Chapter 12
Corrosion Protection

12-1. Corrosion Protection

Among other factors, the integrity and life of a piping system is dependent upon corrosion control. As discussed in previous chapters of this manual, internal corrosion of piping systems is controlled by the selection of appropriate materials of construction, wall thickness, linings and by the addition of treatment chemicals. External corrosion can also be addressed through materials of construction. However, other methods may be required when metallic piping systems are applied.

a. Buried Installations

In buried installations, leaks due to corrosion in metallic piping systems can cause environmental damage. Furthermore, certain types of processes pose safety problems if cathodic protection is not properly installed and maintained. The design and installation of the piping system without consideration of cathodic protection is not acceptable.

b. Above Grade Installations

The external surfaces of metallic piping installed above grade will also exhibit electrochemical corrosion. The corrosion rate in air is controlled by the development of surface-insoluble films. This development is, in turn, affected by the presence of moisture, particulates, sulfur compounds, nitrogen-based compounds, and salt. This corrosion is typically uniform, although pitting and crevice corrosion are also common. Besides selecting a material of construction that is appropriate for the ambient environment, the primary method of corrosion control in above grade piping system is the application of protective coatings. However, a stray current survey must be performed to ensure that electrical currents have not been created through the piping support system.

12-2 Cathodic Protection

Cathodic protection and protective coatings shall both be provided for the following buried/submerged ferrous metallic structures, regardless of soil or water resistivity:

- natural gas propane piping;
- liquid fuel piping;
- oxygen piping;
- underground storage tanks;
- fire protection piping;
- ductile iron pressurized piping under floor (slab on grade) in soil;
- underground heat distribution and chilled water piping in ferrous metallic conduit in soils with resistivity of 30,000 ohm-cm or less; and
- other structures with hazardous products as identified by the user of the facility.

a. Cathodic Protection Requirements

The results of an economic analysis and the recommendation by a "corrosion expert" shall govern the application of cathodic protection and protective coatings for buried piping systems, regardless of soil resistivity. In addition, cathodic protection for metallic piping supported above ground may be warranted. TM 5-811-7, Electrical Design, Cathodic Protection, provides criteria for the design of cathodic protection for aboveground, buried, and submerged metallic structures including piping. Cathodic protection is mandatory for underground gas distribution lines, 946 m^3 (250,000 gal) or greater water storage tanks and underground piping systems located within 3 m (10 ft) of steel reinforced concrete.[1]

For ductile iron piping systems, the results of an analysis by a "corrosion expert," as defined in Paragraph 12-2b, shall govern the application of cathodic protection and/or bonded and unbonded coatings. Unbonded coatings are defined in AWWA C105.

---

[1] TM 5-811-7, p. 2-2.

b. Cathodic Protection Designer

All pre-design surveys, cathodic protection designs, and acceptance surveys must be performed by a "corrosion expert." A corrosion expert is defined as a person who, by reason of thorough knowledge of the physical sciences and the principles of engineering and mathematics acquired by a professional education and related practical experience, is qualified to engage in the practice of corrosion control of buried or submerged metallic piping and tank systems. Such a person must be accredited or certified by the National Association of Corrosion Engineers (NACE) as a NACE Accredited Corrosion Specialist, or a NACE Certified Cathodic Protection Specialist licensing that includes education and experience in corrosion control of buried or submerged metallic piping and tank systems. The "corrosion expert" designing the system must have a minimum of five years experience in the design of cathodic protection systems, and the design experience must be type specific. For instance, a cathodic protection engineer who only has experience designing water tank systems should not design the cathodic protection system for an underground gas line.

The design of the cathodic protection system shall be completed prior to construction contract advertisement except for design-construct projects and pre-approved underground distribution systems. The liquid process piping specification section shall be coordinated with CEGS 13110, Cathodic Protection System (Sacrificial Anode); CEGS 13111, Cathodic Protection System (Steel Water Tanks); and CEGS 13112, Cathodic Protection System (Impressed Current) as required.

c. Cathodic Protection Methods

As previously discussed, galvanic corrosion is an electrochemical process in which a current leaves the pipe at the anode site, passes through an electrolyte, and re-enters the pipe at the cathode site. Cathodic protection reduces corrosion by minimizing the difference in potential between the anode and cathode. The two main types of cathodic protection systems, galvanic (or sacrificial) and impressed current, are depicted in Figure 12-1. A galvanic system makes use of the different corrosive potentials that are exhibited by different materials, whereas an external current is applied in an impressed current system. The difference between the two methods is that the galvanic system relies on the difference in potential between the anode and the pipe, and the impressed current system uses an external power source to drive the electrical cell.

d. Cathodic Protection Design

The design of a cathodic protection system must conform to the guidance contained in TM 5-811-7 (Army), and MIL-HDBK-1004/10 (Air Force). Field surveys and other information gathering procedures are available in TM 5-811-7. The following steps and information is required to ensure a cathodic protection system will perform as designed:

Step 1. Collect data:
- corrosion history of similar piping in the area;
- drawings;
- tests to include current requirement, potential survey, and soil resistivity survey;
- life of structures to be protected;
- coatings; and
- short circuits.

Step 2. Calculate the surface area to be protected and determine the current requirement.

Step 3. Select the anode type and calculate the number of anodes required.

Step 4. Calculate circuit resistance, required voltage, and current.

Step 5. Prepare life cycle cost analyses.

Step 6. Prepare plans and specifications.

12-3. Isolation Joints

When piping components, such as pipe segments, fittings, valves or other equipment, of dissimilar materials are connected, an electrical insulator must be used between the components to eliminate electrical current flow. Complete prevention of metal-to-metal contact must be achieved. Specification is made for dielectric unions between threaded dissimilar metallic components; isolation flanged joints between non-threaded dissimilar metallic components; flexible (sleeve-type) couplings for

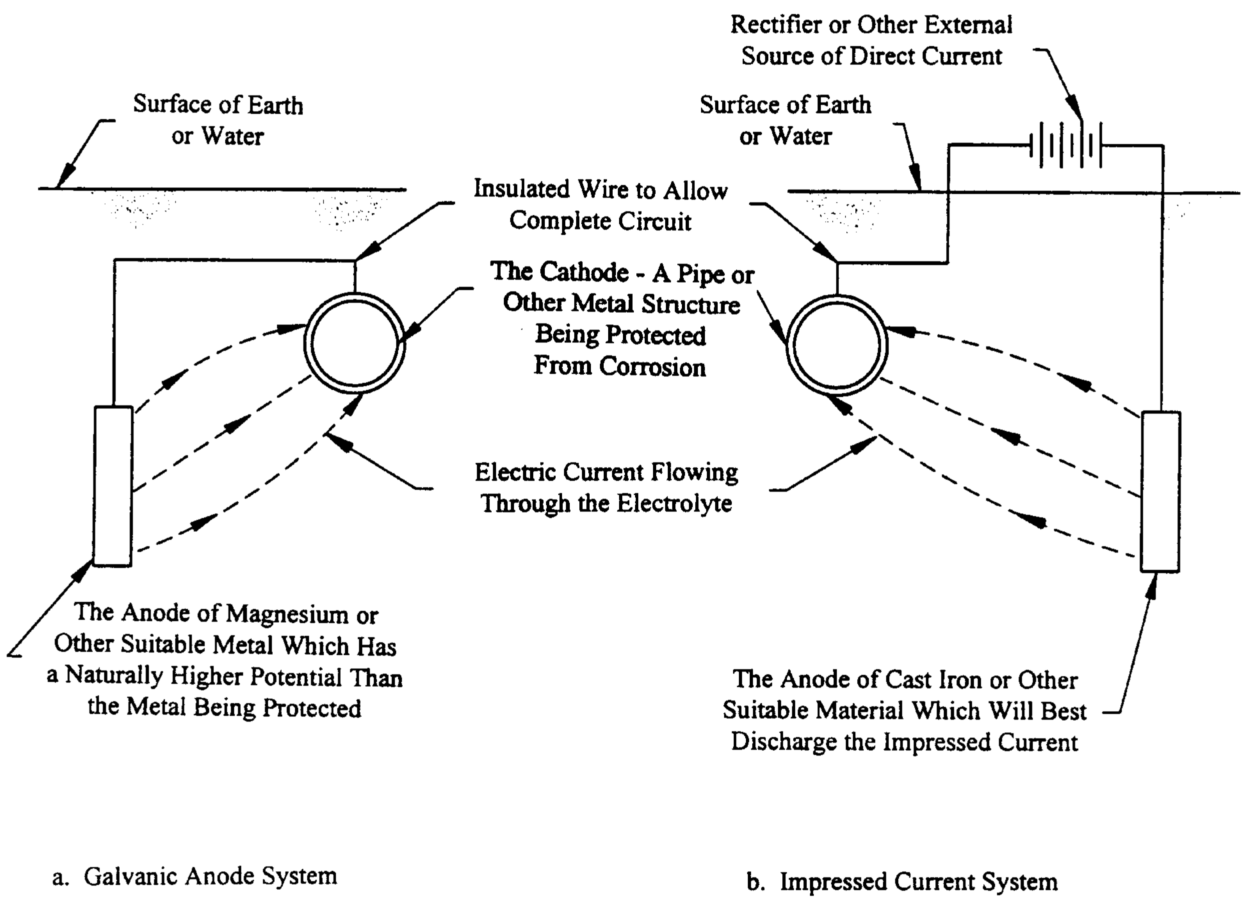

Figure 12-1. Cathodic Protection Methods
(Source: U.S. Air Force)

plain end pipe sections, see Chapter 11 for further information concerning these couplings; and under special aboveground situations that have USACE approval split-sleeve couplings. For the flanged isolation joints complete isolation is required; additional non-metallic bolt isolation washers, and full length bolt isolation sleeves are required. Dielectric isolation shall conform to NACE RP-0286. Copper water service lines will be dielectrically isolated from ferrous pipe.

a. Installation

Proper installation of isolation joints is critical. Installation procedures should follow the manufacturer's recommendations exactly.

b. Isolation from Concrete

A ferrous metallic pipe passing through concrete shall not be in contact with the concrete. The ferrous metal pipe shall be separated by a non-metallic sleeve with waterproof dielectric insulation between the pipe and the sleeve. Ferrous metal piping passing through a concrete thrust block or concrete anchor block shall be insulated from the concrete or cathodically protected.

c. Surge Protection

The need for surge and fault current protection at isolating devices (dielectrically insulated flanges) should be considered. If an insulated flange is installed in an area classified by National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) criteria, such as a flammable liquid pipe joint inside the classified area, a sealed, weatherproof surge arrester must be installed across each isolating device. The arrester should be the gapless, self-healing, solid state type, such as metal oxide varistor. Cable connections from arresters to isolating devices should be short, direct, and a size suitable for short-term, high current loading.

12-4. Protective Coatings

Since corrosion of metallic piping is electrochemical, if a protective coating that is continuous, impervious and insulating is applied to the piping exterior, the electrical circuit cannot be completed, and corrosion will not occur. The bases of selection for an exterior pipe coating are chemical inertness, adhesiveness, electrical resistance, imperviousness, and flexibility to adjust to both pipe deformation (for example, thermal expansion/contraction) and environmentally induced stress (for example, wind induced shear). Obviously, the coating must be applied without holidays and remain undamaged, without cracks or pinholes.