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PROTECTION AGAINST INTERFERENCE

PROTECTION OF REMOTE - FEEDING SYSTEMS AND LINE REPEATERS AGAINST LIGHTNING AND INTERFERENCE FROM NEIGHBOURING ELECTRICITY LINES

ITU-T Recommendation K.15

(Extract from the *Blue Book*)

NOTES

1 ITU-T Recommendation K.15 was published in Volume IX of the *Blue Book*. This file is an extract from the *Blue Book*. While the presentation and layout of the text might be slightly different from the *Blue Book* version, the contents of the file are identical to the *Blue Book* version and copyright conditions remain unchanged (see below).

2 In this Recommendation, the expression "Administration" is used for conciseness to indicate both a telecommunication administration and a recognized operating agency.

Recommendation K.15

PROTECTION OF REMOTE-FEEDING SYSTEMS AND LINE REPEATERS AGAINST LIGHTNING AND INTERFERENCE FROM NEIGHBOURING ELECTRICITY LINES

(Geneva, 1972)

Preliminary recommendation

To minimize interference to the power feeding of repeaters from external sources, the CCITT recommends that, whenever possible, the repeater power-feeding system should be so arranged that the circuit in which the power-feeding currents circulate (including the units connected to it) remains balanced with respect to the sheath and to earth, and that the circuit in which the power- feeding currents circulate does not provide low impedance paths for longitudinal currents.

Introduction

The presence of components capable of withstanding only moderate excess voltage stress, in particular semiconductor components (transistors, etc.) in telecommunication equipment, necessitates protective measures against overvoltages which may occur at the terminals. This is so even if the overvoltages only slightly exceed the service voltages, as they are still capable of disturbing the functioning of these components and even of destroying them.

In addition, the functioning of circuits provided with repeaters may be disturbed by electromotive forces induced by power lines, depending on how the lines are operated; disturbance may be caused even when there is no fault on the lines.

Components, in particular the semiconductor components of apparatus which is directly connected to the conductors of telecommunication lines, may be damaged since these conductors, whether in cable or in open-wire lines, are exposed to overvoltages due to external sources such as the magnetic induction caused by power lines or atmospheric discharges.

The repeaters inserted at intervals on telecommunication lines belong to this category of equipment. As the remote feeding is by the cable or open-wire conductors which are used for transmission, the overvoltages may reach the terminals of the semiconductor components and damage them. This can be avoided if protective devices or appropriate circuit designs are provided in order to limit the overvoltages at sensitive points to permissible values or to preclude them altogether.

The protective measures required depend partly on the following:

- the value of the e.m.f. which may occur;
- the composition of the line, particularly when cable pairs are used;
- the arrangements made with regard to the outer conductor of coaxial pairs in relation to the metallic sheath of the cable (floating potential or earth);
- the type of power supply (d.c. or a.c.).

If the overvoltages occuring on conductors used for the power supply are due to magnetic induction caused by neighbouring power lines, one can start by assessing their values by the calculation methods indicated in the *Directives*. Additional calculations are necessary to find what protective measures are required.

When the overvoltages are due to atmospheric discharges, their values can only be reckoned approximately. The protection provided must therefore be tested in the apparatus concerned under the most realistic possible conditions.

The above requirements are met by the measures recommended below. These do not pretend to be complete as the technique is still changing; they will, however, ensure for the manufacturer and the user of such systems a high degree of protection.

1 Methods of calculation

1.1 The *Directives*[1] explain, in principle, how to calculate the longitudinal e.m.f. induced in the remote-feeding circuit. The calculation method is applicable both under normal operating conditions and when there is a fault on the electricity line.

1.2 The additional calculation of voltages and currents induced in a coaxial pair is based on the longitudinal e.m.f. reckoned from the information referred to in § 1.1 above. For this calculation it is advisable to refer to Recommendation K. 16. (See also reference [2].)

1.3 For the evaluation of voltages and currents (peak value of short impulses) that may occur in remote-feeding circuits following atmospheric discharges, reference should be made to the manual cited in [3]. (See also reference [4].)

2 Limit values of overvoltages

2.1 *Longitudinal voltages caused by magnetic induction*

In principle, the limit values of induced longitudinal voltages indicated in [5] must not be exceeded when the ability of the material (cables, conductors, equipment) to withstand higher voltages is in doubt. A higher limit may be permitted, however, if a previous examination of the dielectric strength of the insulation of the conductors and the equipment connected to them show that there is no danger of breakdown (see [5]).

If the remote-feeding equipment raises the conductors permanently to a high potential with respect to the metallic sheath of the cable or to earth, it must be borne in mind that the induced voltage is superimposed on the power supply voltage (see [5]).

2.2 *Overvoltages caused by atmospheric discharges*

The permissible limit values of impulse voltages depend mainly on the dielectric strength of the insulation of the conductors and the equipment connected to them unless additional provision is made (e.g. in the systems) to limit the overvoltages to values below the breakdown voltages. The permissible limits at the terminals of equipment including semiconductor components depend on the characteristics of those components.

3 Protective measures

3.1 *Protection against overvoltages*

The protective measures should be designed to function whatever the source of the overvoltages (magnetic induction, atmospheric discharges, etc.).

3.1.1 *Protection of conductors in cables*

If the limit values indicated in §§ 2.1 and 2.2 above are exceeded, adequate protective measures should be applied. For example, the dielectric strengh of the insulation may be increased when new equipments are installed. It is also possible to use cables with an improved screening factor. Furthermore, voltages may be limited by lightning protectors or other voltage limiting devices. In the latter case, care must be taken to ensure that the lightning protector ceases to function once the overvoltage has disappeared and that the power feeding conductor resumes normal operation. Other protective measures are not excluded.

In composite cables in which some pairs are used for power feeding, it is advisable to coordinate the protective measures for all the conductors so as to preclude harmful effects on the cable as a whole.

3.1.2 *Protection of repeaters*

Protection must be provided both at the input and output of the repeater and on the remote-feeding circuit.

It is recommended that protection be incorporated in repeaters using solid-state devices at the time of manufacture so as to prevent damaging magnitudes of overvoltages from reaching the terminals of sensitive elements, e.g. the semiconductor components.

When lightning protectors are employed to limit overvoltages, it must be borne in mind that certain overvoltages whose amplitude is less than the striking voltage are still high enough to damage some components, e.g. the semiconductor junctions of components, transistors, etc. present in the equipment. It is therefore advisable to provide protection internally by associating with the lightning protectors other protective components, such as Zener diodes and filtering, (this may already be provided in the equipment). The combination of these elements inside the equipment gives protection that is an integral part of the equipment. This is done in such a way that the overvoltages, whatever their source or value, are reduced by stages to a sufficiently low level as not to cause any harm.

It may happen that the protection of repeaters from voltages induced permanently by power or traction lines requires fewer components and is less expensive when the outer conductor of the coaxial pairs is at a floating potential than when it is earthed. On the other hand, when the outer conductor is earthed, staff working on coaxial pair lines are better protected against accidental contact with the inner conductor which, as it is used for power feeding, is raised to a certain potential. As each system has its advantages and disadvantages, the choice will depend on operating requirements.

3.2 *Measures to ensure the satisfactory functioning of equipment in the presence of disturbing voltage permanently induced in the cable*

Steps must be taken to ensure that the repeater functions properly in the presence of disturbing voltages and current permanently induced in the cable conductors by power or traction lines. This refers to power lines that cause interference, but which are fault-free. The values of the induced voltages and currents may be assessed by the calculation methods referred to in § 1.1 above.

4 Testing of power-fed repeaters using solid-state devices

4.1 *General*

It is advisable that the test conditions simulate real conditions as closely as possible. They must reproduce not only normal working conditions but accidental circumstances, for example when a conductor which is normally insulated comes into contact with the metallic sheath of the cable or with the earth.

4.2 *Testing by impulse voltages*

It is recommended that the information in Recommendation K.17 should be referred to when tests are carried out by means of impulse voltages and currents. With regard to the amplitude of the waveforms, it is not enough to allow it to increase to the maximum; it is also necessary to make the test with an amplitude which is less than any threshold voltage of the protection (e.g. striking voltage of lightning protectors). The effectiveness of the protective devices (diodes, for example) can thus be ascertained in respect of overvoltages whose amplitude is low but whose energy may be high.

When lightning protectors are employed, it is necessary to ensure that their striking voltages are less than the dielectric strength between the conductors and the equipment chassis in order to prevent any breakdown.

4.3 *Testing by alternating voltages*

When repeaters are power fed by symmetric or coaxial pairs whose outer conductors are insulated from earth or from the metallic cable sheath, it is advisable to carry out a test with an alternating voltage to ensure that the strength of the insulation with respect to earth is higher than the values permitted in the *Directives* for voltages due to magnetic induction.

In order to check the behaviour of the repeaters and their power supply path when the lightning protectors strike, an alternating current in accordance with the information given in Recommendation K.17 should be applied to the terminals of the path.

In systems where a permanently induced voltage may be expected due, for example, to the alternating current in railway lines, it is necessary to superimpose on the feed current an alternating current of the same frequency (50 Hz, 60 Hz, 16 2/3 Hz) and strength as that produced in the power-feeding section when the induced voltage has the value specified in [5]. During the flow of the induced current the hum modulation must be so small that the values for route sections suggested by Study Group XV in Question 11 are obtained.

References

[1] CCITT manual *Directives concerning the protection of telecommunication lines against harmful effects from electric power and electrified railway lines,* Vol. II, ITU, Geneva, 1988.

[2] KEMP, (J.), SILCOOK, (H.W.), STEWARD, (C.J.): Power frequency induction on coaxial cables with application to transistorized systems, *Electrical Communication,* Vol. 40, No. 2, pp. 255-266, 1965.

[3] CCITT manual *The protection of telecommunication lines and equipment against lightning discharges*, ITU, Geneva, 1974, 1978.

[4] KEMP, (J.): Estimating voltage surges on buried coaxial cables struck by lightning, *Electrical Communication*, Vol. 40, No. 3, pp. 381-385, 1965.

[5] CCITT manual *Directives concerning the protection of telecommunication lines against harmful effects from electric power and electrified railway lines*, Vol. VI, ITU, Geneva, 1988.