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Freezing Rain Sensor Model 6496

Overview

The AWI Model 6496 Freezing Rain Sensor uses an ultrasonically vibrating probe to detect the presence of icing conditions. The vibrating frequency of the probe (nominally 40,000 hertz) decreases with the accumulation of ice, frost, or wet snow. After ice has accumulated on the probe to a predetermined thickness, the AWOS DCP instructs the sensor to turn on its internal heaters to deice the probe.

During deicing, maximum heater power is 400 watts. The deicing system is capable of completely melting approximately 3.8 mm of ice on the probe and strut within 30 seconds at -20 degrees Celsius (°C).

Frequency values and status are reported to the AWOS once each minute. The system combines information from the freezing rain sensor with data from other AWOS sensors to generate the required reports of freezing rain.

Design

The Freezing Rain Sensor uses an ultrasonic axially vibrating probe to detect the presence of icing conditions. This sensing probe is a nickel alloy tube mounted in the strut at its midpoint with 1 inch (25.4mm) exposed to the atmosphere. This tube exhibits magnetostrictive properties and expands and relaxes under the influence of a variable magnetic field. A magnetic bias field is provided by a magnet mounted inside the strut and modulated by a drive coil surrounding the lower half of the tube. A magnetostrictive oscillator (MSO) circuit is created



by the addition of a pickup coil and operational amplifier. The ultrasonic axial movement of the tube resulting from the activation of the drive coil causes a current to be induced in the pickup coil. The current from the pickup coil drives the operational amplifier, which provides the signal for the drive coil. The oscillation frequency of the circuit is terminated by the natural resonant frequency of the sensor tube, which is tuned to approximately 40,000 hertz. As the ice detector encounters an icing environment, ice collects on the sensing probe. The added mass of accreted ice causes the frequency of the sensing probe to decrease in accordance with the laws of classical mechanics. A 0.02-inch (0.5mm) thickness of ice on the probe causes the operating

frequency of the probe to decrease by approximately 133 hertz. The ice detector control circuitry utilizes a microprocessor to monitor probe frequency when instructed by the CDP. The ice detector deices itself through internal heating elements in both the strut and probe. After the ice detector is deiced, the sensing probe cools quickly and is ready to sense ice formation again.

SENSORS

SPECIFICATIONS

Parameter	Specification
Output Range (mass equivalent)	0.02"–0.10"(0.5–2.5 mm)
Communication	RS-232
Baud Rates	300, 2400, 9600
Power Supply	115 V AC, 55–65 Hz
• Ice-Sensing Mode	5 W
• Deicing Mode	350 W

ORDERING INFORMATION

Part Number	Description
6496	Freezing Rain Sensor



All Weather Inc.
1165 National Dr.
Sacramento, CA 95834

www.allweatherinc.com

Phone: 916-928-1000
USA Toll Free: 800-824-5873
Fax: 916-928-1165

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