

**IECEE**

**CTL-OP 108 Ed. 2.0**

**COMMITTEE OF TESTING LABORATORIES**

**OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE**

# **Laboratory procedure for preparation, extension and use of Thermocouples**

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IECEE Secretariat, 3, rue de Varembe, Geneva, Switzerland, Telefax : +41 22 919 0300, e-mail : [pro@iec.ch](mailto:pro@iec.ch)



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## **Background**

CTL-OP 108 Ed. 2 has been published only by issuing the new format of CTL-OPs. The content has not been changed.

This has been approved by the 48th CTL Meeting held in Geneva on 2011-09-21/22.

## Purpose

This Laboratory Procedure establishes procedures for preparation, attachment, extension and use of thermocouples for temperature measurement.

## 1 Scope

This Procedure applies to thermocouples for temperature measurement used for testing of electrical and similar products. This Procedure describes recommended practices shown by experience to be useful. This Procedure does not prohibit use of other practices that may also be valid and useful.

## 2 Responsibility

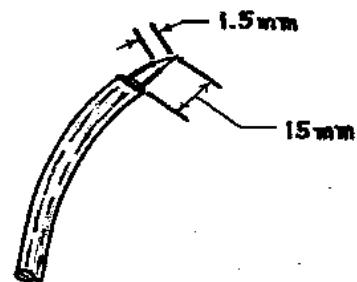
Laboratory personnel who prepare and use thermocouples are responsible to follow this procedure.

## 3 Procedure

3.1 Thermocouples shall be prepared by staff trained in preparation of thermocouples.

3.2 Thermocouples are to be prepared as noted:

- 3.2.1 Inner insulation stripped back approximately 1.5 mm from tip.
- 3.2.2 Outer insulation, if any, stripped back approximately 15 mm from tip.
- 3.2.3 The tip is to be joined by a single point weld. Other reliable and consistent methods of joining the thermocouple wires may be used upon prior acceptance of the CTL.



*Note: Dimensions given are typical, not required.*

3.3 **Placement** - The measuring thermocouple junction must be placed where the temperature is to be measured. The element must be placed and applied so that it reaches the same temperature as the part in question. Be cautious of possible electrical shock hazard and stress on the measuring equipment, if the thermocouple is connected to live parts of if thermocouples are connected to parts of different polarity. It may be appropriate to place additional electrical insulating sleeving over the conductors (not the thermocouple junction).

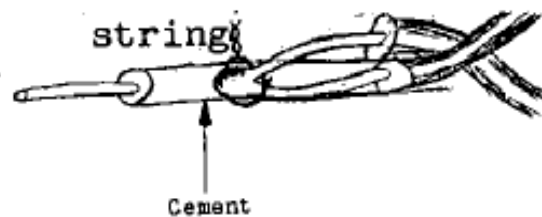
3.4 **Attachment** - The **thermocouple junction** shall be applied to be in intimate contact with the surface of the part to be measured in order to reach the same temperature as the part being measured. The **thermocouple junction** shall be in good thermal contact with the part being



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measured. The method of attachment shall be done in a way to have a minimal affect upon the temperatures measured.

- 3.5 Leads shall be located in the same temperature environment as the bead itself.
- 3.5.1 Heat will be conducted along the thermocouple wire. Where the thermocouple junction is at a different temperature than the immediately adjacent leads, heat flow will take place for the leads to the junction or from the junction to the leads, and the best temperature measurement of the surface in contact with the junction will not be made.
- 3.5.2 This problem is minimized by thin leads. Generally, 0.320 mm (28 AWG) or 0.254 mm (30 AWG) thermocouples should be used.
- 3.6 Securing of Thermocouples - Several methods of securing thermocouples are tying, cementing, adhesive, peening, welding and soldering:



- 3.6.1 Tying - Tying with thread is used primarily for round items such as wire insulation.
- 3.6.2 Cement - Two examples are Kaolin powder mixed with sodium silicate solution in approximately equal proportions by volume and Cyanoacrylate adhesive (e. g. Henkel Sicomet). Cement is used to:
- 3.6.2.1 Secure the thermocouple to the surface whose temperature is being measured.
- 3.6.2.2 Provide a better thermal bond than would be obtained by a point contact of the junction with the surface.
- 3.6.2.3 Reduce the surface area of the junction and leads exposed to air at a temperature different from that being measured.
- 3.6.3 The thermocouple should be secured in position prior to application of the cement.
- 3.6.4 In order to prevent loosening of the junction and separation of the cement, the cement should be allowed to thoroughly set before reassembling the unit under test.
- 3.6.5 Soldering is useful for attaching thermocouples to copper or other metal surfaces to which solder will adhere. The advantage of using solder is better thermal conductivity and greater mechanical security for the junction will be obtained than with cement.
- 3.6.6 It should be noted that the temperature would be sensed primarily at the point furthest from the junction where the solder bridges the thermocouple leads. Cold solder joints and excessive solder should be avoided.

3.6.7 **Confinement** - Thermocouples can often be confined between layers of material or between metal and insulating materials and held in good thermal contact by pressure on the two surfaces.

3.6.8 Care shall be exercised to see that a confined thermocouple or its junction does not cause a separation between normally mating surfaces, which would change the temperature distribution at the point being measured.

3.6.9 A groove or hole may be placed in one of the materials to accept the thermocouple and its leads to preclude the above condition.

3.6.10 A thermocouple should ordinarily be kept slightly recessed beneath the surface, to be certain that the temperature being measured is not that of the adjacent surface material.

3.6.11 **Peening** - The thermocouple junction may be placed in a cavity and the metal peened over.

3.6.12 **Tape** - Pressure sensitive tape conveniently holds thermocouple leads in place.

3.6.13 Use as little tape as possible consistent with good mechanical securement of the thermocouple.

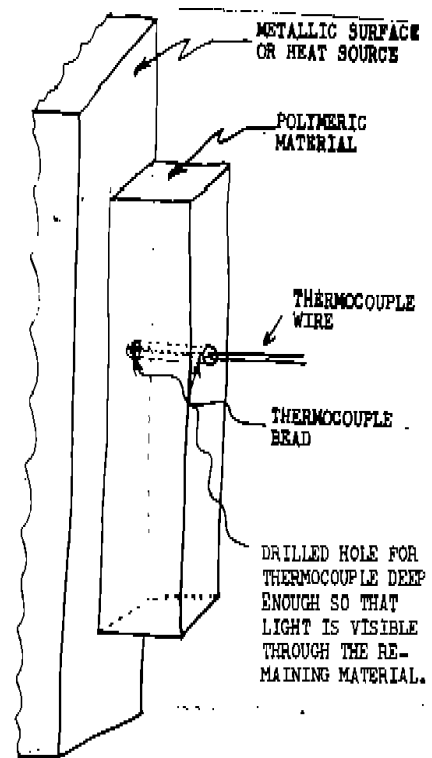
3.6.14 Glass tape with thermosetting adhesive is useful for high temperature applications.

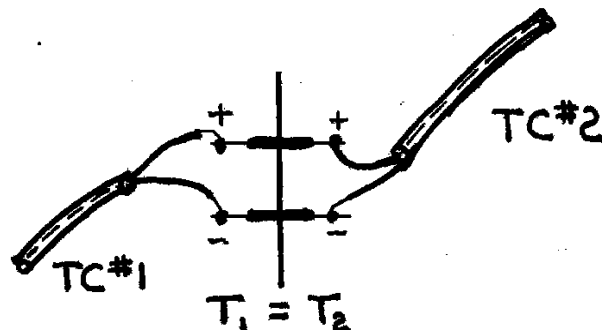
3.6.15 Tape can be used to provide strain relief for the thermocouple.

3.6.16 The tape should be located remote from the junction.

3.7 **Connection** - Where practical thermocouples shall be connected directly to the temperature measuring instrument. Where it is not practical to connect thermocouples directly to the instrument, thermocouple extension wires and connectors of the type for the thermocouples used shall be employed.

3.8 **Exception** - Thermocouple connectors need not be used in the limited situation where the thermoelectric affects of the junctions made are nullified such as shown in the following example for feed through connectors. Thermocouple wires TC#1 and TC#2 are the same type. Connections are made to the same type of conductors (e.g. copper alloy). The temperatures T1 and T2 at the connections are the same.





- 3.9 The temperatures of the two reference(cold) junctions mentioned in the exceptions, must be the same as each other and the same as the temperature measuring instrument as well. The junctions and instrument must be protected (shielded) from heat and cold air flows, sunshine, heat emission from the test sample, lamps, soldering irons, etc., which could result in a change in the temperature of the reference junctions.
- 3.10 **Use** - The type of thermocouples utilized shall be used within the manufactured specification operating parameters for that type of thermocouple (e.g. temperature operating range).
- 3.11 **Guidance** - Additional guidance on preparation and use of thermocouples can be found in the following publications:
- 3.11.1 "Manual on The Use of Thermocouples in Temperature Measurement", American Society for Testing and Materials, Special Technical Publication 470A.
- 3.11.2 "Temperature Measurement Thermocouples", ANSI-MC96.1-1982.
- 3.11.3 "Calibration of Thermocouples", European Cooperation for Accreditation of Laboratories, EA-10/08(formerly EAL-G31).
- 3.11.4 "Traceability of Temperature Measurement", UKAS LAB11.
- 3.11.5 "Thermocouples Part 1: Reference Tables", IEC 60584-1.
- 3.11.6 "Thermocouples Part 2: Tolerances", IEC 60584-2.
- 3.11.7 "Thermocouples Part 2: Tolerances", IEC 60584-2.