

Guidelines for the safe design and operation of
shell and tube heat exchangers to withstand the
impact of tube failure

2nd edition

GUIDELINES FOR THE SAFE DESIGN AND OPERATION OF SHELL AND TUBE HEAT
EXCHANGERS TO WITHSTAND THE IMPACT OF TUBE FAILURE

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CONTENTS

	Page
Foreword	11
Acknowledgements	13
1 Introduction	17
1.1 Background	17
1.2 Scope of guidelines	18
1.3 Application	18
1.4 Legislation requirements	22
1.5 Research studies	22
1.5.1 Introduction	22
1.5.2 High Pressure Heat Exchanger Task Group	22
1.5.3 Institute of Petroleum first JIP	23
1.5.4 EPSRC funded study	23
1.5.5 HSE follow-up study	23
1.5.6 CMPT funded study	24
1.5.7 Second HSE follow-up study	24
1.5.8 EI second JIP	24
2 Heat exchanger selection considerations	26
2.1 Introduction	26
2.2 Shell and tube heat exchangers	26
2.3 Failure considerations	26
2.4 Failure incidents	27
2.4.1 Lessons from incidents	27
2.4.2 Lessons for exchanger design	27
2.4.3 Lessons for exchanger operation and maintenance	29
2.5 Failure rates	29
2.5.1 Limited availability of data	29
2.5.2 Tube rupture frequency	29
2.5.3 Relief device reliability	30
2.6 Alternative heat exchanger types	30
3 Shell and tube heat exchanger design	31
3.1 Introduction	31
3.2 Tube failure scenarios	31
3.2.1 Two failure scenarios	31
3.2.2 Small leakage considerations	31
3.2.3 Tube rupture considerations	31
3.3 Factors affecting tube rupture peak pressure	32
3.4 Mitigating tube failures	34
3.4.1 Selection of the LP side design pressure	34
3.4.2 Bundle design	35
3.4.3 Tube vibration analysis	35
3.4.4 Relief device selection	38
3.4.5 Exchanger isolation	38
3.4.6 Instrumentation	38
3.4.7 High pressure in the shell	39

Contents continued		Page
3.5	Existing heat exchangers	39
3.6	Associated piping	40
3.6.1	Piping specification	40
3.6.2	Pipe routing	40
3.6.3	Support specification	41
3.6.4	In-line devices	42
4	Relief system design.	43
4.1	Introduction	43
4.2	Overpressure scenarios	45
4.3	Physical processes during relief	45
4.3.1	General	45
4.3.2	Transient stage	46
4.3.3	Pseudo-steady stages	46
4.4	Initial LP design pressure	47
4.4.1	Flow rate of HP gas into the LP side of heat exchanger	47
4.4.2	Gas impact induced initial step in LP pressure	48
4.4.3	LP design pressure	49
4.5	Types of relief devices	49
4.5.1	Introduction	49
4.5.2	Conventional PRVs	50
4.5.3	Balanced PRVs	50
4.5.4	Pilot-operated PRVs	50
4.5.5	Pin valves	51
4.5.6	Rupture discs	52
4.6	Shell and tube heat exchangers design considerations for selecting relief devices.	53
4.6.1	Dynamic pressure response during tube rupture	53
4.6.2	Operating pressure	57
4.6.3	Fluid composition and phase	58
4.6.4	Design temperature	58
4.6.5	Location of relief devices	59
4.6.6	Relief device configuration	59
4.6.7	Analysis considerations	60
4.7	Flare/relief system design considerations for selecting relief devices	60
4.7.1	Relief device interface with relief system	60
4.7.2	Unplanned opening of relief devices	61
4.7.3	Location of relief devices in relation to relief system	61
4.7.4	Discharge piping design	62
4.7.5	Relief device selection steps summary	62
4.8	Determining relief device set pressure	64
4.8.1	Factors affecting set pressure	64
4.8.2	Design publications (e.g. codes, standards, etc)	64
4.8.3	Manufacturing tolerance considerations	65
4.8.4	Operating conditions	67
4.8.5	Dynamic pressure response considerations	67
4.8.6	Interaction of relief devices	69
4.9	Relief device piping	69
4.9.1	Process design considerations	69
4.9.2	Mechanical design considerations	69

Contents continued	Page
4.10 Downstream of relief device	71
4.10.1 Process design considerations.	71
4.10.2 Mechanical design and construction.	72
4.10.3 Issues affecting the disposal system	73
4.11 Sizing the pressure relief system.	74
4.11.1 Procedure steps	74
4.11.2 Steady-state relief flow calculations	75
5 Dynamic simulation	79
5.1 Background.	79
5.2 Available dynamic models	79
5.3 Input data to dynamic models	79
5.4 Interpretation of dynamic simulation results.	80
5.5 Degree of validation of one-dimensional models	81
5.6 Effect of short duration pressure surges.	82
5.7 Limitations.	82
6 Instrumentation design and selection	84
6.1 Introduction	84
6.2 Purpose of instrumentation	84
6.3 Instrument design and selection	85
6.3.1 General	85
6.3.2 Instrument selection checklist.	85
6.4 Instrument options	86
6.4.1 Scope.	86
6.4.2 Heat exchanger performance.	86
6.4.3 Detecting tube failure.	87
6.4.4 Detecting relief device opening – PRV.	90
6.4.5 Detecting relief device opening – rupture disc	91
6.4.6 Detecting relief device opening – pin valve	93
6.4.7 Detecting relief device opening via tailpipe measurement.	93
6.4.8 Detecting flow in the tailpipe.	93
6.4.9 Detecting pressure difference across relief device(s)	94
6.4.10 Disposal system measurements.	95
6.4.11 Control valve positions and stops	96
6.4.12 Motor soft starts	96
6.5 Instrument actions.	96
6.6 Monitoring and recording system considerations	97
6.6.1 Basic requirements	97
6.6.2 Scan rate	97
6.6.3 Data captured	97
6.6.4 Installation and connection	97
6.7 Other considerations	98
6.7.1 Applicability	98
6.7.2 Space/layout	98
6.7.3 Testing – online/offline	98
6.7.4 Safety-critical systems.	98
6.7.5 Maintaining the integrity of the relief system	98
6.8 Human factors.	99
6.8.1 Applicability	99

Contents continued	Page
6.8.2	Operator interface and signal detection 99
6.8.3	Training and competence 100
6.8.4	Maintenance and testing 100
6.9	Summary selection criteria 100
6.9.1	Detection of tube rupture or leak 100
6.9.2	Relief device opening – specific to device 101
6.9.3	Relief device opening – general 101
6.9.4	Disposal system measurements. 101
6.9.5	Preventing relief events and/or spurious opening of relief devices 101
6.10	Assessment of existing installations 101
7	Operation 110
7.1	Introduction 110
7.2	Definition of safe design limits. 110
7.3	Operating procedures 110
7.4	Inspection and testing 111
7.5	Management of change 111
 Annexes	
Annex A	Glossaries 112
A.1	Introduction 112
A.2	Acronyms and abbreviations. 112
A.3	Definitions of terms 114
A.4	Variable symbols 125
Annex B	References. 127
Annex C	Applicable UK legislation. 132
C.1	General UK regulations 132
C.2	Offshore regulations (UK). 133
C.3	Onshore regulations (UK). 135
Annex D	Incidents 138
D.1	Introduction 138
D.2	Failure of shell and tube heat exchangers 138
D.3	Tube failures in shell and tube heat exchangers 140
D.4	Failures of shell and tube heat exchangers relief systems 141
Annex E	Failure statistics 145
E.1	Releases from shell and tube heat exchangers 145
E.2	Tube failures in shell and tube heat exchangers 149
E.3	Relief device failures. 150
Annex F	Experimental validation. 151
F.1	Introduction 151
F.2	Full scale tube rupture within a shell. 151
F.3	4" shock tube 156
F.4	Static pressure relief valve flow test rig 165
F.5	12" shock tube 166

Contents continued		Page
Annex G	Crossflow vibration analysis	174
	G.1 Introduction	174
	G.2 Analysis of heat exchanger tube vibration for crossflow	174
Annex H	Impact initial step pressure calculation	177
	H.1 Equation derivation	177
	H.2 Estimation of characteristic shell area	178
	H.3 Limitations of pulse pressure relationship	181
	H.4 Example calculations	182
Annex I	Shell and tube heat exchangers design sensitivity simulations	184
	I.1 Introduction	184
	I.2 Model assumptions	184
	I.3 Heat exchanger sizes modelled.	185
	I.4 Modelling results	186
Annex J	Options for relief device locations	192
	J.1 The issues	192
	J.2 Best arrangement.	193
	J.3 High flare header	193
	J.4 Two devices in series	195
	J.5 Summary	196
Annex K	Simulation of slug flow in the relief pipe	197
	K.1 Simulation case description	197
	K.2 Results	197

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

FIGURES

Figure 1:	Typical HP/LP STHE (Tubular Exchanger Manufacturers Association (TEMA) type AEU) .	17
Figure 2:	Suggested design sequence	20
Figure 3:	Suggested sequence for existing heat exchangers	21
Figure 4:	Fretting, impact and cracking failures.	36
Figure 5:	Inlet annular distributor	37
Figure 6:	Impingement rods under inlet nozzle.	37
Figure 7:	Suggested relief system design sequence.	44
Figure 8:	Experimental pressure traces for shell-side pressure following tube rupture, showing transient and pseudo-steady stages	45
Figure 9:	Schematic of event immediately following a tube rupture	46
Figure 10:	Schematic showing initial impulse step pressures	49
Figure 11:	Butterfly style pin valve	51
Figure 12:	Butterfly style pin valve typical schematic.	52
Figure 13:	Applicability of relief devices to design/test pressure levels.	56
Figure 14:	Relief device selection flowchart	63
Figure 15:	Rupture disc burst pressure tolerance and operating ratio	66
Figure 16:	Best arrangement for fast relief	70
Figure 17:	Comparison of model predictions with experimental results for peak shell pressure following tube rupture.	81
Figure 18:	Signal detection.	100
Figure 19:	Instrumentation decision tree	102–103
Figure F.1:	Photograph of experimental heat exchanger	151
Figure F.2:	Dimensioned sketch of experimental heat exchanger.	152
Figure F.3:	Dimensioned sketch of 8" diameter outlet line	153
Figure F.4:	Positions of instruments for large-scale experiments	153
Figure F.5:	Form of failure predicted by FEA	155
Figure F.6:	Comparison of measured and predicted strains for large-scale experiment	155
Figure F.7:	Schematic of shock tube	156
Figure F.8:	Comparison of dynamic simulations programs with shock tube results	157
Figure F.9:	Shock tube schematic for validating FEA program predictions.	158
Figure F.10:	Comparison of experimental yield pressure for an aluminium plate with that calculated by FEA	158
Figure F.11:	Shock tube schematics for testing various relief devices	159
Figure F.12:	Pressure traces for 0,1 m stainless steel disc with 0,004 m orifice.	161
Figure F.13:	Pressure traces for 0,05 m safety valve with 0,015 m orifice.	162
Figure F.14:	Pressure traces for 0,05 m safety valve with 0,004 m orifice.	162
Figure F.15:	Shock tube schematics for further testing of safety RVs.	163
Figure F.16:	0,2 m (8") stainless steel disc 0,08 m orifice test results (position K4).	164
Figure F.17:	M designation RV mounted on water reservoir for static testing	165
Figure F.18:	Overall schematic of shock tube indicating positions of 'driver', piezoelectric pressure sensors (K1 - K4) and RV for testing.	167
Figure F.19:	K1 to K4 sensor pressures for case M 1,2a.	168
Figure F.20:	Examination of early pressure rise on K4 using an accelerometer.	169
Figure F.21:	Schematic showing the extraction of the RFT.	170
Figure F.22:	Measured and simulated pressure traces for run P 4,0a	172
Figure G.1:	Fluidelastic instability and tube movement.	174
Figure G.2:	Fluidelastic instability constant for typical tube layouts.	176
Figure H.1:	Sketch showing longitudinal baffle	179

Contents continued	Page
Figure H.2: Sketch showing perpendicular baffle	179
Figure H.3: Sensitivity of initial step pressure to characteristic shell area for Exchanger 2 (medium)	181
Figure H.4: Sensitivity of reflected initial step pressure to characteristic shell area for Exchanger 2 (medium).	181
Figure I.1: Varying tube pressure	188
Figure I.2: Varying number of shell passes	189
Figure I.3: Varying tube volume percentage	189
Figure I.4: Varying baffling (shell baffling K factor)	190
Figure I.5: Varying shell flow rate (to turndown flows)	190
Figure I.6: Varying tube internal diameter.	191
Figure J.1: Relative location of heat exchanger and relief header	192
Figure J.2: Conventional relief device location	193
Figure J.3: Best arrangement for fast relief is to a low level header	193
Figure J.4: Dedicated header and knockout drum.	194
Figure J.5: Surge pressure suppression relief device location	194
Figure J.6: Two devices in series option.	195
Figure K.1: Sketch of simulation model	197
Figure K.2: Relief pipe slug lengths for 220 m relief pipe, 6 m exchanger shell and 199 barg gas pressure	198
Figure K.3: Relief pipe slug velocities for 220 m relief pipe, 6 m exchanger shell and 199 barg gas pressure	198
Figure K.4: Exchanger shell pressure for 220 m relief pipe, 6 m exchanger shell and 199 barg gas pressure (without initial pressure surges).	199

TABLES

Table 1: Relative trends on peak pressure and pipe load for different exchanger parameters	34
Table 2: Percent reduction in peak pressures when PRV opening time reduced from 50 ms to 4,6 ms.	54
Table 3: Example application of relief devices	57
Table 4: Code requirements for maximum set pressures for relief devices	65
Table 5: Detection of tube rupture or leak	104
Table 6: Relief device opening – specific to device.	106
Table 7: Relief device opening – general	107
Table 8: Disposal system measurements	108
Table 9: Preventing relief events and/or spurious opening of relief devices.	109
Table E.1: OREDA External leakage data for STHEs.	145
Table E.2: HSE hydrocarbon release data – breakdown by system	146
Table E.3: HSE hydrocarbon release data – breakdown by cause	146
Table E.4: HSE hydrocarbon release data – leak frequency data	147
Table E.5: IOGP Release frequencies for tube side hydrocarbon	147
Table E.6: DNV Release frequencies for tube side hydrocarbon.	148
Table E.7: Flemish Government failure rate data	148
Table E.8: API RP 581 Failure rate data.	148
Table E.9: IOGP release frequencies for shell side hydrocarbon.	149
Table E.10: DNV Release frequencies for shell side hydrocarbon.	149
Table F.1: Large scale experiment tube rupture and peak shell pressures	154
Table F.2: 4" shock tube experiments for one dimensional model verification	156
Table F.3: Large rupture disc and small safety valve experiment results.	160
Table F.4: Reverse acting stainless steel rupture disc 3-stage opening times	164
Table F.5: 4L6 Safety RV opening times	165

Contents continued	Page
Table F.6: Static test results for three relief valves, before and after dynamic tests	166
Table F.7: Target test conditions for dynamic testing, based on multiples of valve set pressure. . .	167
Table F.8: Time response data for valve dynamic testing using shock tube generated pulse pressures.	170
Table G.1: Values of C in tube natural frequency equation.. . . .	175
Table I.1: Modelled heat exchanger dimensions	185
Table J.1: Advantages (green) and disadvantages (orange) of each option.	196
Table K.1: Relief pipe diameters investigated for different cases	197
Table K.2: Relief pipe dynamic bend forces (DLF=2) for 220 m relief pipe, 6 m exchanger shell and 199 barg gas pressure	199
Table K.3: Relief pipe dynamic bend forces (DLF=2) for 220 m relief pipe, 6 m exchanger shell and 100 barg gas pressure	200
Table K.4: Relief pipe dynamic bend forces (DLF=2) for 220 m relief pipe, 6 m exchanger shell and 50 barg gas pressure	200
Table K.5: Relief pipe dynamic bend forces (DLF=2) for 20 m relief pipe, 6 m exchanger shell and 199 barg gas pressure	201
Table K.6: Relief pipe dynamic bend forces (DLF=2) for 20 m 8" relief pipe and 199 barg gas pressure	201

FOREWORD

This, the second edition of the *Guidelines for the safe design and operation of shell and tube heat exchangers to withstand the impact of tube failure* contains major additions to the first edition. Both first and second editions have been the result of joint industry projects (JIPs) managed by the Energy Institute (EI) and the former Institute of Petroleum (IP).

With shell and tube heat exchangers (STHEs) there is concern about the potential consequences of a tube failure allowing high pressure (HP) fluid on one side to enter the low pressure (LP) fluid on the other side. In the 1990s, with growing computer power and computer programming, some companies were using dynamic simulation to test the consequences of tube rupture to provide input to the design of the overpressure protection system. The IP formed a task group from which the first JIP was set up to commission full scale experiments of tube ruptures within a heat exchanger. The experiments investigated the pressures experienced by the heat exchanger, to which the accuracy of the simulations was compared.

One conclusion from the first JIP was that the relief device opening time was critical for the exchanger protection. At the time, only rupture discs had been reported to have fast opening times. As a consequence many heat exchangers were protected against sudden tube rupture using rupture discs. However, there have been a number of incidents in industry involving failure of these rupture discs on heat exchangers that would not have been as serious if other devices, especially reseating pressure relief valves (PRVs), had been used instead.

Consequently, the second JIP was set up to provide additional guidance and to perform additional experiments to investigate the opening times of pressure relief and pin valves of the typical sizes required to protect a heat exchanger. The second JIP included:

- Experiments with a larger shock tube and larger spring loaded safety valves than had been tested before, as well as tests with a pin valve.
- Simulation of the tests performed to gain extra detail and information from the measured results.
- A hazard and operability study (HAZOP) and hazard identification (HAZID) of typical STHE installations.
- Development of guidance on tube vibration failure modes and calculation of vibration potential.
- Simulations of heat exchanger tube rupture to compare the importance of different design parameters on the overpressures experienced.
- A survey of operators' experience with safety devices for overpressure protection of STHEs.
- A literature search to gather information on additional heat exchanger incidents and failure rate data.
- Using the results of the experiments and simulations to produce additional guidance on the selection of overpressure protection device types and operating setpoint specification.
- Using the HAZOP, HAZID and incidents to produce guidance on the design of pipework and instrumentation.

The output from the second JIP has led to these updated guidelines which, in particular, include:

- Flow charts for the process and decisions for:
 - overall design steps;
 - relief system design;
 - relief device selection;
 - decisions on instrumentation, and
 - reassessment of existing heat exchangers.
- Lists and outlines of past incidents involving failures with heat exchangers which can be considered to mitigate against repeat incidents.
- Further reliability statistics to aid quantitative risk assessments (QRAs).
- Relative impacts of changes to design parameters of a heat exchanger.
- Basis for analysing tube vibration.
- An equation to provide an initial estimate of the step increase in pressure following a tube rupture from which first approximation of the design pressure for the LP side can be chosen.
- Guidance on the issues to consider when designing the pipework connected to the heat exchanger.
- Discussion of the types of relief device available to protect the heat exchanger from overpressure and guidance for the selection of the relief device.
- Guidance on the location of the relief device relative to the heat exchanger and the flare header.
- Guidance for the specification of the set pressure of the relief device, taking into account manufacturing tolerance.
- Guidance on the software requirements and values to use when performing dynamic simulation of a tube rupture.
- Discussion on slug loads in the relief pipework as a result of opening of a relief device.
- Guidance on the selection of instrumentation for the heat exchanger to detect tube failure and to detect operation of the relief device.

Warning: It should be noted that if STHEs and associated relief systems are not designed correctly and a failure occurs then the result could be serious damage to the exchanger and/or its associated piping with potential consequential damage and/or injury.

The information contained in this publication is for guidance only, and while every reasonable care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of its contents, the EI, and its technical committees, cannot accept any responsibility for any actions taken, or not taken, on the basis of this information. The EI shall not be liable to any person for any loss or damage that may arise from the use of any of the information contained in any of its publications.

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The main deliverable of the first JIP was *Guidelines for the design and safe operation of shell and tube heat exchangers to withstand the impact of tube failure* (1st edition).

This revised publication has been produced primarily as a result of work carried in the 'Bursting disks for shell and tube heat exchanger overpressure protection joint industry project (JIP)', referred to herein as the second JIP. The JIP used some £250 000 of funding provided by the following sponsors and participants, and work- and equipment-in-kind provided by other participants:

- Sponsors:
 - BG International Ltd
 - BP Exploration Operating Company Ltd
 - ConocoPhillips (UK) Ltd
 - Energy Institute
 - Nexen Petroleum UK Ltd
 - Total E&P UK Ltd
- Participants:
 - ABB Consulting
 - Genesis Oil and Gas Consultants Ltd
 - Petrofac Engineering Ltd
- Work- and equipment-in-kind participants:
 - Anderson Greenwood Crosby – Pentair
 - BS&B Safety Systems (UK) Ltd
 - GE Oil & Gas
 - Health and Safety Executive/Health and Safety Laboratory
 - Heat Transfer Research, Inc.
 - Hydraulic Analysis Ltd

The second JIP was directed by a Steering Committee, which comprised the following representatives from May 2012 through to publication of these Guidelines:

Glyn Addicott	Hydraulic Analysis Ltd
John Blitz	BS&B Safety Systems (UK) Ltd
Jean-Paul Boyer	Anderson Greenwood Crosby – Pentair
Michael Cloete	ConocoPhillips (UK) Ltd
Steve Coates	Petrofac Engineering Ltd
Tim Davies	BG International Ltd
Colin Deddis (Chair)	Independent
Philip Eost	BP Exploration Operating Company Ltd
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Ian Wyatt	Atkins

The EI acknowledges their contribution to working collaboratively to ensure success of the JIP; in particular for ensuring the credibility of the deliverables by engaging in technical reviews of drafts. The listing refers to representatives' last affiliation whilst participating in the second JIP. Other sponsor and participant representatives are acknowledged for engaging in the JIP, for example in the HAZID workshop of typical STHE installations.

Development of these revised guidelines, the main deliverable of the second JIP, was informed by interim deliverables from several work packages. On behalf of the Steering Committee, the EI commissioned the following technical service contractors to execute these work packages:

Work package	Technical service contractor	Interim deliverable
Relief device selection		
RD1 and RD2	The University of Sheffield (Dr Bruce Ewan)	Final report on RD1 and RD2 work packages University of Sheffield
RD3	The University of Sheffield (Dr Bruce Ewan) and Atkins (Ian Wyatt)	Report on RD3 work package University of Sheffield
Heat exchanger design		
HE1.3	Heat Transfer Research, Inc. (Tom Lestina)	Mitigating tube vibration in heat exchangers
HE2.1 and HE3	Hydraulic Analysis Ltd. (Glyn Addicott, Marcus Shepherd)	Model calibration against the University of Sheffield shock tube results
HE2.1 and HE3	Hydraulic Analysis Ltd. (Glyn Addicott, Marcus Shepherd)	Unrelieved STHE tube rupture simulation results
HE2.1 and HE3	Hydraulic Analysis Ltd. (Glyn Addicott, Marcus Shepherd)	Report: Past project simulation results

Work package	Technical Service Contractor	Interim deliverable
HE2.1 and HE3	Hydraulic Analysis Ltd. (Glyn Addicott, Marcus Shepherd)	STHE tube rupture simulation results with spring relief valves (RVs) installed
HE2.1 and HE3	Hydraulic Analysis Ltd. (Glyn Addicott, Marcus Shepherd)	STHE tube rupture simulation results with pin valve installed
Design guidelines		
DG2 and DG3	Genesis Oil and Gas Consultants Ltd. (James Adamson, Colin Deddiss)	Guidance on relief device selection criteria for tube rupture and relief device set-point selection criteria
DG4 and DG8	Atkins (Gillian Dickson, Peter Henderson, Graham Maclean, Ian Wyatt)	Design criteria for overpressure protection of piping and flanges connected to heat exchangers
DG5	Health and Safety Laboratory (Matt Clay, Dr John Hare)	HAZID studies
DG5	Health and Safety Laboratory (Dr John Hare)	UK legislation and guidance
DG5.1	Atkins (Gillian Dickson, Peter Henderson, Graham Maclean, Ian Wyatt)	DG5 Disposal system design guidelines
Design guidelines		
DG5.2	Atkins (Gillian Dickson)	STHE/relief device interface design guidelines
DG6	Health and Safety Laboratory (Dr John Hare)	STHE failure rate data
DG6	Health and Safety Laboratory (Dr John Hare)	STHE summary of incidents (anonymised)
DG6	Atkins (Ian Wyatt)	Operator experience questionnaire
DG7	ABB Consulting (Sarah Harrison, Laza Krstin, Stanley Rowling)	Instrumentation requirements for detection of tube rupture and bursting disk rupture
TA1	Atkins (Ian Wyatt)	(This publication – the main deliverable)
PM1	Colin Weil (Consultant)	(This publication – the main deliverable)

Key to work packages

DG = Design guidelines

HE = Heat exchanger design

PM = Project Manager

RD = Relief device selection

TA = Technical author

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In addition, JIP sponsors, participants (and their affiliates, co-venturers and successor organisations) and technical service contractors also have access to 'Report to The Institute of Petroleum on the *Development of design guidelines for protection against over-pressures in high pressure heat exchangers: phase one*', Trident Consultants Ltd. and Foster Wheeler Energy, Report J2572 known as *The Trident report* June 1993.

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- BS&B Safety Systems (UK) Ltd.
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The process industries frequently require to heat or cool HP gas. The most common method used has been in STHes. The LP side of the exchanger, which contains a utility fluid such as sea water, is therefore at risk in the event of any leakage from the HP side of the exchanger. Such exchangers may have greatly differing operating pressures between the two fluids and the designer has to consider several variables when choosing the optimum exchanger type, selecting suitable materials, which fluid should be within the tubes and the design pressure and temperature for each side of the exchanger. It has become common practice for the LP side to be designed to withstand a pressure just above the operating or flow lock-in pressure of the utility fluid, but well below the HP side's operating pressure. There is a risk that tube failure could lead to failure of the LP pressure envelope and the release of large quantities of flammable gas. The LP side, therefore, should be protected against tube failure by fitting relief devices such as rupture discs, pin valves or safety relief valves (RVs). The adequacy of the methodology used to design the LP side to withstand the sudden release of HP gas through tube rupture was not proven before the work performed for the first edition of these guidelines. The consequences of such a failure can range from (at the worst) catastrophic rupture of the LP side with considerable financial loss and risk to personnel, to satisfactory release through the overpressure protection system.

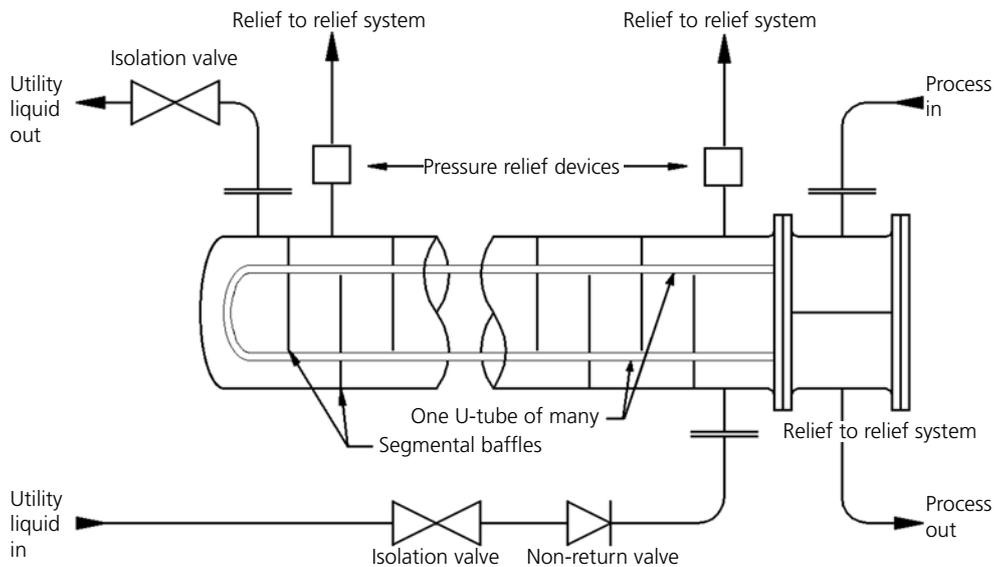


Figure 1: Typical HP/LP STHE (Tubular Exchanger Manufacturers Association (TEMA) type AEU)

The guidance in these guidelines is primarily for a heat exchanger where the HP gas is in the tubes and the LP heating/cooling medium is in the shell. A typical HP/LP STHE configuration is shown in Figure 1.

1.2 SCOPE OF GUIDELINES

Although these guidelines are based on experiments and other studies where the HP fluid is in the tubes, they are also suitable to form a basic approach for the alternate geometry where the HP fluid is contained within the shell.

Typically, in the designs relevant to these guidelines, the LP side fluid (usually a utility), operates at low pressures <15 barg, whilst the gas in the tubes may be at pressures ranging from several times the utility pressure to orders of magnitude higher.

There are four main scenarios that could generate pressure above the normal operating pressures within the utility side of the exchanger. These are thermal expansion, external fire, tube failure or flow lock-in. However, the designer should identify all credible causes of overpressure. These guidelines have been written to clarify the process industry's approach to designing for the tube failure scenario (which for HP services will usually be the most onerous). They provide good practice for the engineers faced with decisions on the safe design and operation of heat exchangers.

The experiments and studies upon which the guidelines are based were limited to applications of HP single phase gas discharging into LP single phase liquids. Hence, they may not be fully applicable to situations where multiple phases are present on either the tube or shell side prior to a tube failure, or where phase changes occur during a tube failure event e.g. flashing of the LP liquid phase.

The scope of the guidelines includes:

- heat exchanger including tubes and baffles;
- inlet heating/cooling medium pipe;
- exit heating/cooling medium pipe;
- relief devices;
- interface between the exchanger and relief devices;
- relief device tail pipes and impact on downstream disposal, and
- instrumentation for tube failure events and relief system operation.

1.3 APPLICATION

These guidelines are intended for process, mechanical and instrumentation engineers to use when designing systems incorporating STHes, when reviewing systems designed prior to publication of these guidelines, or when the process conditions are to be changed that could invalidate assumptions made in the system design.

This publication is based primarily on the UK and European legislative framework, but also international publications (codes of practice, design standards, specifications, guidance, etc.) and good practice. However, its guidance is universally applicable provided it is read, interpreted and applied in conjunction with relevant national and local statutory legislation and publications. Where the requirements differ, the more stringent should be adopted.

This publication adopts the notation of a comma for decimal mark (e.g. 4,2 mm) and a space as separator for thousands (e.g. 2 000). Also, it largely aligns to relief device terminology defined in API Std. 520 Part 1, except where there is uncertainty in what type of relief device is under consideration (e.g. in old reports).

These guidelines provide additional guidance and information for the safe design and operation of STHes, supplementing the design methodologies provided in various design publications (e.g. standards (Stds), codes, etc.) such as:

- API Std 521: *Pressure-relieving and depressuring systems*
- API Std 660: *Shell-and-tube heat exchangers*
- ASME Section VIII Division 1 and 2: *ASME boiler and pressure vessel code*
- EN 13445: *Unfired pressure vessels*
- PD 5500: *Specification for unfired pressure vessels*
- TEMA: *Standards of the Tubular Exchanger Manufacturers' Association*

Where the heat exchanger is being designed to one or more of these standards, these guidelines are applicable internationally. If operating outside of the UK the legislation applicable will differ from that listed in 1.4, in which case local legislation should be applied.

Section 2 describes issues with the design of STHes for tube failure events. Past failures are described and incident statistics are presented. This all forms a background as to why the risk of tube failure should be considered and some of the issues to be considered in improving the safe design and operation of these heat exchangers.

Section 3 provides guidelines for the design of the heat exchanger and associated LP inlet and exit pipework. Section 4 provides guidelines on the pressure relief system design to protect the exchanger in the event of a tube rupture. Dynamic simulation of tube rupture in heat exchangers is covered in section 5 and section 6 describes the options for instrumentation of the heat exchanger for detecting a tube failure event and detection of relief device operation. Section 7 includes guidance for the management of the heat exchanger once it is in operation.

The suggested design process, shown in Figure 2, is to first select the required heat exchanger type, then design the heat exchanger followed by the relief system. The design should then be checked for the consequences of tube rupture, maybe using dynamic simulation. If excessive pressures are predicted then the heat exchanger design should be reconsidered. If the design cannot be changed then it may be possible to change the design pressure of the LP side. Failing that, the relief system design should be modified. Once a suitable design is finalised the instrumentation can be added.

For existing heat exchangers, especially those designed before the first edition of these guidelines, the process in Figure 3 is suggested. On a periodic basis, the process hazards associated with the heat exchanger should be reviewed (see section 7). If the design publications have changed since the previous review then an investigation into the effects of tube rupture should be considered. If the analysis determines excessive pressures in the LP side as a result of tube rupture then the changes to LP side design pressure should be investigated. If that is not possible the modifications to the relief system should be investigated. If that is not possible then replacement of the heat exchanger should be considered.