

INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

NORME INTERNATIONALE

Insulating liquids – Determination of the breakdown voltage at power frequency – Test method

Isolants liquides – Détermination de la tension de claquage à fréquence industrielle – Méthode d'essai

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD.....	3
INTRODUCTION.....	5
1 Scope.....	6
2 Normative references	6
3 Terms and definitions	6
4 Electrical apparatus	6
4.1 General.....	6
4.2 Voltage regulator	6
4.3 Step-up transformer.....	7
4.4 Switching system	7
4.5 Current-limiting resistors.....	7
4.6 Measuring system.....	7
5 Test assembly	7
5.1 General.....	7
5.2 Test cell.....	8
5.3 Electrodes	9
5.4 Stirring device.....	9
6 Preparation of electrodes.....	9
7 Test assembly preparation.....	9
8 Sampling	10
9 Test procedure	10
9.1 Sample preparation.....	10
9.2 Filling of the cell	10
9.3 Application of the voltage.....	10
10 Report	11
11 Test data dispersion and reproducibility.....	11
11.1 Test data dispersion	11
11.2 Reproducibility	12
Annex A (informative) Improved test method.....	13
A.1 Test procedure for improved test method	13
A.2 Report.....	14
Annex B (informative) Special test method for low volume samples	15
Annex C (informative) Representative material for a performance test	16
Bibliography.....	17
Figure 1 – Example of test cell with spherical electrodes 12,5 mm to 13,0 mm diameter	8
Figure 2 – Example of test cell with partially hemispherical electrodes with 25 mm radius and 36 mm diameter.....	8
Figure 3 – Graphical representation of coefficient of variation versus mean breakdown voltage.....	12
Figure A.1 – Example of a sequence of breakdown shots for determination of the breakdown voltage.....	14

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**INSULATING LIQUIDS – DETERMINATION OF THE BREAKDOWN
VOLTAGE AT POWER FREQUENCY – TEST METHOD****FOREWORD**

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IEC 60156 has been prepared by IEC technical committee 10: Fluids for electrotechnical applications. It is an International Standard.

This fourth edition cancels and replaces the third edition published in 2018. This edition constitutes a technical revision.

This edition constitutes a technical revision and, mainly, confirms the content of the previous edition even if some advances are included. The test method has not been changed for practical reasons, due to the very large number of instrumentations disseminated around the world.

The text of this International Standard is based on the following documents:

Draft	Report on voting
10/1241/FDIS	10/1256/RVD

Full information on the voting for its approval can be found in the report on voting indicated in the above table.

The language used for the development of this International Standard is English.

This document was drafted in accordance with ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2, and developed in accordance with ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1 and ISO/IEC Directives, IEC Supplement, available at www.iec.ch/members_experts/refdocs. The main document types developed by IEC are described in greater detail at www.iec.ch/publications.

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INTRODUCTION

As normally applied, breakdown voltage of insulating liquids is not a basic material property but an empirical test procedure intended to indicate the presence of contaminants such as water and solid suspended matter and the advisability of carrying out drying and filtration treatment.

The AC breakdown voltage value of insulating liquids strongly depends on the particular set of conditions used in its measurement. Therefore, standardized testing procedures and equipment are essential for the unambiguous interpretation of test results.

The method described in this document applies to either acceptance tests on new deliveries of insulating liquids or testing of treated liquids prior to or during filling into electrical equipment, or to the monitoring and maintenance of insulating liquid-filled apparatus in service. It specifies rigorous sample-handling procedures and temperature control that should be adhered to when certified results are required. For routine tests, especially in the field, less stringent procedures may be practicable, and it is the responsibility of the user to determine their effect on the results.

Annex A describes, for comparison, an alternative test method which could be introduced in the future. Annex B describes special test methods, using cells which may include low volume samples. Annex C describes a reference material for a performance test and check according to IEC 60060-3 [1]¹.

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¹ Numbers in square brackets refer to the Bibliography.

INSULATING LIQUIDS – DETERMINATION OF THE BREAKDOWN VOLTAGE AT POWER FREQUENCY – TEST METHOD

1 Scope

This document specifies the method for determining the dielectric breakdown voltage of insulating liquids at power frequency. The test procedure is performed in a specified apparatus, where the oil sample is subjected to an increasing AC electrical field until breakdown occurs. The method applies to all types of insulating liquids of nominal viscosity up to 350 mm²/s at 40 °C. It is appropriate both for acceptance testing on unused liquids at the time of their delivery and for establishing the condition of samples taken in monitoring and maintenance of equipment.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

IEC 60475, *Method of sampling insulating liquids*

3 Terms and definitions

No terms and definitions are listed in this document.

ISO and IEC maintain terminology databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- IEC Electropedia: available at <https://www.electropedia.org/>
- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>

4 Electrical apparatus

4.1 General

The electrical apparatus consists of the following units:

- 1) voltage regulator,
- 2) step-up transformer,
- 3) switching system,
- 4) current-limiting resistors,
- 5) measuring device.

Two or more of these units may be integrated in any equipment system.

4.2 Voltage regulator

The test voltage shall be increased with an automatic control of the required uniform voltage rate of rise. The device should not introduce harmonics disturbances (< 3 %) and the AC source should be free from harmonics.

4.3 Step-up transformer

The test voltage is obtained by using a step-up or resonant transformer supplied from an AC source using 48 Hz to 62 Hz (sinusoidal waveform). The voltage source value is constantly increased. The controls of the variable low-voltage source shall be capable of varying the test voltage smoothly, uniformly and without overshoots or transients. Incremental increases (produced, for example, by a variable auto-transformer or an amplifier) shall not exceed 2 % of the expected breakdown voltage.

The centre-point of the secondary winding of the transformer should be connected to earth.

4.4 Switching system

The circuit shall be opened automatically if a sustained arc between the electrodes occurs and the voltage between the electrodes collapses.

NOTE Typically, voltage collapse is detected in the range of 500 V.

The primary circuit of the step-up transformer shall be fitted with a circuit-breaker operated by the current sensing device, resulting from the breakdown of the sample and shall break the voltage within 10 ms.

The sensitivity of the current or voltage sensing element depends on the energy-limiting device employed and only approximate guidance can be given.

A cut-off time of < 100 µs, as given in the previous edition of this document, is necessary to perform multiple breakdowns on silicone liquids.

4.5 Current-limiting resistors

To protect the equipment and to avoid excessive decomposition at the instant of breakdown of liquids, such as silicone or ester liquids, a resistance limiting the breakdown current shall be inserted in series with the test cell.

The short-circuit current of the transformer and associated circuits shall be within the range of 10 mA to 25 mA for all voltages higher than 15 kV. This may be achieved by a combination of resistors in either or both the primary and secondary circuits of the high-voltage transformer.

4.6 Measuring system

For the purpose of this document, the magnitude of the test voltage is defined as its peak value divided by $\sqrt{2}$.

The output voltage of the step-up transformer may be measured by means of a measuring system consisting of a voltage divider or a measuring winding of the step-up transformer coupled with a peak-voltmeter. The measuring system shall be calibrated up to the upper scale voltage to be measured. A method of calibration which has been found satisfactory is the use of a transfer standard. This is an auxiliary measuring device which is connected in place of the test cell between the high-voltage terminals to which it presents an impedance similar to the one of the sample liquids. The auxiliary device is separately calibrated against a primary standard [2], [3].

5 Test assembly

5.1 General

The breakdown voltage test is performed following the method described herewith as a routine test.