1 General Description of Aluminum Electrolytic Capacitors

1-1 The Principle of Capacitor

The principle of capacitor can be presented by the principle drawing as in Fig.1-1.

When a voltage is applied between the metal electrodes placed opposite on both surfaces of a dielectric, electric charge can be stored proportional to the voltage.

$Q = C \cdot V$

Q : Quantity of electricity (C)

V : Voltage (V)

C : Capacitance (F)

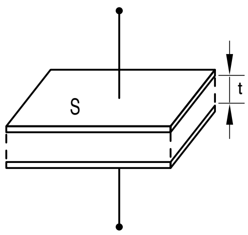


Fig.1-1

C. called the capacitance of capacitor, is expressed by the following expression with the electrode area S[m^2], the electrode spacing t [m] and the dielectric constant of dielectric " ε ":

$$C[F] = \varepsilon_0 \cdot \varepsilon \cdot \frac{S}{t}$$

ε_0 : Dielectric constant in vacuum ($=8.85\times10^{-12}$F/m)

The dielectric constant of an aluminum oxide film is 7 to 8. Larger capacitances can be obtained by enlarging the electrode area S or reducing t.

Table 1-1 shows the dielectric constants of typical dielectrics used in the capacitor. In many cases, capacitor names are determined by the dielectric material used, for example, aluminum electrolytic capacitor, tantalum capacitor, etc.

Table 1

Dielectric	Dielectric Constant	Dielectric	Dielectric Constant
Aluminum oxide film	7 to 8	Porcelain (ceramic)	10 to 120
Mylar	3.2	Polystyrene	2.5
Mica	6 to 8	Tantalum oxide film	10 to 20

Although the aluminum electrolytic capacitor is small, it has a large capacitance. It is because the electrode area is roughened by electrochemical etching, enlarging the electrode area and also because the dielectric is very thin.

The schematic cross section of the aluminum electrolytic capacitor is as in Fig.1-2.

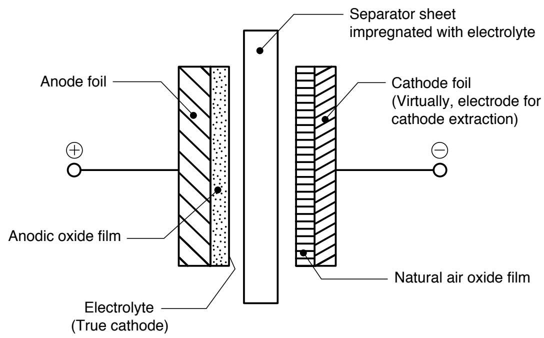
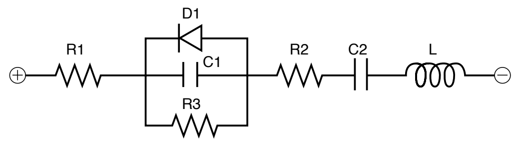


Fig.1-2

1-2 Equivalent Circuit of the Capacitor

The electrical equivalent circuit of the aluminum electrolytic capacitor is as presented in the following figure.



R1 : Resistance of terminal and electrode

R2 : Resistances of anodic oxide film and electrolyte

R3 : Insulation resistance because of defective anodic oxide film

D1 : Oxide semiconductor of anode foil

C1 : Capacity of anode foil

C2 : Capacity of cathode foil

L : Inductance caused by terminals, electrodes, etc.

2 About the Life of an Aluminum Electrolytic Capacitor

2-1 Estimation of life with minimal ripple current (negligible).

Generally, the life of an aluminum electrolytic capacitor is closely related with its ambient temperature and the life will be approximately the same as the one obtained by Arrhenius' equation.

$$L = L_0 \times 2^{\left(\frac{T_0 - T}{10}\right)} \quad \text{..................(1)}$$

Where L : Life at temperature T

L_0 : Life at temperature T_0

2-2 Estimation of life considering the ripple current.

The ripple current affects the life of a capacitor because the internal loss (ESR) generates heat. The generated heat will be :

$P = I^2R$..................(2)

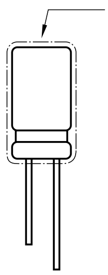
Where I : Ripple current (Arms)
R : ESR (Ω)

With increase in the temperature of the capacitor:

$$\Delta T = \frac{I^2 \times R}{A \times H} \quad ....(3)$$

Where ΔT : Temperature increase in the capacitor core(deg.)
I : Ripple current (Arms)
R : ESR (Ω)
A : Surface area of the capacitor (cm^2)
H : Radiation coefficient (Approx. 1.5 to 2.0 $\times 10^{-3} W/cm^2 \times ℃$)

The above equation (3) shows that the temperature of a capacitor increases in proportion to the square of the applied ripple current and ESR, and in inverse proportion to the surface area. Therefore, the amount of the ripple current determines the heat generation, which affects the life. The value of ΔT varies depending on the capacitor types and operating conditions. The usage is generally desirable if ΔT remains less than 5℃. The measuring point for temperature increase due to ripple current is shown below ;



Test results:

(1) The life equation considering the ambient temperature and the ripple current will be :

$$L = Ld \times 2^{\left(\frac{T_0 - T}{10}\right)} \times K^{\left(\frac{-\Delta T}{10}\right)} \quad ....(4)$$

Where Ld : Life at DC operation (h)
K : Ripple acceleration factor
(K=2, within allowable ripple current)
(K=4, if exceeding allowable ripple current)
T_0 : Upper category temperature (℃)
T : Operating temperature (℃)
ΔT : Temperature increase at capacitor core (deg.)

(2) The life equation based on the life with the rated ripple current applied under the maximum guaranteed temperature will be a conversion of the above equation (4), as below :

$$L = Lr \times 2^{\left(\frac{T_0 - T}{10}\right)} \times K^{\left(\frac{\Delta T_0 - \Delta T}{10}\right)} \quad ....(5)$$

Where Lr : Life at the upper category temperature with the rated ripple current (h)
ΔT_0 : Temperature increase at capacitor core, at the upper category temperature (deg.)

(3) The life equation considering the ambient temperature and the ripple current will be a conversion of the above equation (5), as below :

$$L = Lr \times 2^{\left(\frac{T_0 - T}{10}\right)} \times K^{\left\{1 - \left(\frac{I}{I_0}\right)^2\right\} \times \frac{\Delta T_0}{10}} \quad ......(6)$$

Where I_0 : Rated ripple current at the upper category temperature (Arms)
I : Applied ripple current (Arms)

ΔT_0 of each category highest temperature

Aluminum Electrolytic Capacitors	85	: 10deg
	105 to 135	: 5deg
	150	: 3deg
Polymer hybrid type aluminum Electrolytic Capacitors	105	: 15deg
	125	: 10deg
	135	: 10deg

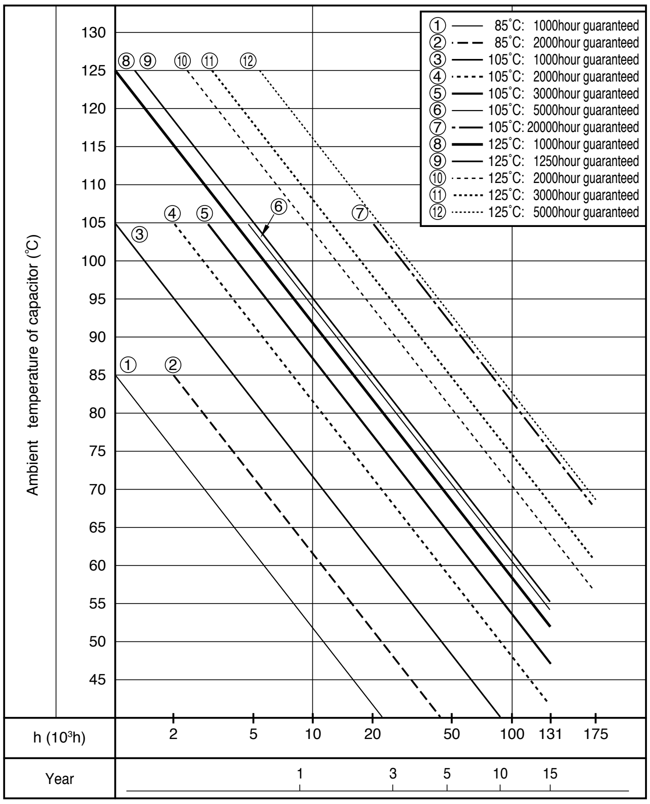
Since it is actually difficult to measure the temperature increase at the capacitor core, the following table is provided for conversion from the surface temperature increase to the core temperature increase.

Table 2-1

Case diameter	~10	12.5~16	18	20~22	25	30	35
Core / Surface	1.1	1.2	1.25	1.3	1.4	1.6	1.65

The life expectancy formula shall in principle be applied to the temperature range between the ambient temperature of +40℃ and upper category temperature. The expected life time shall be about fifteen years at maximum as a guide in terms of deterioration of the sealant.

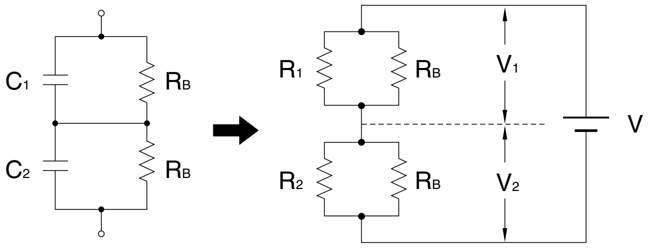
(Fig. 2-1 Life Expectancy Chart)



3 To calculate Balance when connecting in series

3-1 Circuit layout

Circuit for connecting two capacitors (C1, C2) in series and equivalent circuit can be illustrated as below figure. Formula to calculate a balance resistance R_B of below figure is shown as follows.



Following are the preconditions of the circuit.

① V_2 shall be the rated voltage ($=V_0$). ($V_1<V_2$)

② V shall be a times $V_0\times2$. $V=2aV_0$ ($a<1$)

③ R_2 shall equal $R_1\times b$. ($b<1$) (1)

3-2 Formulas to calculate [R_B]

3-2-1 Following formula can be established from balanced condition.

$$V_1\left[\frac{1}{R_1}+\frac{1}{R_B}\right]=V_2\left[\frac{1}{R_2}+\frac{1}{R_B}\right] \qquad (2)$$

3-2-2 Following formula can be established from preconditions.

$$V_2\leqq V_0 \qquad (3)$$

$$V_1=V-V_2 \qquad (4)$$

$$=2aV_0-V_2 \qquad (4')$$

3-2-3 Put formulas (1), (3) and (4') in formula (2).

$$(2aV_0-V_2)\left[\frac{R_1+R_B}{R_1\times R_B}\right]=V_2\left[\frac{bR_1+R_B}{bR_1\times R_B}\right]$$

$$2abV_0(R_1+R_B)=V_2\{b(R_1+R_B)+bR_1+R_B\}$$

$$2ab(R_1+R_B)\leqq 2bR_1+(1+b)R_B$$

Accordingly, balance resistance R shall be the following formula.

$$R_B\leqq 2bR_1\frac{(1-a)}{(2a-1)\times b-1} \qquad (5)$$

3-3 Calculation Example

Calculate the value of the balance resistance in the case of connecting two 400V 470μF (LC standard value : 1.88mA) capacitors in series.

$$R_1=\frac{400(V)}{1.88(mA)}=213(k\Omega)$$

If a=0.8, 400(V)×2×0.8=640(V) as an impressed voltage.

If b=2, $R_2=b\,R_1=426(k\Omega)$, LC=0.94(mA).

Balance resistance R_B will be.

$$R_B\leqq 2\times2\times213(k\Omega)\frac{(1-0.8)}{(2\times0.8)\times2-1}=852(k\Omega)$$

4 Regarding Recovery Voltage

- After charging and then discharging the aluminum electrolytic capacitor, and further causing short-circuit to the terminals and leave them alone, the voltage between the two terminals will rise again after some interval. Voltage caused in such case is called recovery voltage. Following is the process that causes this phenomenon :
- When the voltage is impressed on a dielectric, electrical transformation will be caused inside the dielectric due to dielectric action, and electrification will occur in positive-negative opposite to the voltage impressed on the surface of the dielectric. This phenomenon is called polarization action.
- After the voltage is impressed with this polarization action, and if the terminals are discharged till the terminal voltage reaches 0 and are left open for a while, an electric potential will arise between the two terminals and thus causes recovery voltage.
- Recovery voltage comes to a peak around 10 to 20 days after the two terminals are left open, and then gradually declines. Recovery voltage has a tendency to become bigger as the component (stand-alone base type) becomes bigger.
- If the two terminals are short-circuited after the recovery voltage is generated, a spark may scare the workers working in the assembly line, and may put low-voltage driven components (CPU, memory, etc.) in danger of being destroyed. Measures to prevent this is to discharge the accumulated electric charge with resistor of about 100 to 1kΩ before using, or ship out by making the terminals in short-circuit condition by covering them with an aluminum foil at the production stage. Please consult us for adequate procedures.

5 Electrode Foil Development Technology

5-1 Corrosion inhibition of cathode foil

Inactive treatment is implemented to ensure long life by inhibiting natural corrosion of the cathode foil. Fig. 3-1 shows its effects with values of the polarization resistance inversely proportional to the corrosion rate using the AC impedance method (FRA). This indicates that the cathode foil used in the High reliability capacitors has the polarization resistance higher than that of the conventional capacitors owing to corrosion inhibition.

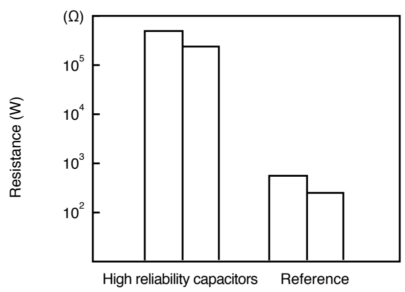


Fig. 3-1

5-2 Sealing material permeability of electrolyte

To ensure long life, a low permeable lactone solvent for the sealing material is used as the main solvent of the electrolyte of the High reliability capacitor. Fig. 3-2 shows the test results on the permeability obtained by changing the weight of the capacitors produced with different types of electrolytes at a high temperature.

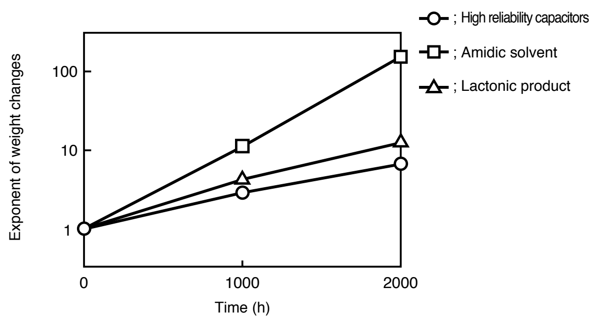


Fig. 3-2

5-3 Airtightness of sealing material

Since the electrolyte is stable for hours, the key element for capacitor's life is the sealing material. By optimizing the crosslinking density of the sealing material polymer, the sealing material of the High reliability capacitor attains its long life with electrolyte permeability less than that of the conventional capacitors.

Fig. 3-3 shows the test results on the airtightness of the sealing material obtained by changing the weight of the capacitors at a high temperature, producing capacitors with the conventional sealing material and improved one both containing the electrolyte used in the High reliability capacitor.

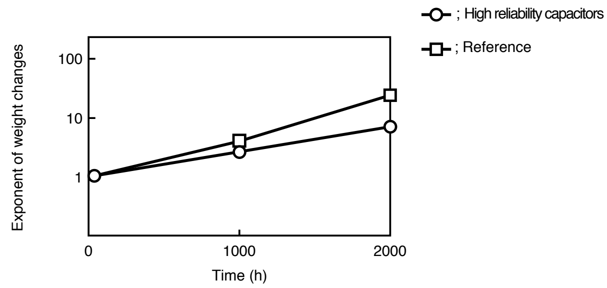


Fig. 3-3

5-4 Long-time stability of electrolyte

The electrolyte used in the High reliability capacitor is stable with low initial resistivity and small secular changes at a high temperature. Fig. 3-4 shows change in resistivity at 105°C.

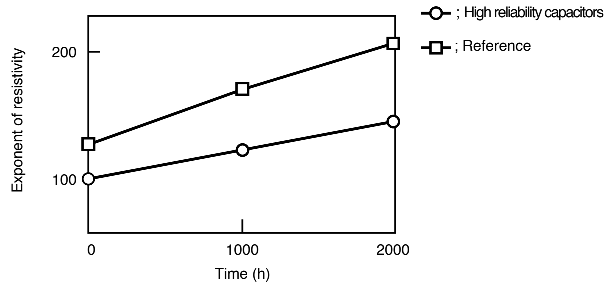


Fig. 3-4

5-5 Dielectric formation voltage and leakage current characteristics of anode foil

To increase the operating life by controlling the gas generation inside capacitor because of 1.5 to 2 times the rated voltage, while that of the previous capacitor is about 1.3 times the rated voltage.

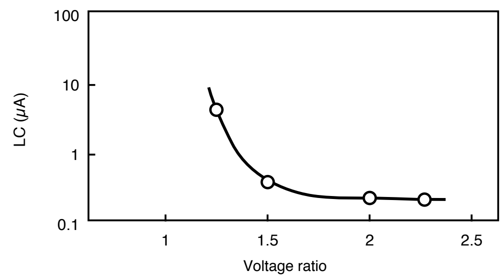


Fig. 3-5

5-6 Lowered ESR of Electrode Foil

To reduce the ESR of electrolytic capacitor, we have improved our chemical conversion technology for anode foil to develop lower ESR electrode foil compared to the conventional product as shown in Fig. 3-6

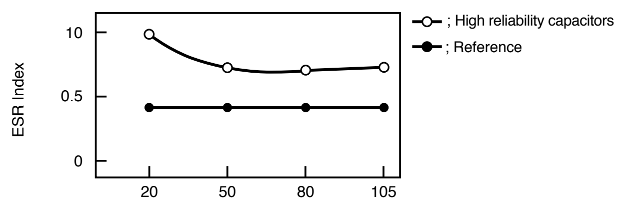


Fig. 3-6 ESR Index of Anode Foil