

September 2006

Hydro Plant Risk Assessment Guide

Appendix E5: Transformer Condition Assessment

E5.1 GENERAL

Power transformers are key components in the power train at hydroelectric powerplants and are appropriate for analysis under a condition assessment program. Transformer failure can have a significant economic impact due to long lead times in procurement, manufacturing, and installation in addition to high equipment cost. According to the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), "Extending the useful life of power transformers is the single most important strategy for increasing life of power transmission and distribution infrastructures, starting with generator step-up transformers (GSU) at the powerplant itself." (EPRI Report # 1001938.)

Determining the present condition of a power transformer is an essential step in analyzing the risk of failure. This appendix provides a process for arriving at a Transformer Condition Index which may be used to develop a business case addressing risk of failure, economic consequences, and other factors.

E5.2 SCOPE / APPLICATION

The transformer condition assessment methodology outlined in this appendix applies to oil-filled power transformers (> 500 kVA) currently in operation.

This guide is not intended to define transformer maintenance practices or describe in detail transformer condition assessment inspections, tests, or measurements. Utility maintenance policies and procedures must be consulted for such information.

E5.3 CONDITION AND DATA QUALITY INDICATORS AND TRANSFORMER CONDITION INDEX

The following four condition indicators are generally regarded by hydro powerplant engineers as providing a sound basis for assessing transformer condition:

- Insulating Oil Analysis (DGA and Furan)
- Power Factor and Excitation Current Tests
- Operation and Maintenance History
- Age

These condition indicators are initially evaluated using Tier 1 inspections, tests, and measurements, which are conducted by utility staff or contractors over the course of time and as

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