



**International
Standard**

ISO 7870-6

Control charts —

**Part 6:
EWMA control charts for the
process mean**

Cartes de contrôle —

*Partie 6: Cartes de contrôle EWMA pour la moyenne d'un
processus*

**Second edition
2024-07**

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Published in Switzerland

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

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For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 69, *Applications of statistical methods*, Subcommittee SC 4, *Applications of statistical methods in product and process management*.

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO 7870-6:2016), which has been technically revised.

A list of all parts in the ISO 7870 series can be found on the ISO website.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

Introduction

Shewhart control charts are the most widespread statistical control methods used for controlling a process, but they are slow in signalling shifts of small magnitude in the process parameters. The exponentially weighted moving average^[13] (EWMA) control chart makes possible faster detection of small to moderate shifts.

The Shewhart control chart is simple to implement and it rapidly detects shifts of major magnitude. However, it is fairly ineffective for detecting shifts of small or moderate magnitude. It happens quite often that the shift of the process is slow and progressive (in case of continuous processes in particular); this shift has to be detected very early in order to react before the process deviates seriously from its target value. There are two possibilities for improving the effectiveness of the Shewhart control charts with respect to small and moderate shifts.

- The simplest, but not the most economical possibility is to increase the subgroup size. This may not always be possible due to low production rate; time consuming or too costly testing. As a result, it may not be possible to draw samples of size more than 1.
- The second possibility is to take into account the results preceding the control under way in order to try to detect the existence of a shift in the production process. The Shewhart control chart takes into account only the information contained in the last sample observation and it ignores any information given by the entire sequence of points. This feature makes the Shewhart control chart relatively insensitive to small process shifts. Its effectiveness can be improved by taking into account the former results.

Where it is desired to detect slow, progressive shifts, it is preferable to use specific charts which take into account the past data and which are effective with a moderate control cost. Two very effective alternatives to the Shewhart control chart in such situations are

- a) Cumulative sum (CUSUM) control chart. This chart is described in ISO 7870-4. The CUSUM control chart reacts more sensitively than the X-bar chart to a shift of the mean value in the range of half to two sigma. If one plots the cumulative sum of deviations of successive averages from a specified target, even minor, permanent shifts in the process mean will eventually lead to a sizable cumulative sum of deviations. Thus, this chart is particularly well-suited for detecting such small permanent shifts that may go undetected when using the X-bar chart.
- b) Exponentially weighted moving average (EWMA) control chart which is covered by this document. This chart is presented like the Shewhart control chart; however, instead of placing on the chart the successive averages of the samples, one monitors a weighted average of the current average and of the previous averages.

EWMA control charts are generally used for detecting small shifts in the process mean. They will detect shifts of half sigma to two sigma much faster. They are, however, slower in detecting large shifts in the process mean. EWMA control charts can also be preferred when the subgroups are of size $n = 1$.

The joint use of an EWMA control chart with a small value of smoothing parameter (λ) and a Shewhart control chart has been recommended as a means of guaranteeing fast detection of both small and large shifts. The here considered EWMA control chart monitors only the process mean; monitoring the process variability requires the use of some other technique including special EWMA control charts.

The numbers in all tables and figures were calculated using the R-package SPC, (Knoth 2022), which makes use of the algorithm proposed by Crowder (1987).

The R-file containing the calculations can be downloaded on <https://standards.iso.org/iso/7870/-6/ed-2/en>.

Control charts —

Part 6: EWMA control charts for the process mean

1 Scope

This document covers EWMA control charts, originally proposed by Roberts (1959)^[16], as a statistical process control technique to detect small shifts in the process mean. It makes possible the faster detection of small to moderate shifts in the process mean. In this chart, the process mean is evaluated in terms of exponentially weighted moving average of all previous observations or averages.

The EWMA control chart's application is worthwhile in particular when

- production rate is slow,
- a minor or moderate shift in the process mean is vital to be detected,
- sampling and inspection procedure is complex and time consuming,
- testing is expensive, and
- it involves safety risks.

NOTE EWMA control charts are applicable for both variables and attributes data. The given examples illustrate both types (see 5.5, Annex A, Annex B and Annex C).

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.

ISO 3534-2, *Statistics — Vocabulary and symbols — Part 2: Applied statistics*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 3534-2 apply.

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

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

3.1

run length

number of samples taken up to the point at which a signal occurs

3.2

average run length

ARL

Mathematical expectation of the run length