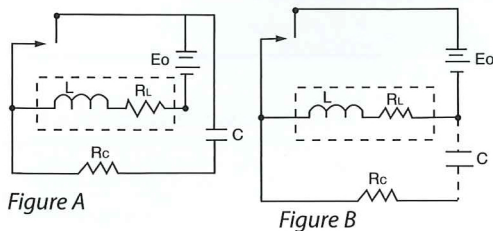


# HOW QUENCHARC® WORKS

The most popular and commonly used method of arc suppression is to connect a resistor-capacitor network as shown in Figures A and B. The preferred method of connection is across the contacts it wants to protect. However, the network can be hooked across the load, as is shown by the dashed line, when all inductance of the load circuit is considered lumped together.



When the contacts open, the voltage across the uncharged capacitor is zero and the transient voltage starts charging the capacitor. In the meantime, the gap of the contact is steadily widened, and by the time the capacitor is charged to its full potential, the contact gap is widened well beyond the minimum breakdown potential of air, thus preventing the arcing. When the contact closes, the inrush current from the capacitor may damage the contact, and here resistance is needed to limit the maximum current to  $E_o/R_c$  during the contact closure.

The induced voltage on opening the contact is:

$$V = IR_c = \frac{R_c}{R_L} E_o \quad (1)$$

and, as can be seen, the larger the value of a series resistor, the higher the induced voltage. On the other hand, the lower series resistance makes the current on contact closure higher. The time dependence of the voltage is given by:

$$V(t) = L \frac{di}{dt} + (R_L + R_c)i + E_o + \frac{1}{C} \int i dt \quad (2)$$

and the rate of voltage change, which is important in transient suppression of triac switching, is:

$$\frac{dv}{dt} = L \frac{d^2i}{dt^2} + (R_L + R_c) \frac{di}{dt} + \frac{i}{C} \quad (3)$$

Equation 3 tells us that by knowing the circuit conditions with given values of  $L$  and coil resistance that limit the current prior to contact opening, the rate of voltage rise is inversely proportional to capacitance. In other words, the larger the capacitance, the greater is the transient suppression. However, when the contact closes, the additional energy stored in the capacitor has to be discharged through the contact. Hence, a compromise has to be made in the selection of both resistance and capacitance.

In an effort to provide a simple answer to designers' requests for proper values of resistance and capacitance, some relay manufacturers came out with empirical formulas and nomographs. For instance, C.C. Bates<sup>1</sup> gives the equations:

$$C = \frac{I^2}{10} \quad R = \frac{E_o}{10I(1 + \frac{50}{E_o})} \quad (4)$$

where

$C$  = capacitance in  $\mu F$

$I$  = load current in amperes prior to contact opening

$R$  = resistance in ohms in series with capacitor

$E_o$  = source voltage

The choice of resistance and capacitance value however, is quite flexible. In fact, the choice is so simple that one does not need a nomograph at all. Besides, a nomograph published by a certain relay manufacturer may be for the particular relays the firm manufactures, not necessarily universal.

<sup>1</sup>Bates, C.C., "Contact Protection of Electromagnetic Relays." *Electro-mechanical Design*, August, 1966.

## CHOOSING A QUENCHARC®

In choosing a Quencharc®, first of all, check the maximum switching current rating of the contacts to be protected. This value differs for different types of contact materials and different types of relays. The maximum current during the contact closure with an RC network is  $E_o/R_c$ , where  $E_o$  is the source voltage and  $R_c$  is the resistance value of the network. The quantity  $E_o/R_c$  must be lower than the maximum switching current for obvious reasons. Next, the selection of capacitance is best done with an oscilloscope.

Connect the oscilloscope probe to the relay wiper and ground the other plate of the contact. Without an RC network across the contacts, check the amplitude of the transient voltage on contact break and the amplitude of the current on contact make. If the voltage is less than 300V and the current less than the maximum switching current rating of the relay, and if you don't see any arcing, you may not need the contact protection at all. If you spot arcing, connect a 0.1  $\mu F$  + 100 $\Omega$ , 250 VAC, QC100 (our most widely used Quencharc®), across the contacts, and observe the levels of suppression, voltage on break and current on make. The suppressed voltage should be below 250V, which provides 70 volts of safety margin from the breakdown potential of air. If the voltage is still above 250V, try a 0.25  $\mu F$  + 220 $\Omega$  or a 0.5  $\mu F$  + 330 $\Omega$  range. If you need a higher capacitance than 1.0  $\mu F$ , you may be better off with a Zener or a varistor in terms of cost and space. For most relays and triacs 0.1  $\mu F$  + 100 $\Omega$  provides a satisfactory suppression.

When protecting contacts in AC circuits, the same general guidelines as for DC circuits can be used, but the wattage of the resistor must be considered if current flow is sustained for a long enough period of time to heat the component. Compute the impedance of the RC unit to obtain a current value, then use  $I^2R$  and time considerations to determine whether the standard network resistor is adequate.

## OPERATING

**TEMPERATURE RANGE** -55°C to +85°C at full rated voltage.

## DISSIPATION FACTOR

The nominal dissipation factor is determined from the following equation:

$$DF = 2\pi fCR + 0.006$$

where:

$f$  = test frequency in hertz

$C$  = nominal capacitance value in farads

$R$  = nominal value of series resistor in  $\Omega$ .

## DIELECTRIC WITHSTANDING VOLTAGE

Unit shall withstand a DC potential of 1.6 times the DC voltage rating. Testing conducted at 25°C.

## DC LIFE TEST

Unit shall withstand a test potential of 125% of the rated voltage for a period of 500 hours at a temperature of 85°C. A failure shall consist of:

- Capacitance change greater than 5%.
- Dissipation factor greater than original limits.

## LONG TERM STABILITY

The capacitance shall not change more than 2% when stored at ambient temperature and humidity for a period of 2 years or less.

## PHYSICAL

### TOLERANCE

Capacitor  $\pm 20\%$ , Resistor  $\pm 10\%$ .

### CONSTRUCTION\*

Metallized polyester capacitor in series with a carbon composition resistor.

### CASE

Coated with a UL94V-0 flame retardant epoxy.

### WIRE LEADS

#20 AWG (0.032") capacitor end. Resistor end 0.025" to 0.032".

### MARKING

⚡ P ⚡ Quencharc®, capacitance, resistance, voltage.

\* 39 $\Omega$  resistors are power wire-wound