

Motor/ Inverter Compatibility

Thermal Overloads and Single Phase Motors

Motors with thermal overloads installed may not operate properly on a VFD. The current carrying thermal overload is designed for sine wave power. Operation on a VFD may cause nuisance tripping or potentially not protect the motor as would be expected on line power. Thermostats or thermistors installed in the motor and connected properly to the VFD may provide suitable thermal overload protection when operating on a VFD. (Consult Codes)

Single phase motors and other fractional horsepower ratings are not designed to be operated on a VFD. Within Nidec Motor Corporation standard products, all motors NEMA[®] 48 frame (5.5" diameter) and smaller are not suitable for VFD applications. Three phase 56 and 143/145 frame applications should be noted on the catalog price page; or if in doubt ask a Nidec Motor Corporation technical representative for recommendations on compatibility with a VFD.

Slow Speed Motors

Motors with a base design of slower than six poles require special consideration regarding VFD sizing and minimizing harmonic distortion created at the motor terminals due to cable installation characteristics. Additional external PWM waveform filters and shielded motor cables designed for PWM power may be required to provide acceptable motor life. Harmonic distortion on the output waveform should be kept to a minimum level (less than 10%).

690V Applications

Motors that will be applied to 690Vac PWM VFDs require the use of an external filter to limit peak voltage spikes and the use of an Inverter Grade[®] motor. Where available, an alternative to using an output filter is to upgrade to a 2300V insulation system.

Low Voltage TITAN[®] Motors

The use of 449 frame and larger motors on PWM type VFDs should use the cable length limits of the second chart from the previous page as a guide for inverter application or consider the use of an external filter and shielded motor cables designed for PWM power to minimize harmonic distortion and peak voltages at the motor terminals. Harmonic distortion on the output waveform should be kept to a minimum level (less than 10%).

Bearing Currents related to PWM waveform

Due to the uniqueness of this condition occurring in the field, protection of the motor bearings from shaft currents caused by common mode voltages is not a standard feature on sinewave or Inverter Duty motor products, unless explicitly noted. Some installations may be prone to a voltage discharge condition through the motor bearings called fluting.

Fluting damage is related to characteristics of the PWM waveform, VFD programming and characteristics and installation.

Bearing fluting as a result of VFD sine wave characteristics may be prevented by the installation of a shaft grounding device such as a brush or ring and/or correction of the installation characteristics causing the shaft voltage condition.

Multiple Motors on a Single VFD

Special considerations are required when multiple motors are powered from a single VFD unit. Most VFD manufacturers can provide guidelines for proper motor thermal considerations and starting/stopping of motors. Cable runs from the VFD and each motor can create conditions that will cause extra stress on the motor winding. Filters may be required at the motor to provide maximum motor life.

Grounding and Cable Installation Guidelines

Proper output winding and grounding practices can be instrumental in minimizing motor related failures caused by PWM waveform characteristics and installation factors. VFD manufacturers typically provide detailed guidelines on the proper grounding of the motor to the VFD and output cable routing. Cabling manufacturers provide recommended cable types for PWM installations and critical information concerning output wiring impedance and capacitance to ground.

Vertical Motors on VFDs

Vertical motors operated on VFD power present unique conditions that may require consideration by the user or installation engineer:

- Slowest rpm that can be utilized and not cause the non-reversing ratchet to operate properly (in the range of 200 –300 rpm)
- Unexpected / unacceptable system vibration and or noise levels caused by the torque pulsation characteristics of the PWM waveform, a system critical frequency falling inside the variable speed range of the process or the added harmonic content of the PWM waveform exciting a system component
- Application related problems related to the controlled acceleration/deceleration and torque of the motor on VFD power and the building of system pressure/ load.
- The impact the reduction of pump speed has on the down thrust reflected to the pump motor and any minimum thrust requirements of the motor bearings
- Water hammer during shutdown damaging the non-reversing ratchet

Humidity and Non-operational Conditions

The possible build-up of condensation inside the motor due to storage in an uncontrolled environment or non-operational periods in an installation, can lead to an increased rate of premature winding or bearing failures when combined with the stresses associated with PWM waveform characteristics. Moisture and condensation in and on the motor winding over time can provide tracking paths to ground, lower the Megohm resistance of the motor winding to ground and lower the Corona Inception Voltage level of the winding.

Proper storage and maintenance guidelines are important to minimize the potential of premature failures. Space heaters or trickle voltage heating methods are the preferred methods for drying out a winding that has low megaohm readings. Damage caused by these factors are not covered by the limited warranty provided unless appropriate heating methods are properly utilized during non-operational periods and prior to motor start-up.

NEMA[®] Application Guide for AC Adjustable Speed Drive Systems:
<http://www.nema.org/stds/acadjustable.cfm#download>

*This information applies only to Integral Horsepower (IHP) motors as defined on the Agency Approval page, under UL[®] & CSA[®] listings where indicated.

† All marks shown within this document are properties of their respective owners