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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### PREVENTING AND MINIMIZING ARC FLASH RISK IN POWER SYSTEM NETWORK

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#### Abstract

Arc flash events have resulted in several accidents due to faults in electrical equipment that lead to a significant release of energy. This event is a hazard and threat to the Power System Security and due to the large energy release, plasma is generated, as pressure increases since it causes physical damage to equipment while life of system operators within the vicinity of its occurrence are at risk. Although arc flash is one of the electrical safety programs that have been in existence, arc flash hazard was not adequately addressed until recently. However, the Electric Arc phenomenon is relatively new in the Nigerian power industry, there are certain aspect that are yet to be treated by the available literature, hence it is the duty of this work to establish model for addressing the observed lapses. The design is adequately prepared for the power system security analysis using typical scenarios in industrial facilities that are prone to yield high incident energy levels. In line with the foregoing, the developed methodology is validated using a segment of the Nigeria's power industry as case study.

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#### Introduction:-

It is essential to reduce the level of available energy that can be released in an arc flash at any point in an electrical system. Nonetheless, it is important to recognize that the main contributors to arc-flash events are human error and electrical equipment failure.

Human errors can include dropping tools or loose parts inside equipment; inadvertently connecting energized system with tools, parts, conductors, or cables or improperly aligning equipment while it is being inserted into live electrical bus such as a motor control center (MCC) or switchgear. Factors related to equipment failure can include lack of equipment maintenance, equipment failure, cable insulation failure or continued electrical fault occurrences that go uncorrected, causing premature component failures (i.e., overvoltage, overload, and overcurrent conditions). Therefore, it is important to establish and maintain regular preventive maintenance schedules for electrical equipment and systems, as well as to take immediate action to correct repetitive problems.

It is also important to point out that a suitable environment for electrical equipment is key to prevent the accumulation of dust or the buildup of corrosion and condensation, all of which can lead to improper equipment operation and/or premature equipment failure. Therefore, a clean, conditioned electrical room is warranted in places where major equipment such as substations, MCCs and switchgear are located. A clean equipment environment also

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promotes safer working conditions for electrical maintenance personnel who must service electrical equipment while energized. This will ensure Power Integrity that concerns maintaining the quality of power from generation to consumption that gives high power integrity, meaning noise levels that are within tolerance.

Failure to apply overcurrent protective devices within their ratings can result in blast, explosion even fires. The consequent of arc flash is immediate, but the result of these incidents can damage equipment and cause severe injury, including burns. The arc flash boundary or restricted approach boundary, changes depending on the potential arc flash hazard. The arc flash boundary is calculated to 1.2 calories/cm<sup>2</sup> of incident energy. When the arc flash boundary is the furthest away, it becomes the line no one should pass without training and wearing of appropriate PPE.

From the foregoing; this work is focused on arc flash hazards and their assessment through the calculation of incident energy or heat flux and other technical information that is considered beneficial to the Energy Industry. To this end, this is achieved by developing a model to evaluate the magnitude of incident energy in the power system. Further to which a design protocol is established to reduce possibility of stress on the power system components as well as the overall restoration time of the faulty system back to service.

### Design Methodology:-

This work utilized electrical Transient Analysis Program (ETAP) software for the short circuit calculation which is developed with its foundation squarely laid on the Newton-Raphson power flow technique. In which case, there are several different methods of solving the resulting nonlinear system of equations. This method begins with initial guesses of all unknown variables (voltage magnitude and angles at Load Buses and voltage angles at Generator Buses). Further to this, the Taylor Series is adopted, with the higher order terms ignored, for each of the power balance equations included in the system of equations. The result is a linear system of equations that can be expressed as:

$$\begin{bmatrix} \Delta\theta \\ \Delta|V| \end{bmatrix} = -J^{-1} \begin{bmatrix} \Delta P \\ \Delta Q \end{bmatrix} \quad (1)$$

Where  $\Delta P$  and  $\Delta Q$  are called the mismatched equations

$$\Delta P_i = -P_i + \sum_{k=1}^N |V_i||V_k|(G_{ik}\cos\theta_{ik} + B_{ik}\sin\theta_{ik}) \quad (2)$$

$$\Delta Q_i = -Q_i + \sum_{k=1}^N |V_i||V_k|(G_{ik}\sin\theta_{ik} - B_{ik}\cos\theta_{ik})$$

and  $J$  is a matrix of partial known as a Jacobian matrix which is expressed as follows:

$$J = \begin{bmatrix} \frac{\partial\Delta P}{\partial\theta} & \frac{\partial\Delta P}{\partial|V|} \\ \frac{\partial\Delta Q}{\partial\theta} & \frac{\partial\Delta Q}{\partial|V|} \end{bmatrix} \quad (3)$$

The linearized system of equations is solved to determine the next guess ( $m+1$ ) of voltage magnitude and angles based on:

$$\theta^{m+1} = \theta^m + \Delta\theta \quad (4)$$

$$|V|^{m+1} = |V|^m + \Delta|V| \quad (5)$$

The process continues until a stopping condition is met.

**Algorithm of the evaluation of Arc Flash Incident Energy**

There are some critical components of the power network that must be subjected to fault analysis to determine their respective resilience to the occurrence of incident energy. This includes the power generator/utility, power transformer and other power equipment. Thus, Arc Flash Hazard Decision steps is as depicted in Fig. 1.

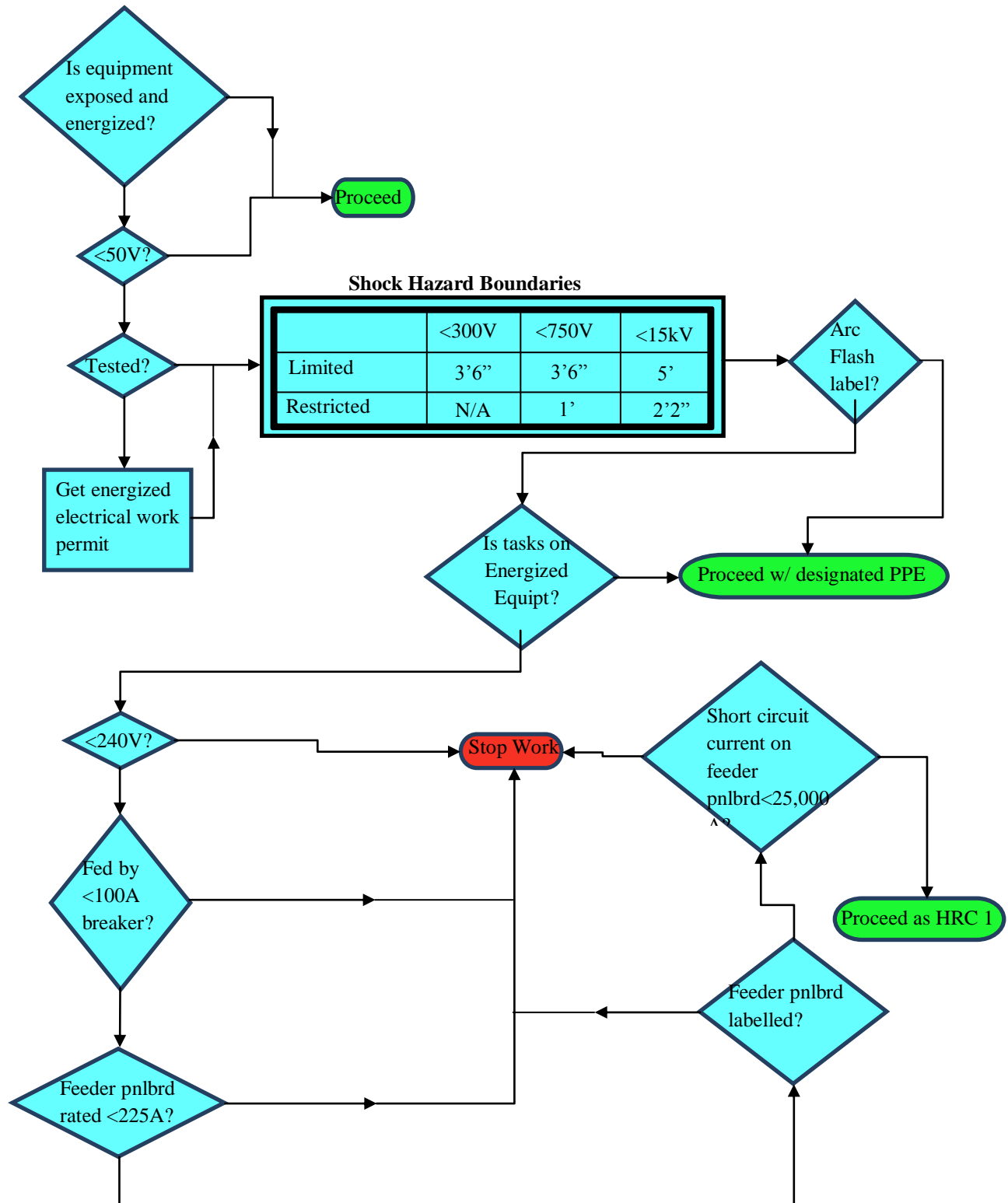


Fig. 1:- Flow chart of Arc Flash Hazard Decision Tree.

The multiple steps involved in calculating an arcing current, using the obtained results to estimate incident energy, then applying that information to determine an arc flash boundary.

The first step in the arc-flash analysis is to calculate the arcing current. Arcing current is a short circuit via ionized gas between one live part and the ground or another live part (Kumpulainen, et al., 2008). Due to the arc resistance, the arcing current is not the same as the available fault current. Arcing current is always lower than the bolted fault current (Murphy, 2008), (Doan, 2008).

From the IEEE-1584 empirical derived model for a system under 1000V and having an available fault current between 700A -106kA, the arcing current can be calculated as follows (IEEE std. 1584, 2002):

$$I_a = K + 0.662 I_{bf} + 0.0966V + 0.000526G + 0.5588V(I_{bf}) - 0.00304G(I_{bf}) \tag{6}$$

Where,

- $I_g$  is the  $\log_{10}$
- $I_a$  is arcing current (kA)
- $K$  is -0.153 for open configurations and is -0.097 for box configurations
- $I_{bf}$  is bolted fault current for three-phase faults (kA)
- $V$  is system voltage (kV)
- $G$  is the gap between conductors (mm)

This work will consider the analysis of the effects of arc-flash exposure for technical personnel and engineers working on electrical equipment in a critical facility. Therefore, the K value is -0.097 to represent the arc occurring inside an electrical panel, switchboard, or motor control center. The system voltage V, for this project is 480 except when a step-down transformer is inserted to achieve a 208-volt feeder. The value for G is the gap spacing between the conductors or bus bars, which is dependent on equipment design. From the table below, the bus gap corresponding to low voltage switchgear is 32 (IEEE-1584, 2004; Das, 2012).

**Table 1:-** Classes of Equipment and Typical Bus Gaps.

Classes of Equipment	Typical Bus Gaps (mm)
15kV Switchgear	152
5kV Switchgear	104
Low-Voltage switchgear	32
Low-Voltage MCCs and Panel boards	25
Cable	13
Other	Not required

This reduces the arcing current of equation (1) to:

$$I_a = 10^{(-0.034 + 0.0833 I_{bf})} \tag{7}$$

The incident energy is a value that represents the amount of thermal energy that a person is exposed to at a given distance. Incident energy is measured in Joules per square centimeter ( $J/cm^2$ ) and is defined as a watt second (IEEE std. 1584, 2002). The incident energy, normalized for an arc duration of 0.2 seconds and a distance of 24" can be calculated given the arcing current above and using the following formula (IEEE std. 1584, 2002).

The Incident Energy normalized could be calculated as follows:

$$I_a E_n = K_1 + K_2 + 1.081 I_a + 0.0011 G \tag{8}$$

Where,

- $E_n$  is normalized incident energy ( $J/cm^2$ )
- $K_1$  is -0.792 for open box configurations (no enclosure) and is -0.555 for box configurations (enclosed equipment)
- $K_2$  is 0 for ungrounded and high-resistance grounded systems and is -0.113 for grounded systems

- $I_a$  is arcing current from above
- $G$  is the gap between conductors (mm)

The constants  $K_1$  and  $K_2$  are dependent upon the physical enclosure of the circuit breaker. Since circuit breakers are mounted in a switchgear it is considered a box configuration. This will give a  $K_1$  value of 0.555 and for a grounded system, therefore a  $K_2$  value of 0.113 is appropriate.

This reduces the normalized incident energy equation (8) to:

$$E_n = 10^{(-0.633 + 1.081 I_g I_a)} \tag{9}$$

For a different arc duration and/or distance from the arc, the normalized incident energy can be converted into the actual incident energy as follows (IEEE std. 1584, 2002):

$$E = C_f E_n \left(\frac{t}{0.2}\right) \left(\frac{610^x}{D^x}\right) \tag{10}$$

Where,

- $E$  is incident energy (cal/cm<sup>2</sup>)
- $C_f$  is 1.0 for voltages above 1kV and is 1.5 for voltages at or below 1kV
- $E_n$  is normalized incident energy
- $t$  is arcing duration in seconds
- $D$  is the distance from possible arc point to the person (mm)
- $x$  is the distance exponent

This equation can be reduced by verifying system parameters. For a 480 volts system,  $C_f$  is 1.5 and the value for the distance exponent  $X$ , is furnished by the IEEE 1584 table below.

**Table 2:-** Distance x Factors.

System Voltage	Equipment Type	Distance X Factor
208-1kV	Open Air	2.000
208-1kV	Switchgear	1.473
208-1kV	MCC and Panels	1.641
208-1kV	Cable	2.000

The value of  $D$  represents the distance from the exposed energized electrical conductor to the maintenance personnel working on the equipment. This value is standardized by IEEE 1584 depending on the class of the energized electrical equipment (IEEE std. 1584, 2002).

**Table 3:-** Classes of Equipment and Typical Working Distances.

Classes of Equipment	Typical working distance (inches) $D$
15kV Switchgear	36
5kV Switchgear	36
Low-Voltage Switchgear	24
Low-Voltage MCCs and Panelboards	18
Cable	18
Other	TBD

Using  $X = 1.473$  and  $D = 18$ , reduce the incident energy of equation (9) to:

$$E = 2.295 E_n \left(\frac{t}{0.2}\right) \tag{11}$$

Equations 7, 9 and 11 may now be combined into one equation which expresses the incident energy  $E$  as a function on  $I_{bf}$  and  $t$ , as follows (Brown and Shapiro, 2006):

$$E = 2.295 \left\{ 10^{(-0.670 + 0.901 \lg I_{bf})} \right\} \left( \frac{t}{0.2} \right) \tag{12}$$

Note that equation (12) is valid only for the assumptions made above (i.e. a CB in a box configuration), which are for a power circuit breaker in an electrical system analyzed by this work (i.e. a solidly grounded 480 volts system, a circuit breaker mounted in a low-voltage switchgear, and at a working distance of 18”).

The arc-flash hazard analysis provides important information that helps establish a safety barrier for workers when exposed to energized equipment. The incident energy level that will cause a curable burn or a second-degree burn is 1.2 cal/cm<sup>2</sup> (Lee, 1982). If a butane lighter is held 1 cm away from a person’s finger for 1 second and the finger is in the blue flame, a square centimeter area of the finger will be exposed to about 1.2 cal/cm<sup>2</sup> (IEEE std. 1584, 2002). The entire premise of safety and arc flash is based on a curable or second-degree burn and, therefore, the incident energy level of 1.2 cal/cm<sup>2</sup> is an important value. The distance away from an exposed energized conductor that is calculated at 1.2 cal/cm<sup>2</sup> is known as the arc-flash boundary. This can be calculated by rearranging equation (10) and solving for distance at an incident energy of 1.2 cal/cm<sup>2</sup>.

$$D_b = \left[ 4.184 C_f E_n \left( \frac{t}{0.2} \right) \left( 610^{\frac{x}{E_b}} \right) \right]^{\frac{1}{x}} \tag{13}$$

Where,

- $D_b$  is the boundary from the arcing point or the flash protection boundary
- $C_f$  is 1.5 for voltages at or below 1 kV
- $E_n$  is incident energy normalized
- $E_b$  is incident energy at boundary distance
- $t$  is time in seconds
- $x$  is the distance exponent from Table 1

After comparing equations 12 and 13, the determining factors for the incident energy level are the arcing current that results from the available fault current and the time that the arc exposure exists. These factors are controlled by the system in which the circuit breaker is installed and the interrupting characteristics of the circuit breaker.

Figure 1 shows a circuit breaker time current curve with the arcing current crossing it.

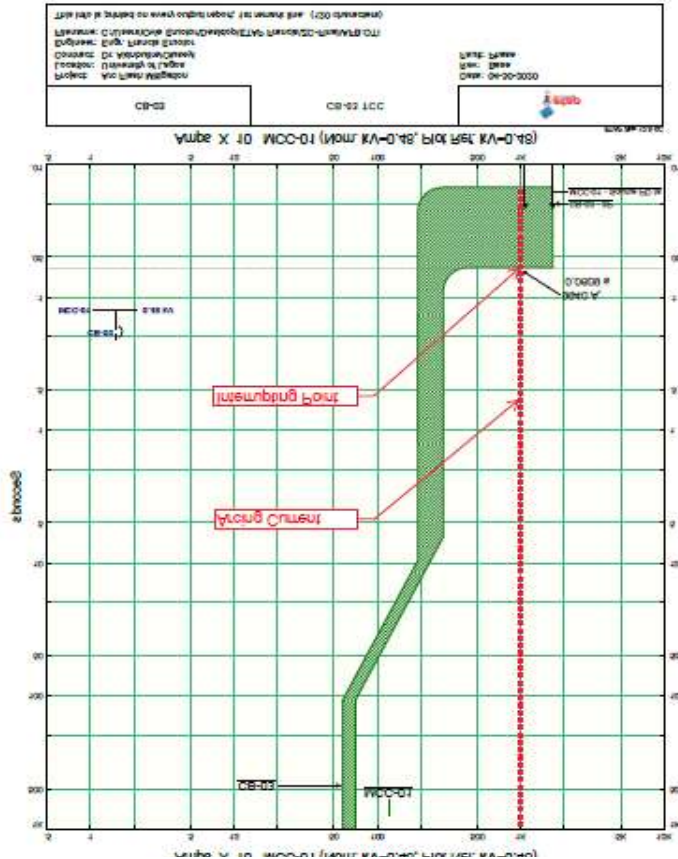


Figure1:- CircuitBreakerTCCInterruptingArcingCurrent.

Here it is shown that an arcing current of approximately 9.94kA is interrupted by the circuit breaker CB-01 at a time of 0.0609 seconds. This entire process is recalculated at a fault current level of 85% less than the reported AFC. This allows for a worse-case scenario if the fault current is lower than anticipated. This arcing current is simultaneously plotted against the protective device curve and the lowest interrupt time is used in calculating the incident energy. Figure 2 shows both arcing currents plotted against MCC-01.



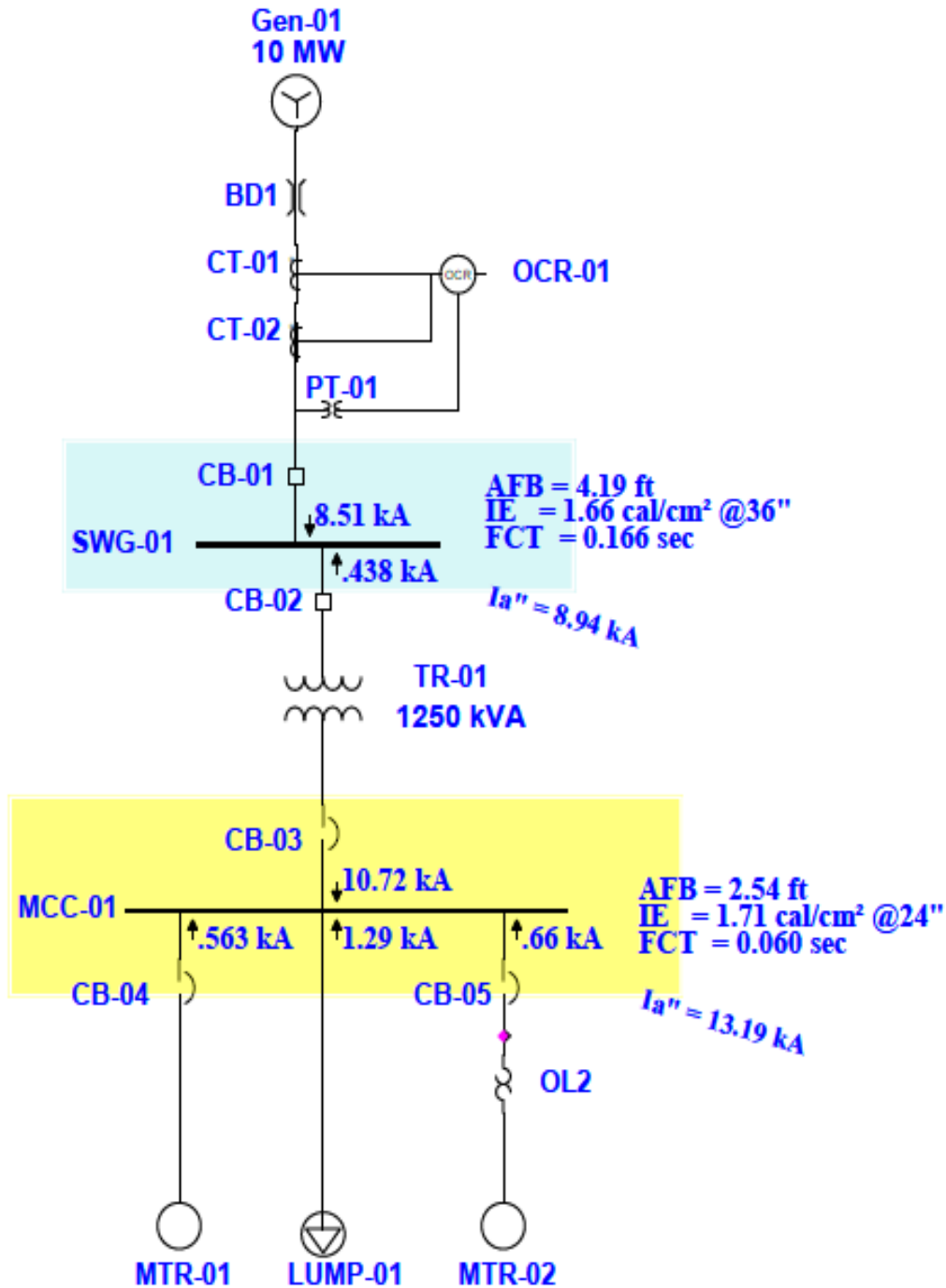


Figure3: -One-Line Diagram showing MCC-01 Incident Energy.

With this information of an incident energy level of 1.44 cal/cm<sup>2</sup>, the Electrical Engineer can now select clothing and personal protective equipment rated for arc-flash safety. The clothing and equipment selected must always have an arc flash rating greater than the incident energy of the electrical device to be maintained. Since the incident energy level can have a multitude of values ranging from 0.1 cal/cm<sup>2</sup> up to over 40 cal/cm<sup>2</sup>, the amount of different clothing devices could be enormous. Therefore, the concept of grouping the incident energy levels into categories arose.

### Arc Flash Hazard Analysis

arc-flash hazard analysis involves performing a fault current analysis and a protective device coordination study. An arc-flash hazard analysis is a continuation of the short-circuit study and protective-device coordination study (IEEE std. 1584, 2002). The results from the short-circuit study are used to determine the available fault current at electrical equipment locations and help to properly specify equipment with stand ratings and interrupting capabilities. The results from the protective-device coordination study give us information on the time the system takes to isolate overload or fault conditions. The results of the short-circuit and protective device evaluation are used in combination to give the necessary information required to perform an arc-flash hazard analysis. The results of the arc-flash hazard analysis are used to identify the flash-protection boundary and the incident energy at assigned working distances throughout any position or level in the electrical system (IEEE std. 1584, 2002).

### Arc Flash Hazard Risk Categories

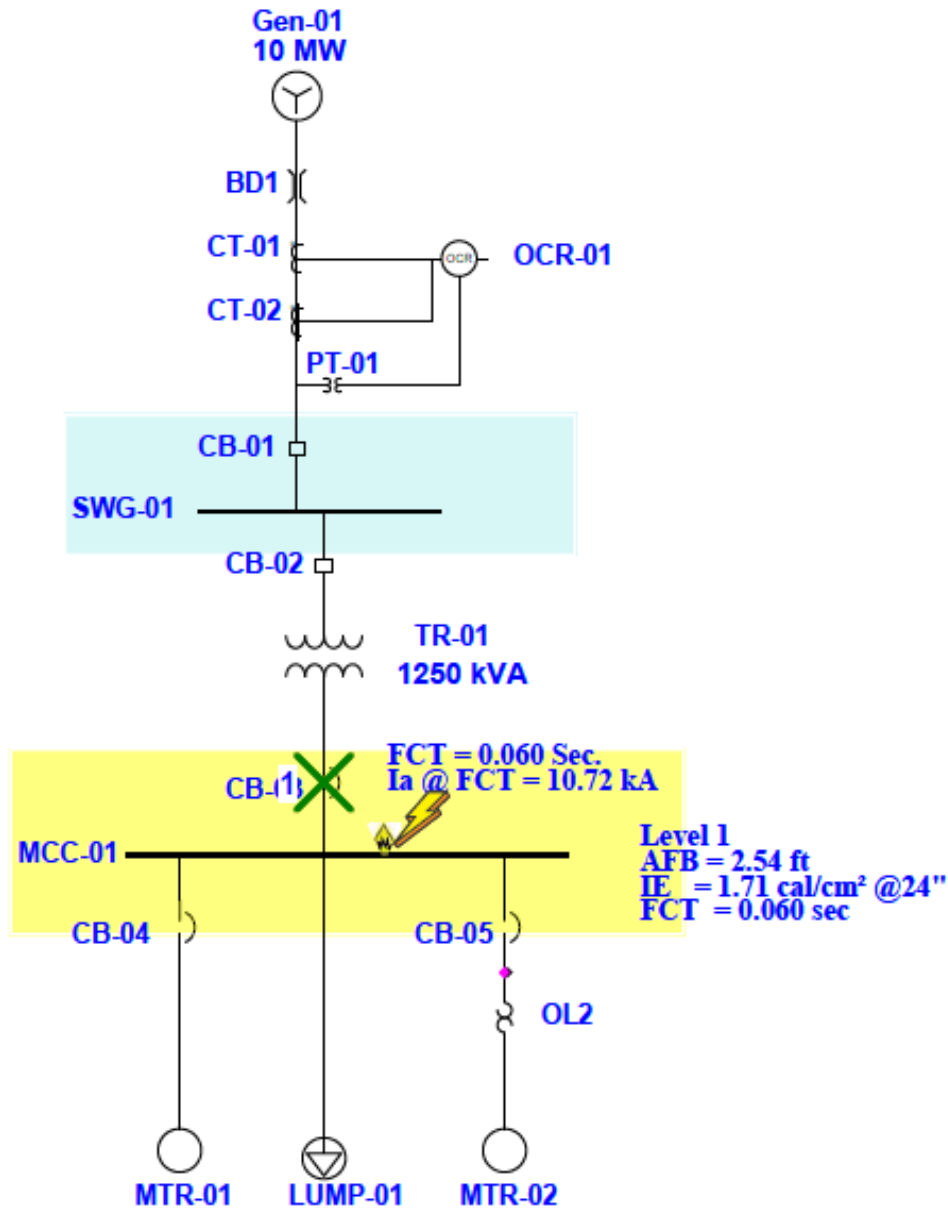
While incident energy prediction was being researched, there were also studies being conducted on how to protect workers in the event of an arc-flash.

The Arc Flash Hazard Analysis gives us an incident energy level at a specified working distance from the source of the arc. This enables us to select Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that is rated above the incident energy. Although the concept of wearing PPE that is suited for the task is simple, the different incident energy levels can be numerous. Therefore, the implementation of hazard risk categories was instituted into the PPE selection process. The hazard risk category levels are: 0, 1, 2, 3 and 4 which correlate to maximum incident energy levels ( $\text{cal/cm}^2$ ) of 1.2, 4, 8, 25, 40. This allows for an electrical device to be labeled per category and the selection of PPE can be matched the same way.

**Table 4:** -Hazard Risk Categories and PPE Characteristics.

Hazard Risk Category (HRC)	Typical Protective Clothing Systems	Required Min. PPE Arc Rating ( $\text{cal/cm}^2$ )
0	Non-melting, flammable Materials (Natural or treated materials with at least 4.5 oz/yd <sup>2</sup> )	1.2
1	FR pants and FR shirt, or FR coverall	4
2	Cotton Underwear, plus FR shirt and FR pants	8
3	Cotton Underwear, plus FR shirt and FR pants and FR coverall	25
4	Cotton Underwear, plus FR shirt and FR pants and multi-layer flash suit	40

The One-line diagram for SWG-01 and MCC-01 can now include a hazard risk category also known as a PPE Category as shown below in Figure 4.



**Figure4:** -One-Line Diagram Showing Incident Energy and Hazard Risk Category.

Per Table 4, the highest hazard risk category is level 4, with a maximum incident energy of  $40 \text{ cal/cm}^2$ . While PPE is certainly available in ratings well above  $40 \text{ cal/cm}^2$ , working near exposed energized electrical equipment above  $40 \text{ cal/cm}^2$  is discouraged (Doan, 2008). However, the greater than normal emphasis should be placed on de-energizing the equipment at such high incident energy levels.

**Arc Flash Warning Label**

The purpose of Arc Flash Warning Labels is to warn personnel of the potential hazards of electrical equipment they might be working on. The label shows what action they should take to reduce the hazard.

Labeling is required for any piece of electrical equipment that may need examination, adjustment, service, or maintenance while energized, creating the potential for an arc flash incident to occur. Arc flash hazard labels must be placed on any piece of electrical equipment where workers might need to perform work while the equipment is still energized. Items that should have arc flash warning labels typically includes:

1. Switchboards/Panelboards/Distribution Boards.
2. Industrial Control Panels.
3. Enclosed Circuit Breakers.
4. Motor Control Centers.
5. Disconnects/Safety Switches (fused)
6. Inverters.
7. UPS.

**Equipment Labeling**

Switchboards, panelboards, industrial control panels, meter socket enclosures and motor control centers that are likely to require examination, adjustment, servicing, or maintenance while energized must be field marked with a label containing all the following information (Montana, 2012):

- a. Nominal System Voltage
- b. Arc Flash Boundary
- c. Available incident energy and the corresponding working distance
- d. Available 3 phase bolted current
- e. Hazard/Risk Category (0 through 4)
- f. The date that the label was applied
- g. Other explanatory information as desired

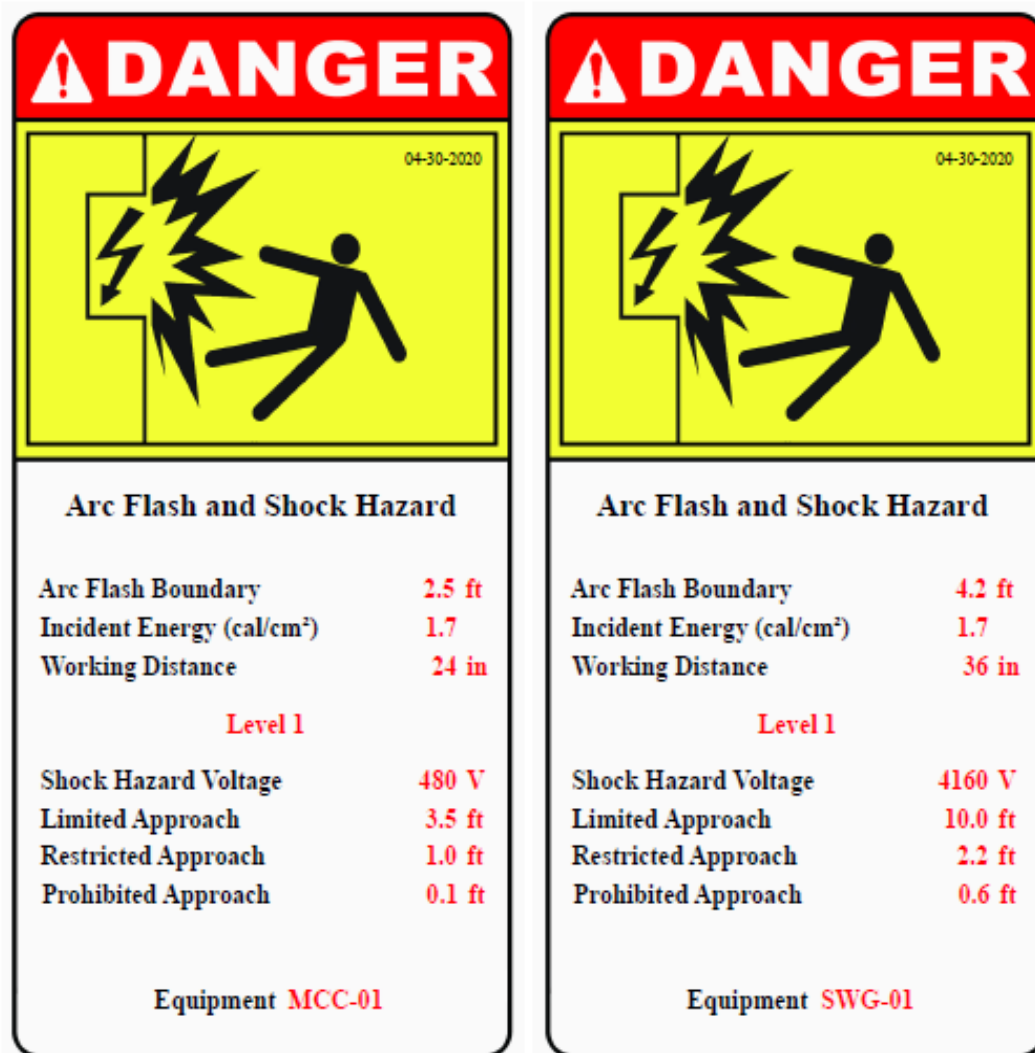


Figure 5: - Arc Flash Warning Label for Major Equipment.

**Result And Discussion:-**

**Arc Flash Hazard Mitigation**

Several steps are required to adequately mitigate Arc Flash Hazard.

**Table5:-** Arc Flash Simulation Methods.

Scenario ID	Arc Flash Method	ArcingCurrent(kA)	I.E. (cal/mm <sup>2</sup> ) for 2.0 sec
Case 1	Half Cycle (Ia'')	9.06	1.67
Case 2	Half Cycle (Ia')	8.72	1.61
Case 3	Decay Method (Ia'' - Ia)	9.06	1.39

**Table 6:-** Incident Energy at various distances.

Arc in Open Air								Arc in Cubic Box					
Arc Duration		Arc Flash Bound [ft]	Distance from Arc Electrodes (inches)					Arc Flash Bound [ft]	Distance from Arc Electrodes (inches)				
Second	Cycle		18	24	30	36	48		18	24	30	36	48
0.004	0.25	0.6	0.22	0.12	0.08	0.05	0.03	0.7	0.37	0.24	0.17	0.13	0.09
0.008	0.50	0.9	0.43	0.24	0.15	0.11	0.06	1.1	0.73	0.48	0.35	0.26	0.17
0.033	2.00	1.8	1.72	0.97	0.62	0.43	0.24	2.8	2.93	1.92	1.38	1.06	0.69
0.050	3.00	2.2	2.58	1.45	0.93	0.65	0.36	3.6	4.40	2.88	2.07	1.59	1.04
0.067	4.00	2.5	3.44	1.94	1.24	0.86	0.48	4.4	5.87	3.84	2.77	2.11	1.38
0.083	5.00	2.8	4.31	2.42	1.55	1.08	0.61	5.1	7.34	4.80	3.46	2.64	1.73
0.100	6.00	3.1	5.17	2.91	1.86	1.29	0.73	5.8	8.80	5.76	4.15	3.17	2.08
0.133	8.00	3.6	6.89	3.87	2.48	1.72	0.97	7.1	11.74	7.68	5.53	4.23	2.77
0.167	10.00	4.0	8.61	4.84	3.10	2.15	1.21	8.2	14.67	9.60	6.91	5.29	3.46
0.333	20.00	5.7	17.22	9.69	6.20	4.31	2.42	13.1	29.35	19.21	13.83	10.57	6.92
0.500	30.00	7.0	25.83	14.53	9.30	6.46	3.63	17.3	44.02	28.81	20.74	15.86	10.38
0.667	40.00	8.0	34.44	19.37	12.40	8.61	4.84	21.0	58.69	38.42	27.66	21.14	13.84
0.833	50.00	9.0	43.05	24.22	15.50	10.76	6.05	24.5	73.36	48.02	34.57	26.43	17.30
1.000	60.00	9.8	51.66	29.06	18.60	12.92	7.27	27.7	88.04	57.63	41.48	31.71	20.76
1.167	70.00	10.6	60.27	33.90	21.70	15.07	8.48	30.8	102.71	67.23	48.40	37.00	24.22
1.333	80.00	11.4	68.88	38.75	24.80	17.22	9.69	33.7	117.38	76.84	55.31	42.29	27.68
1.500	90.00	12.1	77.49	43.59	27.90	19.37	10.90	36.5	132.06	86.44	62.23	47.57	31.14
1.667	100.00	12.7	86.10	48.43	31.00	21.53	12.11	39.2	146.73	96.05	69.14	52.86	34.60
1.883	110.00	13.3	94.71	53.28	34.10	23.68	13.32	41.8	161.40	105.65	76.06	58.14	38.06
2.000	120.00	13.9	103.33	58.12	37.20	25.83	14.53	44.3	176.08	115.26	82.97	63.43	41.52

**Arc Flash Considerations**

The calculations of incident energy on bus fault MCC-01 (Figure 4) are shown in Table 5 and Table 6. This gives an incident energy release of 1.71cal/cm<sup>2</sup>: though not extremely dangerous. Relays OCR-01 must operate to clear the bus fault. A bus differential scheme will be invariably provided, this bus fault will be removed quickly, and all the breakers on this bus tripped. This will reduce the incident energy to 1.71 cal/cm<sup>2</sup>.

A fault at this location, say in the incoming section of transformer incoming breaker CB-03 sees two sources of fault current, one from the utility source through 1.25 MVA transformer and the other contributed by the loads. The generator will be tripped in a short time, approximately six cycles, assuming five - cycle rated breakers and one cycle operating time of generator differential relay. But due to rotating inertia of the generator, the fault continues to be fed by the generator. NEMA standard requires that a generator should be capable of withstanding a three - phase bolted fault at its terminals for 30 seconds, without injury, when operating at its rated kVA and power factor, at 5% overvoltage with fixed excitation (NEMA, 1993).

An ETAP simulation will show that the fault will continue to be fed with decaying magnitude for many seconds, even though the field circuit breaker is tripped, and the generator excitation is removed.

The available computer - based programs do not account for this decay after the generator breaker is opened. The generator side terminal compartment of the circuit breaker continues to be fed from this fault current releasing additional incident energy.

It is prudent to calculate the additional incident energy released by hand for a period of 2 seconds. The generator transient fault current for this duration will give conservative results.

### **Conclusion & Recommendation:-**

Reducing personal injuries from arc flash events should be the main goal of any arc flash hazard assessment. Many facilities have locations where the arc flash energy levels are extremely high. These dangerous areas require electricians and technicians to wear heavy layers of personal protective equipment (PPE) when working on energized equipment. Unfortunately, in some areas, this PPE can increase the chances of heat stroke and other heat-related problems

Design engineers have a few options to reduce system voltage or fault currents. However, the best and most direct way to reduce arc flash hazards is to reduce fault-clearing times.

We have looked at several ways to reduce the arc flash energy in a facility. Arc flash energy can be reduced by (in order of effect): decreasing the trip times; reducing fault currents; and increasing the working distance.

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