

# IEEE Recommended Practice for Establishing Liquid Immersed and Dry-Type Power and Distribution Transformer Capability when Supplying Nonsinusoidal Load Currents

IEEE Power and Energy Society

Sponsored by the  
Transformers Committee

# **IEEE Recommended Practice for Establishing Liquid Immersed and Dry-Type Power and Distribution Transformer Capability when Supplying Nonsinusoidal Load Currents**

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**Transformers Committee**  
of the  
**IEEE Power and Energy Society**

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**Abstract:** Provided in this recommended practice are calculation methods for conservatively evaluating the feasibility for an existing installed dry-type or liquid immersed transformer, to supply nonsinusoidal load currents as a portion of the total load. Also provided is necessary application information to assist in properly specifying a new transformer expected to carry a load, a portion of which is composed of nonsinusoidal load currents. A number of examples illustrating these methods and calculations are presented. Reference annexes provide a comparison of the document calculations to calculations found in other industry standards. Suggested temperature rise calculation methods are detailed for reference purposes.

**Keywords:** current harmonics, harmonic loss factor, IEEE C57.110™, k-factor, nonsinusoidal load currents

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## Introduction

This introduction is not part of IEEE Std C57.110-2018, IEEE Recommended Practice for Establishing Liquid Immersed and Dry-Type Power and Distribution Transformer Capability when Supplying Nonsinusoidal Load Currents.

One side effect of the trend toward energy efficiency is the increase in harmonic current flowing in the power system. The widespread use of solid state electronics in industrial and residential loads on small and medium power dry-type and liquid immersed transformers has resulted in a dramatic increase in the harmonic content of the load current of these transformers. It has become common for the harmonic factor of the current to exceed 0.05 per-unit, which is the limit specified for “usual service conditions” in IEEE Std C57.12.00™ and IEEE Std C57.12.01™. The higher harmonic content in the load current of these transformers causes higher eddy current loss in the windings and the structural parts linked by the transformer leakage flux and, consequently, higher operating temperatures. In addition, harmonic load currents reduce the efficiency of the transformer. Users of this document should also recognize that liquid immersed transformers may have different load limitations than dry-type transformers and that the harmonic loading practices should treat the two types of transformers differently when necessary.

This recommended practice provides guidance for the conservative loading of transformers carrying nonsinusoidal load currents so that overheating is avoided. The intent of this document is to provide simple methods of calculating these effects on either a new transformer or an existing transformer. More specifically, it is expected that this recommended practice would be used for the following situations:

- a) A new transformer required to carry some nonsinusoidal load currents, but will not be entirely devoted to a rectifier load.
- b) An existing transformer not originally specified for supplying nonsinusoidal load currents, but is now required to supply a load, a portion of which is nonsinusoidal.

Two methods are described in this recommended practice. The first method is intended to illustrate calculations by those with access to detailed information on loss density distribution within each of the transformer windings. The second method is less accurate and is intended for use by those with access to transformer certified test report data only. It is anticipated that the first method will emphasize the information necessary to specify a new transformer and show how this information is used by transformer design engineers, whereas the second method will be employed primarily by users. This recommended practice provides methods for conservatively evaluating the feasibility of applying nonsinusoidal load currents to existing transformers and clarifies the requirements for specifying new transformers to supply nonsinusoidal loads.

New transformers that are intended to supply loads with high harmonic content must be specified with a harmonic current spectrum. The designer cannot assume nor can the user expect the designer to use standard or typical current distribution tables. If the harmonic content of the load is unknown, then both the user and the transformer designer are at risk and reasonable steps should be taken to help ensure a conservative design for the application. Guidelines on how this information is used to develop proper transformer sizing is provided in this document, but appropriate calculations specific to the type of transformer design are the responsibility of the designer. Approximate calculation techniques that provide conservative results are provided for the typical user who has much less information than the transformer designer.

In the latest revision of this recommended practice, the document was updated to current IEEE styles, and general revisions were made. In addition, substantial additions were made to the references and three new annexes were added. [Annex C](#) provides information on skin effect in addition to eddy and other losses that were previously discussed. [Annex F](#) aids the user in understanding the impact of the highest eddy losses as compared to the average values, and [Annex G](#) provides sample loss data for eddy current and other stray losses across a range of distribution transformers.

## Contents

1. Overview.....	10
1.1 Scope.....	10
1.2 Purpose.....	10
2. Normative references .....	10
3. Definitions.....	11
4. General considerations.....	11
4.1 Transformer losses.....	11
4.2 Transformer capability equivalent.....	12
4.3 Basic data .....	13
4.4 Transformer per-unit losses .....	13
4.5 Transformer losses at measured currents .....	14
4.6 Harmonic loss factor for winding eddy currents .....	16
4.7 Harmonic loss factor for other stray losses .....	19
5. Design considerations for new transformer specification.....	21
5.1 Harmonic current filtering .....	21
5.2 Impact on the neutral .....	21
5.3 Power factor correction equipment.....	21
5.4 Electrostatic ground shields.....	21
5.5 Design consideration outside the windings.....	22
5.6 Harmonic spectrum analysis.....	22
5.7 Design consideration in the windings .....	22
6. Recommended procedures for evaluating the load capability of existing transformers.....	23
6.1 Transformer capability equivalent calculation using design eddy-current loss data .....	23
6.2 Transformer capability equivalent calculation using data available from certified test report .....	30
6.3 Neutral bus capability for nonsinusoidal load currents that include third harmonic components .....	37
Annex A (informative) Bibliography.....	39
Annex B (informative) Tutorial discussion of transformer losses and the effect of harmonic currents on these losses.....	43
Annex C (informative) Corrected harmonic loss factor for high frequencies .....	46
Annex D (informative) Comparison of UL K-factor definition and IEEE Std C57.110 harmonic loss factor definition .....	51
Annex E (informative) Temperature rise testing procedures .....	54
Annex F (informative) Derivation of the ratio of highest winding eddy loss to average.....	59
Annex G (informative) Sample transformer loss data .....	61

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## 1. Overview

### 1.1 Scope

This recommended practice applies only to two winding transformers covered by IEEE Std C57.12.00, IEEE Std C57.12.01, and NEMA ST20.<sup>1</sup> It does not apply to rectifier transformers.<sup>2</sup>

### 1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to establish uniform methods for determining the capability of transformers when supplying nonsinusoidal load currents of known characteristics.

## 2. Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document (i.e., they must be understood and used, so each referenced document is cited in text and its relationship to this document is explained). For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments or corrigenda) applies.

IEEE Std C57.12.00™, IEEE Standard General Requirements for Liquid-Immersed Distribution, Power, and Regulating Transformers.<sup>3,4</sup>

IEEE Std C57.12.01™, IEEE Standard General Requirements for Dry-Type Distribution and Power Transformers Including Those with Solid Cast and/or Resin-Encapsulated Windings.

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<sup>1</sup>Information on references can be found in [Clause 2](#).

<sup>2</sup>Rectifier transformers are addressed by IEEE Std C57.18.10™, IEEE Standard Practices and Requirements for Semiconductor Power Rectifier Transformers.

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