

# Ni-Cd block battery

Technical manual

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**saft**



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# 1. Introduction

The nickel-cadmium battery is the most reliable battery system available in the market today. Its unique features enable it to be used in applications and environments untenable for other widely available battery systems.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the nickel-cadmium battery has become an obvious first choice for users looking for a reliable, long life, low maintenance system.

**This manual details the design and operating characteristics of the Saft Nife pocket plate block battery to enable a successful battery system to be achieved. A battery which, while retaining all the advantages arising from nearly 100 years of development of the pocket plate technology, can be so worry free that its only major maintenance requirement is topping-up with water.**

## 2. Benefits of the block battery

### 2.1 Complete reliability

The block battery does not suffer from the sudden death failure associated with the lead acid battery (see section 4.1 Plate assembly).

### 2.2 Long cycle life

The block battery has a long cycle life even when the charge/discharge cycle involves 100% depth of discharge (see section 6.7 Cycling).

### 2.3 Exceptionally long lifetime

A lifetime in excess of twenty years is achieved by the Saft Nife block battery in many applications, and at elevated temperatures it has a lifetime unthinkable for other widely available battery technologies (see section 6.8 Effect of temperature on lifetime).

### 2.4 Low maintenance

With its generous electrolyte reserve, the block battery reduces the need for topping-up with water, and can be left in remote sites for long periods without any maintenance (see section 6.9 Water consumption and gas evolution).

### 2.5 Wide operating temperature range

The block battery has an electrolyte which allows it to have a normal operating temperature of from  $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$  to  $+50^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $-4^{\circ}\text{F}$  to  $+122^{\circ}\text{F}$ ), and accept extreme

temperatures, ranging from as low as  $-50^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $-58^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) to up to  $+70^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $+158^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) (see section 4.3 Electrolyte).

### 2.6 Fast recharge

The block battery can be recharged at currents which allow very fast recharge times to be achieved (see section 8.3 Charge acceptance).

### 2.7 Resistance to mechanical abuse

The block battery is designed to have the mechanical strength required to withstand all the harsh treatment associated with transportation over difficult terrain (see section 9.2 Mechanical abuse).

### 2.8 High resistance to electrical abuse

The block battery will survive abuse which would destroy a lead acid battery, for example overcharging, deep discharging, and high ripple currents (see section 9.1 Electrical abuse).

### 2.9 Simple installation

The block battery can be used with a wide range of stationary and mobile applications as it produces no corrosive vapors, uses corrosion-free polypropylene containers and has a simple bolted connector assembly system (see section 10 Installation and operating instructions).

### 2.10 Extended storage

When stored in the empty and discharged state under the recommended conditions, the block battery can be stored for many years (see section 10.2 Installation and operating instructions).

### 2.11 Well-proven pocket plate construction

Saft has nearly 100 years of manufacturing and application experience with respect to the nickel-cadmium pocket plate product, and this expertise has been built into the twenty-plus years' design life of the block battery product (see section 4 Construction features of the block battery).

### 2.12 Environmentally safe

Saft operates a dedicated recycling center to recover the nickel, cadmium, steel and plastic used in the battery (see section 12 Disposal and recycling).

### 2.13 Low life-cycle cost

When all the factors of lifetime, low maintenance requirements, simple installation and storage and resistance to abuse are taken into account, the Saft Nife block battery becomes the most cost effective solution for many professional applications.

# 3. Electrochemistry of nickel-cadmium batteries

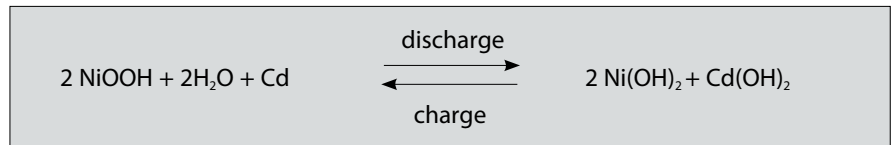
The nickel-cadmium battery uses nickel hydroxide as the active material for the positive plate, and cadmium hydroxide for the negative plate.

The electrolyte is an aqueous solution of potassium hydroxide containing small quantities of lithium hydroxide to improve cycle life and high temperature operation.

The electrolyte is only used for ion transfer; it is not chemically changed or degraded during the charge/discharge cycle. In the case of the lead acid battery, the positive and negative active materials chemically react with the sulphuric acid electrolyte resulting in an ageing process.

The support structure of both plates is steel. This is unaffected by the electrolyte, and retains its strength throughout the life of the cell. In the case of the lead acid battery, the basic structure of both plates is lead and lead oxide which play a part in the electrochemistry of the process and are naturally corroded during the life of the battery.

The charge/discharge reaction of a nickel-cadmium battery is as follows:



During discharge the trivalent nickel hydroxide is reduced to divalent nickel hydroxide, and the cadmium at the negative plate forms cadmium hydroxide.

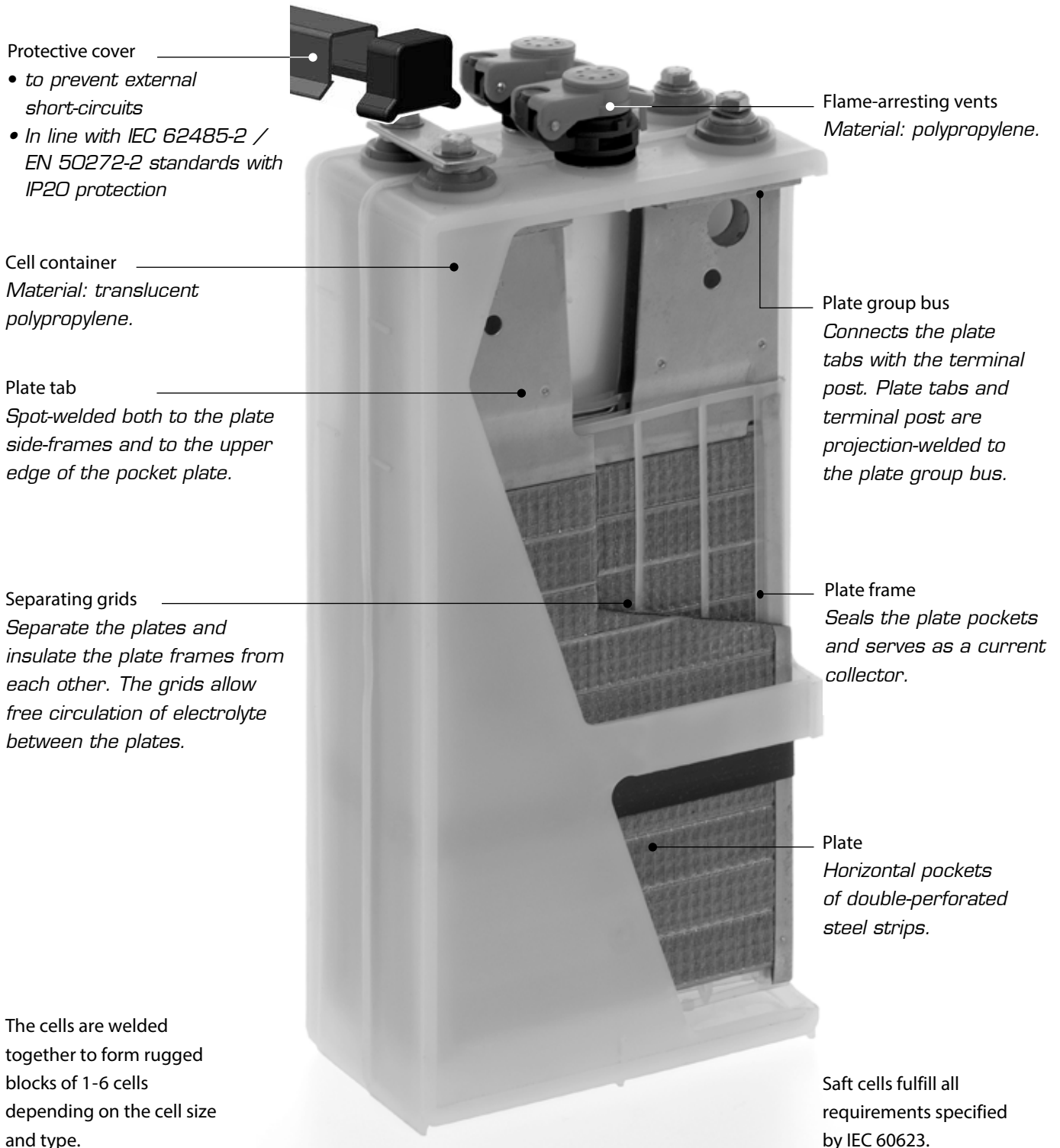
On charge, the reverse reaction takes place until the cell potential rises to a level where hydrogen is evolved at the negative plate and oxygen at the positive plate which results in water loss.

Unlike the lead acid battery, there is little change in the electrolyte density during charge and discharge. This allows large reserves of electrolyte to be used without inconvenience to the electrochemistry of the couple.

Thus, through its electrochemistry, the nickel-cadmium battery has a more stable behavior than the lead acid battery, giving it a longer life, superior characteristics and a greater resistance against abusive conditions.

Nickel-cadmium cells have a nominal voltage of 1.2 V.

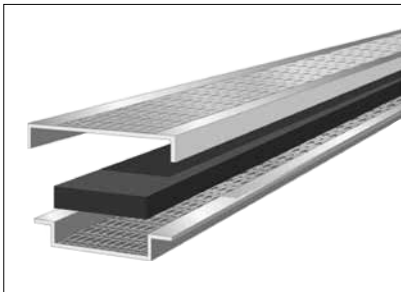
## 4. Construction features of the block battery



#### 4.1 Plate assembly

The nickel-cadmium cell consists of two groups of plates, the positive containing nickel hydroxide and the negative containing cadmium hydroxide.

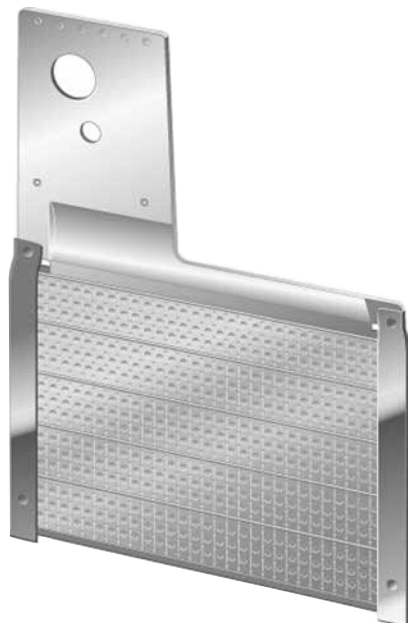
The active materials of the Saft Nife pocket plate block battery are retained in pockets formed from steel strips double-perforated by a patented process.



These pockets are mechanically linked together, cut to the size corresponding to the plate width and compressed to the final plate dimension. This process leads to a plate which is not only mechanically very strong but also retains its active material within a steel containment which promotes conductivity and minimizes electrode swelling. These plates are then welded to a current carrying bus bar assembly which further ensures the mechanical and electrical stability of the product.

Nickel-cadmium batteries have an exceptionally good lifetime and cycle life because their plates are not gradually weakened by corrosion, as the structural component of the plate is steel. The active material of the plate is not structural, only electrical. The alkaline electrolyte does not react with steel, which means that the supporting structure of the block battery stays intact and unchanged for the life of the battery. There is no corrosion and no risk of "sudden death."

In contrast, the lead plate of a lead acid battery is both the structure and the active material and this leads to shedding of the positive plate material and eventual structural collapse.





## 4.2 Separation

Separation between plates is provided by injection molded plastic separator grids, integrating both plate edge insulation and plate separation.

By providing a large spacing between the positive and negative plates and a generous quantity of electrolyte between plates, good electrolyte circulation and gas dissipation are provided, and there is no stratification of the electrolyte as found with lead acid batteries.

## 4.3 Electrolyte

The electrolyte used in the block battery, which is a solution of potassium hydroxide and lithium hydroxide, is optimized to give the best combination of performance, life, energy efficiency and a wide temperature range.

The electrolyte temperature is to be monitored during charge. If the temperature exceeds + 45°C (+113°F)

during charging, then it must be stopped to reduce the temperature. The charging can be resumed when electrolyte temperature drops below + 40°C (+ 104°F).

The concentration of the standard electrolyte is such as to allow the cell to be operated to temperature extremes as low as -20°C (-4°F) and as high as +50°C (+122°F). This allows the very high temperature fluctuation found in certain regions to be accommodated.

For very low temperatures a special high density electrolyte can be used.

The electrode material is less reactive with the alkaline electrolyte (nickel-cadmium secondary batteries) than with acid electrolytes (lead acid secondary batteries).

Furthermore, during charging and discharging in alkaline batteries the electrolyte works

mainly as a carrier of oxygen or hydroxyl ions from one electrode to the other; hence the composition or the concentration of the electrolyte does not change noticeably. In the charge/discharge reaction of the nickel-cadmium battery, the potassium hydroxide is not mentioned in the reaction formula. A small amount of water is produced during the charging procedure (and consumed during the discharge). The amount is not enough to make it possible to detect if the battery is charged or discharged by measuring the density of the electrolyte.

Once the battery has been filled with the correct electrolyte either at the battery factory or during the battery commissioning there is no need to check the electrolyte density periodically. The density of the electrolyte in the battery either increases or decreases as the electrolyte level drops because of water

electrolysis or evaporation or rises at topping-up. Interpretation of density measurements is difficult and could be misleading.

In most applications the electrolyte will retain its effectiveness for the life of the battery and will never need replacing. However, under certain conditions, such as extended use in high temperature situations, the electrolyte can become carbonated. If this occurs the battery performance can be improved by replacing the electrolyte.

The standard electrolyte used for the first fill in cells is E22 and for replacement in service is E13.

#### 4.4 Terminal pillars

Short terminal pillars are welded to the plate bus bars using a well-established and proven method. These posts are manufactured from steel bar, internally threaded for bolting on connectors, and nickel-plated.

The sealing between the cover and the terminal is provided by a compressed visco-elastic sealing surface held in place by compression lock washers. This assembly is designed to provide satisfactory sealing throughout the life of the product.

#### 4.5 Venting system

The block battery is fitted with a special flame-arresting flip-top vent to give an effective and safe venting system.

#### 4.6 Cell container

The battery is built up using well-proven block battery construction. The tough polypropylene containers are welded together by heat sealing.

The block battery uses 4 plate sizes or plate modules. These are designated module type 1, 2, 3 and 4. They can be recognized from the block dimensions as follows:

Block width (mm)	Block height (mm)	Plate module
123	194	1
123	264	2
195	349	3
195	405	4

Table 1 - Correlation between block dimensions and plate module number

# 5. Battery types and applications

In order to provide an optimum solution for the wide range of battery applications which exist, the block battery is constructed in three performance ranges.

Soft Nife battery types	L	M	H
Autonomy mini maxi	3 h 100 h	30 min 3 h	1 s 30 min
Use of battery	Power backup Bulk energy storage	Power backup	Starting, Power backup
Applications	Engine starting - Switchgear - UPS - Process control - Data and information systems - Emergency lighting - Security and fire alarm systems - Switching and transmission systems - Signaling		
<b>Stationary</b>			
<b>Utilities</b> electricity, gas, water production & distribution	•	•	•
<b>Oil and gas</b> offshore & onshore, petrochemical refineries	•	•	•
<b>Industry</b> chemical, mining, steel metal works	•	•	•
<b>Buildings</b> public, private	•	•	•
<b>Medical</b> hospitals, X-ray equipment	•	•	•
<b>Telecom</b> radio, satellite, cable, repeater stations, cellular base stations	•	•	
<b>Railroad</b> substations & signaling	•	•	•
<b>Airports</b>	•	•	•
<b>Military</b> all applications	•	•	•

### 5.1 Type L

The L type is designed for applications where the battery is required to provide a reliable source of energy over relatively long discharge periods. Normally, the current is relatively low in comparison with the total stored energy, and the discharges are generally infrequent. Typical uses are power backup and bulk energy storage.

### 5.2 Type M

The M type is designed for applications where the batteries are usually required to sustain electrical loads for between 30 minutes to 3 hours or for "mixed" loads which involve a mixture of high and low discharge rates. The applications can have frequent or infrequent discharges. The range is typically used in power backup applications.

### 5.3 Type H

The H type is designed for applications where there is a demand for a relatively high current over short periods, usually less than 30 minutes in duration. The applications can have frequent or infrequent discharges. The range is typically used in starting and power backup applications.

### 5.4 Choice of type

In performance terms the ranges cover the full time spectrum from rapid high current discharges of a second to very long low current discharges of many hours. Table 2 shows in general terms the split between the ranges for the different discharge types. The choice is related to the discharge time and the end of discharge voltage. There are, of course, many applications where there are multiple discharges, and so the optimum range type should be calculated. This is explained in the section 7 "Battery sizing".

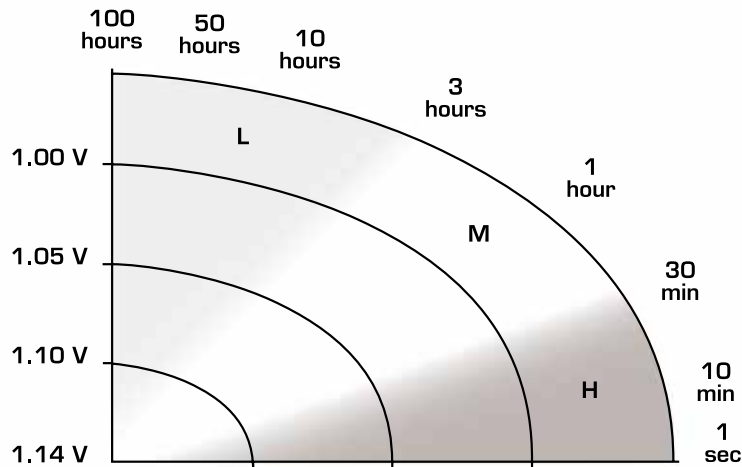


Table 2 - General selection of cell range

# 6. Operating features

## 6.1 Capacity

The block battery capacity is rated in ampere-hours (Ah) and is the quantity of electricity at +20°C (+68°F) which it can supply for a 5 hour discharge to 1.0 V after being fully charged for 7.5 hours at 0.2 C<sub>5</sub>A. This figure conforms to the IEC 60623 standard.

According to the IEC 60623, 0.2 C<sub>5</sub>A is also expressed as 0.2 I<sub>t</sub>A. The reference test current (I<sub>t</sub>) is expressed as:

$$I_t A = \frac{C_n \text{ Ah}}{1 \text{ h}}$$

where:

- C<sub>n</sub> is the rated capacity declared by the manufacturer in ampere-hours (Ah),
- and
- n is the time base in hours (h) for which the rated capacity is declared.

## 6.2 Cell voltage

The cell voltage of nickel-cadmium cells results from the electrochemical potentials of the nickel and the cadmium active materials in the presence of the potassium hydroxide electrolyte. The nominal voltage for this electrochemical couple is 1.2 V.

## 6.3 Internal resistance

The internal resistance of a cell varies with the temperature and the state of charge and is, therefore, difficult to define and measure accurately.

The most practical value for normal applications is the discharge voltage response to a change in discharge current.

The internal resistance of a block battery cell depends on the performance type and at normal temperature has the values given in Table 3 in mΩ per 1/C<sub>5</sub>.

To obtain the internal resistance of a cell it is necessary to divide the value from the table by the rated capacity.

For example, the internal resistance of a SBH 118 (module type 3) is given by:

$$\frac{39}{118} = 0.33 \text{ m}\Omega$$

The figures of Table 3 are for fully charged cells.

For lower states of charge the values increase. For cells 50% discharged the internal resistance is about 20% higher, and when 90% discharged, it is about 80% higher. The internal resistance of a fully discharged cell has very little meaning.

Reducing the temperature also increases the internal resistance, and at 0°C (+32°F), the internal resistance is about 40% higher.

Cell type	Module plate size (see table 1)			
	1	2	3	4
SBLE	105	125	160	165
SBM	55	62	78	86
SBH	N/A	30	39	43

Table 3 - Internal resistance in mΩ per 1/C<sub>5</sub>

## 6.4 Effect of temperature on performance

Variations in ambient temperature affect the performance of the cell and this needs to be taken into account when sizing the battery.

Low temperature operation has the effect of reducing the performance, but the higher temperature characteristics are similar to those at normal temperatures. The effect of low temperature is more marked at higher rates of discharge.

The factors which are required in sizing a battery to compensate for temperature variations are given in a graphical form in Figure 1(a), L type, Figure 1(b), M type and Figure 1(c), H type for operating temperatures from  $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$  to  $+50^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $-4^{\circ}\text{F}$  to  $+122^{\circ}\text{F}$ ).

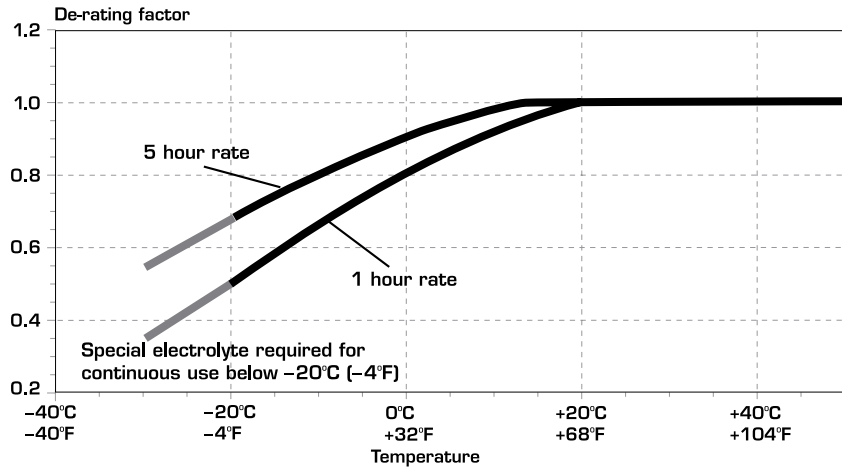


Figure 1(a) - Temperature de-rating factors for L type cell

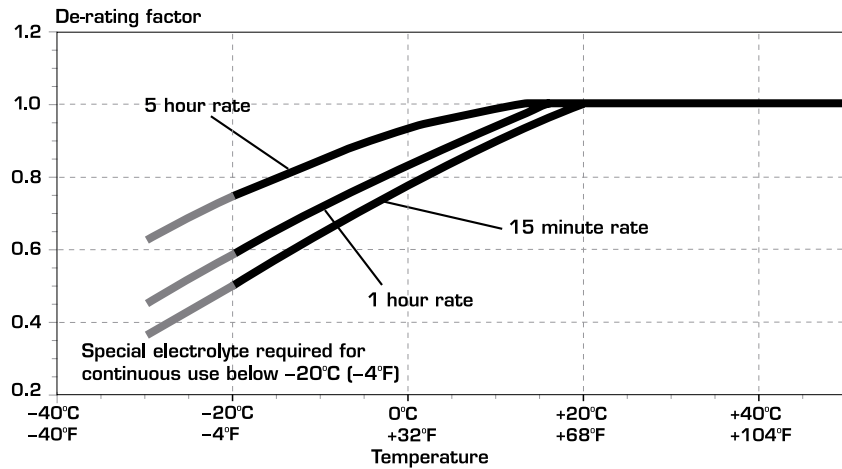


Figure 1(b) - Temperature de-rating factors for M type cell

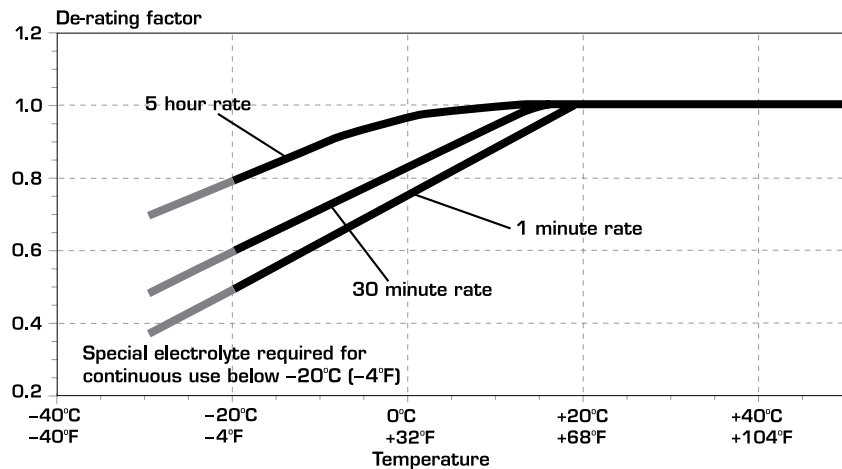


Figure 1(c) - Temperature de-rating factors for H type cell

### 6.5 Short-circuit values

The typical short-circuit value in amperes for a block battery cell is approximately 9 times the ampere-hour capacity for an L type block, 16 times the ampere-hour capacity for an M type block and 28 times the ampere-hour capacity for an H type block.

The block battery with conventional bolted assembly connections will withstand a short-circuit current of this magnitude for many minutes without damage.

### 6.6 Open circuit loss

The state of charge of the block cell on open circuit slowly decreases with time due to self-discharge. In practice this decrease is relatively rapid during the first two weeks, but then stabilizes to about 2% per month at +20°C (+68°F).

The self-discharge characteristics of a nickel-cadmium cell are affected by the temperature. At low temperatures, the charge retention is better than at normal temperature, and so the open circuit loss is reduced. However, the self-discharge is significantly increased at higher temperatures.

The typical open circuit loss for the block battery for a range of temperatures which may be experienced in a stationary application is shown in Figure 2.

### 6.7 Cycling

The block battery is designed to withstand the wide range of cycling behavior encountered in stationary applications. This can vary from low depth of discharges to discharges of up to 100% and the number of cycles that the product will be able to provide will depend on the depth of discharge.

The less deeply a battery is cycled, the greater the number of cycles it is capable of performing before it is

unable to achieve the minimum design limit. A shallow cycle will give many thousands of operations, whereas a deep cycle will give only hundreds of operations.

Figure 3 gives typical values for the effect of depth of discharge on the available cycle life, and it is clear that when sizing the battery for a cycling application, the number and depth of cycles have an important consequence on the predicted life of the system.

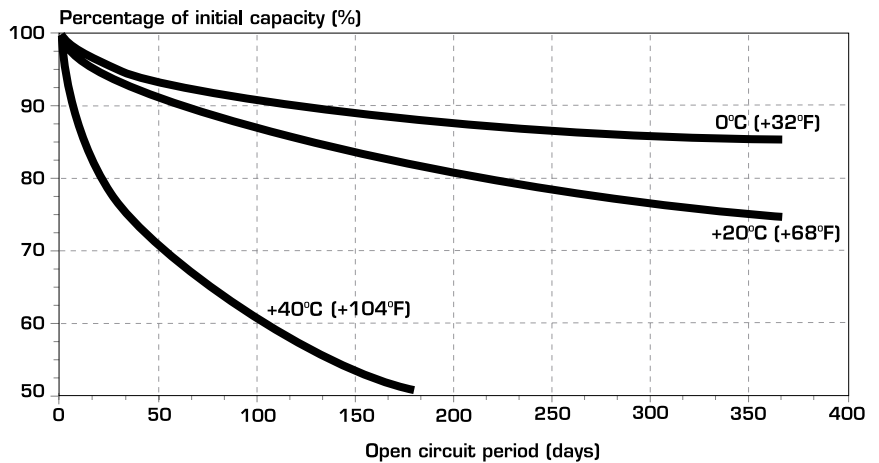


Figure 2 - Capacity loss on open circuit stand

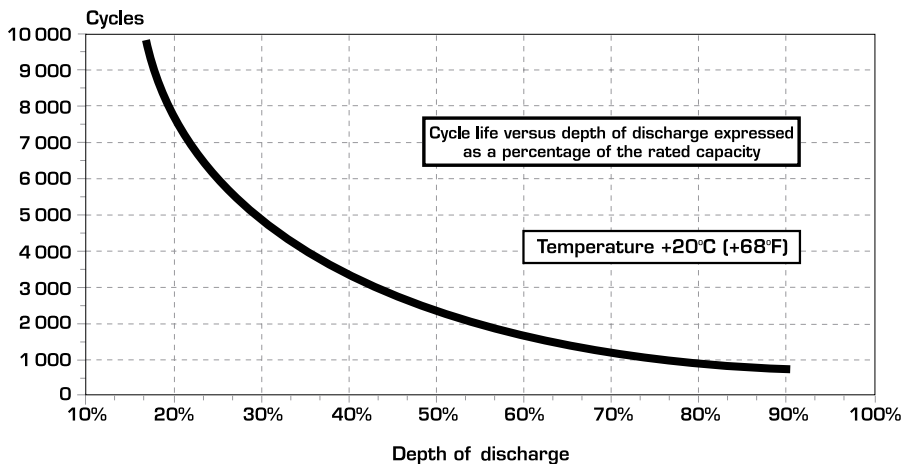


Figure 3 - Typical cycle life versus depth of discharge

## 6.8 Effect of temperature on lifetime

The block battery is designed as a twenty year life product, but as with every battery system, increasing temperature reduces the expected life. However, the reduction in lifetime with increasing temperature is very much lower for the nickel-cadmium battery than the lead acid battery.

The reduction in lifetime for the nickel-cadmium battery, and for comparison, a high quality lead acid battery is shown graphically in Figure 4. The values for the lead acid battery are as supplied by the industry and found in Eurobat and IEEE documentation.

In general terms, for every 9°C (16.2°F) increase in temperature over the normal operating temperature of +25°C (+77°F), the reduction in service life for a nickel-cadmium battery will be 20%, and for a lead acid battery will be 50%.

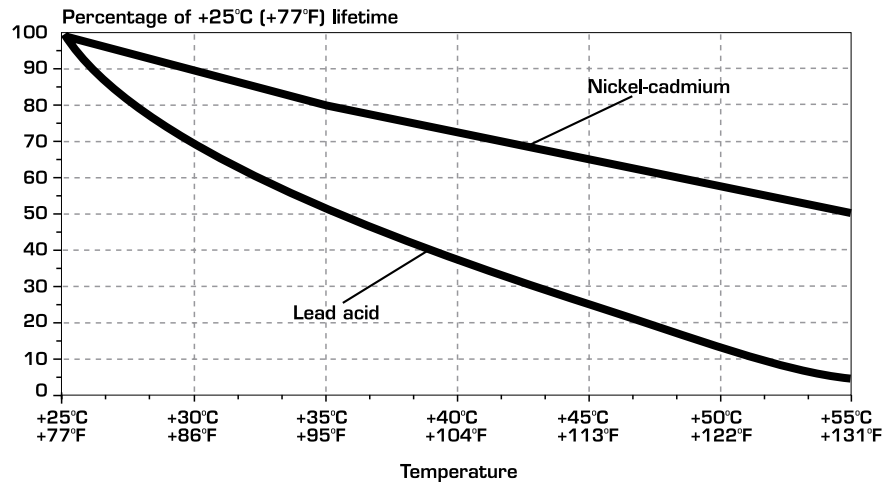


Figure 4 - Effect of temperature on lifetime

In high temperature situations, therefore, special consideration must be given to dimensioning the nickel-cadmium battery. Under the same conditions, the lead acid battery is not a practical proposition, due to its very short lifetime. The VRLA battery, for example, which has a lifetime of about 7 years under good conditions, has this reduced to less than 1 year, if used at +50°C (+122°F).



## 6.9 Water consumption and gas evolution

During charging, more ampere-hours are supplied to the battery than the capacity available for discharge. These additional ampere-hours must be provided to return the battery to the fully charged state and, since they are not all retained by the cell and do not all contribute directly to the chemical changes to the active materials in the plates, they must be dissipated in some way. This surplus charge, or overcharge, breaks down the water content of the electrolyte into oxygen and hydrogen, and pure distilled or deionized water has to be added to replace this loss.

Water loss is associated with the current used for overcharging. A battery which is constantly cycled, i.e. is charged and discharged on a regular basis, will consume more water than a battery on standby operation.

In theory, the quantity of water used can be found by the Faradic equation that each ampere-hour of overcharge breaks down 0.366 cm<sup>3</sup> of water. However, in practice, the water usage will be less than this, as the overcharge current is also needed to counteract self-discharge of the electrodes.

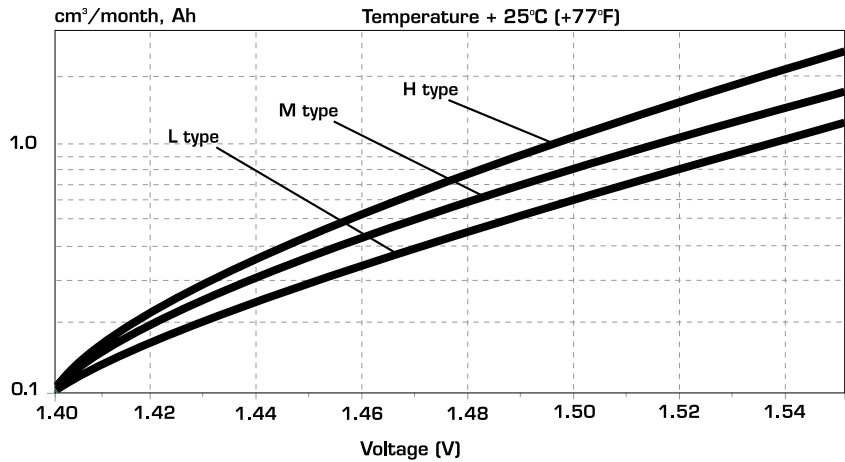


Figure 5 - Water consumption values for different voltages and cell types

The overcharge current is a function of both voltage and temperature, so both have an influence on the consumption of water. Figure 5 gives typical water consumption values over a range of voltages for different cell types.

Example: An SBM 161 is floating at 1.43 V/cell. The electrolyte reserve for this cell is 500 cm<sup>3</sup>. From Figure 5, an M type cell at 1.43 V/cell will use 0.27 cm<sup>3</sup>/month for one Ah of capacity. Thus an SBM 161 will use 0.27 x 161 = 43.5 cm<sup>3</sup> per month and the electrolyte reserve will be used in

$$\frac{500}{43.5} = 11.5 \text{ months.}$$

The gas evolution is a function of the amount of water electrolyzed into hydrogen and oxygen and are predominantly given off at the end of the charging period. The battery gives off no gas during a normal discharge.

The electrolysis of 1 cm<sup>3</sup> of water produces 1865 cm<sup>3</sup> of gas mixture and this gas mixture is in the proportion of 2/3 hydrogen and 1/3 oxygen. Thus the electrolysis of 1 cm<sup>3</sup> of water produces 1243 cm<sup>3</sup> of hydrogen.

# 7. Battery sizing principles in stationary standby applications

There are a number of methods which are used to size nickel-cadmium batteries for standby floating applications. The method employed by Saft is the IEEE 1115 recommendation which is accepted internationally. This method takes into account multiple discharges, temperature de-rating, performance after floating and the voltage window available for the battery.

A significant advantage of the nickel-cadmium battery compared to a lead acid battery, is that it can be fully discharged without any inconvenience in terms of life or recharge. Thus, to obtain the smallest and least costly battery, it is an advantage to discharge the battery to the lowest practical value in order to obtain the maximum energy from the battery.

The principle sizing parameters which are of interest are:

## 7.1 The voltage window

This is the maximum voltage and the minimum voltage at the battery terminals acceptable for the system. In battery terms, the maximum voltage gives the voltage which is available to charge the battery, and the minimum voltage gives the lowest voltage acceptable to the system to which the battery can be discharged. In discharging the nickel-cadmium battery, the cell voltage should be taken as low as possible in order to find the most economic and efficient battery.

## 7.2 Discharge profile

This is the electrical performance required from the battery for the application. It may be expressed in terms of amperes for a certain duration, or it may be expressed in terms of power, in watts or kW, for a certain duration. The requirement may be simply one discharge or many discharges of a complex nature.

## 7.3 Temperature

The maximum and minimum temperatures and the normal ambient temperature will have an influence on the sizing of the battery. The performance of a battery decreases with decreasing temperature and sizing at a low temperature increases the battery size. Temperature de-rating curves are produced for all cell types to allow the performance to be recalculated.

#### **7.4 State of charge or recharge time**

Some applications may require that the battery shall give a full duty cycle after a certain time after the previous discharge. The factors used for this will depend on the depth of discharge, the rate of discharge, and the charge voltage and current.

A requirement for a high state of charge does not justify a high charge voltage if the result is a high end of discharge voltage.

#### **7.5 Ageing**

Some customers require a value to be added to allow for the ageing of the battery over its lifetime. This may be a value required by the customer, for example 10%, or it may be a requirement from the customer that a value is used which will ensure the service of the battery during its lifetime. The value to be used will depend on the discharge rate of the battery and the conditions under which the discharge is carried out.

#### **7.6 Floating effect**

When a nickel-cadmium cell is maintained at a fixed floating voltage over a period of time, there is a decrease in the voltage level of the discharge curve. This effect begins after one week and reaches its maximum in about 3 months. It can only be eliminated by a full discharge/charge cycle, and it cannot be eliminated by a boost charge. It is therefore necessary to take this into account in any calculations concerning batteries in float applications.

As the effect of reducing the voltage level is to reduce the autonomy of the battery, the effect can be considered as reducing the performance of the battery and so performance down-rating factors are used.

# 8. Battery charging

## 8.1 Charging generalities

The block battery can be charged by all normal methods. Generally, batteries in parallel operation with charger and load are charged with constant voltage. In operations where the battery is charged separately from the load, charging with constant current or declining current is possible. High-rate charging or overcharging will not damage the battery, but excessive charging will increase water consumption to some degree.

## 8.2 Constant voltage charging methods

Batteries in stationary applications are normally charged by a constant voltage float system and this can be of two types: the two-rate type, where there is an initial constant voltage charge followed by a lower voltage floating voltage; or a single-rate floating voltage.

The single voltage charger is necessarily a compromise between a voltage high enough to give an acceptable charge time and low enough to give a low water usage. However it does give a simpler charging

system and accepts a smaller voltage window than the two-rate charger.

The two-rate charger has an initial high voltage stage to charge the battery followed by a lower voltage maintenance charge. This allows the battery to be charged quickly, and yet, have a low water consumption due to the low maintenance charge or float voltage level.

The values used for the block battery ranges for single and two-rate charge systems are as shown in Table 4 below.

To minimize the water usage, it is important to use a low charge voltage per cell, and so the minimum voltage for the single level and the two level charge voltage is the normally recommended value. This also helps within a voltage window to obtain the lowest, and most effective, end of discharge voltage per cell (see section 7 Battery sizing).

The values given as maximum are those which are acceptable to the battery, but would not normally be used in practice, particularly for the single level, because of high water usage.

Cell type	Single level (V/cell)		Two level (V/cell)		
	min	max	min	max	floating
L	1.43	1.50	1.47	1.70	1.42 ± 0.01
M	1.43	1.50	1.45	1.70	1.40 ± 0.01
H	1.43	1.50	1.45	1.70	1.40 ± 0.01

Table 4 - Charge and float voltages for the block battery ranges

### 8.3 Charge acceptance

A discharged cell will take a certain time to achieve a full state of charge. Figures 6(a), (b) and (c) give the capacity available for typical charging voltages recommended for the block battery range during the first 30 hours of charge from a fully discharged state.

Figure 6(a) - Typical recharge times from a fully discharged state for the SBLE range

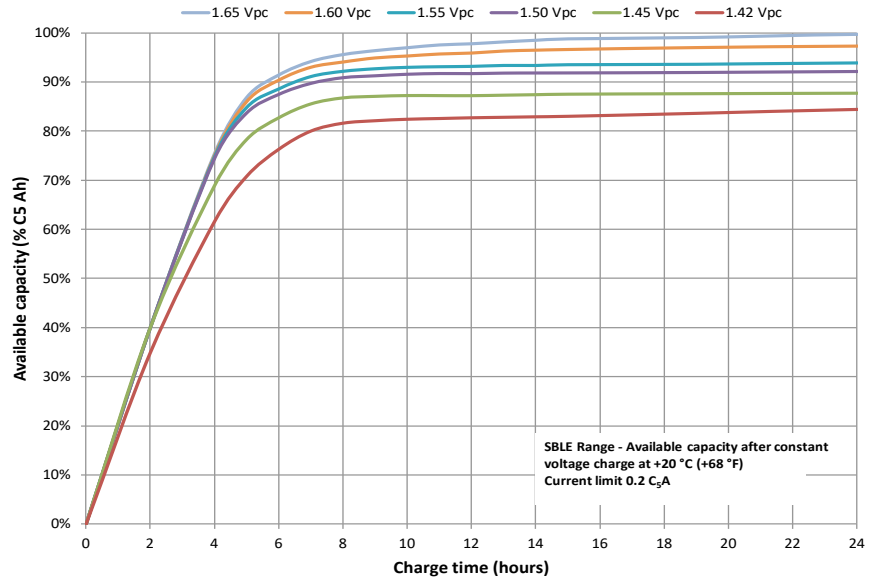
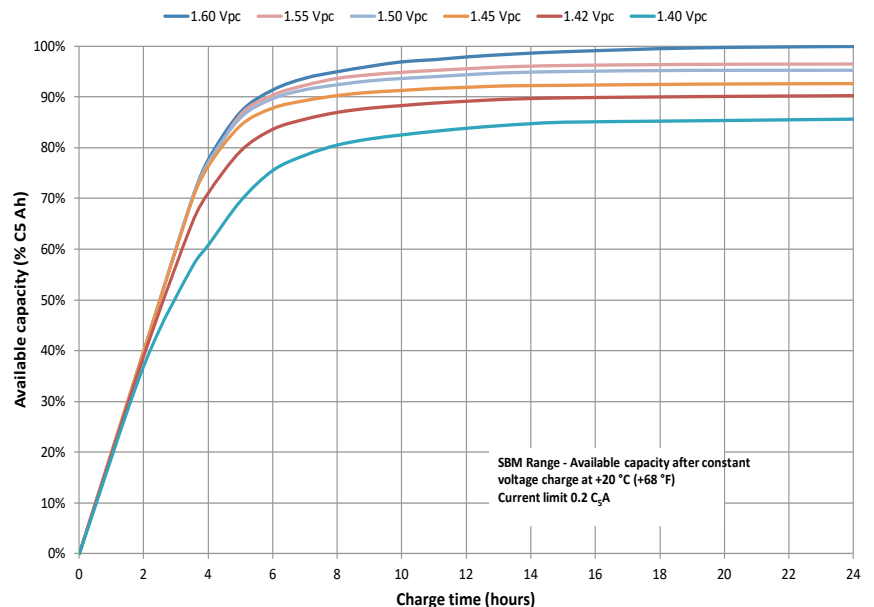


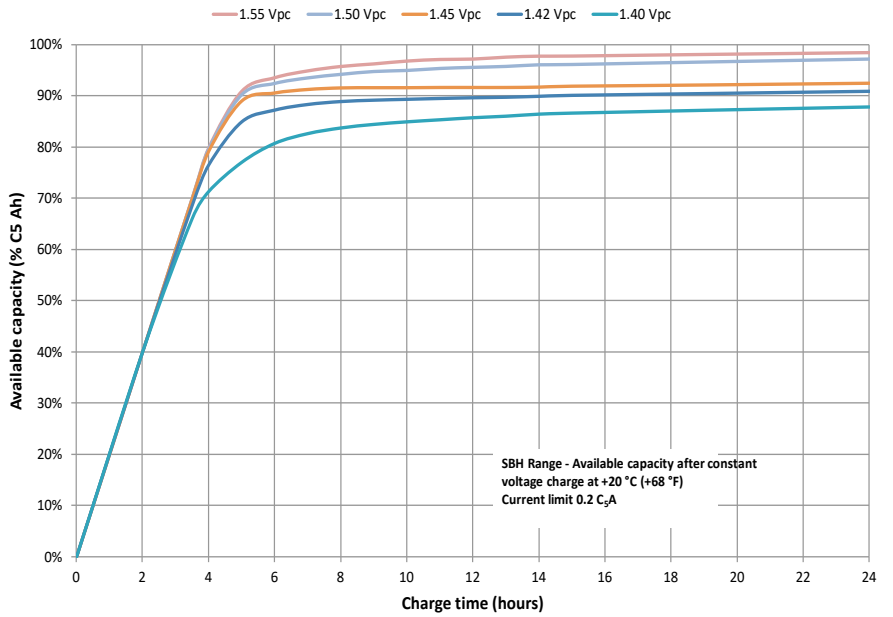
Figure 6(b) - Typical recharge times from a fully discharged state for the SBM range



These graphs give the recharge time for a current limit of 0.2 C<sub>5</sub> A. Clearly, if a lower value for the current is used, e.g. 0.1 C<sub>5</sub> A, then the battery will take longer to charge. If a higher current is used then it will charge more rapidly. This is not in general a pro rata relationship due to the limited charging voltage.

If the application has a particular recharge time requirement then this must be taken into account when calculating the battery.

Figure 6(c) - Typical recharge times from a fully discharged state for the SBH range



## 8.4 Charge efficiency

The charge efficiency of the battery is dependent on the state of charge of the battery and the temperature. For much of its charge profile, it is recharged at a high level of efficiency.

In general, at states of charge less than 80% the charge efficiency remains high, but as the battery approaches a fully charged condition, the charging efficiency falls off.

## 8.5 Temperature effects

As the temperature increases, the electrochemical behavior becomes more active, and so, for the same floating voltage, the current increases. As the temperature is reduced then the reverse occurs. Increasing the current increases the water loss, and reducing the current creates the risk that the cell will not be sufficiently charged.

For standby application, it is normally not required to compensate the charging voltage with the temperature. However if water consumption is of main concern, temperature compensation should be used if the battery is operating at high temperature such as +35°C (+95°F). At low temperature (< 0°C/+32°F), there is a risk of poor charging and it is recommended either to adjust the charging voltage or to compensate the charging voltage with the temperature.

Value of the temperature compensation:  $-3 \text{ mV}/^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $-1.7 \text{ mV}/^{\circ}\text{F}$ ), starting from an ambient temperature of +20°C to +25°C (+68°F to +77°F).

## 8.6 Commissioning\*

It is recommended that a good first charge should be given to the battery. This is a once only operation, and is essential to prepare the battery for its long service life. It is also important for discharged and empty cells which have been filled, as they will be in a totally discharged state.

A constant current first charge is preferable and this should be such as to supply 200% of the rated capacity of the cell. Thus, a 250 Ah cell will require 500 ampere-hours' input, e.g. 50 A for 10 hours.

*\* Please refer to the installation and operating instructions (see section 10).*

# 9. Special operating factors

## 9.1 Electrical abuse

### Ripple effects

The nickel-cadmium battery is tolerant to high ripple and will accept ripple currents of up to  $0.2 C_5 A I_{\text{eff}}$ . In fact, the only effect of a high ripple current is that of increased water usage.

Thus, in general, any commercially available charger or generator can be used for commissioning or maintenance charging of the block battery. This contrasts with the valve-regulated lead acid battery (VRLA) where relatively small ripple currents can cause battery overheating, and will reduce life and performance.

### Over-discharge

If more than the designed capacity is taken out of a battery then it becomes deep-discharged and reversed. This is considered to be an abuse situation for a battery and should be avoided.

In the case of lead acid batteries this will lead to failure of the battery and is unacceptable.

The block battery will not be damaged by over-discharge but must be recharged to compensate for the over-discharge.

### Overcharge

In the case of the block battery, with its generous electrolyte reserve, a small degree of overcharge over a short period will not significantly alter the maintenance period. In the case of excessive overcharge, water replenishment is required, but there will be no significant effect on the life of the battery.

## 9.2 Mechanical abuse

### Shock loads

The block battery concept has been tested to IEC 68-2-29 (bump tests at 5 g, 10 g and 25 g) and IEC 77 (shock test 3 g), where  $g$  = acceleration.

### Vibration resistance

The block battery concept has been tested to IEC 77 for 2 hours at 1 g, where  $g$  = acceleration.

### External corrosion

The block battery is manufactured in durable polypropylene. All external metal components are nickel-plated or stainless steel, protected by an anti-corrosion oil, and then protected by a rigid plastic cover.



# 10. Installation and operating instructions

## Important recommendations

- Never allow an exposed flame or spark near the batteries, while charging.
- Never smoke while performing any operation on the battery.
- For protection, wear rubber gloves, long sleeves and appropriate splash goggles or face shield.
- The electrolyte is harmful to skin and eyes. In the event of contact with skin or eyes, wash immediately with plenty of water. If eyes are affected, flush with water, and obtain immediate medical attention.
- Remove all rings, watches and other items with metal parts before working on the battery.
- Use insulated tools.
- Avoid static electricity and take measurements for protection against electric shocks.
- Discharge any possible static electricity from clothing and/or tools by touching an earth-connected part “ground” before working on the battery.
- Ventilation, in accordance with the IEC 62485-2 standard, is mandatory during commissioning and operation.

## 10.1 Receiving the shipment

Do not overturn the package.

Inspect cells for any damage and report any to the freight company immediately.

- If the cells are shipped filled and charged, the cells are ready for assembly.

## 10.2. Installation

### 10.2.1 Location

Install the battery in a dry and clean room. Avoid direct sunlight and heat.

The battery will give the best performance when the ambient temperature is between +10°C to +30°C (+50°F to +86°F).

### 10.2.2. Ventilation

During charging, the battery is emitting gases (oxygen and hydrogen mixture).

Ventilation of the battery room, in accordance with the IEC 62485-2 standard, must be provided.

**Note that special regulations for ventilation may be valid in your area depending on the application.**

### 10.2.3 Electrolyte

Cells delivered filled and charged:

Check for spilling.

If spilling is noticed, the spilled cells must be refilled with E22 electrolyte, only after assembly (see 10.2.4 Assembly), to the same level as the other cells in the string.

- Cells delivered empty and discharged

**Important: The commissioning charge must start within 24 hours but not before 4 hours after the electrolyte has been filled. After commissioning, the battery shall be charged permanently according to section 4.**

If the electrolyte is supplied dry, prepare it according to its separate instructions sheet.

The electrolyte to be used is E22.

Fill the cells about 20 mm above the minimum level mark (lower) with electrolyte. Start the commissioning charge within 24 hours but not before 4 hours.

### 10.2.4 Assembly

Verify that cells are correctly interconnected with the appropriate polarity.

The connecting lugs to the battery terminals should be nickel plated.

Recommended torques values for terminal bolts are:

- M 6 = 11 ± 1.1 Nm (97.4 ± 9.8 lbf.in)
- M 8 = 20 ± 2 Nm (177.0 ± 17.7 lbf.in)
- M10 = 30 ± 3 Nm (265.0 ± 26.6 lbf.in)

The connectors and terminals should be corrosion-protected by coating with a thin layer of anti-corrosion oil or NO-OX-ID™A”.

## 10.3 Commissioning

**Verify that the vents are closed and ventilation, in accordance with the IEC 62485-2 standard, is provided during this operation.**

**A good commissioning is important and mandatory. Charge at constant**

current is preferable.

**Prior and during commissioning charge, record all data requested in the commissioning report available on [www.saftbatteries.com](http://www.saftbatteries.com).**

### 10.3.1 Constant current charge

If the current limit is lower than indicated in the Table A or B, charge for a proportionally longer time.

■ For cells filled and charged by the factory and stored less than 6 months: Charge for 10 h at 0.2 C<sub>5</sub>A recommended (see Tables A or B).

■ For cells filled on location or for filled cells which have been stored more than 6 months:

a) Charge for 10 h at 0.2 C<sub>5</sub>A

recommended (see Tables A or B)

b) Discharge at 0.2 C<sub>5</sub>A to 1.0 V/cell

c) Charge for 10 h at 0.2 C<sub>5</sub>A

recommended (see Tables A or B).

**Note: At the end of the charge, the cell voltage may reach the level of 1.85 V per cell, thus the charger shall be able to supply such voltage. When the charger maximum voltage setting is too low to supply constant current charging, divide the battery into two parts to be charged individually.**

### 10.3.2. Constant voltage charge

■ For cells filled and charged by the factory and stored less than 6 months:

Charge for 24 h at 1.65 V/cell, current limited to 0.2 C<sub>5</sub>A or charge for 48 h at 1.55 V/cell, current limited to 0.2 C<sub>5</sub>A (see Tables A or B).

■ For cells filled on location or for filled cells which have been stored more than 6 months:

a) Charge for 30h at 1.65 V/cell with current limited to 0.2 C<sub>5</sub>A (see Tables A or B)

b) Discharge at 0.2 C<sub>5</sub>A to 1.0 V/cell

c) Charge for 30 h at 1.65 V/cell with current limited to 0.2 C<sub>5</sub>A

or charge for 48 h at 1.55 V/cell current limited to 0.2 C<sub>5</sub>A

(see Tables A or B)

**The electrolyte temperature is to be monitored during charge. If the temperature exceeds + 45°C (+113°F) during charging, then it must be stopped to reduce the temperature. The charging can be resumed when electrolyte temperature drops below + 40°C (+ 104°F).**

### 10.3.3. Electrolyte adjustment after commissioning

■ For cells delivered filled by the factory:

- Check the electrolyte level and adjust it to the maximum level mark (upper) by adding distilled or deionized water.

■ For cells filled on location:

- Check the electrolyte level and adjust it to the maximum level mark (upper) by adding: electrolyte.

The battery is ready for use.

**Note:**

**When full battery performance is required for capacity test purposes, the battery has to be charged in accordance with IEC 60623.**

## 10.4. Charging in service

Maintaining the recommended battery charging voltage is very important to insure long life to the battery. The battery charger must be set to the recommended charging values.

### 10.4.1. Continuous parallel operation, with occasional battery discharge.

Recommended charging voltage (+20°C to +25°C / +68°F to +77°F):

For two level charge:

- Float level

= 1.42 ± 0.01 V/cell for L cells

= 1.40 ± 0.01 V/cell for M and H cells

- High level (Boost)

= 1.47 - 1.70 V/cell for L cells

= 1.45 - 1.70 V/cell for M and H cells.

A high voltage will increase the speed and efficiency of the recharging.

For single level charge (Float and Boost charge are not available):

1.43 - 1.50 V/cell.

### 10.4.2. Buffer operation, where the load exceeds the charger rating.

Recommended charging voltage (+20°C to +25°C / +68°F to +77°F):

1.50 - 1.60 V/cell.

## 10.5. Preventive maintenance

- Keep the battery clean using only water. Do not use a wire brush or solvents of any kind. Vent plugs can be rinsed in clean water if necessary.
- Check the charging voltage.

It is important that the recommended charging voltage remains unchanged.

The charging voltage should be checked and recorded at least once yearly. If a cell float voltage is found below 1.35 V, high-rate charge is recommended to apply to the cell concerned.

- Check visually the electrolyte level. Never let the level fall below the minimum level mark (lower). Use only distilled or deionized water to top-up. Experience will tell the time interval between topping-up.

Note: Once the battery has been filled with the correct electrolyte either at the battery factory or during the battery commissioning, there is no need to check the electrolyte density periodically. Interpretation of density measurements is difficult and could be misleading.

- Check every two years that all connectors are tight. The connectors and terminal bolts should be corrosion protected by coating with a thin layer of anti-corrosion oil or NO-OX-ID™A”.

- High water consumption is usually caused by high improper voltage setting of the charger.

Note that all these maintenance recommendations followed the IEEE 1106 standard 'Recommended Practice for Installation, Maintenance, Testing and Replacement of Vented Nickel-Cadmium Batteries for Stationary Applications'.

## 10.6. Changing Electrolyte

In most stationary battery applications, the electrolyte will retain its effectiveness for the life of the battery.

However, under special battery operating conditions, if the electrolyte is found to be carbonated, the battery performance can be restored by replacing the electrolyte.

The electrolyte type to be used for replacement in these cells is: E13. Refer to "Electrolyte Instructions".

## 10.7. Storage

Store the battery indoors in a dry, clean, cool location (0°C to +30°C / +32°F to+ 86°F) and well ventilated space.

Do not store in direct sunlight or expose to excessive heat.

- Cells filled and charged
  - If cells are stored filled, they must be fully charged prior to storage.
  - Cells may be stored filled and charged for a period not exceeding 12 months from date of dispatch from factory.

Storage of a filled battery at temperatures above +30°C (+86°F) can result in permanent change and loss of product performance, depending on the duration of the storage above the maximum recommended temperature.

- Cells empty and discharged
  - Saft recommends to store cells empty and discharged.
  - Cells can be stored like this for many years.

## 10.8. Environment

To protect the environment all used batteries must be recycled. Contact your local Saft representative for further information.



# 11. Maintenance of block batteries in service

In a correctly designed standby application, the block battery requires the minimum of attention. However, it is good practice with any system to carry out an inspection of the system at least once per year, or at the recommended topping-up interval period to ensure that the charger, the battery and the auxiliary electronics are all functioning correctly.

When this inspection is carried out, it is recommended that certain procedures should be carried out to ensure that the battery is maintained in a good state.

## 11.1 Cleanliness/mechanical

Cells must be kept clean and dry at all times, as dust and damp cause current leakage. Terminals and connectors should be kept clean, and any spillage during maintenance should be wiped off with a clean cloth. The battery can be cleaned, using water. Do not use a wire brush or a solvent of any kind. Vent caps can be rinsed in clean water, if necessary.

Check that the flame-arresting vents are tightly fitted and that there are no deposits on the vent caps.

Terminals should be checked for tightness, and the terminals and connectors should be corrosion-protected by coating with a thin layer of neutral grease or anti-corrosion oil.

## 11.2 Topping-up

Check the electrolyte level. Never let the level fall below the lower MIN mark. Use only approved distilled or deionized water to top-up. Do not overfill the cells.

Excessive consumption of water indicates operation at too high a voltage or too high a temperature. Negligible consumption of water, with batteries on continuous low current or float charge, could indicate under-charging. A reasonable consumption of water is the best indication that a battery is being operated under the correct conditions. Any marked change in the rate of water consumption should be investigated immediately.

The topping-up interval can be calculated as described in section 6.9. However, it is recommended that, initially, electrolyte levels should be monitored monthly to determine the frequency of topping-up required for a particular installation.

Saft has a full range of topping-up equipment available to aid this operation.

### 11.3 Capacity check

Electrical battery testing is not part of normal routine maintenance, as the battery is required to give the back up function and cannot be easily taken out of service.

However, if a capacity test of the battery is needed, the following procedure should be followed:

- a) Discharge the battery at the rate of  $0.1 C_5$  to  $0.2 C_5$  A (10 to 20 A for a 100 Ah battery) to a final average voltage of 1.0 V/cell (i.e. 92 volts for a 92 cell battery)
- b) Charge 200% (i.e. 200 Ah for a 100 Ah battery at the same rate used in a)
- c) Discharge at the same rate used in a), measuring and recording current, voltage and time every hour, and more frequently towards the end of the discharge. This should be continued until a final average voltage of 1.0 V/cell is reached. The overall state of the battery can then be seen, and if individual cell measurements are taken, the state of each cell can be observed.

### 11.4 Recommended maintenance procedure

In order to obtain the best from your battery, the following maintenance procedure is recommended.

<b>Yearly</b>
check charge voltage settings
check cell voltages (50 mV deviation from average is acceptable)
check float current of the battery
check electrolyte level
high voltage charge if agreed for application
<b>Every 2 years</b>
clean cell lids and battery area
check torque values, grease terminals and connectors
<b>Every 5 years or as required</b>
capacity check
<b>As required</b>
top-up with water according to defined period (depend on float voltage, cycles and temperature)

It is also recommended that a maintenance record be kept which should include a record of the temperature of the battery room.

# 12. Disposal and recycling

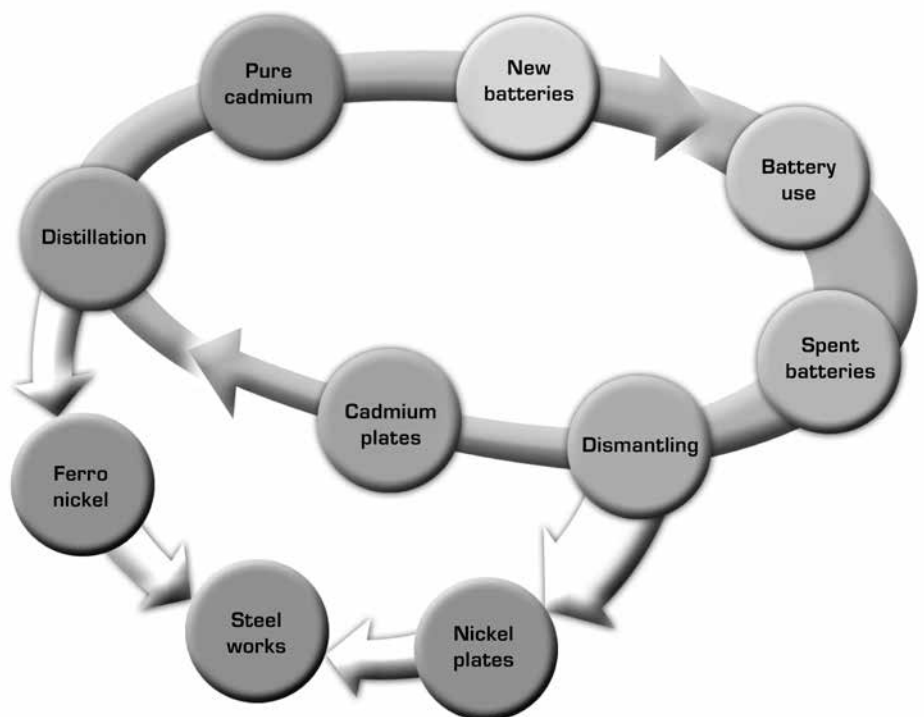
In a world where autonomous sources of electric power are ever more in demand, Saft batteries provide an environmentally responsible answer to these needs. Environmental management lies at the core of Saft's business and we take care to control every stage of a battery's life-cycle in terms of potential impact. Environmental protection is our top priority, from design and production through end-of-life collection, disposal and recycling.

Our respect for the environment is complemented by an equal respect for our customers. We aim to generate confidence in our products, not only from a functional standpoint, but also in terms of the environmental safeguards that are built into their life-cycle. The simple and unique nature of the battery components make them readily recyclable and this process safeguards valuable natural resources for future generations.

In partnership with collection agencies worldwide, Saft organizes retrieval from pre-collection points and the recycling of spent Saft batteries. Information about Saft's collection network can be found on our web site :

[www.saftbatteries.com](http://www.saftbatteries.com)

Ni-Cd batteries must not be discarded as harmless waste and should be treated carefully in accordance with local and national regulations. Your Saft representative can assist with further information on these regulations and with the overall recycling procedure.





Saft is committed to the highest standards of environmental stewardship.

As part of its environmental commitment, Saft gives priority to recycled raw materials over virgin raw materials, reduces its plants' releases to air and water year after year, minimizes water usage, reduces fossil energy consumption and associated CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and ensures that its customers have recycling solutions available for their spent batteries.

Regarding industrial Ni-Cd batteries, Saft has had partnerships for many years with collection companies in most EU countries, in North America and in other countries. This collection network receives and dispatches our customers' batteries at the end of their lives to fully approved recycling facilities, in compliance with the laws governing trans-boundary waste shipments.

This collection network is undergoing minor adaptations to meet the requirements of the EU batteries directive. A list of our collection points is available on our web site.

In other countries, Saft assists users of its batteries in finding environmentally sound recycling solutions. Please contact your sales representative for further information.

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