

ECET 4520

Industrial Distribution Systems, Illumination, and the NEC

Short Circuit Calculations

Overcurrent Protection

<u>110.9 – Interrupting Rating</u>

Equipment intended to interrupt current at fault levels shall have an interrupting rating sufficient for the nominal circuit voltage and the <u>current that is available</u> at the line terminals of the equipment.

Equipment intended to interrupt current at other than fault levels shall have an interrupting rating at nominal circuit voltage sufficient for the current that must be interrupted.



Overcurrent Protection

- <u>Overcurrent protection</u> for conductors is provided in order to open the circuit if the current reaches a value that will cause a dangerous temperature in the circuit conductors, conductor insulation, or attached devices.
- The NEC provides many guidelines relating to the protection of electrical distribution systems and to the selection of overcurrent protection devices.
- Of interest are the guidelines relating to the ratings of any overcurrent protection device used in a system.



Protection is provided by an overcurrent device, connected in series with each circuit conductor, that has a rating (or setting) that is not higher than the allowable ampacity of the conductor.

- NEC 230.90(A)

Overcurrent protection shall be provided in each ungrounded circuit conductor and shall be located at the point where the conductors receive their supply.

- NEC 240.21



Interrupting Rating of Equipment

Equipment intended to interrupt current at fault levels shall have an interrupting rating sufficient for the nominal circuit voltage and the current that is available (if the fault occurs) at the line terminals of the equipment.

- NEC 110.9

<u>Interrupting Rating</u> – The highest current at rated voltage that a device is intended to interrupt under standard test conditions.

– NEC 100



Interrupting Rating of Equipment

Determined under standard conditions, the "interrupt rating" specifies the maximum amount of current a protective device can cut off safely ... i.e. without harm to personnel or resulting damage to equipment, the premises or the device itself.

For example, a circuit breaker trips "safely" if it successfully interrupts the fault, can be reset afterwards, and continues to function properly.

> – "Protecting the Electrical Distribution System..." Engineers Newsletter 1998 Vol.27 No.3 by Guckelberger http://www.trane.com/commercial/library/vol273/



Interrupting Rating of Equipment

Short-circuit current is often two orders of magnitude (100x) greater than normal or rated operating current.

If a circuit breaker or fuse fails to successfully interrupts the fault, this enormous amperage can rapidly heat components to a very high temperature that can destroy the insulation, melt metal, start fires ... and even cause an explosion if arcing occurs.

> – "Protecting the Electrical Distribution System..." Engineers Newsletter 1998 Vol.27 No.3 by Guckelberger http://www.trane.com/commercial/library/vol273/



Interrupting Rating of Equipment

Proper selection of an overcurrent protection device, in terms of its Interrupting Rating, requires knowledge of the maximum short-circuit current that the device is expected to interrupt.

The magnitude of this short-circuit current is dependent on the design of the system and the location of the device within the system, and thus must be calculated for each location.



Short-Circuit Calculations

In a three-phase (3Φ) distribution system, the largest currents typically result from a fault during which all three phases short-circuit together. We will refer to this type of fault as a <u>line-line-line</u> (L-L-L) <u>fault</u>.

Currents due to line-neutral or other types of faults can be estimated from the L-L-L fault current (if it is known).

There are several standardized methods available to calculate the available short-circuit (SC) current, one of which is the <u>Point-to-Point Method</u> of fault current calculation.



The <u>Point-to-Point</u> (P-t-P) method of fault current calculation will be outlined in the following slides, as presented by Cooper Bussmann in:

"A Simple Approach to Short Circuit Calculations" Engineering Dependable Protection - Part I, Bulletin EDP-1, 2004 - http://www1.cooperbussmann.com/library/docs/EDP-1.pdf

The PtP method utilizes a step-by-step process that starts at the service entrance of an electrical system and works inwards towards the end-use outlets.

Point-to-Point SC Calculations

The Point-to-Point Method

- To begin, the available short-circuit current is determined or calculated for the 1st point in the system.
- The current magnitude at the 1st point is then applied in order to calculate the available current at the next point in the system.
- The process is continued until the fault current is known at all required points in the system.

P-to-P Method Basic Components

"Infinite Bus"

^{infinite} bus

The point of connection from the utility is often assumed to be an "infinite bus", implying that it is able to provide infinite current at rated voltage.

With the infinite bus assumption, the utility connection can be modeled as an ideal voltage source with zero output impedance.





Transformers

Transformers are used within distribution systems to step-up or step-down the operational voltage as required based on the design of the system.



Transformer Connected to an "Infinite Bus"

When a transformer is connected to an infinite bus, the primary factor that limits the SC current available at the secondary terminals is the transformer's series-equivalent impedance.





Transformer Connected to an "Infinite Bus"

The transformer's ratings provide the information required for this calculation:

KVA – Apparent Power |S|

EL-L – Secondary Line Voltage

%Z – Percent Series Impedance







Transformer Connected to an "Infinite Bus"

Step 2 – Calculate a multiplier, M, based on the percent impedance of the transformer:

 $Multiplier = M = \frac{100\%}{\% Z}$







Transformer with Limited Primary Current

Transformers are often connected to <u>other than</u> an infinite bus such that there is a limited SC current, $I_{SCA(p)}$, available at the primary terminals.

P-to-P Method Basic Components



Transformer with Limited Primary Current

This is similar in nature to the transformer being supplied by a practical voltage source that includes an ideal source in series with an (output) impedance that limits the source current under SC conditions.





Transformer with Limited Primary Current

When this occurs, the SC current available at the primary terminals must be taken into account when solving for the SC current available at the secondary terminals, $I_{SCA(s)}$.

P-to-P Method Basic Components



Transformer with Limited Primary Current

In addition to the rated KVA and %Z of the transformer, both the rated primary and secondary voltages must be known in order to perform this calculation.





Transformer with Limited Primary Current

The following procedure is used to determine the SC current available at the secondary terminals of a transformer whose primary winding is supplied by a source that provides a limited SC current...













 $I_{SCA(p)} \overset{3 \Phi \text{ Ratings}}{\swarrow} I_{SCA(s)}$

Transformer with Limited Primary Current

Step 3 – Determine the SC current available at the secondary terminals, $I_{SCA(s)}$, by applying the multiplier to $I_{SCA(p)}$:

$$I_{SCA(s)} = I_{SCA(p)} \cdot M \cdot \frac{V_{pri}}{V_{sec}} = I_{SCA(p)} \cdot M \cdot \frac{E_{L-L(p)}}{E_{L-L(s)}}$$



























Other System Components

Other system components, such as fuses and circuit-breakers, are often ignored when applying the P-t-P method for SC current calculation due to this low impedances and negligible effect on the current magnitude.









































