500
- TV & Monitors
 - 16 kHz black line, 351
 - 30-64 kHz autosync, 399
 - 32 kHz black line, 361
 - dampers diodes, 345, 367
 - diode modulator, 327, 367
 - EHT, 352 - 354, 368, 409, 410
 - high voltage bipolar transistor, 339, 341
 - horizontal deflection, 341
 - picture distortion, 348
 - power MOSFET, 339
 - SMPS, 339, 354, 379, 389, 399
 - vertical deflection, 358, 364, 402
- Two transistor flyback converter, 111, 114
- Two transistor forward converter, 111, 117
- Universal motor
 - back EMF, 531

starting, 528

Vacuum cleaner, 527

Varistor, 503

Vertical Deflection, 358, 364, 402

Voltage doubling, 122

Water heaters, 537

Zero crossing, 537

Zero voltage switching, 537