

SELECTION CONSIDERATIONS

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Voltage Rating

The voltage rating of a fuse is the maximum AC or DC voltage at which the fuse is designed to operate. Fuse voltage ratings must equal or exceed the circuit voltage where the fuses will be installed, and fuses used in DC circuits must be specifically rated for DC applications. In terms of voltage, fuses may be rated for AC only, DC only, or both AC and DC. However, exceeding the voltage ratings or using an AC only fuse in a DC circuit could result in violent destruction of the fuse.

The standard 600 volt rated fuses discussed in this section may be applied at any voltage less than or equal to their rating. For example, a 600 volt fuse may be used in a 277 volt or even a 32 volt system, but not any system exceeding 600 volts.

NOTE: This does not apply to semiconductor fuses and medium voltage fuses. See the semiconductor and medium voltage fuse application information on littelfuse.com for voltage limitations of these fuses.

Interrupting Rating

The interrupting rating of a fuse is the highest available symmetrical rms alternating current that the fuse is required to safely interrupt at its rated voltage under standardized test conditions. A fuse must interrupt all overcurrents up to its interrupting rating without experiencing damage. Standard UL fuses are available with interrupting ratings of 10,000 A, 50,000 A, 100,000 A, 200,000 A, and 300,000 A.

NEC® Article 110.9 requires that all equipment intended to break current at fault levels have an interrupting rating sufficient for the system voltage and current available at the equipment's line terminals. Refer to *Figure 1*. It is vitally important to select fuses with interrupting ratings which equal or exceed the available fault current.

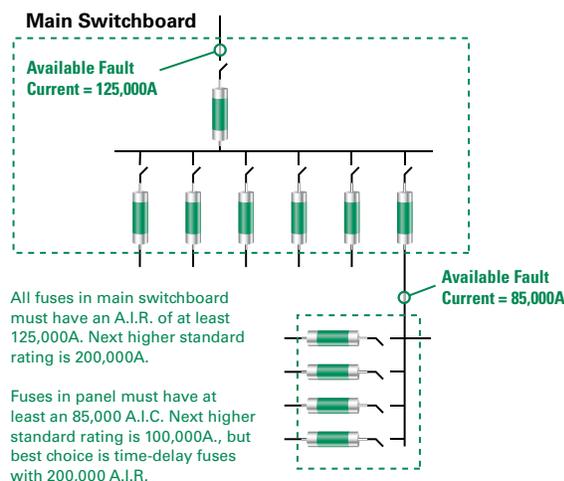


Figure 1 – Interrupting Rating Requirements per NEC

The recommendation to standardize on fuses with at least a 200,000 ampere interrupting rating (AIR) ensures that all fuses have an adequate interrupting rating while providing reserve interrupting capacity for future increases in available fault current.

300,000 AIR Fuses

Littelfuse POWR-PRO® fuse series have a Littelfuse Self-Certified interrupting rating of 300,000 amperes rms symmetrical. The 300,000 ampere testing was performed in a Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratory, and the tests were UL witnessed. UL has ruled that fuses with a UL interrupting rating greater than 200,000 amperes must be marked as “Special Purpose Fuses” and may not be labeled as UL Listed Class RK5, RK1, L, etc.

Type of Protection and Fuse Characteristics

Time current characteristics determine how fast a fuse responds to overcurrents. All fuses have inverse time characteristics; that is, the fuse opening time decreases as the magnitude of overcurrent increases. When properly rated in accordance with NEC® requirements, fuses provide both overload and short-circuit protection to system conductors and components. However, in some instances such as when fuses are used to backup circuit breakers or to provide motor branch circuit short-circuit and ground fault protection, fuses provide only short-circuit protection. A fuse's response to overcurrents is divided into short-circuits and overloads.

Short-Circuits

A fuse's short-circuit response is its opening time on higher-value currents. For power fuses, higher-value currents are generally over 500-600% of the fuse's current rating. As stated earlier, all fuses have inverse time characteristics: the higher the current, the faster the opening time. Since short-circuits should be removed quickly, inverse time is especially important for short-circuit protection.

Overloads

While fuses must disconnect overloaded conductors and equipment before the conductors and components are seriously overheated, they should not disconnect harmless temporary overloads. To provide sufficient overload protection for system conductors, UL has established maximum fuse opening times at 135% and 200% of a fuse's current rating. All UL Listed fuses for application in accordance with the National Electrical Code® must meet these limits whether they are fast-acting or time-delay fuses.

As just stated, a fuse is designed to respond to two types of overcurrents – short circuits and overloads. As a result, selecting the proper fuse for a given application usually involves deciding whether to use a time-delay fuse or a fast-acting fuse. A more in-depth review of both possible scenarios is important at this time.

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Fast-Acting (Normal-Opening) Fuses

Fast-acting fuses (sometimes called “Normal-opening” fuses) have no intentional time-delay. Typical opening times at 500% of the fuse ampere rating range from 0.05 second to approximately 2 seconds. Fast-Acting fuses are suitable for non-inductive loads such as incandescent lighting and general-purpose feeders, or branch circuits with little or no motor load. When protecting motors and other inductive loads, fast-acting fuses must be rated at 200-300% of load currents to prevent nuisance opening on in-rush currents. Fuses with such increased ratings no longer furnish adequate protection from overloads and only provide short-circuit protection. Overload relays or other overload protection devices must be provided to properly protect conductors and equipment from overload conditions.

All fast-acting fuses provide fast short-circuit response within their interrupting rating. Some are considered current-limiting, such as UL Class T and Class J. Others are non-current-limiting, such as UL Class H.

Time-Delay (SLO-BLO®) Fuses

Most UL Class CC, CD, G, J, L, RK5 and RK1 fuses, plus some of the UL Listed Miscellaneous fuses are considered time-delay. If so, they are identified as such on the fuse label with the words “Time-Delay”, “TD”, “D”, or some other suitable marking. Minimum time-delay varies with the fuse class, and to some degree with the fuse ampere rating. UL standards for POWR-GARD® fuse series FLNR, FLNR_ID, FLSR, FLSR_ID, IDSR (UL Class RK5), LLNRK, LLSRK, LLSRK_ID (UL Class RK1), and JTD, JTD_ID (UL Class J) require these fuses to carry 500% rated current for a minimum of 10 seconds. Standards for CCMR and KLDR (UL Class CC and CD) and SLC (UL Class G) fuses require them to carry 200% rated current for a minimum of 12 seconds.

Although there is no UL Classification for time-delay Class L fuses, it is still permissible for them to be marked “Time-Delay.” The amount of time-delay is determined by the manufacturer. Littelfuse KLPC series and KLLU series fuses will hold 500% current for 10 seconds or more.

In addition to providing time-delay for surges and short time overloads, time-delay fuses meet all UL requirements for sustained overload protection. On higher values of current, time-delay fuses are current-limiting; meaning they remove large overcurrents in less than one-half cycle (0.00833 seconds). Time-delay fuses provide the best overall protection for both motor and general purpose circuits, and eliminate nuisance fuse opening and most situations of downtime.

Compared to fast-acting fuses, time-delay fuses can be selected with ratings much closer to a circuit’s operating current. For example, on most motor circuits Class RK5 and RK1 fuses can be rated at 125-150% of a motor’s full load current (FLA). This provides superior overload and short-

circuit protection, and often permits the use of smaller, less expensive disconnect switches. Time-delay fuses have gradually replaced most one-time (UL Class K5) and renewable (UL Class H) fuses. Today, more than 50% of all fuses sold by electrical distributors are time-delay fuses.

Dual Element Fuses

Littelfuse time-delay FLNR, FLNR_ID, FLSR, FLSR_ID, IDSR (UL Class RK5), and LLNRK, LLSRK, LLSRK_ID (UL Class RK1), and some JTD, JTD_ID (UL Class J) series fuses have true dual-element construction meaning the fuse has an internal construction consisting of separate short-circuit and overload sections or elements. Time-delay elements are used for overload protection, and separate fast acting fuse elements or links are used to provide current-limiting short-circuit protection.

Very Fast-Acting Fuses

This category of fuses exists for limited applications. The principle use of very fast acting fuses is to protect solid-state electronic components, such as semiconductors. Fuse series designated as ‘High-Speed (Semiconductor) Fuses’ have special characteristics including quick overload response, very low I^2t and I_{peak} currents, and peak transient voltages, that provide protection for components that cannot withstand line surges, low value overloads, or short-circuit currents. Very fast-acting fuses are designed for very fast response to overloads and short-circuits, and are very current-limiting.

Effect of Ambient Temperature on Fuses

The current carrying capacity of fuses is 110% of the fuse rating when installed in a standard UL test circuit and tested in open air at 25°C ambient. This allows for derating to 100% of rating in an enclosure at 40°C ambient.

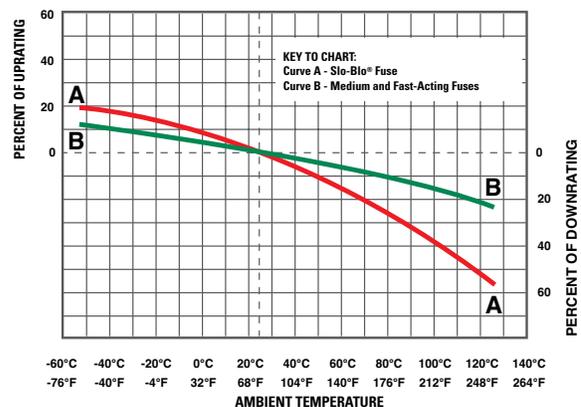


Figure 2 – Fuse Rerating Curve

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Current Limitation

A current-limiting fuse is one that opens and clears a fault in less than 180 electrical degrees, or in other words, within the first half electrical cycle (0.00833 seconds). See the definition of Current-limiting Fuse and *Figure 13* in the Terms and Definitions section.

NEC® Article 240.2 states that a current-limiting overcurrent protective device must reduce the peak let-through current to a value substantially less than the potential peak current that would have occurred if the fuse were not used in the circuit or were replaced with solid conductors of the same impedance. The total destructive heat energy (I^2t) to the circuit and its components is greatly minimized as a result of using current-limiting fuses.

It is important to note that UL Class H 'Renewable' fuses designed decades ago are considered non-current limiting. Other than Midget fuses, almost all other fuse types used in today's electrical systems and applications are considered current-limiting per the above parameters. This selection consideration now involves determining the degree or level of current limitation required to properly protect a given device or system.

It is also important to point out that matching fuse holders and/or fuse blocks must reject non-current-limiting fuses and accept only current-limiting fuses of the stated UL Class.

Physical Size

While often overlooked, the physical size or overall dimensions of the fuse to be used in a given application is another important selection consideration to evaluate. There is a trend toward reduction of size in almost everything, and electrical equipment is no exception. Fuse size is actually determined by the size and dimensions of the fuse block or disconnect switch in which it is installed.

While saving space may be an important factor when selecting the proper fuses, other considerations should not be overlooked. Some of these include:

- Does the smallest fuse have the most desirable characteristics for the application?
- Does the equipment in which the fuse will be installed provide adequate space for maintenance?
- Do smaller fuses coordinate well with the system's other overcurrent protection?

If looking at just physical dimensions, a 600 volt, 60 ampere, 200,000 AIR, time-delay, dual-element UL Class CD fuse is smaller than a similarly rated UL Class J fuse, which is in turn, considerably smaller than a similarly rated UL Class RK1 or Class RK5 fuse. However, smaller-sized fuses can sometimes have less time-delay or more nuisance openings than their larger counterparts, so it is always important to consider all factors involved.

Indication

The newest consideration for selecting the best fuse for a given application is indication. Many of the more commonly used UL fuse classes are now available in both indicating and non-indicating versions. Built-in, blown-fuse indication that quickly identifies which fuse or fuses within an electrical panel or system have blown can be found on the Littelfuse POWR-PRO® LLSRK_ID Class RK1, FLNR_ID, FLSR_ID and IDSR Class RK5, and JTD_ID Class J fuse series.

The indicating feature on these fuses provides reduced downtime, increased safety, and reduced housekeeping or troubleshooting headaches and delays. Littelfuse Indicator® fuses will help lower the costs associated with downtime, provide longer fuse life by minimizing nuisance openings, increase system performance by minimizing equipment damage, and improve safety by minimizing accidents.

III. GENERAL FUSING RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above selection considerations, the following is recommended:

Fuses with ampere ratings from 1/10 through 600 amperes

- When available fault currents are less than 100,000 amperes and when equipment does not require the more current-limiting characteristics of UL Class RK1 fuses, FLNR and FLSR_ID Series Class RK5 current-limiting fuses provide superior time-delay and cycling characteristics at a lower cost than RK1 fuses. If available fault currents exceed 100,000 amperes, equipment may need the additional current-limitation capabilities of the LLNRK, LLSRK and LLSRK_ID series Class RK1 fuses.
- Fast-acting JLLN and JLLS series Class T fuses possess space-saving features that make them especially suitable for protection of molded case circuit breakers, meter banks, and similar limited-space applications.
- Time-delay JTD_ID and JTD series Class J fuses are used in OEM motor control center applications as well as other MRO motor and transformer applications requiring space-saving IEC Type 2 protection.
- Class CC and Class CD series fuses are used in control circuits and control panels where space is at a premium. The Littelfuse POWR-PRO CCMR series fuses are best used for protection of small motors, while the Littelfuse KLDR series fuses provide optimal protection for control power transformers and similar devices.

For questions about product applications, call our Technical Support Group at 800-TEC-FUSE.

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Fuses with ampere ratings from 601 through 6,000 amperes

For superior protection of most general-purpose and motor circuits, it is recommended to use the POWR-PRO® KLPC series Class L fuses. The Class L fuses are the only time-delay fuse series available in these higher ampere ratings.

Information on all the Littelfuse fuse series referenced above can be found on the UL/CSA Fuse Classes and Applications Charts found later in this Technical Application Guide.

IV. SELECTION CONSIDERATIONS FOR FUSE HOLDERS

Equally important to the selection of the proper fuse is the correct selection of the proper fuse holder or fuse block for a given application. Fuse holders are available using most of the same Selection Considerations outlined above for UL fuse classes. Considerations for fuse holders include:

- Current Rating
- Voltage Rating
- Interrupting Rating
- Physical Size
- Indication

Additional selection considerations for fuse holders and fuse blocks include:

- Number of poles
- Mounting configuration
- Connector type

Number of Poles

The number of poles for each set of fuses is determined by the characteristics of the circuit. Most fuse block series are available in 1, 2, or 3 pole configurations, although some are also available with four or more poles. The option to gang individual fuse blocks into longer strips will be determined by the available space and type of wire being used.

Mounting Configuration

Depending on the fuse block design, another selection consideration to evaluate is how the fuse block is mounted or inserted into the panel. Historically, fuse blocks simply screwed into the back of the panel, but many newer designs have now added (or replaced the screw-in design with) a DIN rail mounting capability. The DIN rail mounting feature allows the blocks to be quickly installed and removed from the rails.

Connector Type

For Littelfuse fuse blocks, a choice of three connector types or wire terminations is available:

- Screw – for use with spade lugs or ring terminals.
- Screw with Pressure Plate – for use with solid or stranded wire without terminal and recommended for applications where vibration will be a factor.
- Box Lug – the most durable of the three options and used with all types of solid wire and Class B and Class C stranded wire.

There are a few additional aspects to keep in mind when selecting the fuse holder or fuse block needed for a given application. UL Class H blocks accept Class H, Class K5, and Class R fuses. Similarly, Midget-style fuse blocks accept both Midget and UL Class CC fuses.

Both UL Class R and Class CC fuse holders contain a rejection feature which prevents the insertion of a different Class or type of fuse. The physical size and dimensions of UL Class J and Class T fuses accomplish the same thing in preventing the insertion of a different Class of fuse as well.

V. CIRCUIT PROTECTION CHECKLIST

To select the proper overcurrent protective device for an electrical system, circuit and system designers should ask themselves the following questions before a system is designed:

- What is the normal or average current expected?
- What is the maximum continuous (three hours or more) current expected?
- What inrush or temporary surge currents can be expected?
- Are the overcurrent protective devices able to distinguish between expected inrush and surge currents, and open under sustained overloads and fault conditions?
- What kind of environmental extremes are possible? Dust, humidity, temperature extremes and other factors need to be considered.
- What is the maximum available fault current the protective device may have to interrupt?
- Is the overcurrent protective device rated for the system voltage?
- Will the overcurrent protective device provide the safest and most reliable protection for the specific equipment?
- Under short-circuit conditions, will the overcurrent protective device minimize the possibility of a fire or explosion?
- Does the overcurrent protective device meet all the applicable safety standards and installation requirements?

Answers to these questions and other criteria will help to determine the type overcurrent protection device to use for optimum safety, reliability and performance.