

Fuel Cell System and System Components

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10 kW FC System for a utility vehicle

Automotive 50 kW FC System concept

Stationary/residential 3.5 kW FC System







Passive fuel cell





Definition of system

System – a group of units so combined as to form a whole and to operate in unison Webster Dictionary

Fuel cell system components

Fuel cell stack

Oxygen/air supply

- Hydrogen supply
- Water and heat management
- Fuel processing and integration of fuel processor
- Power conditioning and controls

Pure oxygen can be recirculated



Water balance

 $\dot{m}_{\rm H2O,in} + \dot{m}_{\rm H2O,gen} = \dot{m}_{\rm H2O,out}$

Water at exhaust may be present in vapor and liquid form

$$\dot{m}_{H2O,in} + \dot{m}_{H2O,gen} = \dot{m}_{H2O,out(v)} + \dot{m}_{H2O,out(l)}$$

For a closed loop system

 $\dot{m}_{H2O,gen} = \dot{m}_{H2O,out(1)}$

Therefore:

 $\dot{m}_{H2O,in} = \dot{m}_{H2O,out(v)}$

Water at inlet may be present in vapor and liquid form (depending on pressure, temperature and flow rate)

 $\dot{m}_{H2O,in(v)} + \dot{m}_{H2O,in(l)} = \dot{m}_{H2O,out(v)}$

$$\dot{m}_{\rm H2O,in(v)} = min \left[\frac{IN_{cell}}{4F} M_{\rm H2O} S_{O2} \frac{P_{sat}(t_{in})}{P_{in} - P_{sat}(t_{in})}, \dot{m}_{\rm H2O,out(v)} \right]$$

$$\dot{m}_{\rm H2O,out(v)} = \frac{\rm IN_{cell}}{\rm 4F} M_{\rm H2O} (S_{\rm O2} - 1) \frac{\rm P_{sat}(t_{out})}{\rm P_{out} - \rm P_{sat}(t_{out})}$$

$$\dot{m}_{H2O,in(1)} = \dot{m}_{H2O,out(v)} - \dot{m}_{H2O,in(v)}$$

t_{in} is unknown but may be found out from energy balance





oxygen circulation pum p

> water hseparator 4

O 2 purge

 $h_1 + h_4 = h_2$

$$h_1 = \frac{IN_{cell}}{4F} M_{O2} c_{p,O2} t_{tank}$$

$$h_{4} = \frac{IN_{cell}}{4F} \left(S_{O2} - 1 \right) \left[M_{O2} c_{p,O2} t_{out} + M_{H2O} \frac{P_{sat}(t_{out})}{P_{out} - P_{sat}(t_{out})} \left(c_{p,H2O(v)} t_{out} + h_{fg}^{0} \right) \right]$$

$$h_{2} = \frac{IN_{cell}}{4F}S_{O2}M_{O2}c_{p,O2}t_{in} + \dot{m}_{H2O,in(v)}(c_{p,H2O(v)}t_{in} + h_{fg}^{0}) + \dot{m}_{H2O,in(l)}c_{p,H2O(l)}t_{in}$$

O2 supply

O2 supply

Achievable oxygen temperature at the stack inlet when the oxygen exhaust is recirculated back to the inlet



Dashed lines – atmospheric pressure Solid lines – 300 kPa

Oxygen supply with humidification



Amount of water needed for humidification:

$$\dot{m}_{\rm H2O,in} = \frac{IN_{cell}}{4F} M_{\rm H2O} \left[S_{\rm O2} \frac{\phi P_{sat}(T_{in})}{P_{in} - \phi P_{sat}(T_{in})} - (S_{\rm O2} - 1) \frac{P_{sat}(T_{out})}{P_{out} - P_{sat}(T_{out})} \right]$$

Heat needed for humidification can be calculated from energy balance:



Heat needed for humidification:

$$\begin{split} & Q_{in} = h_{3} - h_{1} - h_{4} - h_{5} \\ & h_{3} = \frac{IN_{cell}}{4F} S_{O2} \Bigg[M_{O2} c_{p,O2} t_{st,in} + M_{H2O} \frac{\phi P_{sat}(t_{st,in})}{P_{in} - \phi P_{sat}(t_{st,in})} (c_{p,H2O(v)} t_{st,in} + h_{fg}^{0}) \Bigg] \\ & h_{1} = \frac{IN_{cell}}{4F} M_{O2} c_{p,O2} t_{tank} \\ & h_{4} = \frac{IN_{cell}}{4F} (S_{O2} - 1) \Bigg[M_{O2} c_{p,O2} t_{out} + M_{H2O} \frac{P_{sat}(t_{out})}{P_{out} - P_{sat}(t_{out})} (c_{p,H2O(v)} t_{out} + h_{fg}^{0}) \Bigg] \\ & h_{5} = \dot{m}_{H2O,in} c_{p,H2O(1)} t_{w} \end{split}$$

Air supply for fuel cell system



Compression power



Total power needed:
$$W_{EM} = \frac{W_{comp}}{\eta_{mech} \cdot \eta_{EM}}$$

Temperature at the end of compression:
$$T_2 = T_1 + \frac{T_1}{\eta_{comp}} \left[\left(\frac{P_2}{P_1} \right)^{\frac{k-1}{k}} - 1 \right]$$

Compression power



Air supply

Stack operation at different pressures



Air supply

Compression power





60°C 300 kPa 30 psig (308 kPa) 170 kPa e.0 (V) e.0 (V) e.0 (V) H2/Air - 20 psig (239 kPa) 1.5/2.0 10 psig (170 kPa) Current density: A/cm² 0.8 0.8 e 0.6 5.0 g Cell voltage: 0.66 0.60 V 0.4 0 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 1 1.2 1.4 Power density: 0.48 W/cm² 0.528 current density (A/cm²) W_{comp}/W_{stack} : 0.4 0.35 0.17 0.083 S=3: V=0.6 0.3 0.25 - S=3; V=0.7 - S=2; V=0.6 0.088 0.040 W/cm^2 Compression power ___S=2; V=0.7 ssion pow 0.2 0.15 0.1 W/cm² 0.44 Net power: 0.44 **Selduos** 0.05 250 350 400 100 150 200 300 Efficiency: 0.37 0.37 pressure (kPa) W_{net} V_{cell} W_{net} $\eta_{\text{sys}} = \eta_{\text{FC}}$ 1.482 W_{FC}

Air supply

Each stack has different polarization curves

Selection of operating pressure also depends on other factors (temperature, humidity ...)

Characteristic of positive displacement compressor



Reduction of flow rate does not need a change in back-pressure for positive displacement compressors

Characteristic of centrifugal compressor



Reduction of flow rate requires reduction of pressure for centrifugal compressors



Water content in air

at various temperatures and pressures 100% relative humidity



Air must be humidified (often saturated)

Humidification of air requires both water and heat



Water & Heat

Water & Heat

Humidification of air requires both water and heat



Source of water in fuel cell system: condensed water from the exhaust

Source of heat in fuel cell system: fuel cell, compressor, fuel processor



- Bubbling
- Membrane
- Water injection
- Steam injection





Inlet Purge $H_2 + \frac{1}{2} O_2 \rightarrow H_2 O$ Fan Temperature sensor FC CONTROLLER ON OFF $N_{H2O} = -2F$ IN Ĵ FC + LOAD+ Inlet Pressure valve regulator scu OUT FC LOAD-Purge valve V (20ms/div) Stopped CH1: OFF 5V/div 1:1 DC 0.00V CH2: ON 100mV/div 10 DC 0.000\ 100mV/div CH4: ON 2V/div 10:1 DC 0.00V **Record Length** Main: 1K Zoom: 1K Filter Smoothing: OFF BW: FULL Trace2: Max 468.Om¥ Min --4.000m∀ Trigger Min 1-12.00mV Trace3: Max 52.00mV Mode: SINGLE Trace4: Max 6.0807 Min 800.QmV EDGE Type: Source: CH4 ₽

Humidification by Short Circuit

Water & Heat

Air supply for fuel cell system

Air supply

Using fuel cell water and heat at the cathode exhaust for Inlet air humidification



Temperatures and pressures where water generated is sufficient to humidify reactant gases (hydrogen/air)





Air supply with humidification and liquid water collection



Air supply

Air supply for fuel cell system with compressor/expander



Expander power

$$W_{exp} = \dot{m}_{Airout} \cdot c_{p} \cdot T_{out} \left[1 - \left(\frac{P_{0}}{P_{out}}\right)^{\frac{k-1}{k}} \right] \eta_{exp}$$

Temperature at the end of expansion

$$T_{end} = T_{out} - T_{out} \left[1 - \left(\frac{P_0}{P_{out}}\right)^{\frac{k-1}{k}} \right] \eta_{exp}$$

Air supply

Compression power w/compressor/expander



Pressure at the fuel cell inlet Pressure drop: 20 kPa Fuel cell temperature: 80°C

Fuel cell system components

- Fuel cell stack
- Air supply
- Hydrogen supply
- Water and heat management
- Fuel processing and integration of fuel processor
- Power conditioning and controls

Hydrogen supply for fuel cell system in dead-end mode with intermittent purging



Hydrogen supply for fuel cell system with recirculation



Hydrogen supply for fuel cell system with humidification



Hydrogen supply for fuel cell system with hydrogen flow through and afterburner w/expander

hydrogen tank ir compressor humidifier humidifier expander M


Energy balance for the afterburner:



The more hydrogen is burned the more power is generated in expander

Does it make sense to waste hydrogen on combustion?



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External heat exchanger: Q_{HX,rem} = hA LMTD

LMTD = logarithmic mean temperature difference





Water and heat management for fuel cell system with separate water and coolant loops



Fuel Cell System with Air Cooling



Water & Heat







Example of a hydrogen/oxygen closed-loop fuel cell system





First PEM Fuel Cell Powered Submarine (1989)



Fuel cell system components

- Fuel cell stack
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Example of hydrogen/air fuel cell system



Fuel cell system with fuel processor



Fuels being considered (other than hydrogen)

- Natural gas
- Propane
- Methanol
- Gasoline
- Other liquid hydrocarbons
 - desulfurized gasoline
 - hydrocrackate
 - alkylate/isomerate
 - gas-to-liquid light paraffin
 - hydrotreated condensate

Fuel processing processes being considered

- Steam reforming
- Partial oxidation
- Autothermal

Basic Equations

Combustion:	$\begin{array}{l} CH_4 + 2O_2 \to CO_2 + 2H_2O(g) + \texttt{802.5 kJ} \\ C_8H_{18} + 12.5O_2 \to \texttt{8CO}_2 + 9H_2O(g) + \texttt{5,063.8 kJ} \\ CH_3OH + 1.5O_2 \to CO_2 + 2H_2O(g) + \texttt{638.5 kJ} \end{array}$	
Partial Oxidation:	$CH_4 + \frac{1}{2}O_2 \rightarrow CO + 2H_2 + 39.0 \text{ kJ}$ $C_8H_{18} + 4O_2 \rightarrow 8CO + 9H_2 + 649.8 \text{ kJ}$ $CH_3OH + \frac{1}{2}O_2 \rightarrow CO_2 + 2H_2 + 154.6 \text{ kJ}$	
Steam Reforming:	$\begin{array}{l} CH_4 + H_2O(g) + \textbf{203.0 kJ} \rightarrow CO + 3H_2 \\ C_8H_{18} + 8H_2O(g) + \textbf{1,286.1 kJ} \rightarrow 8CO + 17H_2 \\ CH_3OH + H_2O(g) + \textbf{87.4 kJ} \rightarrow CO_2 + 3H_2 \end{array}$	
Gas Shift:	$CO + H_2O(g) \rightarrow CO_2 + H_2 + 37.5 \text{ kJ}$	
Preferential oxidation:	$CO + 0.5 O_2 \rightarrow CO_2 + 279.5 \text{ kJ}$	
Water evaporation:	$H_2O(I) + 44.0 \text{ kJ} \rightarrow H_2O(g)$	

HEAT OF FORMATION

	MW	HF
		kJ/mol
H2	2.016	0
O2	31.9988	0
N2	14.0067	0
CO	28.0106	-113.8768
CO2	44.01	-393.4043
H2O(g)	18.0153	-241.9803
H2O(I)	18.0153	-286.0212
CH4	16.043	-74.85998
CH3OH	32.0424	-238.8151
C8H18	114.23	-261.2312

STEAM REFORMING



PARTIAL OXIDATION



AUTOTHERMAL



Overall equations for $CH_4 C_8 H_{18}$ and $CH_3 OH$

$$C_nH_mO_p + xO_2 + (2n - 2x - p)H_2O \rightarrow nCO_2 + (2n - 2x - p + m/2)H_2$$

$$\begin{array}{l} \mathsf{CH}_4 + x\mathsf{O}_2 + (2-2x)\mathsf{H}_2\mathsf{O} \to \mathsf{CO}_2 + (4-2x)\mathsf{H}_2\\ \mathsf{C}_8\mathsf{H}_{18} + x\mathsf{O}_2 + (16-2x)\mathsf{H}_2\mathsf{O} \to 8\mathsf{CO}_2 + (25-2x)\mathsf{H}_2\\ \mathsf{CH}_3\mathsf{OH} + x\mathsf{O}_2 + (1-2x)\mathsf{H}_2\mathsf{O} \to \mathsf{CO}_2 + (3-2x)\mathsf{H}_2 \end{array}$$

Efficiency =
$$\frac{\text{Hydrogen out}}{\text{Fuel in}}$$
 = $\frac{\text{mol H}_2 \times \text{H}_2 \text{ heating value}}{\text{mol fuel x fuel heating value}}$

For CH₄:

Efficiency (LHV) =
$$(4 - 2x) \frac{242.0}{802.5} = 0.3 \cdot (4 - 2x)$$

Efficiency (HHV) = $(4 - 2x) \frac{286.0}{890.6} = 0.321 \cdot (4 - 2x)$



Fuel cell system with fuel processor











Fuel processor is more than a box!



Issues on fuel processor integration with fuel cell

- start-up fuel
- quality of gas product during start-up
- start-up time
- controls
- supply pressure (fuel, water, air)
- efficiency (heating value of hydrogen/fuel)
- heat loss
- possibility of using heat from combustion of fuel cell exhaust gases
- reformate composition
 - hydrogen content
 - water content
 - CO content
- reformate temperature
- pressure drop
- water consumption
- quality of water downlet
- emissions
- turn-down ratio
- transient behavior

Fuel cell system components

- Fuel cell stack
- Air supply
- Hydrogen supply
- Water and heat management
- Fuel processing and integration of fuel processor

Power conditioning and controls

Fuel cell system design from electrical engineering point of view

- Voltage match
- Power conditioning
- Battery requirements
- Controls

Fuel cell generates power at variable voltage! Most loads cannot tolerate big voltage swings! Voltage correction is required!



In addition for AC load DC/AC conversion is required Inverter DC/AC

If ancillary equipment runs of voltage different than the load more than one converter/inverter may be needed in the system!

Fuel cell control

- Start-up procedure
- Monitoring of operating parameters
- Control of operating parameters current air supply hydrogen supply temperature
- Shut-down procedure normal fail-safe

Parasitic loads

- → air supply (blower or compressor/expander)
- → coolant pump
- → water pump(s)
- → heat exchanger fan(s)
- → solenoid valves
- → relays
- → controller



Fuel Cell System Efficiency (Hydrogen as Fuel)



$$\eta_{sys} = \frac{E_{net}}{H_{in}} = \frac{E_{FC}}{H_{in}} \frac{E_{net}}{E_{FC}}$$
$$\frac{E_{FC}}{H_{in}} = \eta_{FC} \qquad \frac{E_{net}}{E_{FC}} = \eta_{AC} \qquad \frac{E_{aux}}{E_{FC}} = \xi$$
$$\eta_{sys} = \eta_{FC} \eta_{AC} \left(1 - \frac{\xi}{\eta_{DC}} \right)$$
Fuel Cell System Efficiency (with reformer)



system efficiency =	net electricity out LHV fuel in	η _{system} = η _{ref} η _{PROX} η _{fu} η _{FC} η _{aux}
reformer efficiency =	LHV hydrogen out LHV fuel in	

Reformer efficiency

(POX/Autothermal)



oxygen equivalence ratio = (fuel/air actual)/(fuel/air theoretical for combustion) ©2002 by Frano Barbir.

system efficiency =	net electricity out LHV fuel in	η _{system} = η _{ref} η _{PROX} η _{fu} η _{FC} η _{aux}
reformer efficiency =	LHV hydrogen out LHV fuel in	
PROX efficiency =	LHV hydrogen out LHV hydrogen in	

PROX reaction: $CO + \frac{1}{2}O_2 \rightarrow CO_2$ Oxygen stoichiometric ratio = actual oxygen/theoretical oxygen Unwanted (but unavoidable) reaction: $H_2 + \frac{1}{2}O_2 \rightarrow H_2O$



CO level at PROX Outlet







Effect of fuel flow rate



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Parasitic load

- → air supply (blower or compressor/expander)
- → coolant pump
- → water pump(s)
- → heat exchanger fan(s)
- → solenoid valves
- → relays
- → controller



System efficiency



Fuel cell system efficiency



Efficiency

HDL 82 FCPM Efficiency Diagram



- → 750 W of parasitic losses in IDLE MODE
- → 6350 W of parasitic losses @ max power

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Efficiency of fuel cell vs. ICE



- a) Low pressure, low temperature fuel cell system
- b) High pressure, high temperature fuel cell system
- c) Fuel cell system with an on-board reformer
- d) Compression-ignition engine (diesel)
- e) Spark-ignition engine

Fuel Cell Systems

The systems may be as simple as







or even more complicated



The simplest fuel cell system

Passive fuel cell with open cathode Metal hydride bottle







A simple fuel cell system



Nexa Fuel Cell System



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A bit complicated fuel cell system



Automotive fuel cell system



Combined Heat and Power Fuel Cell System





