

WHAT IS IEC 61000-4?

The International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) has written a series of specifications, IEC 61000-4, which mandate the performance of all electronic devices in a variety of transient and incident RF conditions. This specification requirement resulted as part of Europe's move toward a single market structure and a desire to formalize and harmonize current member countries' requirements. As of January 1, 1996, all electronic and electrical items sold to Europe must meet IEC 61000-4 series specifications.

WHY IS IEC 61000-4 REQUIRED BY EUROPE?

The various regulatory agencies within Europe feel that the IEC 61000-4 series of specifications is necessary to insure acceptable performance of electronic equipment in a world filled with increasingly more Electromagnetic Interference - EMI. Furthermore, as electronic systems become more portable, and the transient susceptibility of semiconductors increases, government regulations are essential to maintain a minimum level of performance in all equipment. Europe is so serious about the problem that they require that equipment be certified via testing to meet IEC 61000-4 series specifications after 1/1/96 to avoid fines and prosecution.

HOW DO COMPANIES SELLING ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS MEET IEC 61000-4 PARTS 2-5 SPECIFICATIONS?

Companies and design engineers must now use protective circuits or devices to meet these requirements. First, a description of IEC 61000-4/2-6 is in order:

IEC 61000-4-2 ESD TESTING REQUIREMENTS

All equipment destined for Europe must be able to withstand 10 strikes of ESD waveforms with $T_r < 1\text{ns}$ in contact discharge mode (preferred) at pre-selected points accessible during normal usage or maintenance. Testing shall be performed at one or more of four (4) severity levels, depending upon equipment category.

Level	Contact Discharge ¹ Mode Test Voltage kV	Air Discharge Mode Test Voltage kV
1	2	2
2	4	4
3	6	8
4	8	15

61000-4-2 Test Conditions

¹Preferred mode of testing due to repeatability.

WAVEFORM PARAMETERS

Level	Test Voltage Level kV	First Peak of Discharge Current Amps $\pm 10\%$	TR nS	30 nS Current Amps $\pm 30\%$	60 nS Current Amps $\pm 30\%$
1	2	7.5	0.7 -1	4	2
2	4	15	0.7 -1	8	4
3	6	22.5	0.7 -1	12	6
4	8	30	0.7 -1	16	8

Upon completion of the test, the system must not experience upset (data or processing errors) or permanent damage. The waveforms are to be injected at or along the DUT's body which is accessible in normal set-up and operation.

IEC 61000-4-3 ELECTROMAGNETIC COMPATIBILITY IMPACT TESTING (EMC)

This test is concerned with the susceptibility of equipment when subjected to radio frequencies of 27 MHz to 500 MHz. The system must be able to withstand three (3) incident radiation levels:

- Level 1** 1V/m field strength
- Level 2** 3V/m field strength
- Level 3** 10V/m field strength
- Level X** User defined > 10V/m field strength

The system must not experience upset (data or processing errors) or permanent errors.

IEC 61000-4-4 ELECTRICAL FAST TRANSIENT (EFT) TESTING

The EFT test is modeled to simulate interference from inductive loads, relay contacts and switching sources. It consists of coupling EFT signals on I/O parts, keyboard cables, communication lines and power source lines. The system, depending upon appropriate severity level, must be able to withstand repetition rates of 2.5 kHz to 5 kHz for ≥ 1 minute as follows:

	Open Circuit Output Voltage/10%	
	On Power Supply	On I/O, Signal, Data, Control lines
Level 1	0.5kV	0.25kV
Level 2	1kV	0.5kV
Level 3	2kV	1kV
Level 4	4kV	2kV

IEC 61000-4-5 UNIDIRECTIONAL POWER LINE SURGE TEST

The details of this specification for high energy disturbances are being addressed in several drafts under discussion within the EC at this time.

IEC 61000-4-6 CONDUCTED RF TEST FROM 9kHz TO 80MHz

The details of this specification for conducted broad band RF signals are being addressed in a first edition draft within the EC at this time.

Designers have the option of using AVX TransGuards® to meet IEC 61000-4-2, 3 and 4.

In the case of IEC 61000-4-2 TransGuards® can be used to suppress the incoming Transient just like a Zener diode would. TransGuards®, however, exhibit bipolar characteristics, a faster turn-on-time (<1nS), a better repetitive strike capability and superior thermal stability to the Zener suppression device. Furthermore, TransGuards® are typically smaller and lighter when placed on SMT circuit boards. See Figure 1 for data illustrating IEC 61000-4-2 repetitive strike capability.

The TransGuards® effective capacitance allows the device to be used to meet IEC 61000-4-3 and 61000-4-4. The device's parallel capacitance can be used as effectively as a capacitor to block low level incident and conducted RF energy. If in the case of some levels of IEC 61000-4-3 and IEC 61000-4-4 when the intensity of pulse is greater than the device's breakdown capability it will then turn on and suppress via MOV means rather than capacitance (as in the small signal case). Effectiveness hinges upon the proper placement of the device within the PCB (which is usually easily accomplished since TransGuards® are so small).

SUMMARY

AVX TransGuards® are exceptionally suited to meet the defined portions of the IEC 61000-4 document. Experimentation is critical to proper choice and selection of devices to suppress 61000-4-3/4. Samples are available from your local sales representative.

