

interface

ADVANCED FORCE MEASUREMENT

Load Cell Performance as Affected by Cable Length

For high accuracy force measurement the effects of the cable on the measurement must be considered. For constant voltage excitation there are two effects of significance. These are:

1. An effect on the sensitivity due to voltage drops over the cable length.
2. An effect on the thermal span characteristics of the load cell due to the change of cable resistance with temperature.

Cable Length Effects

If the load cell is sold with a cable of any length, the sensitivity is determined with the installed cable in calibration and this is not a problem. For load cells with connectors, or if the customer adds cable himself, there will be a loss of sensitivity of approximately 0.37% per 10 feet of 28 gage cable and 0.09% per 10 feet of 22 gage cable. This error can be eliminated if a six wire cable is run to the end of the load cell cable or connector and used in conjunction with an indicator that has sense lead capability.

Temperature Effects

Since cable resistance is a function of temperature, the cable response to temperature change affects the thermal span characteristics of the load cell/cable system. For 6-wire systems this effect is eliminated. For 4-wire cables the effect is compensated for in the standard cable lengths offered with the load cells if the load cell and cable are at the same temperature at the same time. For non-standard cable lengths, there will be an effect on thermal span performance. The effect of adding 10 feet of 28 gage cable is to cause a decrease in sensitivity with temperature equal to 0.0008%/°F (an amount equal to the standard Interface specification). For an added 10 feet of 22 gage cable the effect is to decrease sensitivity by 0.0002%/°F (one-fourth Interface spec). In many cases a customer can tolerate the degraded performance since our standard specification is extremely tight. However, for long cable runs or high accuracy applications, this can be a significant factor. In such cases, the best approach to the problem is to run six wires to the end of the standard cable length and sense the excitation voltage at that point. This eliminates the problem