

1 Description of Electric Double Layer Capacitor

1-1 Basic Concepts

Generally capacitors are constructed with a dielectric placed between opposed electrodes, functioning as capacitors by accumulating charges in the dielectric material. Aluminum electrolytic and tantalum electrolytic capacitors, for example, use an aluminum oxide film and a tantalum oxide film as the dielectric, respectively.

On the other hand, Electric Double Layer Capacitors have no visible dielectric in a general sense but utilize the state referred to as the electric double layer, which is developed naturally on the interface between substances, as the function of dielectric.

1-2 Operating Principle

The Electric Double Layer represents the state in which positive and negative charges exist at a very short distance on the boundary where contact occurs between two different substances (e.g. solid and liquid). By externally applying a voltage below a certain voltage to the boundary, higher charges can be accumulated. Accordingly, charge and discharge of electric double layer capacitors utilize adsorption and desorption of ions to the ionic adsorption layer (Electric Double Layer) formed on the electrode surface of the activated carbon used for electrodes.

Applying DC voltage externally across the electrodes of the Electric Double Layer allows almost no passage of current up to a certain voltage, exhibiting a condition like insulation.

However, the application of voltages exceeding the certain voltage causes electrolysis to occur in the electrolyte, resulting in abrupt passage of current.

This voltage determines the resistance of voltage of an Electric Double Layer Capacitor. We use an organic electrolyte and its standard electrolysis occurs at the voltage of about 2.5 to 3V.

1-3 Advantages and Disadvantages of Electric Double Layer Capacitor

[Advantages]

- (1) Small size and capacitance in farads (F) available by utilizing the activated carbon electrode with a large surface area
- (2) No special charging circuit and constrains during discharge are required.
- (3) No effect on the life through overcharging and overdischarging
- (4) Environmentally clean energy

[Disadvantage]

- (1) The life is limited due to the use of electrolyte.
- (2) Series connection is required when used with a low resistance of voltage at a high voltage.
- (3) Cannot be used in AC circuits due to high internal resistance unlike aluminum electrolytic capacitors.

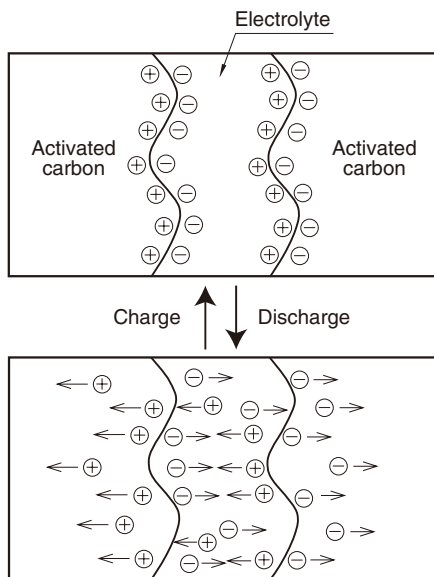


Fig.1 Schematic of Principle of Electric Double Layer Capacitor

1-4 Construction of DYNACAP

The series which consists of coin cells is similar to that of coin-type batteries as shown in Fig.2. DYNACAP contains a single cell or two to three cells stacked in series.

Since these series have a large electrode-to-electrode distance and a small electrode area exhibiting a large internal resistance, they are suitable for the memory backup application that involves microcurrent discharge.

The cylindrical cell construction as seen in the DZ1 and DZN series has the construction similar to that of aluminum electrolytic capacitors as shown in Fig.3.

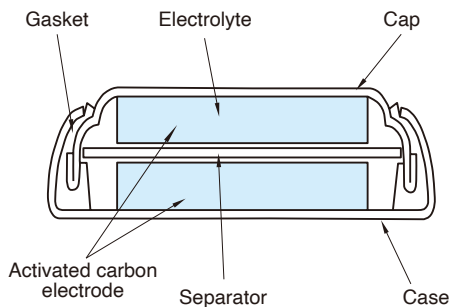


Fig.2 Example of Basic Construction of Coin Cell

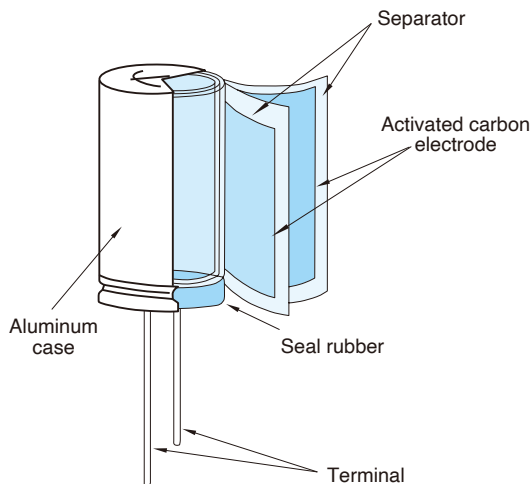


Fig.3 Example of Basic Construction of Cylindrical Cell

These series have a small electrode-to-electrode distance, allowing a large electrode area because of the winding structure. This decreases the internal resistance, which is primary suitable for applications requiring high-power such as motor drive and LED lighting that need high currents.

2 Description of Life Expectancy

Generally, the life of Electric Double Layer Capacitors is largely affected by the ambient temperature.

The expected life is approximated by the equation as shown below:

$$L = L_0 \times 2 \left(\frac{T_0 - T}{10} \right)$$

Where,

- L : Expected lifetime at temperature T
- L₀ : Lifetime at temperature T₀
- T : Expected working temperature
- T₀ : Upper category temperature

Note that the above equation does not cover charge and discharge. In the case of charge and discharge, heat generation occurs inside a capacitor; the temperature rise by this heat generation must also be considered.

The expected life time is a maximum as a guide in terms of deterioration of the sealant.

Coin cell type : about ten years

Cylindrical type : about fifteen years

NOTE : Design, Specifications are subject to change without notice. It is recommended that you shall obtain technical specifications from ELNA to ensure that the component is suitable for your use.

3 Calculation Method of Discharge Time

3-1 Approximating the Discharge Time of Basic Constant Current Discharge

The discharge time at the constant current of a capacitor can be calculated by the following equation.

$$t = (C \times \Delta V) / I$$

Where,

- t : Discharge time (sec.)
- C : Capacitor capacitance (F)
- ΔV : Working voltage range (V)
- I : Discharge current (A)

As an example, we calculate the discharge time when a capacitor of the CB1 series 5.5V 1F is charged with 5V and discharged to 3V at a constant current of 1 mA. Since the working voltage range ΔV is 2V from 5 – 3V, $t = (1F \times 2V) / 0.001A$ from the above equation, and the discharge time can be calculated as 2,000 seconds (about 33 minutes). Note that the actual discharge time may be different because this equation does not cover the effect of the self-discharge and the IR drop by internal resistance described below.

3-2 Effect of Self-discharge at Microcurrents

When backup is made by discharge with a micro-current below some μA especially for the memory backup application and the like, the discharge time must be determined while taking into account the self-discharge as shown in Fig.4.

The value closer to the actual discharge curve is obtained by adding the voltage drop through the self-discharge determined from the voltage retention characteristic test to the discharge curve given by calculation.

Note that the value of self-discharge varies by the charge time, charging current and an ambient temperature.

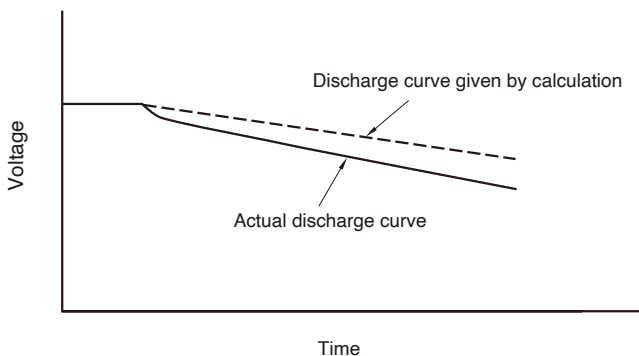


Fig.4 Example of Discharge Curve involving Self-Discharge

3-3 Effect of IR Drop at Large Currents

When a large Current discharge and a capacitor with a high internal resistance are used, the effect of IR drop by the product of the internal resistance and the current must be considered as shown in Fig.5. Moreover, the maximum discharge current of the product (coin cell series) of a memory backup use recommends below 1 mA/F (at 20 °C).

When a large current is required in a very short time, or a large instantaneous current flows at the start of discharge, the voltage drop indicated with ΔV_1 counts. However, when the discharge continues as it is, the discharge curve indicates in a manner showing a slow diffusion and then keeps a constant straight line.

We also make calculation including ΔV_2 of the intersection extending from the initial discharge and the discharge straight line section including the diffusion curve when indicating the DC internal resistance.

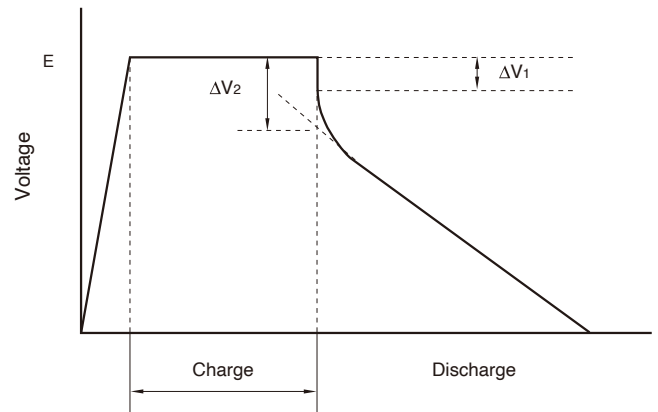


Fig.5 Example of Discharge Curve involving IR Drop

Due to IR drop, the shape of the discharge curve varies by the internal resistance and ambient temperature for each series.

4 Moisture-proof provision

If a electric double layer capacitor is used in a heat-and-high-humidity environment, the characteristic will deteriorate.

Please consult when using in a heat and high humidlty environment.

5 Regarding Recovery Voltage

After charging and then discharging the electric double layer 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. This voltage is called recovery voltage.

This voltage may cause the bad influence to the low-voltage driven components (CPU, memory, etc.) or damage of the capacitor with soldering.

Discharging before use is safer. It is important especially when using it by series connection.

Moreover, it is possible making the terminals in short-circuit condition at the production stage. Please consult us for adequate procedures.

6 Applications

Features & Benefits of Electric Double Layer Capacitor

