

INTERNATIONAL STANDARD



Effects of current on human beings and livestock – Part 1: General aspects



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Effects of current on human beings and livestock – Part 1: General aspects

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD.....	6
INTRODUCTION.....	8
1 Scope.....	9
2 Normative references	10
3 Terms and definitions	10
3.1 General definitions.....	10
3.2 Effects of sinusoidal alternating current in the range 15 Hz to 100 Hz	11
3.3 Effects of direct current.....	12
4 Electrical impedance of the human body and livestock	13
4.1 General.....	13
4.2 Internal impedance of the human body (Z_i)	13
4.3 Impedance of the skin (Z_s).....	13
4.4 Total impedance of the human body (Z_T)	13
4.5 Factors affecting initial resistance of the human body (R_0).....	14
4.6 Values of the total impedance of the human body (Z_T).....	14
4.6.1 Total body impedance dependence for large, medium and small surface areas of contact.....	14
4.6.2 Sinusoidal alternating current 50/60 Hz for large surface areas of contact	14
4.6.3 Sinusoidal alternating current 50/60 Hz for medium and small surface areas of contact.....	17
4.6.4 Sinusoidal alternating current with frequencies up to 20 kHz and above	20
4.6.5 Direct current.....	21
4.7 Value of the initial resistance of the human body (R_0)	22
4.8 Characteristics of the impedance of the body of livestock	22
5 Effects of sinusoidal alternating current in the range of 15 Hz to 150 Hz.....	22
5.1 General.....	22
5.2 Threshold of perception	22
5.3 Threshold of reaction	22
5.4 Immobilization.....	22
5.5 Threshold of let-go.....	23
5.6 Threshold of ventricular fibrillation	23
5.7 Other effects related to electric shocks	23
5.8 Effects of current on the skin	24
5.9 Description of time/current zones (see Figure 20)	24
5.10 Application of heart-current factor (F).....	25
6 Effects of direct current	26
6.1 General.....	26
6.2 Threshold of perception and threshold of reaction.....	26
6.3 Threshold of immobilization and threshold of let-go.....	26
6.4 Threshold of ventricular fibrillation	26
6.5 Other effects of current	27
6.6 Description of time/current zones (see Figure 22)	27
6.7 Heart factor.....	28
6.8 Effects of anodic versus cathodic DC currents	45
Annex A (normative) Measurements of the total body impedances Z_T made on living human beings and on corpses and statistical analysis of the results	48
Annex B (normative) Influence of frequency on the total body impedance (Z_T).....	51

Annex C (normative) Total body resistance (R_T) for direct current.....	52
Annex D (informative) Examples of calculations of Z_T	53
Annex E (informative) Theories of ventricular fibrillation.....	56
Annex F (informative) Quantities of upper limit of vulnerability (ULV) and lower limit of vulnerability (LLV)	57
Annex G (informative) Circuit simulation methods in electric shock evaluation	58
Annex H (normative) Effects of currents passing through the body of livestock	61
H.1 General.....	61
H.2 Principal consideration of the risk of ventricular fibrillation for livestock	61
H.3 Characteristics of the impedance of the body of livestock	62
H.4 Internal impedance of animals (Z_i)	62
H.5 Impedance of the hide and skin (Z_P).....	63
H.6 Impedance (resistance) of the hoof (Z_h , R_h).....	63
H.7 Total body impedance (Z_T)	63
H.8 Initial body resistance (R_0).....	64
H.9 Values of the total body impedance (Z_T)	64
H.10 Values of the initial resistance of the body (R_0).....	65
H.11 Effects on livestock of sinusoidal alternating current in the range from 15 Hz to 100 Hz	65
H.11.1 General	65
H.11.2 Threshold of reaction	66
H.11.3 Threshold of ventricular fibrillation	66
Bibliography.....	69
Figure 1 – Impedances of the human body.....	28
Figure 2 – Internal partial impedances Z_{ip} of the human body.....	29
Figure 3 – Simplified schematic diagram for the internal impedances of the human body	30
Figure 4 – Total body impedance Z_T (50 %) for a current path hand to hand, for large surface areas of contact in dry, water-wet and saltwater-wet conditions for a percentile rank of 50 % of the population for touch voltages $U_T = 25$ V to 700 V, AC 50/60 Hz	31
Figure 5 – Dependence of the total impedance Z_T of one living person on the surface area of contact in dry conditions and at touch voltage (50 Hz)	32
Figure 6 – Dependence of the total body impedance Z_T on the touch voltage U_T for a current path from the tips of the right to the left forefinger compared with large surface areas of contact from the right to the left hand in dry conditions measured on one living person, touch voltage range $U_T = 25$ V to 200 V, AC 50 Hz, duration of current flow max. 25 ms.....	33
Figure 7 – Dependence of the total body impedance Z_T for the 50 th percentile rank of a population of living human beings for large, medium and small surface areas of contact (order of magnitude 10 000 mm ² , 1 000 mm ² and 100 mm ² respectively) in dry conditions at touch voltages $U_T = 25$ V to 200 V AC 50/60 Hz.....	34
Figure 8 – Dependence of the total body impedance Z_T for the 50 th percentile rank of a population of living human beings for large, medium and small surface areas of contact (order of magnitude 10 000 mm ² , 1 000 mm ² and 100 mm ² respectively) in water-wet conditions at touch voltages $U_T = 25$ V to 200 V, AC 50/60 Hz	35
Figure 9 – Dependence of the total body impedance Z_T for the 50 th percentile rank of a population of living human beings for large, medium and small surface areas of contact (order of magnitude 10 000 mm ² , 1 000 mm ² and 100 mm ² respectively) in saltwater-wet conditions at touch voltages $U_T = 25$ V to 200 V, AC 50/60 Hz.....	36

Figure 10 – Values for the total body impedance Z_T measured on 10 living human beings with a current path hand to hand and large surface areas of contact in dry conditions at a touch voltage of 10 V and frequencies from 25 Hz to 20 kHz	37
Figure 11 – Values for the total body impedance Z_T measured on one living human being with a current path hand to hand and large surface areas of contact in dry conditions at a touch voltage of 25 V and frequencies from 25 Hz to 2 kHz	37
Figure 12 – Frequency dependence of the total body impedance Z_T of a population for a percentile rank of 50 % for touch voltages from 10 V to 1 000 V and a frequency range from 50 Hz to 150 kHz for a current path hand to hand or hand to foot, large surface areas of contact in dry conditions	38
Figure 13 – Statistical value of total body impedances Z_T and body resistances R_T for a percentile rank of 50 % of a population of living human beings for the current path hand to hand, large surface areas of contact, dry conditions, for touch voltages up to 700 V, for AC 50/60 Hz and DC	38
Figure 14 – Dependence of the alteration of human skin condition on current density i_T and duration of current flow	39
Figure 15 – Electrodes used for the measurement of the dependence of the impedance of the human body Z_T on the surface area of contact	40
Figure 16 – Oscillograms of touch voltages U_T and touch currents I_T for AC, current path hand to hand, large surface areas of contact in dry conditions taken from measurements	41
Figure 17 – Occurrence of the vulnerable period of ventricles during the cardiac cycle	42
Figure 18 – Triggering of ventricular fibrillation in the vulnerable period – Effects on electro-cardiogram (ECG) and blood pressure	42
Figure 19 – Fibrillation data for dogs, pigs and sheep from experiments and for persons calculated from statistics of electrical accidents with transversal direction of current flow hand to hand and touch voltages $U_T = 220$ V and 380 V AC with body impedances Z_T (5 %)	43
Figure 20 – Conventional time/current zones of effects of AC currents (15 Hz to 100 Hz) on persons for a current path corresponding to left hand to feet (see Table 11)	44
Figure 21 – Oscillogram of touch voltages U_T and touch current I_T for DC, current path hand to hand, large surface areas of contact in dry conditions	44
Figure 22 – Conventional time/current zones of effects of DC currents on persons for a longitudinal upward current path (see Table 13)	45
Figure 23 – Let-go currents for 60 Hz sinusoidal current	45
Figure 24 – Effects of anodic versus cathodic DC currents	46
Figure 25 – Pulsed DC stimulation of single heart cells	47
Figure G.1 – Electric shock in electrical model by Hart [33] including startle reaction effect	59
Figure H.1 – Current flow and impedances of the relevant parts of the body of a cow for current path from the nose to the legs	62
Figure H.2 – Diagrams for an animal, for a current path from the nose to the four legs (path A) and from the forelegs to the hindlegs (path B)	62
Figure H.3 – Diagram for the total body impedance for cattle for a percentage of 5 % of the population	65
Figure H.4 – Ventricular fibrillation for sheep	66
Figure H.5 – Minimum fibrillating currents of sheep as a function of weight for a shock duration of 3 s [55]	67
Figure H.6 – Minimum fibrillating currents (averages) of various species of livestock as a function of weight for a shock duration of 3 s [53]	68
Table 1 – Total body impedances Z_T for a current path hand to hand AC 50/60 Hz, for large surface areas of contact in dry conditions	15

Table 2 – Total body impedances Z_T for a current path hand to hand AC 50/60 Hz, for large surface areas of contact in water-wet conditions	16
Table 3 – Total body impedances Z_T for a current path hand to hand AC 50/60 Hz, for large surface areas of contact in saltwater-wet conditions	17
Table 4 – Total body impedances Z_T for a current path hand to hand for medium surface areas of contact in dry conditions at touch voltages $U_T = 25 \text{ V}$ to 200 V AC 50/60 Hz (values rounded to 25Ω)	18
Table 5 – Total body impedances Z_T for a current path hand to hand for medium surface areas of contact in water-wet conditions at touch voltages $U_T = 25 \text{ V}$ to 200 V AC 50/60 Hz (values rounded to 25Ω)	19
Table 6 – Total body impedances Z_T for a current path hand to hand for medium surface areas of contact in saltwater-wet conditions at touch voltages $U_T = 25 \text{ V}$ to 200 V AC 50/60 Hz (values rounded to 5Ω)	19
Table 7 – Total body impedances Z_T for a current path hand to hand for small surface areas of contact in dry conditions at touch voltages $U_T = 25 \text{ V}$ to 200 V AC 50/60 Hz (values rounded to 25Ω)	19
Table 8 – Total body impedances Z_T for a current path hand to hand for small surface areas of contact in water-wet conditions at touch voltages $U_T = 25 \text{ V}$ to 200 V AC 50/60 Hz (values rounded to 25Ω)	20
Table 9 – Total body impedances Z_T for a current path hand to hand for small surface areas of contact in saltwater-wet conditions at touch voltages $U_T = 25 \text{ V}$ to 200 V AC 50/60 Hz (values rounded to 5Ω)	20
Table 10 – Total body resistances R_T for a current path hand to hand, direct current, for large surface areas of contact in dry conditions	21
Table 11 – Time/current zones for AC 15 Hz to 100 Hz for hand to feet pathway – Summary of zones of Figure 20	25
Table 12 – Heart-current factor F for different current paths	26
Table 13 – Time/current zones for direct current for hand to feet pathway – Summary of zones of Figure 22	28
Table A.1 – Total body impedances Z_T , electrodes type A for dry conditions and deviation factors F_D (5 % and 95 %)	48
Table A.2 – Total body impedances Z_T , electrodes type B for dry, water-wet and saltwater-wet conditions and deviation factors F_D (5 % and 95 %)	48
Table A.3 – Total body impedances Z_T for dry, water-wet and saltwater-wet conditions and deviation factors F_D (5 % and 95 %)	48
Table A.4 – Deviation factors F_D (5 %) and F_D (95 %) for dry and water-wet conditions in the touch voltage range $U_T = 25 \text{ V}$ up to 400 V for large, medium and small surface areas of contact	50
Table D.1 – 50 th percentile values for the total body impedance for a current path hands-feet, medium surface area of contact for hands, large for feet, reduction factor 0,8, dry conditions, touch currents I_T and electrophysiological effects	54
Table G.1 – Body impedance examples (uncompensated)	59
Table H.1 – Impedance (resistance) of the hooves of cattle (Z_h , R_h) for AC voltages up to 230 V , 50/60 Hz	63
Table H.2 – Total body impedances Z_T for AC 50/60 Hz for cattle for touch voltages up to 230 V	64
Table H.3 – Initial body resistance R_0 for cattle	65
Table H.4 – Threshold of ventricular fibrillation for AC 50/60 Hz [53] [54] for different species of livestock, for a shock duration of 3 s	67

INTERNATIONAL ELECTROTECHNICAL COMMISSION

**EFFECTS OF CURRENT ON HUMAN BEINGS
AND LIVESTOCK –****Part 1: General aspects****FOREWORD**

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International Standard IEC 60479-1 has been prepared by IEC technical committee 64: Electrical installations and protection against electric shock.

This first edition cancels and replaces IEC TS 60479-1:2005, Amendment 1:2016 and IEC TR 60479-3:1998. This edition constitutes a technical revision.

This edition includes the following significant technical changes with respect to IEC TS 60479-1 and IEC TR 60479-3:

- The contents of IEC TR 60479-3 relating to aspects unique to the effects of current passing through the bodies of livestock have been incorporated into a new Annex H (normative).

It has the status of a basic safety publication in accordance with IEC Guide 104.

The text of this International Standard is based on the following documents:

CDV	Report on voting
64/2275/CDV	64/2343/RVC

Full information on the voting for the approval of this International Standard can be found in the report on voting indicated in the above table.

This document has been drafted in accordance with the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

A list of all parts in the IEC 60479 series, published under the general title *Effects of current on human beings and livestock*, can be found on the IEC website.

The committee has decided that the contents of this document will remain unchanged until the stability date indicated on the IEC website under "<http://webstore.iec.ch>" in the data related to the specific document. At this date, the document will be

- reconfirmed,
- withdrawn,
- replaced by a revised edition, or
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INTRODUCTION

In order to avoid errors in the interpretation of this document, it should be emphasized that the data given herein is mainly based on experiments with animals as well as on information available from clinical observations. Only a few experiments with shock currents of short duration have been carried out on living human beings.

On the evidence available, mostly from animal research, the values are so conservative that this document applies to persons of normal physiological conditions including children, irrespective of age and weight.

There are, however, other aspects which should be taken into account, such as probability of faults, probability of contact with live or faulty parts, ratio between touch voltage and fault voltage, experience gained, technical feasibilities, and economics. These parameters should be considered carefully when establishing safety requirements, for example, operating characteristics of protective devices for electrical installations.

The form of the document, as has been adopted, summarizes results so far achieved which are being used by technical committee 64 as a basis for establishing requirements for protection against shock. These results are considered important enough to justify an IEC publication which may serve as a guide to other IEC committees and countries having need of such information.

This document applies to the threshold of ventricular fibrillation which is the main cause of deaths by electric current. The analysis of results of recent research work on cardiac physiology and on the fibrillation threshold, taken together, has made it possible to better appreciate the influence of the main physical parameters and, especially, of the duration of the current flow.

This document contains information about body impedance and body current thresholds for various physiological effects. This information can be combined to derive estimates of AC and DC touch voltage thresholds for certain body current pathways, contact moisture conditions, and skin contact areas.

This document refers specifically to the effects of electric current. When an assessment of the harmful effects of any event on human beings and livestock is being made, other non-electric phenomena, including falls, heat, fire, or others should be taken into account. These matters are beyond the scope of this document, but may be extremely serious in their own right.

Further experimental data are under consideration, such as recent ongoing experimental work on "current induced heart fibrillation by excitation with discrete Fourier spectra" which is intended to contribute to frequency factor data.

The characteristics of the impedance of the body of livestock and the effects of sinusoidal alternating currents are described in Annex H.

EFFECTS OF CURRENT ON HUMAN BEINGS AND LIVESTOCK –

Part 1: General aspects

1 Scope

This part of IEC 60479 provides basic guidance on the effects of shock current on human beings and livestock.

For a given current path through the human body, the danger to persons depends mainly on the magnitude and duration of the current flow. However, the time/current zones specified in the following clauses are, in many cases, not directly applicable in practice for designing measures of protection against electrical shock. The necessary criterion is the admissible limit of touch voltage (i.e. the product of the current through the body called touch current and the body impedance) as a function of time. The relationship between current and voltage is not linear because the impedance of the human body varies with the touch voltage, and data on this relationship is therefore required. The different parts of the human body (such as the skin, blood, muscles, other tissues and joints) present to the electric current a certain impedance composed of resistive and capacitive components.

The values of body impedance depend on a number of factors and, in particular, on current path, on touch voltage, duration of current flow, frequency, degree of moisture of the skin, surface area of contact, pressure exerted and temperature.

The impedance values indicated in this document result from a close examination of the experimental results available from measurements carried out principally on corpses and on some living persons.

Knowledge of the effects of alternating current is primarily based on the findings related to the effects of current at frequencies of 50 Hz or 60 Hz which are the most common in electrical installations. The values given are, however, deemed applicable over the frequency range from 15 Hz to 100 Hz, threshold values at the limits of this range being higher than those at 50 Hz or 60 Hz. Principally the risk of ventricular fibrillation is considered to be the main mechanism of death of fatal electrical accidents.

Accidents with direct current are much less frequent than would be expected from the number of DC applications, and fatal electrical accidents occur only under very unfavourable conditions, for example, in mines. This is partly due to the fact that with direct current, the let-go of parts gripped is less difficult and that for shock durations longer than the period of the cardiac cycle, the threshold of ventricular fibrillation is considerably higher than for alternating current.

This basic safety publication is primarily intended for use by technical committees in the preparation of standards in accordance with the principles laid down in IEC Guide 104 and ISO/IEC Guide 51. It is not intended for use by manufacturers or certification bodies.

One of the responsibilities of a technical committee is, wherever applicable, to make use of basic safety publications in the preparation of its publications. The requirements, test methods or test conditions of this basic safety publication will not apply unless specifically referred to or included in the relevant publications.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

IEC Guide 104:2010, *The preparation of safety publications and the use of basic safety publications and group safety publications*

ISO/IEC Guide 51:2014, *Safety aspects – Guidelines for their inclusion in standards*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>
- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <http://www.iso.org/obp>

3.1 General definitions

3.1.1

longitudinal current

current flowing lengthwise through the trunk of the human body such as from hand to feet

3.1.2

transverse current

current flowing across the trunk of the human body such as from hand to hand

3.1.3

internal impedance of the human body

Z_i

impedance between two electrodes in contact with two parts of the human body, neglecting skin impedances

Note 1 to entry: For the body of livestock, the impedance of the hooves, if any, are also neglected.

3.1.4

impedance of the skin

Z_s

impedance between an electrode on the skin and the conductive tissues underneath

3.1.5

total impedance of the human body

Z_T

vectorial sum of the internal impedance and the impedances of the skin

Note 1 to entry: For the body of livestock, Z_T is the vectorial sum of the internal impedance and the impedances of the hide, skin and hooves, if any (see Figure H.1).

SEE: Figure 1.