

# TAB Journal



THE MAGAZINE OF THE ASSOCIATED AIR BALANCE COUNCIL • SPRING 2015

A photograph of a young man in a dark blue uniform with yellow trim, working on a vertical pipe wrapped in silver insulation. He is looking up at a pressure gauge he is adjusting. Another pressure gauge is visible on a lower pipe. He is wearing red and black gloves. The background is a plain wall with a dark horizontal beam.

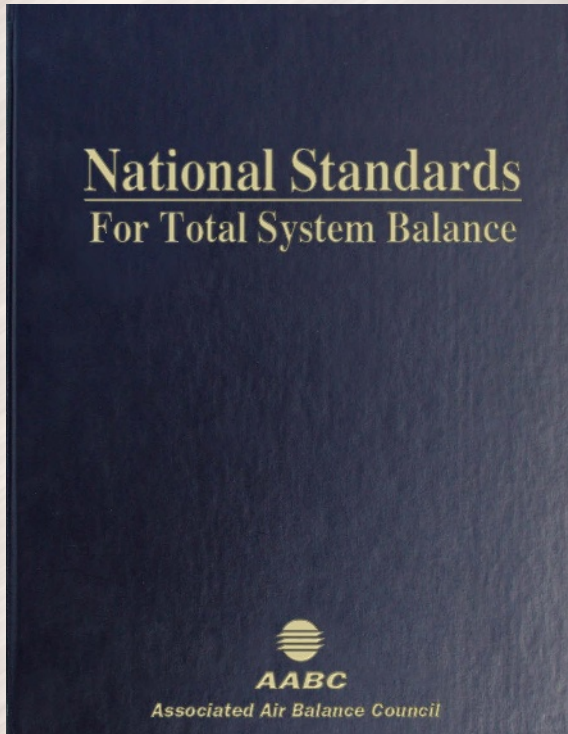
## Troubleshooting and Safety Considerations

### IN THIS ISSUE:

- Fire Damper Inspections
- Electrical Safety
- Encountering Deficiencies



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# TAB Journal

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## From the Publisher

The spring 2015 issue of *TAB Journal* explores the issues encountered when troubleshooting and the safety considerations to keep in mind when balancing different systems. In “Catching Hidden Costs: A Commissioning Story,” Professional System Analysis, Inc. looks at how commissioning services can eliminate problems that would lead to additional operating expenses.

Victor Lakoseljic of VPG Associates Limited discusses at the high-speed construction industry and how that can lead to deficiencies that hinder testing and balancing.

Environmental Test & Balance Company’s Sean Green, TBE, goes over a case study where an automatic flow control valve was malfunctioning.


Zohar Davidovich of Airdronics Inc. presents the case for how crucial proper fire damper inspection is in the safety of a building.

Justin Garner, P.E., TBE, CxA, of Engineered Air Balance Co., Inc., discusses electrical hazards that may be present when performing TAB and commissioning work.


Griffin Air Balance’s Shawn Griffin, TBS, presents a case study that involved fume hood testing for a multi-story science building.

Kane Lassiter, TBE, of Engineered Air Balance Co., Inc., looks at a project that required balancing several variable volume grease hoods and fan systems.

And finally, American Testing, Inc.’s Jeremy Johnson, TBE, discusses a balancing project for a university teaching amphitheatre.

We would like to thank all of the authors for their contributions to this issue of *TAB Journal*. Please contact us with any comments, article suggestions, or questions to be addressed in a future Tech Talk. We look forward to hearing from you! 





*"...the commissioning process prevented temperature and control problems that the owner or building occupant would have found objectionable after occupancy."*



# CATCHING HIDDEN COST\$: A Commissioning Story

*Professional System Analysis, Inc.*

Commissioning services were provided for an Army Reserve Center in the Chicago area. During the course of completing the commissioning process, several problems were identified and corrected that benefited the project. The problems included dampers that would not open when the fan was operating, improper shut-down sequences, incomplete alarm programming, and occupancy sensors that would not activate VAV boxes. Thus, the commissioning process prevented temperature and control problems that the owner or building occupant would have found objectionable after occupancy.

Also found was an issue that may not have been discovered if it were not for the commissioning process. The site included a maintenance building with a large work bay for vehicle repairs. This bay had five large overhead doors and was heated by a makeup air unit, seven infrared burners, and an in-floor hot water heating system. The makeup air unit was equipped with a variable fire, natural gas burner that was designed to provide 100% outside air at a minimum temperature of 68° F at all times.

The unit was located near the ceiling about 25 feet above the floor with the duct and grilles at the same level. There was no cooling coil installed in this unit, and it was engaged with a push button or through an interlock with any one of the five vehicle exhaust fans. Exhaust fans were also manually started by the user. The makeup air unit had a self-contained control package, so the energy management system was only monitoring status, temperatures, volume, and alarm conditions.

The mechanical contractor completed the startup of the system and the controls contractor was ready to begin functional testing. During the commissioning process, it was discovered that the temperature of the unit rose by eight degrees even though there was no need for heat. The initial outside air temperature reading was 81° F with an 89° supply air temperature. Further investigation revealed that every time the unit was started, the burner was operating at a low fire condition. This was not found during the startup

procedure by the mechanical contractor or the EMS contractor. Considering the location of the unit and the supply grilles, it is doubtful that this condition would have been discovered if the owner had chosen not to include commissioning services.

If this issue had not been discovered, the low fire operation of the burner when there was no call for heat would have resulted in higher costs for the building owner that had been projected at \$419 annually or \$8,380 over the expected 20-year lifetime of the equipment in natural gas usage alone. The amount was calculated by assuming that the unit would operate at maximum CFM for 40 hours per week (Monday through Friday).

No determination could be made regarding the number of hours the unit would operate at a reduced volume, so this was disregarded when making calculations. The Illinois Citizens Utility Board website reported the average cost of natural gas was 58 cents per therm at the time. Average high and low temperatures for the area were obtained from Weather.com and a period of 116 days was subsequently determined to be the annual amount of time the unit would operate with no call for heat. The remaining days were determined to result in either no increased cost or were unoccupied hours. This number was only an approximation based on the projected use provided by the owner and could change depending on total hours of operation.

While this particular estimated expense was not extreme, it did illustrate how commissioning services can eliminate problems that would lead to additional operational expenses. Project architects and engineers benefit from the inclusion of commissioning services on their projects. Ultimately, however, it is the owner who will benefit the most from commissioning all the building's systems due to the potential long-term costs it can reduce. On this particular building, the owners who benefitted the most from commissioning were American taxpayers. 🌐



# DEFICIENCIES

Victor Lakoseljac  
VPG Associates Limited

## a Growing Problem



**T**he construction business has become increasingly competitive over the years. The increase could be attributed to more contractors, tighter cost margins and fewer projects to go around. As a result larger and smaller projects are being completed with tighter schedules. This unfortunately does not come without consequences especially in the mechanical portion of a project. Improper cooperation between the subtrades can add to the problems and confusion. This high speed construction results in unfortunate deficiencies that hampers testing and balancing

Some of the above deficiencies can be corrected or bypassed by our own forces; however, if they are not

corrected can present themselves as major problems as the project goes along. If these deficiencies are not corrected the contract will be compromised.

To prevent these items from becoming major issues the following steps can be followed to minimize future problems.

- Step1** *Early identification of the problem is essential, notify the appropriate people (your client) immediately on site.*
- Step2** *Follow up the verbal site notification by fax or email (on a weekly or biweekly basis for large projects)*
- Step3** *Follow up the fax or email with a phone call & site inspection after the problem has been corrected. This step may have to be repeated along with step 2 updated lists.*

The idea here is early detection and written confirmation to avoid any back charges or late penalties from a contractor. Furthermore, if these are items that are not in the original contract, complete lists may help recover the cost spent to identify the problems in the first place. These items must be corrected as soon as possible before the trades are off the project to prevent obstacles when completing testing and balancing. 🌐

### DEFICIENCIES SHOW UP FROM ALL SIDES

**Electrical:** fans not running, motors tripping out, DDC boxes not powered

**Controls:** boxes not programmed, boxes not communicating, pneumatic lines not connected, control sequences not communicating

**Mechanical:** Pumps not running, pumps running backwards, valves not installed or installed backwards

**Sheet Metal:** Dampers not installed, diffusers not installed or installed in the wrong location, holes not cut into ductwork



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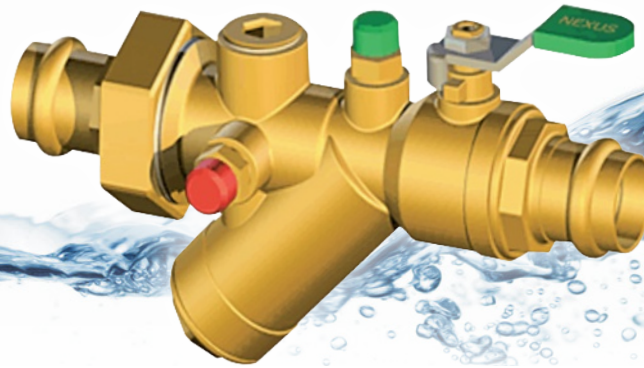
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# TROUBLESHOOTING

## Nexus Automatic Flow Control Valves

Sean Green, TBE  
Environmental Test  
Balance Company



**E**nvironmental Test and Balance Company accepted a project balancing a condensing water system at a large educational facility for the Arkansas Army National Guard located in Little Rock. The referenced system consisted of 70 water source heat pumps served by system circulating pumps, a plate and frame heat exchanger, and a separate cooling tower loop. Each water source heat pump was furnished with a Nexus UltraMatic™ automatic flow control valve preset from the factory at a specified flow rate (GPM). The valve body houses a spring-loaded flow control cartridge that maintains a desired flow rate. The cartridge spring range is 2 to 45 PSID (0.14-3.10 Bar). The first number, 2 (0.14), of this spring range is the minimum differential pressure (DP) required to maintain constant flow and the second number, 45 (3.10), is the maximum DP the cartridge can absorb and still maintain the specified GPM.

To begin, all manual and temperature control valves were opened, the total pump flows were set, and an initial system differential pressure setpoint was established. This system was designed for future expansion and the pumps were oversized and rated 80% higher than the collective coil design. The total pump flows were determined by temporarily adjusting the pump VFD to 60 Hz to plot the full-flow and no-flow readings. The triple duty valve was adjusted to obtain the required flow and a system differential pressure setpoint was established. The VFD was then placed in the automatic mode and the valve was reopened allowing the VFD to control to the DP setpoint.

During the coil balancing phase the technician reported that the automatic flow valve differential pressure readings were not falling within the manufacturer's specified range of 2 to 45 PSID on the larger valves. An acceptable pressure differential of roughly 5 to 10 PSID was measured on the 3/4" valves, although the larger valves (1", 1 1/4", and 1 1/2") all yielded

differential pressures of approximately 0.3 to 0.8 PSID; an indication of low flow rate.

Several checks were made to ensure that this was not an isolated problem, and typical readings were found at valves throughout the system. A cursory check of the pump settings indicated that it was still delivering the design GPM. It was confirmed that the coils were piped correctly, the valves were installed in the correct direction, and the temperature control valves were fully open. Adding to the confusion, past field experiences have indicated that the Nexus valves are highly reliable and will typically maintain the tagged flow rate when the design pressure range is achieved.

Working with this information, and knowing it was highly unusual, it was concluded that the valves were malfunctioning. All of the tests indicated that the UltraMatic™ flow valves were not throttling the flow to the manufacturer's setting. This assumption was based on...

1. Confidence in the pump settings.
2. An obviously high flow rate at the coil (water could be heard rushing through the coil).
3. A secondary flow measurement by coil pressure drop could not be obtained due to the gauge tap placements (entering side located before the strainer and the leaving side was located after the temperature control valve). Nevertheless, the pressure drop was measured and found to be approximately two times higher than the design coil pressure drop. Although not a reliable flow reading, this was another indication of a high water flow rate.
4. Recalling that the pump was oversized, the full pump flow could not be obtained if the valves were holding the flow to design. The valve differential pressures were under 1.0 PSIG even when operating the pump at full capacity with the triple duty valve fully open.





The spring cartridges can be easily removed on valve bodies ½” to 2” in size. Several cartridges were removed from the valve bodies to verify there no was no presence of trash that could possibly be holding the spring open.

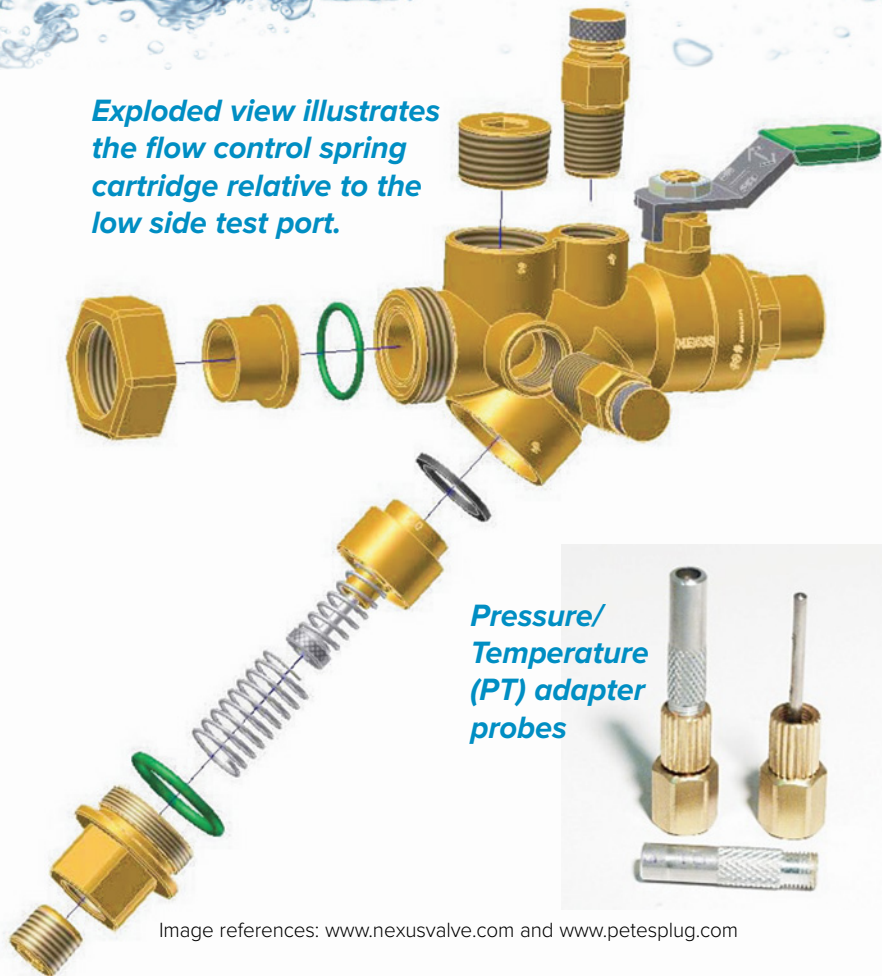
At this point the manufacturer’s local vendor and Nexus technical support were contacted, and neither had experienced a problem similar to this and they were unable to provide immediate support. They did agree to send a new valve cartridge, and shipped the part overnight. After receiving and replacing the cartridge, the results were no different and a differential pressure of less than 1.0 PSID was still measured.

Feeling a little discouraged, a second look was taken at the differential pressure meter, hoses, and fittings. The meter was connected to the valve again and a slight difference in the pipe noise was noticed. The pump triple duty valve was fully reopened so these noise changes were more distinct. When the test probe was re-inserted into the low side PT plug (green cap) the noise level at the temperature control valve increased, indicating a higher flow rate.

The PT probes being used were slightly too long for the PT plug, but it was not realized that the probes were long enough to actually reach the spring cartridge and open the valve when the fitting was installed into the valve body. Depressing the spring allowed a high flow rate through the valve with little to no pressure drop (on the single valve under test). Switching to smaller PT probes yielded pressure drop of roughly 3 to 10 PSID.

Technical note: The pressure drops were actually exceeding the maximum 45 PSID when the pump was

*Exploded view illustrates the flow control spring cartridge relative to the low side test port.*

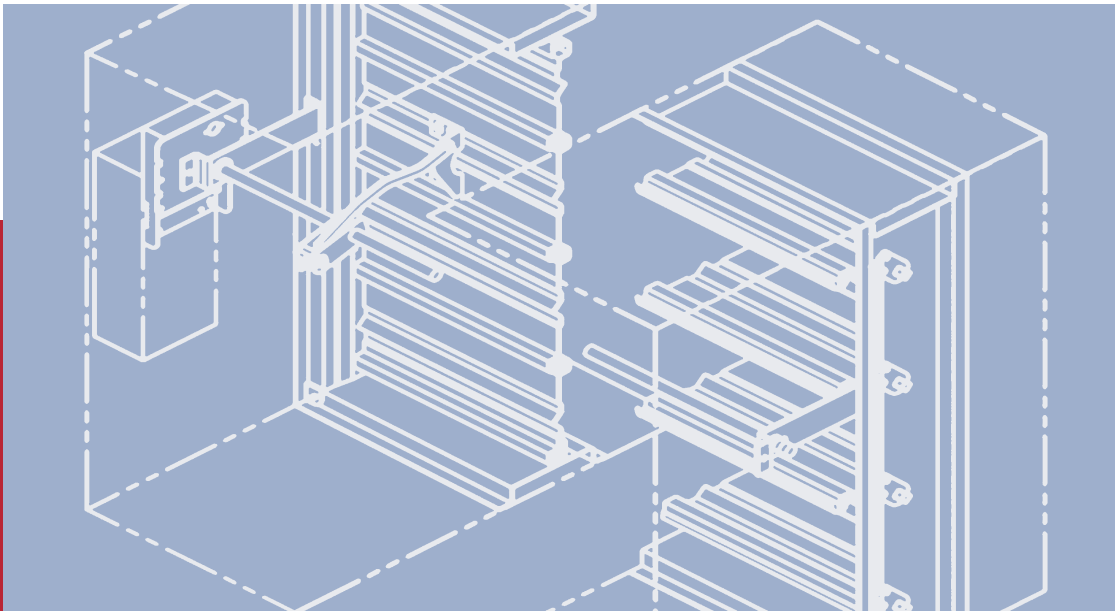


*Pressure/ Temperature (PT) adapter probes*

Image references: [www.nexusvalve.com](http://www.nexusvalve.com) and [www.petesplug.com](http://www.petesplug.com)

operating at full flow. This fully depresses the spring cartridge to a fixed orifice.

The low pressure drop was indicating a high flow rate, and not a low flow rate; the problem was caused by using a probe that was too long. Nexus was contacted and informed of the situation. The manufacturer’s representatives were not familiar with this situation and their operating and maintenance manuals do not reflect a potential problem arising by using an improperly sized test probe. The PT test probes should not exceed 1.5 inches in length to avoid this issue. 🌐



# PROPER FIRE DAMPER INSPECTION

**Zohar Davidovich**  
*Airdronics Inc.*

**A** The proper inspection of fire dampers is crucial for any building standing today in North America. These engineered pieces of equipment may be easily overlooked, but nevertheless they save lives in cases of emergency. Fire dampers are usually found in the ducts where they penetrate fire rated walls or ceilings. Every duct that goes through a fire rated wall or ceiling must have a fire damper installed. There are several types of fire dampers such as fire/smoke dampers, fire stop flaps, and the mechanical fire damper. Each building may have a combination of these

depending on the application, and where the ducts are installed.

Fire stop flaps are most commonly used in fire rated ceilings where the duct penetrates the ceiling, these fire stop flaps are usually spring loaded. Mechanical fire dampers are most commonly used in fire rated walls, and simply fall down when the link is melted resulting in the restriction of air through the duct. Fire/Smoke dampers are electronically controlled dampers that are connected to the main alarm system, and only close when the alarm is engaged.



Proper inspection of a fire damper may include a visual inspection of a mechanical damper to ensure nothing obstructs it from fully closing.

Proper inspection of a fire damper may include inspecting that the fire damper has been installed properly, inspecting that the fire damper has angles around it, a visual inspection of a mechanical damper to ensure nothing obstructs it from fully closing, and inspecting the heat-activated link that holds that damper in the open position. Letting the fire damper fall down as if the link has been melted is also a critical inspection procedure, thus verifying that nothing obstructs the damper from closing smoothly. When inspecting a fire/smoke damper the alarm has to be triggered for the damper to close—this may require the assistance of an electrician. Depending on company policy, the manufacturer of the fire damper, model number, and size of fire damper may need to be included in the final report. The final and most important step of inspecting a fire damper is to not hesitate to fail a fire damper if the technician inspecting it fears that it might not be fully up to standards and will not do the job it was designed to in an emergency situation. 🌐

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# What's all the FUSS about **ARC FLASH** and Electrical Safety?

**Justin Garner, P.E., TBE, CxA**  
*Engineered Air Balance Co., Inc.*

There has been a lot of emphasis on electrical safety both within our company and the construction/operations industry in general within the last couple of years. All of this emphasis is attributed to NFPA Standard 70E that was significantly revised in 2012. NFPA 70E is not a law, but rather a standard methodology for compliance with OSHA regulations stating that every employer must protect its employees from electrical hazards. It is not THE standard, but is widely accepted throughout the construction, operations and maintenance industries. It is important to realize that a standard must be black and white, but cannot always cover the gray areas that a worker encounters on a daily basis. Therefore, a thorough understanding of hazards as well as appropriate training is needed to keep every worker safe.

Let's begin this discussion with a very simple explanation of electrical hazards that may be present while performing TAB and Commissioning work. Everyone is aware of the shock hazard that is present with electrical equipment, but how aware are you of the arc flash hazard that may be present? While a shock hazard exists from coming into contact with

live energized conductors, an arc flash hazard may be present just being in the same room with electrical equipment, whether or not the conductors are exposed.

An arc flash is caused by an electrical arcing fault or short between two energized conductors or an energized conductor and neutral or ground. The first component of an arc flash, the available energy in the



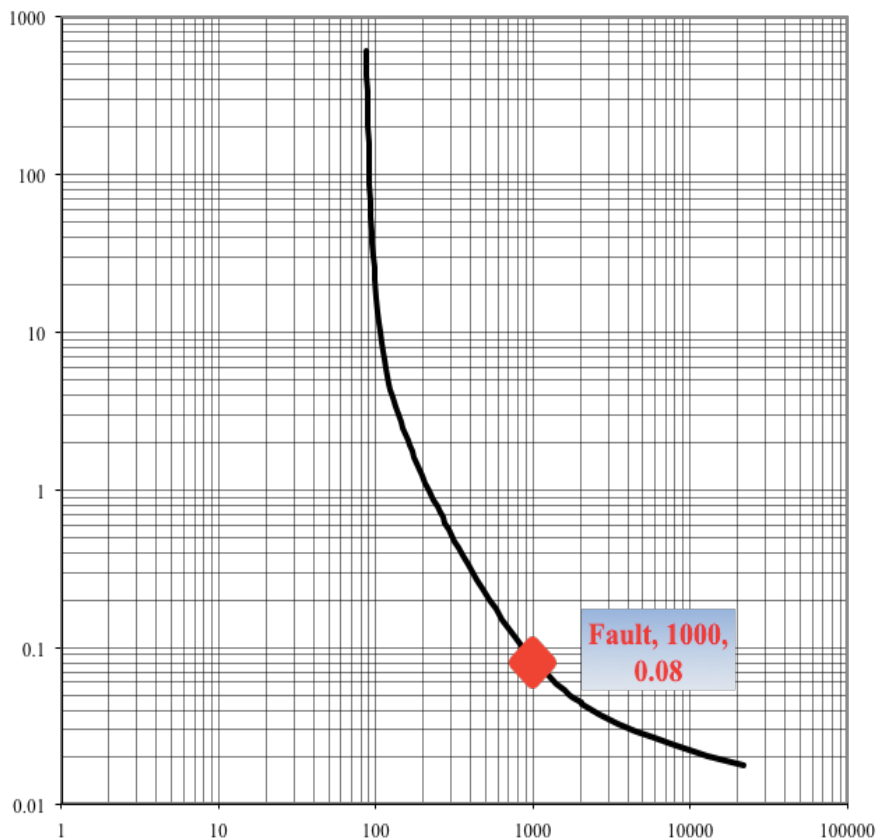
arc fault (measured in kilo-amperes or kA), is determined by the available short circuit current or bolted fault current at the location of the fault. There are a number of factors that determine this value including the available utility short circuit at the building source, the voltage of the system, the size of transformers and their associated impedance (or resistance to current flow), and the length and size of conductors in the system up to the point of the fault.

The second component of an arc flash is the duration of the arc. This is the most important factor in determining the intensity of an arc flash. A common misconception is that higher voltage equipment or higher amperage busways have a higher arc flash hazard. This may or may not be true. Often, the higher voltage and amperage systems produce arcing faults that have very high arcing fault currents, but the upstream overcurrent protection devices open and clear these faults very quickly. Therefore, the overall arc flash energy level (measured in calories / square centimeter) is relatively low for the energy that is available. Conversely, many points that are further along in an electrical distribution system, such as a motor control center or motor starter, can have relatively low available arc fault currents, but the overcurrent protection device settings do not clear the fault quickly. This results in longer arc fault duration and a much higher arc flash energy level. An example of these two scenarios is shown in the figures on the right and on page 12.

In Figure 1, an open air 1000 Amp fault on a 40 Amp primary service is illustrated downstream of a 12,460 (12.kV) fused switch. The Y axis of the chart is time in seconds and the X axis of the chart represents fault current in Amperes. The arc flash incident energy in this situation is only 0.25 cal / sq. cm, which equates to a Hazard Risk Category (HRC) of 0. The prohibited boundary (36") to prevent a shock hazard is actually greater than the arc flash hazard boundary (6").

Figure 2 shows both a bolted fault and the arc fault that could be generated in a motor control center for a chiller. As noted, the bolted short circuit fault current is approximately 100,000 Amps. If that fault were to occur, the upstream overcurrent protective device (OPD) would trip in approximately 0.05 seconds. The

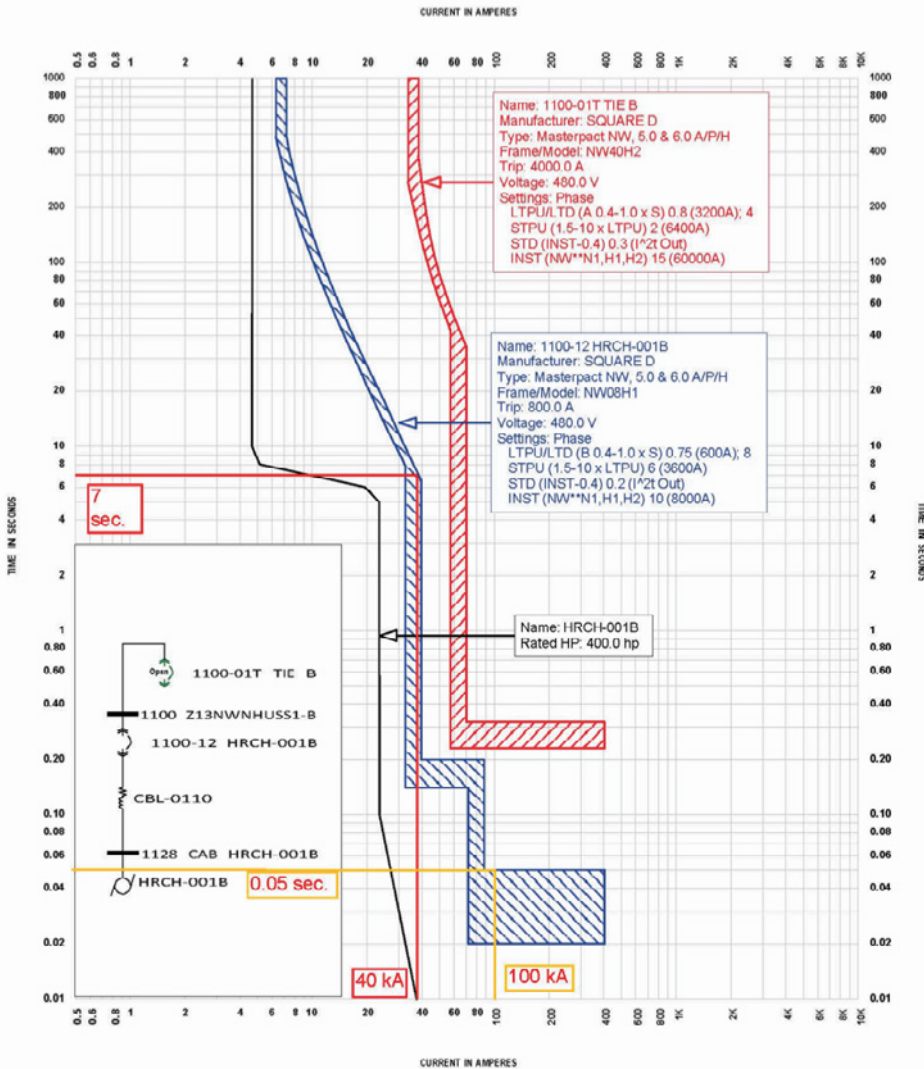
**FIGURE 1: 12,160 V Busway Fault**



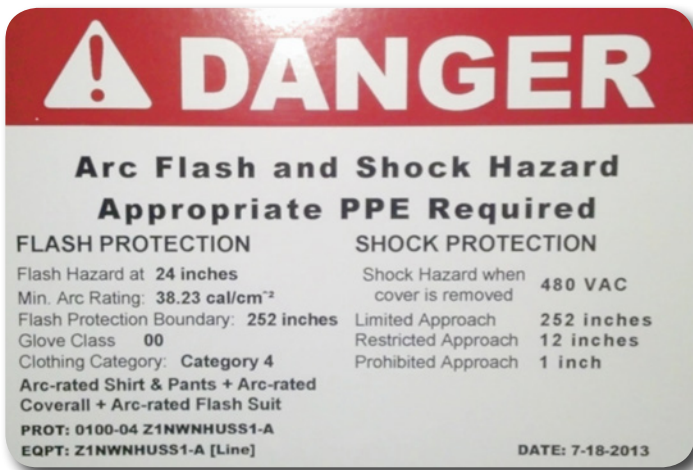
maximum arc fault current is actually calculated based upon the minimum short circuit current available which is 40,000 amps. At this level, the OPD trip time is approximately 7 seconds resulting in an arc flash energy level of 299 cal. / sq. cm at a boundary of 505 inches. This is a HRC of DANGEROUS—or no arc flash PPE is available for protection of personnel—within a radius of 42 feet from the equipment.

Most people would say this hazard level is only applicable if the panel door is open with the live conductors exposed. This reasoning is incorrect. The equipment manufacturers test their equipment to withstand the short circuit current rating and contain any products of combustion to prevent a fire. They do not rate their standard cabinets to withstand arc faults. Therefore, an arc fault incident could cause the enclosure to rupture and subject personnel to high arc flash energy levels in addition to flying shrapnel and other hazards. Only electrical equipment specifically rated for arc flash hazards can guarantee protection. Furthermore, while a greater chance of an arc flash exists when equipment is being switched, all electrical equipment can fail even under normal operation.

**FIGURE 2: Chiller Motor Starter Fault (Arc vs. Short Circuit)**



**FIGURE 3: Arc Flash / Shock Hazard Label**



Therefore, it is imperative that personnel are always aware of their surroundings and are diligent in mitigating hazards while performing their daily tasks. Work tasks should be performed away from energized equipment whenever possible and proper precautions should be taken when working near energized equipment.

So what does this mean for Test and Balance and Commissioning personnel? First and foremost is to understand the hazards that may be present around electrically energized equipment. While a large motor control center is typically more dangerous, do not discount the 10 HP motor starter disconnect switch that is commonplace in many facilities. Personnel must search out the facts and understand the hazards. To do this, a person must be able to read an Arc Flash Warning Label that should be posted on most new equipment. An example is shown in figure 3.

This label provides all of the required information in order to determine what is needed to be safe around a piece of equipment. The Flash Protection Boundary indicates the distance from the equipment where an arc flash could cause a second degree burn to bare skin (1.2 cal. / sq. cm.). Within this boundary, the stated HRC must be

utilized to determine arc flash PPE as shown on the label. The shock hazard is also listed. The limited approach for un-qualified personnel will typically be the same as the arc flash boundary. The restricted approach is determined by the voltage of the energized conductors. The minimum insulated glove class will be provided on the label if work within the restricted approach boundary is required (i.e. voltage and current measurements). The prohibited approach should never be entered except utilizing test instruments or insulated tools along with the proper PPE (i.e. voltage rated gloves).

If a detailed hazard label is not provided, there are other options. The electrical coordination and arc flash study can be obtained from the Owner or Engineer and referenced to determine the arc flash hazard and shock



HRC LEVEL	MIN. CLOTHING ARC RATING / MAXIMUM INCIDENT ENERGY LEVEL (CALORIES /SQ. CM.)	REQUIRED PPE
0	None	Non-melting or un-treated natural fiber long sleeve shirt and pants, hard hat, safety glasses, leather boots, ear protection, leather gloves
1	4	Arc rated long sleeve shirt and pants or coveralls, arc rated face shield, hard hat, safety glasses, leather boots, ear protection, leather gloves
2	8	Arc rated long sleeve shirt and pants or coveralls, arc rated face shield and balaclava or hood, hard hat, safety glasses, leather boots, ear protection, leather gloves
3	25	Arc rated long sleeve shirt and pants or coveralls, arc rated flash suit, arc rated hood, hard hat, safety glasses, leather boots, ear protection, arc rated gloves
4	40	Arc rated long sleeve shirt and pants or coveralls, arc rated flash suit, arc rated hood, hard hat, safety glasses, leather boots, ear protection, arc rated gloves
DANGEROUS	No PPE Available	No PPE is available for protection above HRC4.

hazard boundaries as well as the HRC or incident energy (cal. / sq. cm.) levels. Once these values are known, the following table from NFPA 70E can be utilized to determine the appropriate arc flash PPE for protection.


It is important to understand the purpose of arc rated clothing. An arc flash incident can produce extremely bright light, intense heat, a large concussion or blast, vaporized particles, shrapnel, and poisonous gases. The arc rated clothing is meant to protect the human body from sustaining life threatening injuries. This does not mean that a person will not get burned or otherwise injured, but the clothing should sustain the arc flash energy without catching fire and causing more serious burns. Most serious workplace injuries from arc flash are not a result of the flash or blast itself, but are caused by secondary burning of a person's clothing or burns to exposed skin. Therefore, flame retardant clothing is the first line of defense in protection from an arc flash incident.

The following table describes the voltage rated insulated glove classes for protection from shock hazards. All rubber insulated gloves must be used with protective leather outer gloves and visually inspected before each use for holes, tears or abrasions.

If the arc flash or shock hazard levels cannot be determined, personnel should not perform energized work on equipment or be in close proximity to equipment that could exhibit an arc flash hazard. If possible, all equipment energy sources should be

VOLTAGE RATED GLOVE CLASS	MAXIMUM WORKING VOLTAGE
00	500 Volts AC / 750 Volts DC
0	1,000 Volts AC / 1,500 Volts DC
1	7,500 Volts AC / 11,250 Volts DC
2	17,000 Volts AC / 25,500 Volts DC
3	26,500 Volts AC / 39,750 Volts DC
4	36,000 Volts AC / 54,000 Volts DC

de-energized and locked out following appropriate lockout / tagout procedures, unless diagnostic testing is required or de-energizing the equipment poses a greater risk to employees or building operations (e.g. healthcare facilities).

In conclusion, proper safety procedures must always be followed even when personnel are not working directly on a piece of equipment. Always be aware of surroundings and identify hazards. If there are any questions about the safety of a situation, stop immediately, leave the area and consult someone with experience to determine the proper course of action to perform work tasks. No task is worth risk of death or injury to complete. 



## FUME HOOD TESTING Shawn Griffin, TBS Griffin Air Balance Ltd.

**G**riffin Air Balance was contracted for the air and water balancing for a multi-story science building renovation. The contract included setting the flows for fume hoods; however, the controls contractor was responsible for certifying the hoods.


The fume hood system consisted of three exhaust fans, two operating and one standby, on a common plenum. Each fume hood had its own digital VAV controller in the penthouse to control the maximum/ minimum airflows (which depend on the sash height of the fume hood).

Due to the lack of sufficient lengths of duct on the floors it was decided to traverse the VAV boxes in the penthouse. With all of the maximum/minimum set points set, the controls contractor proceeded to certify the fume hoods.

There were a number of fume hoods that initially could not be certified. The VAV boxes in question were checked and confirmed to be within spec. The face velocities at the fume hoods were measured and the readings matched those taken by the controls contractors.

The mechanical contractor was advised that duct leakage was suspected in the system. They argued that as it was welded stainless steel, that could not be possible. Copies of calibration certificates and traverse procedures were provided when the mechanical contractor questioned the instrumentation and procedures.

In an attempt to confirm the airflows the controls contractor again tried to find acceptable traverse locations on the floors. This proved difficult due to the cramped ceiling space and the lack of long runs of duct. Eventually the fume hoods were traversed and a difference of up to 25 percent was found when the floor traverses and the penthouse traverses were compared. The mechanical contractor still did not accept that there must be duct leakage and continued to insist that as it was welded stainless steel duct, the results must be wrong.

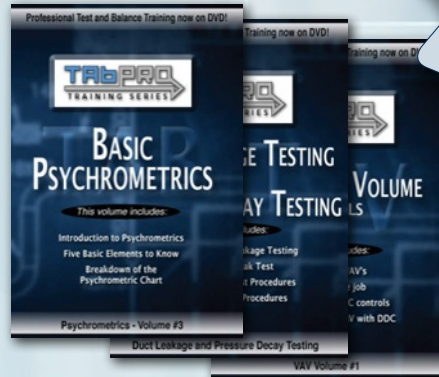
In the end, an inspection of the ductwork confirmed that while all visible seams looked fine, seams that could not be seen had not all been welded. These seams were accessible only by cutting holes in walls. Once welded, the respective fume hoods passed certification. 



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# VARIABLE VOLUME GREASE HOODS

Kane Lassiter, TBE  
Engineered Air Balance Co., Inc.



A recent project involved several variable volume grease hoods and fan systems. There were four systems, each one consisting of one exhaust fan with a VFD and two or three grease hoods, each with integral modulating damper and flow sensor. Each hood also had a temperature sensor in the duct and infrared sensors in the hood. The system concept is to vary the exhaust air flow as required by the activities in the hood, thereby reducing the energy required to exhaust and the energy required for outside air make up. The separate BAS system varies the outside air delivered to the space based on the total kitchen exhaust. This required an interface between the BAS and the hood systems which was done through Bacnet. For this system there were three touchscreen display consoles where hood variables such as damper position and airflow could be viewed. There was no proprietary software on hand to interface with the hood system controls.

The system operates as follows. If the infrared hood sensor detects heat at the cooking surface, the exhaust fan is energized and the hood damper and fan flow control is enabled. The system enters what it refers to as idle mode. In idle mode the system operates at 60% of the design capacity. Upon increased cooking activities sensed by the infrared sensor and the duct mounted temperature sensor, the air volume is increased using the modulating damper

to maintain the duct temperature in a predetermined range. The fan VFD modulates the fan speed to maintain one of the hood control dampers near 100% open.

Balance of the hoods is simple when using the manufacturer's method for determining air flow. The hood has a pressure measuring tip in the panel next to the grease filters where measurements of the exhaust plenum pressure can be taken. The



## Balance of the hoods is simple when using the manufacturer's method for determining air flow.

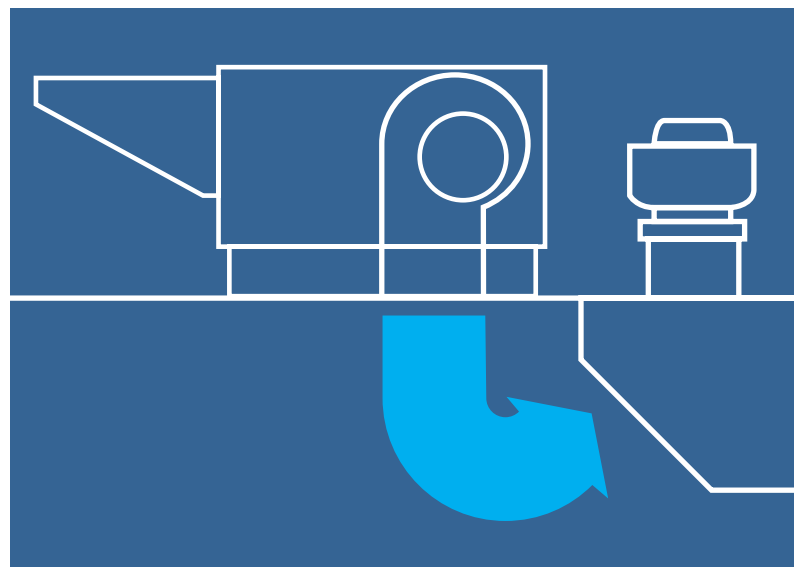
submittal data provides the design airflow and pressure required at the port. A chart with different airflows and pressures is also available but not necessary to have if the design conditions are known. Their chart airflow is based on the formula  $(CFM2/CFM1)^2 = Sp2/Sp1$ . The pressure was measured with neutral temperature air and calculated using this formula.

### Some problems encountered:

1. The control damper would not provide 100% closure when hood was not in use. In some cases substantial airflow was being wasted. This required the startup technician to return and make adjustments.
2. System "hunting". The fan speed would modulate and the multiple hood control dampers would also modulate causing large swings in air flow. After unsuccessful attempts by the manufacturer's field technician to fix the issue, the manufacturer's operations manager in cooperation with EAB was able to successfully tune the loops. This took time and patience to verify the systems would react quickly and remain stable.
3. Inaccurate air flow readings. There were several instances where the airflow calculated based on the submittal did not match the controls displayed value. Again the operations manager was able to make the necessary corrections. In one instance there was a large discrepancy between the readings that could not be rectified thru the controls. It was discovered that the hood design had been changed but corrected data had not been submitted. Once the correct design data was acquired the hood airflows were verified to match the controls reading.
4. Inaccurate alignment of the infrared sensors. These sensors require removal for occasional cleaning and if they are not aligned correctly they will not detect heat and the system will not energize and/or react quickly. This was proven when the owner was cooking and smoke was pouring out of the hood and setting off smoke detectors.

Some other features of this system are alarms for clogged, missing or misaligned filters, VFD faults, fire suppression, sensor failures and high temperatures. The hood also has the ability to be overridden to maximum airflow for five minutes or one hour with the push of a button. A room temperature sensor is also installed near the hoods and provides input to the system.

This was the first system of this type encountered by individuals working the project, and the first for this specific jobsite. Overall the system seemed to work satisfactorily but it will be monitored with input from the owner to see if long term operational satisfaction is achieved. 🌐





# Cx/TAB VERIFICATION

Jeremy Johnson, TBE  
American Testing, Inc.

American Testing was contracted directly by the owner to balance a university teaching amphitheater. The scope of the project was to rebalance one existing AHU, one VAV terminal with hot water reheat coil, and six supply air devices.

Even though this project was very small in scope, there were several challenges to overcome to successfully balance the systems. The balancing of the air devices had to be performed with scaffolding installed over the seating area while other aspects of the HVAC systems were incomplete.

The six air devices consisted of four 20” round diffusers and two 20x14 supply side wall registers. The balancing devices for the sidewall grilles installed were opposed blade dampers (OBD’s) and the 20” round diffusers had manual volume dampers. The supply ductwork was arranged so that the two sidewall registers were the closest to the VAV. With the low design duct velocity, these air devices received a substantial amount of the airflow upon initial testing. The OBD’s for both side wall grilles ended up being throttled nearly 75%. The position of OBD’s could not be permanently marked and unfortunately their balance position was not noted on our field sheets. It was mentally noted the noise level was acceptable at this position.

During testing and balancing, it was observed that one of the 20” diffuser damper handles was installed in the closed position with the actual damper position open. This was a mental note that

failed to make it to the TAB report. The remaining air devices were balanced with at least one volume damper 100% open.

The TAB report was completed and submitted for review. The engineer accepted the TAB report while the commissioning authority requested TAB verification during the functional performance testing. We met the commissioning agent onsite after the space was completely finished and begin to repeat our readings of the VAV duct traverse, AHU performance, and return air plenum readings in the mechanical equipment room. All of the readings repeated within tolerances.

Readings were then verified in the amphitheater. Due to the fact the scaffolding was removed, a lift was used to measure two of the 20” round supply diffusers. The other two 20” round diffusers in the middle of the space could not be measured without scaffolding. The two sidewall registers could be measured off a 6’ ladder. The two 20” round diffusers were measured with an airfoil probe. The K factor for this diffuser was previously established by duct traverse. The end diffusers tested at approx. 85% of design (within limits as established within an open area).

It was then necessary to measure the sidewall grilles, which tested much higher than the original TAB data (approximately 200% of design). It was found that the OBD’s were 100% open. Between the time of the original testing and balancing and TAB verification, the OBD’S were disturbed from the previous TAB





The balancing of the air devices had to be performed with scaffolding installed over the seating area...

setting. As any experienced TAB professional knows, balancing in general with OBD's is very subjective. Most OBD's have no means of marking the position and can easily be tampered with. Substantial changes in system static pressure can also affect the position of OBD's, as in the starting and stopping of fans, filter change-outs during operating modes, equipment panels accessed during operating mode. As anyone who has been in this position before, it is very frustrating trying to explain or assume what could have happened to these OBD's. These OBD's were adjusted back to their original TAB settings and the remaining readings were repeatable. It is possible, however, that the OBD's positions could move again.

In cases such as this, provide documentation in the

TAB report to better substantiate the work if needed. Mental notes need to be converted to documented notes. In this example, the OBD's approximate damper position should have been noted as it corresponds to each air device in the report. Additionally, the damper with the handle installed improperly should have been noted. Documentation would not have changed the actual situation but it would have revealed a better detailed understanding of how the TAB was successfully completed.

Customizing the TAB Reports to reflect and represent the final balance conditions with exceptional detail is something industry professionals should all be striving for in the expanding world of Cx/TAB verification. 🌐

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