EPA-452/F-03-026

Air Pollution Control Technology Fact Sheet

Name of Technology: Fabric Filter - Reverse-Air Cleaned Type
- Reverse-Air Cleaned Type with Sonic Horn Enhancement
- Reverse-Jet Cleaned Type

(also referred to as Baghouses)

Type of Technology: Control Device - Capture/Disposal

Applicable Pollutants: Particulate Matter (PM), including particulate matter less than or equal to 10 micrometers (:m) in aerodynamic diameter (PM_{10}), particulate matter less than or equal to 2.5 :m in aerodynamic diameter ($PM_{2.5}$), and hazardous air pollutants (HAPs) that are in particulate form, such as most metals (mercury is the notable exception, as a significant portion of emissions are in the form of elemental vapor).

Achievable Emission Limits/Reductions:

Typical new equipment design efficiencies are between 99 and 99.9%. Older existing equipment have a range of actual operating efficiencies of 95 to 99.9%. Several factors determine fabric filter collection efficiency. These include gas filtration velocity, particle characteristics, fabric characteristics, and cleaning mechanism. In general, collection efficiency increases with increasing filtration velocity and particle size.

For a given combination of filter design and dust, the effluent particle concentration from a fabric filter is nearly constant, whereas the overall efficiency is more likely to vary with particulate loading. For this reason, fabric filters can be considered to be constant outlet devices rather than constant efficiency devices. Constant effluent concentration is achieved because at any given time, part of the fabric filter is being cleaned. As a result of the cleaning mechanisms used in fabric filters, the collection efficiency is constantly changing. Each cleaning cycle removes at least some of the filter cake and loosens particles which remain on the filter. When filtration resumes, the filtering capability has been reduced because of the lost filter cake and loose particles are pushed through the filter by the flow of gas. As particles are captured, the efficiency increases until the next cleaning cycle. Average collection efficiencies for fabric filters are usually determined from tests that cover a number of cleaning cycles at a constant inlet loading. (EPA, 1998a)

Applicable Source Type: Point

Typical Industrial Applications:

Fabric filters can perform very effectively in many different applications. Common applications of fabric filter systems with reverse-air cleaning are presented in Table 1, however, fabric filters can be used in most any process where dust is generated and can be collected and ducted to a central location. Other cleaning-types may also be used in these applications. Sonic horn enhancement of mechanical shaker cleaning is generally used for applications with dense particulates such as utility boilers, metal processing, and mineral products.

Table 1. Typical Industrial Applications of Reverse-Air -Cleaned Fabric Filters (EPA, 1997; EPA, 1998a)

Application		Source Category Code (SCC)
Utility Boilers (Coal)		1-01-002...003
Industrial Boilers (Coal, Wood)		1-02-001...003, 1-02-009
Commercial/Institutional Boilers (Coal, Wood)		1-03-001...003, 1-03-009
Non-Ferrous Metals Processing (Primary and Secondary):		
	Copper	3-03-005, 3-04-002
	Lead	3-03-010, 3-04-004
	Zinc	3-03-030, 3-04-008
	Aluminum	3-03-000...002 3-04-001
	Other metals production	3-03-011...014 3-04-005...006 3-04-010...022
Ferrous Metals Processing:		
	Coke	3-03-003...004
	Ferroalloy Production	3-03-006...007
	Iron and Steel Production	3-03-008...009
	Gray Iron Foundries	3-04-003
	Steel Foundries	3-04-007,-009
Mineral Products:		
	Cement Manufacturing	3-05-006...007
	Coal Cleaning	3-05-010
	Stone Quarrying and Processing	3-05-020
	Other	3-05-003...999
Asphalt Manufacture		3-05-001...002
Grain Milling		3-02-007

Emission Stream Characteristics:

a. Air Flow: Baghouses are separated into two groups, standard and custom, which are further separated into low, medium, and high capacity. Standard baghouses are factory-built, off the shelf units. They may handle from less than 0.10 to more than 50 standard cubic meters per second (sm^3/sec) ("hundreds" to more than 100,000 standard cubic feet per minute (scfm)). Custom baghouses are designed for specific applications and are built to the specifications prescribed by the customer. These units are generally much larger than standard units, i.e., from 50 to over 500 sm^3/sec (100,000 to over 1,000,000 scfm). (EPA, 1998b)

b. Temperature: Typically, gas temperatures up to about 260 C (500 F), with surges to about 290 C (550 F) can be accommodated routinely, with the appropriate fabric material. Spray coolers or dilution air can be used to lower the temperature of the pollutant stream. This prevents the temperature limits of the fabric from being exceeded. Lowering the temperature, however, increases the humidity of the pollutant stream. Therefore, the minimum temperature of the pollutant stream must remain above the dew point of any condensable in the stream. The baghouse and associated ductwork should be insulated and possibly heated if condensation may occur. (EPA, 1998b)

c. **Pollutant Loading:** Typical inlet concentrations to baghouses are 1 to 23 grams per cubic meter (g/m^3) (0.5 to 10 grains per cubic foot (gr/ft^3)), but in extreme cases, inlet conditions may vary between 0.1 to more than 230 g/m^3 (0.05 to more than 100 gr/ft^3). (EPA, 1998b)

d. **Other Considerations:** Moisture and corrosives content are the major gas stream characteristics requiring design consideration. Standard fabric filters can be used in pressure or vacuum service, but only within the range of about ± 640 millimeters of water column (25 inches of water column). Well-designed and operated baghouses have been shown to be capable of reducing overall particulate emissions to less than 0.05 g/m^3 (0.010 gr/ft^3), and in a number of cases, to as low as 0.002 to 0.011 g/dsm^3 (0.001 to 0.005 gr/dscf). (AWMA, 1992)

Emission Stream Pretreatment Requirements:

Because of the wide variety of filter types available to the designer, it is not usually required to pretreat a waste stream's inlet temperature. However, in some high temperature applications, the cost of high temperature-resistant bags must be weighed against the cost of cooling the inlet temperature with spray coolers or dilution air (EPA, 1998b). When much of the pollutant loading consists of relatively large particles, mechanical collectors such as cyclones may be used to reduce the load on the fabric filter, especially at high inlet concentrations (EPA, 1998b).

Cost Information:

Cost estimates are presented below for reverse-air cleaned fabric filters, for sonic horn enhancement, and for reverse-jet cleaned fabric filters. The costs are expressed in 2002 dollars for reverse-air cleaned and sonic horn enhancement. The cost estimates assume a conventional design under typical operating conditions. The costs do not include auxiliary equipment such as fans and ductwork.

The costs for reverse-air cleaned systems are generated using EPA's cost-estimating spreadsheet for fabric filters (EPA, 1998b). The cost estimate for sonic horn enhancement is obtained from the manufacturer quote given in the OAQPS Control Cost Manual (EPA, 1998b). Sonic horns are presented as an incremental cost to the capital cost for a shaker-cleaned system. The operational and maintenance (O&M) cost for shaker-cleaned systems are reduced by 1% to 3% with the sonic horn enhancement. The capital cost for the reverse-jet cleaned fabric baghouse is based on a manufacturer quote (Carrington, 2000). This quote includes only the baghouse purchased equipment cost. O&M costs, annualized costs, and cost effectiveness were not estimated for reverse-jet. In general, reverse-jet has higher capital costs and O&M costs than reverse-air due to its complexity (see Section 10, Theory of Operation).

Costs are primarily driven by the waste stream volumetric flow rate and pollutant loading. In general, a small unit controlling a low pollutant loading will not be as cost effective as a large unit controlling a high pollutant loading. The costs presented are for flow rates of 470 m^3/sec (1,000,000 scfm) and 1.0 m^3/sec (2,000 scfm), respectively, and a pollutant loading of 9 g/m^3 (4.0 gr/ft^3) . For reverse-jet, the capital cost presented is for a baghouse of 378,000 m^3/sec (800,000 scfm).

Pollutants that require an unusually high level of control or that require the fabric filter bags or the unit itself to be constructed of special materials, such as Gore-Tex or stainless steel, will increase the costs of the system (EPA, 1998b). The additional costs for controlling more complex waste streams are not reflected in the estimates given below. For these types of systems, the capital cost could increase by as much as 40% and the O&M cost could increase by as much as 5%.

a. **Capital Cost:** \$19,000 to \$180,000 per sm^3/s (\$9 to \$85 per scfm), reverse-air
   \$1,000 to \$1,300 per m^3/sec (\$ 0.51 to \$0.61 per scfm), additional cost for sonic horns
   \$2,000 to \$4,200 per m^3/sec (\$1 to \$2 per scfm), reverse-jet purchased equipment cost

b. **O & M Cost:** \$14,000 to \$58,000 per sm^3/s (\$6 to \$27 per scfm), annually

c. **Annualized Cost:** \$17,000 to \$106,000 per sm^3/s (\$8 to \$50 per scfm), annually

d. **Cost Effectiveness:** \$58 to \$372 per metric ton (\$53 to \$337 per short ton)

Theory of Operation:

In a fabric filter, flue gas is passed through a tightly woven or felted fabric, causing PM in the flue gas to be collected on the fabric by sieving and other mechanisms. Fabric filters may be in the form of sheets, cartridges, or bags, with a number of the individual fabric filter units housed together in a group. Bags are most common type of fabric filter. The dust cake that forms on the filter from the collected PM can significantly increase collection efficiency. Fabric filters are frequently referred to as baghouses because the fabric is usually configured in cylindrical bags. Bags may be 6 to 9 m (20 to 30 ft) long and 12.7 to 30.5 centimeters (cm) (5 to 12 inches) in diameter. Groups of bags are placed in isolable compartments to allow cleaning of the bags or replacement of some of the bags without shutting down the entire fabric filter. (STAPPA/ALAPCO, 1996)

Operating conditions are important determinants of the choice of fabric. Some fabrics (e.g., polyolefins, nylons, acrylics, polyesters) are useful only at relatively low temperatures of 95 to 150 C (200 to 300 F). For high-temperature flue gas streams, more thermally stable fabrics such as fiberglass, Teflon®, or Nomex® must be used (STAPPA/ALAPCO, 1996).

Practical application of fabric filters requires the use of a large fabric area in order to avoid an unacceptable pressure drop across the fabric. Baghouse size for a particular unit is determined by the choice of air-to-cloth ratio, or the ratio of volumetric air flow to cloth area. The selection of air-to-cloth ratio depends on the particulate loading and characteristics, and the cleaning method used. A high particulate loading will require the use of a larger baghouse in order to avoid forming too heavy a dust cake, which would result in an excessive pressure drop As an example, a baghouse for a 250 megawatt (MW) utility boiler may have 5,000 separate bags with a total fabric area approaching 46,500 m^2 (500,000 square feet). (ICAC, 1999)

Determinants of baghouse performance include the fabric chosen, the cleaning frequency and methods, and the particulate characteristics. Fabrics can be chosen which will intercept a greater fraction of particulate, and some fabrics are coated with a membrane with very fine openings for enhanced removal of submicron particulate. Such fabrics tend to be more expensive. Cleaning intensity and frequency are important variables in determining removal efficiency. Because the dust cake can provide a significant fraction of the fine particulate removal capability of a fabric, cleaning which is too frequent or too intense will lower the removal efficiency. On the other hand, if removal is too infrequent or too ineffective, then the baghouse pressure drop will become too high. (ICAC, 1999)

Reverse-air cleaning is a popular fabric filter cleaning method that has been used extensively and improved over the years. It is a gentler but sometimes less effective clearing mechanism than mechanical shaking.

Most reverse-air fabric filters operate in a manner similar to shaker-cleaned fabric filters. Typically, the bags are open on the bottom, closed on top and the gas flows from the inside to the outside of the bags with dust being captured on the inside. However, some reverse-air designs collect dust on the outside of the bags. In either design, reverse-air cleaning is performed by forcing clean air through the filters in the opposite direction of the dusty gas flow. The change in direction of the gas flow causes the bag to flex and crack the filter cake. In internal cake collection, the bags are allowed to collapse to some extent during reverse-air cleaning. The bags are usually prevented from collapsing entirely by some kind of support, such as rings that are sewn into the bags. The support enables the dust cake to fall off the bags and into the hopper. Cake release is also aided by the reverse flow of the gas. Because felted fabrics retain dust more than woven fabrics and thus, are more difficult to clean, felts are usually not used in reverse-air systems. (EPA, 1998a)

There are several methods of reversing the flow through the filters. As with mechanical shaker-cleaned fabric filters, the most common approach is to have separate compartments within the fabric filter so that each compartment can be isolated and cleaned separately while the other compartments continue to treat the dusty gas. One method of providing the reverse flow air is by the use of a secondary fan or cleaned gas from the other compartments. Reverse-air cleaning alone is used only in cases where the dust releases easily from the fabric. In many instances, reverse-air is used in conjunction with shaking, pulsing or sonic horns. (EPA, 1998a)

Sonic horns are increasingly being used to enhance the collection efficiency of mechanical shaker and reverse-air fabric filters (AWMA, 1992). Sonic horns utilize compressed air to vibrate a metal diaphragm, producing a low frequency sound wave from the horn bell. The number of horns required is determined by fabric area and the number of baghouse compartments. Typically, 1 to 4 horns per compartment operating at 150 to 200 hertz are required. Compressed air to power the horns is supplied at 275 to 620 kiloPascals (kPa) (40 to 90 pounds per square inch gage (psig)). Sonic horns activate for approximately 10 to 30 seconds during each cleaning cycle (Carr, 1984) .

Sonic horn cleaning significantly reduces the residual dust load on the bags. This decreases the pressure drop across the filter fabric by 20 to 60%. It also lessens the mechanical stress on the bags, resulting in longer operational life (Carr, 1984). As stated previously, this can decrease the O&M cost by 1 to 3%, annually. Baghouse compartments are easily retrofitted with sonic horns. Sonic assistance is frequently used with fabric filters at coal-burning utilities (EPA, 1998a).

Reverse-jet is a cleaning method developed in the 1950's to provide better removal of residual dusts. In this method, the reverse air is piped to a ring around the bag with a narrow slot in it. The air flows through the slot, creating a high velocity air stream that flexes the bag at that point. The ring is mounted on a carriage, driven by a motor and cable system, that travels up and down the bag. This method provides excellent cleaning of residual dust. Due to its complexity, however, maintenance requirements are high. In addition, air impingement on the bags results in increased wear (Billings, 1970). The application of reverse-jet cleaning has been declining (EPA, 1998a).

Advantages:

Fabric filters in general provide high collection efficiencies on both coarse and fine (submicron) particulates. They are relatively insensitive to fluctuations in gas stream conditions. Efficiency and pressure drop are relatively unaffected by large changes in inlet dust loadings for continuously cleaned filters. Filter outlet air is very clean and may be recirculated within the plant in many cases (for energy conservation). Collected material is collected dry for subsequent processing or disposal. Corrosion and rusting of components are usually not problems. Operation is relatively simple. Unlike electrostatic precipitators, fabric filter systems do not require the use of high voltage, therefore, maintenance is simplified and flammable dust may be collected with proper care. The use of selected fibrous or granular filter aids (precoating) permits the high-efficiency collection of submicron smokes and gaseous contaminants. Filter collectors are available in a large number of configurations, resulting in a range of dimensions and inlet and outlet flange locations to suit installation requirements. (AWMA, 1992)

Disadvantages:

Temperatures much in excess of 290 C (550 F) require special refractory mineral or metallic fabrics, which can be expensive. Certain dusts may require fabric treatments to reduce dust seepage, or in other cases, assist in the removal of the collected dust. Concentrations of some dusts in the collector, approximately 50 g/m^3 (22 gr/ft^3), may represent a fire or explosion hazard if a spark or flame is accidentally admitted. Fabrics can burn if readily oxidizable dust is being collected. Fabric filters have relatively high maintenance requirements (e.g., periodic bag replacement). Fabric life may be shortened at elevated temperatures and in the presence of acid or alkaline particulate or gas constituents. They cannot be operated in moist environments; hygroscopic materials, condensation of moisture, or tarry adhesive components may cause crusty caking or plugging of the fabric or require special additives. Respiratory protection for maintenance personnel may be required when replacing fabric. Medium pressure drop is required, typically in the range of 100 to 250 mm of water column (4 to 10 inches of water column). (AWMA, 1992)

Other Considerations:

Fabric filters are useful for collecting particles with resistivities either too low or too high for collection with electrostatic precipitators. Fabric filters therefore may be good candidates for collecting fly ash from low-sulfur coals or fly ash containing high unburned carbon levels, which respectively have high and low resistivities, and thus are relatively difficult to collect with electrostatic precipitators. (STAPPA/ALAPCO, 1996)

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