



Smart Grounding with SmartGround® Testing



Smart Grounding Is Really Important

Life safety around energized equipment is paramount. Grounding systems protect people and equipment, and the more complex and sensitive a facility's equipment and processes are, the more crucial it is to properly verify and maintain an effective grounding system.



What Should You Do?

Test It. And Test It Again.

Once installed, a grounding system should be tested by a qualified grounding expert at start-up, periodically as it ages, and any time changes are made to or around the site so that anomalies and risks can be identified and mitigated.

Hire an Expert

While there are copious methods and tools to test a ground grid, the "by a qualified grounding expert" is the important part. It can be more dangerous to make decisions based on inaccurate information than to have never tested at all. Even when using the most sophisticated testing equipment, it's absolutely crucial that the operator not only knows how to use it properly, but understands advanced grounding theory and all the variables that impact results.

HP&D grounding specialists offer a wide range of grounding tests:

- Testing of energized systems per IEEE Standard 81
- Ground grid mat and system impedance
- Point-to-point continuity
- Step and touch voltage
- Transfer voltage
- Soil resistivity
- Tower ground impedance (transmission, distribution, telecom, wind turbines)
- Fall-of-potential test (three-point)
 - Method intended for isolated systems only
- Clamp-on induced frequency

Testing is Only the Beginning

Grounding is complex, and a properly-conducted test generates volumes of data and information, but how do you know what it all means to you? This is where HP&D really shines. Our grounding specialists thoroughly analyze your test results to provide a comprehensive engineering report, and when applicable, identify concerns and offer relevant recommendations.

In addition to this standard report, we can analyze:

- Safety (per IEEE Standard 80 or IEC 479)
- Steady state
- Lightning protection

SmartGround Method

IEEE developed a standard (81) that addresses how to test grounding systems. While previous versions of the standard focused on the Fall of Potential (FOP) method, FOP and other short-cut methods described are riddled with pitfalls that are difficult, if not impossible, to hurdle.

The biggest pitfall of these methods is that the grounding system under test must be de-energized and completely isolated. That means a complete shutdown of your facility and a complete electrical and physical disconnect from the utility, communications, distribution systems – any bonded system – if you want accurate results. Now, in new construction at a remote greenfield site, you’re “isolated,” so FOP is feasible. Otherwise, you’re already bonded and energized, or at least close to something that will affect the results, rendering conventional test methods futile.

So, in 2012 IEEE revised the standard to acknowledge these complexities and prescribe a better approach – computer-based testing, specifically with a “computer-based grounding multimeter.”

SGM vs. FOP and Other Methods

As a computer-based grounding multimeter, SGM overcomes the inherent pitfalls presented by traditionally-accepted methods.

SGM mitigates conventional test issues

- Can be used at energized sites
- Reduces required lead length to 2x the site diagonal
- Filters out EMI/RFI and power frequency (60 Hz) noise
- Computer modeling corrects for nearby facilities and infrastructure
- Quantifies error
- Onboard diagnostics and reporting (probe performance, data quality)
- Accurate results and quantified data for informed decisions

This product incorporates technology developed for the Electric Power Industry under the sponsorship of EPRI, the Electric Power Research Institute.

About HP&D

HP&D is a customer-driven, employee-owned collaborative team of engineers, technicians, and service professionals offering electrical and mechanical testing and commissioning, engineering consulting, grounding design and assessment, power systems studies, facility assessments, and training services.

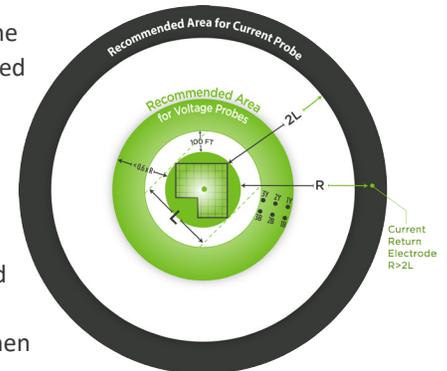
HP&D is a subsidiary of Patterson & Dewar Engineers, Inc. (pdengineers.com), which has provided electrical and civil engineering services to electric utility clients since 1947.



SmartGround Multimeter (SGM)

At HP&D, we use the SmartGround® Multimeter (SGM) to test grounding systems. The SGM is a computer-based multi-function instrument as prescribed by the standard that was developed specifically to test energized grounding systems; it is both a variable-frequency current source and seven-channel data acquisition platform. Its processing software filters out electronic noise, compensates for errors, and reports on the coherence and quality of the measured data.

In conjunction with the SGM, we use Integrated Grounding System Design software (IGS) to develop a complete picture of the grounding system under test and provide remediation recommendations when needed.



Conventional test presents issues

- Site must be de-energized & isolated
- Extremely long lead lengths are required (5-10x the site diagonal)
- Interference (stray currents, EMI/RFI noise) affects results
- Nearby facilities and infrastructure affects results
- Unknown confidence in data
- No diagnostics
- Bad data informs bad decisions

Contact Us

Visit us on the web at hoodpd.com or call (770) 453-1415.

Connect with us on social media:



HP&D on LinkedIn



HP&D on Facebook



hoodpd.com