Designation: E 1629 – 94

An American National Standard

Standard Practice for
Determining the Impedance of Absolute Eddy-Current Probes[1]

1. Scope

1.1 This practice covers a procedure for determining the impedance of absolute eddy-current probes (bridge-type, air or ferrite core, wire wound, shielded, or unshielded) used for finding material defects in electrically conducting material. This practice is intended to establish a uniform test methodology to measure the impedance of eddy-current probes prior to receipt of these probes by the purchaser or the specifier.

1.2 *Limitations*—This practice does not address the characterization or measurement of the impedance of differential, a-c coupled, or transmit/receive types of probes. This practice does not address the use of magnetic materials in testing probes. This practice shall not be used as a basis for selection of the best probe for a particular application or as a means by which to calibrate a probe for a specific examination.

1.3 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as the standard. The values given in parentheses are for information only.

1.4 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 The following document forms a part of this practice to the extent specified herein:

2.2 *ASTM Standards:*

E 1316 Terminology for Nondestructive Examination[2]

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—The terminology relating to eddy-current examination that appears in Terminology E 1316 shall apply to the terms used in this practice.

3.2 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.2.1 *eddy-current test block—for the purposes of the method described in this practice*, a rectangular block made of an aluminum alloy (see 6.1.2) to which an active eddy-current probe is applied.

3.3 *Mathematical Symbols*:

3.3.1 *j*—a symbol used in electrical engineering to represent $\sqrt{-1}$. It is associated with the restriction to the flow of electrical current caused by capacitors and coils.

3.3.2 *N*—any number.

3.3.3 *|N|*—the magnitude of *N*, regardless whether *N* is positive, negative, or a vector quantity.

3.3.4 $\sqrt{N}$ —the square root of *N*.

3.3.5 $(N)^2$—*N* squared, that is, $N \times N$.

3.3.6 ΔN—delta *N*, the change or difference in *N*.

3.4 *Abbreviation:*

3.4.1 *tan*—used for the tangent function. The $\tan^{-1}$, arctangent or inverse tangent function, returns a value that is a measure of an angle and can be in either degrees or radians. When using a calculator to determine the $\tan^{-1}$, care should be taken to determine whether the answer is in degrees or radians since the numerical values that represent the same angle are different.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 Eddy-current probes may be used for the nondestructive examination of parts or structures made of electrically conducting materials. Many of these examinations are intended to discover material defects, such as fatigue cracks, that may cause the part or structure to be unsafe or unfit for further service. Eddy-current probes that fail to meet the performance level requirements of this practice shall not be used for the examination of material or hardware unless the probe is qualified by some other system or an agreement has been reached by the probe manufacturer and the purchaser, or both.

5. General Practice

5.1 *Use of Test Blocks*—The test blocks described in this practice shall not be used for purposes other than measuring the impedance of eddy-current probes as specified in this practice. They shall not be used for calibrating an examination or for determining flaw sensitivity.

5.2 *Responsibility*—Initial determination of the impedance values of eddy-current probes shall be performed by the probe manufacturer in accordance with this practice. The results shall be delivered with the probe and maintained by the using organization. While the retesting of probes may be performed

using this practice, only the results obtained before the probe is in use should be compared to the initial impedance values. The impedance results should not be compared to the initial values after a probe has been used.

6. Specific Practice

6.1 *Test Method*—Impedance measurements shall be made on an aluminum alloy test block with a machined slot that conforms to the requirements of this practice. The operating frequency (as specified by the probe manufacturer) may vary for each probe examined, depending on the specific probe geometry, skin depth, matching impedance, desired signal strength, and application. A commercial impedance measuring instrument that conforms to 6.1.1 shall be used to make the measurements. The measurements will be recorded on the worksheet (Appendix X1) to calculate the probe impedance. The calculated values shall be compared to the acceptable criteria (6.3) to determine probe acceptability.

6.1.1 *Test Equipment*—The test instrument shall be either a commercial impedance measuring instrument or an LCR meter with an oscillator capable of driving a current in the probe at the probe's operating frequency. The output shall display the probe impedance in either polar form, providing a magnitude and a phase angle, or rectangular form, providing resistive and reactive components of the impedance, or both. This instrument shall be calibrated in accordance with the instrument's specifications at the required interval.

6.1.2 *Test Blocks*—The test block shall be fabricated from 7075-T6 aluminum alloy 1.9-cm (0.75-in.) thick, with slotted holes for testing bolt hole probes and a slotted flat section for testing surface probes. All test surfaces shall be machined to an average finish ≤ 15 μm (591 μin.). The conductivity of the aluminum alloy should be between 30 and 35 % IACS.

6.1.2.1 The slotted flat section shall have side measurements of at least six times the coil diameter or 5.1 by 5.1 cm (2 by 2 in.), whichever is larger. The slot dimensions shall be machined across the block's surface and shall measure at least 5.0 cm (2-in.) long. The slot cross section shall measure 0.1 ± 0.01 mm (0.004 ± 0.004 in.) wide and 0.5 ± 0.025 mm (0.02 ± 0.001 in.) deep.

6.1.2.2 The test holes shall be made for all of the nominal sizes of bolt hole probes to be examined. The edges of the holes shall be spaced 1.9-cm (0.75-in.) apart from each other and from the block edges. The slot shall run the entire length of the hold and will be 0.1 ± 0.01-mm (0.004 ± 0.0004-in.) wide and 0.5 ± 0.025-mm (0.02 ± 0.001-in.) deep.

6.1.2.3 Fig. 1 shows a representative test block with the holes used for testing two different sizes of bolt hole probes. The length of the block ($x + 5.1$ cm) depends on the number and size of the test holes required by the user, as well as the amount of clearance required between each hole and the block's edges.

6.2 *Measurement Procedure*:

6.2.1 *Measurements*—Impedance values can be expressed in different ways. Impedances are most commonly given in either rectangular or polar form. In polar form, the impedance is expressed as a magnitude, $|Z|$, with a corresponding phase angle, θ, and often appears as $|Z| \angle \theta$. The rectangular form expresses the impedance as a combination of a resistive
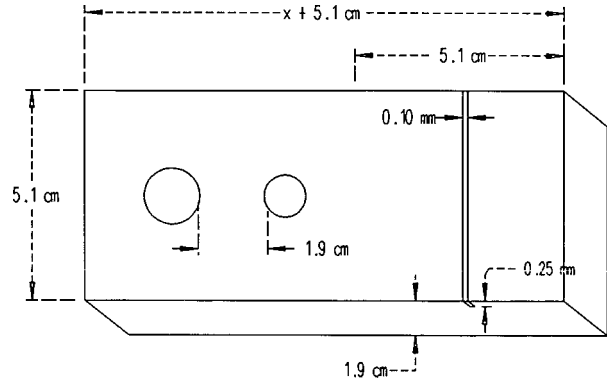

FIG. 1 Representative Test Block

component, R, and a reactive or imaginary (denoted by j) component, X. This form often appears as $R \pm jX$. Fig. 2 shows two points measured in both forms and the resulting impedance change (ΔZ) calculation. This is typical of the way in which impedance changes are measured on actual eddy-current probes using the test method specified in this practice. The impedance of a probe is measured first off the slot and then on the slot in this method, and the difference between these two measurements is calculated. An error may occur in the calculations if appropriate coordinate conversions are not made (addition and subtraction are performed on rectangular coordinates and multiplication and division on polar coordinates).

6.2.1.1 All performance tests shall be conducted within the temperature range from 15 to 27°C (60 to 80°F). The probe test frequency shall depend on the rated operating frequency of the particular probe under test (see X1.4.2.3).

6.2.2 *Probe Impedance in Air*—Attach the probe to the impedance measuring instrument, and position the probe at least 50.8 mm (2 in.) away from any electrically conducting material or hardware, or both. Measure the impedance and record the impedance values on the worksheet. Compare the measurement to the values listed in 6.3.1.

6.2.3 *Average Off-Slot Probe Impedance*—Place the probe on the surface of or in the hole in the test block, as appropriate. For a surface probe, place the probe on four different positions on the face of the block. The center of each position shall be at least four coil diameters from any edge, slot, or hole. For a bolt hole probe, rotate the probe face in the hole to four different positions that are away from the slot and the top and bottom of the hole. Measure the impedance and record the four impedance values on the worksheet in either polar or rectangular coordinates. If necessary, convert the polar values to R_{off} and X_{off}(resistive and reactive components). Calculate the magnitude of each of the measurements and record them on the
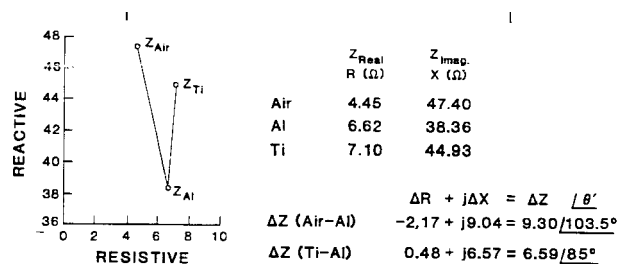

FIG. 2 Rectangular and Polar Coordinates and Resulting ΔZ

worksheet. Determine the variation (scatter) in the magnitudes of the measurements and compare it to the requirements given in 6.3.2. When acceptable values are obtained, average the four values to calculate $R_{off\ avg}$ and $X_{off\ avg}$. Record the averages on the worksheet.

6.2.4 *Maximum On-Slot Impedance*—Position the probe face on the slot to obtain a maximum impedance reading. Perform this procedure four times, and record the four resulting impedances in rectangular coordinates, R_{on} and X_{on}, on the worksheet. Average the four values to calculate $R_{on\ avg}$ and $X_{on\ avg}$. Record the averages on the worksheet.

6.2.5 *Probe Performance Criterion*—The probe impedance change caused by the slot, ΔZ, is the magnitude of $R_{on\ avg} - R_{off\ avg}$ and $X_{on\ avg} - X_{off\ avg}$. The fractional change is the absolute value of ΔZ divided by $|Z_{off\ avg}|$. Appendix X1 contains the formulas for calculating the values of $|\Delta Z|$ and $|Z_{off\ avg}|$. Record the calculated values on the worksheet and compare them to the requirements of 6.3.3 to determine acceptance.

6.3 *Acceptance Criteria*—Acceptance of a probe being characterized by this practice requires that it meet all of the following criteria:

6.3.1 *Probe Impedance in Air*—Unless otherwise specified, the magnitude of the probe impedance in air shall be between 20 and 1000 Ω, and the phase shall be between 70 and 90 deg.

An impedance value below 20 Ω indicates the possibility of a short circuit in the probe coil, and a value above 1000 Ω indicates a possible open circuit.

6.3.1.1 The magnitude of the impedance in air shall be within 10 % of the value specified for that type of probe by the probe manufacturer and be within the input impedance range specified for the measuring instrument.

6.3.2 *Measurement Scatter*—A variation greater than 4 % among the off-slot impedance measurements indicates that the values are too scattered. The measurements must be repeated using greater care in holding the surface probe more securely or fitting the bolt hole probe more snugly in the hole. Repeated high variation indicates an analysis of the system using different examiners or known acceptable probes. The probe is unacceptable if the measurement scatter cannot be reduced to the acceptable value.

6.3.3 *Probe Impedance Ratio*—These ratios will be determined by agreement between the eddy-current probe manufacturer and the probe purchaser.

7. Keywords

7.1 absolute eddy-current probes; eddy-current probes; impedance; nondestructive testing

APPENDIXES

(Nonmandatory Information)

X1. WORKSHEET FOR CALCULATION OF RESULTS

X1.1 General

X1.1.1 *Scope*—This appendix provides mathematical formulas and a worksheet for recording measurements and calculating results. It is recommended that the worksheet in this practice be left blank and photocopied for each probe tested. Appendix X2 contains an example of a completed worksheet.

X1.2 General Practice

X1.2.1 These measurements should be performed using a test instrument that displays impedance in polar or rectangular coordinates, or both. To perform the necessary calculations, both forms of complex impedance (polar and rectangular) are necessary. Mathematical conversion will be necessary if the test instrument does not display the impedance in both forms.

X1.2.1.1 *Polar to Rectangular Conversion*—The conversions from polar ($|Z| \angle \theta$) to rectangular ($R \pm jX$) can be performed using the following formulas:

$$R = |Z|\cos\theta \qquad X = |Z|\sin\theta \qquad \text{(X1.1)}$$

The use of a calculator with trigonometric functions is recommended. The abbreviation "cos" is used for the cosine function, and the abbreviation "sin" is used for the sine function.

X1.2.1.2 *Rectangular to Polar Conversion*—The conversions from rectangular ($R \pm jX$) to polar ($|Z| \angle \theta$) can be performed using the following formulas:

$$|Z| = \sqrt{R^2 + X^2} \qquad \theta = tan^{-1}(X/R) \qquad \text{(X1.2)}$$

X1.3 Specific Practice

X1.3.1 It will be necessary to perform the following calculations after recording the measured impedances:

X1.3.1.1 *Average Value*—This involves adding the four measurement values ($R_1 + R_2 + R_3 + R_4$ and $X_1 + X_2 + X_3 + X_4$), dividing the totals by four, and recording those results in the appropriate space on the worksheet (see X1.4.6.1 or X1.4.6.2).

X1.3.1.2 *Impedance Magnitude*— $|Z| = \sqrt{R^2 + X^2}$.

X1.3.1.3 *Measurement Scatter*—A percentage value obtained by choosing the highest and lowest values from the four off-flaw impedance magnitudes and applying the following formula:

$$[(\text{highest value} - \text{lowest value})/\text{highest value}] \times 100 \qquad \text{(X1.3)}$$

X1.3.1.4 *Probe Impedance Change*—The average probe impedance calculated for the off-slot impedance is subtracted from the average maximum on-slot impedance measurement. The impedance change in rectangular form is converted to a polar magnitude, $|\Delta Z|$.

X1.4 Measurement Worksheet

X1.4.1 Operator's Name/ID and Date _____.