



Designation: F1796 – 09

Standard Specification for High Voltage Detectors—Part 1 Capacitive Type to be Used for Voltages Exceeding 600 Volts AC¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation F1796; the number immediately following the designation indicates the year of original adoption or, in the case of revision, the year of last revision. A number in parentheses indicates the year of last reapproval. A superscript epsilon (ϵ) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

1. Scope

1.1 This specification covers portable, live-line tool-supported, direct-contact type capacitive voltage detectors to be used on electrical systems both indoors and outdoors for ac voltages from 600 V to 800 kV with frequency of 60 Hz. The function of the voltage detector is limited to the detection of the presence or absence of nominal operating voltage.

1.1.1 Two types of voltage detectors are provided and are designated as Type I, audible/visual and Type II, numeric, with or without audible.

1.1.2 Two styles of voltage detectors, differing in wet conditions characteristics, are provided and are designated as Style A, indoor use and Style B indoor/outdoor use.

1.2 The use and maintenance of these high voltage detectors and any necessary insulated tool handles are beyond the scope of this specification.

1.3 *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.*

NOTE 1—Except where specified, all voltage defined in this specification refer to phase-to-phase voltage in a three-phase system. Voltage detectors covered by this specification may be used in other than three-phase systems, but the applicable phase-to-phase or phase-to-ground (earth) voltages shall be used to determine the operating voltage.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:²

F819 [Terminology Relating to Electrical Protective Equipment for Workers](#)

¹ This specification is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee F18 on Electrical Protective Equipment for Workers and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee F18.35 on Tools & Equipment.

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² For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

2.2 ANSI Standard:³

ANSI C84.1 [Voltage Ratings for Electric Power Systems and Equipment](#)

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions:

3.1.1 *capacitive voltage detector*—a device that relies on current passing through stray capacitance to ground.

3.1.2 *clear indication*—a specific condition that detects and indicates the voltage state at the contact electrode.

3.1.3 *clear perception*—the ability by the user to determine that the voltage detector is in its operating position.

3.1.4 *contact electrode*—the bare conductive part of the conductive element that establishes the electrical connection to the component to be tested.

3.1.5 *indicator*—part of the voltage detector that indicates the presence or absence of the nominal operating voltage or the measured voltage at the contact electrode.

3.1.6 *indoor style*—a detector designed for use in dry conditions, normally indoors.

3.1.7 *interference field*—electrical field affecting the indication.

3.1.8 *interference voltage*—voltages other than the signal voltage capable of making the device operate.

3.1.9 *limit marking*—distinctive location or mark to indicate to the user the physical limit to which the detector may be inserted between live components or may touch them.

3.1.10 *nominal operating voltage*—a nominal value consistent with the latest revision of ANSI C84.1.

3.1.11 *outdoor style*—a detector designed for use either indoors or outdoors.

3.1.12 *response time*—time delay between sudden change of the voltage state on the contact electrode and the associated clear indication.

3.1.13 *testing element*—built in or external device, by means of which the functioning of the voltage detector can be checked.

³ Available from American National Standards Institute, 11 West 42nd St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10036.

3.1.14 *threshold voltage*—minimum voltage between the line component and earth (ground) required to give a clear audible or visual indication, or both; or numeric indication, corresponding to specific conditions as defined in corresponding test (see *clear indication* and *clear perception*).

3.1.15 *voltage detector*—a device for indicating the presence or absence of nominal design or operating voltage or the measured voltage.

3.1.16 *voltage, nominal design*—a nominal value consistent with the latest revision of ANSI C84.1, assigned to the circuit or system for the purpose of conveniently designating its voltage class.

3.1.17 *voltage range*—value of voltage generally agreed upon by manufacturer and customer, to which certain operating specifications are referred.

3.2 Tests:

3.2.1 *acceptance test*— a test made at the option of the purchaser.

3.2.2 *design test*— a type test made on a specimen treated as representative of an industrial product. These tests will not generally be repeated in quantity production unless a change in the design is implemented.

3.2.3 *performance test*— a test performed to indicate normal operation of the instrument.

3.2.4 *routine test*— a type test made regularly on production material.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 This specification establishes requirements for the design and testing of high voltage detectors, used in the electrical power industry, to determine the presence or absence of nominal operating voltage or the measured voltage.

5. Type of Detector

5.1 Capacitive

5.1.1 *Direct Contact*—Operates without the need for a ground lead, but requires physical contact with the component to be tested; with an audible/visual indicator.

5.1.2 *Type II – Direct Contact*— Operates without the need for a ground lead, but requires physical contact with the component to be tested; with a numeric value indicator, with or without audible.

6. Ordering Information

6.1 Orders for high voltage detectors under this specification shall include this ASTM designation and the following information:

- 6.1.1 Type,
- 6.1.2 Style,
- 6.1.3 Voltage range,
- 6.1.4 Catalog number/s.

7. Marking

7.1 Labeling:

7.1.1 Instructions for indoor and outdoor testing use and maintenance of the voltage detectors shall be included with

each unit. Whenever practicable, instructions for use and testing shall be printed on a permanent-type label and attached to the unit.

7.1.2 Voltage range, manufacturer and a general statement regarding any use precautions or limitations shall be permanently marked on each unit.

8. Specifications

8.1 The manufacturer shall clearly specify the limits of performance of each voltage detector within the instructions as follows:

- 8.1.1 Operating voltage range or ranges,
- 8.1.2 Operating temperature range,
- 8.1.3 Operating humidity range,
- 8.1.4 Storage temperature range,
- 8.1.5 Storage humidity range, and
- 8.1.6 Any limitations in use.

9. Workmanship, Finish, and Appearance

9.1 Workmanship and finish shall be of such quality as to ensure safe operation of the unit. Appearance shall be the prerogative of the manufacturer.

10. Testing

10.1 *General*—Tests shall be performed on a detector that has been completely assembled. Tests shall be carried out under the following ambient test conditions:

- 10.1.1 Ambient temperature 59 to 95°F (15 to 35°C).
- 10.1.2 Relative humidity 45 to 75 %.

10.2 *Methods*—Unless otherwise specified, tests shall be carried out using a 60 Hz ac power source. Tests shall be performed in dry conditions.

10.2.1 The maximum test voltage level shall be reached within 10 to 20 s.

10.2.2 An acceptable tolerance of $\pm 3\%$ is allowed for all required values.

10.3 *Design Test*—At least two (2) units shall be tested to ensure that design specifications are achieved.

10.3.1 *Type I Voltage Test (Audible/Visual Indication)*—Each unit shall be subjected to the voltage necessary to verify the unit's threshold voltage. The threshold voltage V_t shall satisfy the following relationship $\pm 10\%$:

$$\text{Threshold voltage} = 0.3 \text{ to } 0.45 \times \text{minimum nameplate voltage}$$

10.3.2 *Type II Voltage Test (Numeric Indication)*—Each unit shall be subjected to the voltage necessary to verify the unit's nominal design voltage range/s, within $\pm 30\%$ of applied voltage.

NOTE 2—Type II voltage detectors may indicate the design voltage in phase-to-phase or phase-to-ground values.

10.3.3 *Temperature Dependence of the Indication*—The detector shall operate correctly in the temperature range of the climatic category according to Table 1. The numeric or threshold voltage shall not vary by more than $\pm 10\%$, with respect to the numeric or threshold voltage measured when tested at the minimum and maximum temperature. The detector shall be subjected to the maximum and minimum temperature extremes for 24 h and immediately subjected to a numeric

TABLE 1 Climatic categories

Temperature	
Temperature °C	°F
-20 to +55	-4 to +131

or threshold voltage test. The numeric or threshold voltage is not to deviate $\pm 10\%$ from the previously tested and recorded test report when conducted under the standard atmospheric conditions as stated in 10.1.

10.3.4 *Low Temperature Impact*—The procedure outlined in 10.3.5 shall be followed after exposure to $-20^{\circ}\text{C}/-4^{\circ}\text{F}$ for 24 h.

10.3.5 *Drop/Impact*—The test surface shall be concrete or steel and smooth, hard and unpliant. The height of the fall shall be 3 ft. The unit shall be dropped twice: once in the horizontal position and once in the vertical. The vertical drop shall be made on the contact electrode if present. It is acceptable if the contact electrode bends, as long as the unit continues to operate. The unit shall be considered to have passed the test if there is no significant mechanical damage and the unit meets the requirements of 10.6.

10.3.6 *Humidity*—The detector is to be exposed to a minimum of 96 % humidity for 24 h. The detector is considered to have passed if it meets the same criteria as outlined in 10.3.

10.3.7 *Wet Test*—Style B units identified for “outdoor use” shall be tested using the Rain/Wet Test described in Annex A1.

10.3.8 *Battery Life Test*—For detectors equipped with internal test functions, the detector shall be submitted to a battery life test where after exposure to the standard atmosphere test conditions in 10.1, the self-test functions of the detector are activated and allowed to deplete the battery which was determined to be “new” and “fresh” at insertion. The detector’s self-test functions must last for 5 min of continuous use. The performance requirements are outlined in 10.6.

10.3.9 *Durability of Labeling*—The labels on the detector shall be scrubbed with a towelette soaked in water for 1 min then another towelette soaked in ethyl alcohol for another minute. The test is considered passed if the marking remains legible, the printing does not smear and the label remains attached.

10.3.10 *Continuous Operation Rating*—The detector shall be placed in contact with a high voltage supply lead and subjected to maximum rated voltage for 5 min. The detector is considered to have passed the test if the indicating signals have worked continuously for the entire period and all the functions as specified in 10.6 are functioning after the voltage testing is completed.

10.3.11 *Response Time*—The test voltage applied shall be the threshold voltage plus 10 %. The test voltage shall remain ON and the detector shall be applied and removed five times. The time sequence between these periods should vary and each shall be at least 3 s long in duration. The test is considered passed if all response times are shorter than 1 s.

10.3.12 *Testing the “Self-Test” Function* —The self-test function, for detectors equipped with this feature, shall be activated according to the instructions. The visual or audible signals, or both, or numeric shall activate and shall be observed for proper functioning. This function shall be activated three

times noting any changes observed in its operation. This test is considered passed if the proper indications appear each time. For the purpose of this test the numeric display shall be considered a proper indication.

10.3.13 *Acceptable Audible Indication*— The audible test should be performed in an environment where background noise does not exceed 60 dBA.

10.3.13.1 The detector shall be mounted so that the sound axis is parallel to the ground at least 5.0 ft off any sound reflecting surface. The test shall be performed by applying a voltage of 10 % over the threshold voltage to the contact electrode.

10.3.13.2 The sound intensity shall be measured at 2 ft intervals at ± 15 degrees off centerline while moving away from the detector until the following audible thresholds are determined: (1) 77 dBA for detectors with intermittent signals, and (2) 80 dBA for detectors with continuous signals.

10.3.13.3 The detector is considered passed if the audible thresholds are met at distances consistent with the maximum voltage rating of the detector and OSHA minimum approach distances. These audible thresholds may be reduced by 10 dBA if the detector is equipped with a visual indication also.

10.3.14 *Acceptable Visual Indication*—The Type I visual tests should be conducted in an environment with ambient light conditions ranging from 0 to 18 000 fc.

10.3.14.1 The test shall be performed by applying a minimum voltage of 10 % over the threshold voltage to the contact electrode.

10.3.14.2 Three observers shall determine that visual detection can be made throughout angles of $\pm 15\%$ off the detector centerline at distances up to and including 10 ft from the detector under test.

10.3.15 *Visual Inspection*—The detector shall be reviewed for any defects apparent in its enclosure, contact electrode, or visual and audible indicating systems. Labeling shall be inspected and any accessories shall also be visually inspected. If any defects are found, the detector is to be rejected.

10.3.16 *Method to Measure Threshold Voltage*—The detector shall be supported in a non-conductive fixture in a horizontal position. For a detector with a maximum rated voltage of 69kV and below, it will be positioned 3 ft above a conductive floor. No foreign objects shall be located between the test fixture and the floor. For detectors rated above 69kV, the height from floor dimension will be 6 ft.

10.3.16.1 The high voltage cable connected to the electrode shall be free and clear of all surrounding objects connecting to the detector on an even axis. The detector shall be tested according to its designed threshold voltage range.

10.3.16.2 The detector is considered to have passed if it responds at the calculated threshold voltage values.

10.3.17 *Interference Voltage Testing*—Refer to Fig. 1 for the test set-up for Interference Voltage Testing.

10.3.17.1 For testing opposite phase interference voltage, refer to the test set-up shown in Fig. 2.

(1) The test voltage is 0.6 times the voltage rating of the detector, or the highest voltage in its voltage range.

(2) The detector passes the test if it does not indicate that nominal operating voltage is present.