



Air Pollution Control Technology Fact Sheet

Name of Technology: Fabric Filter - Pulse-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 (μm) in aerodynamic diameter (PM_{10}), particulate matter less than or equal to 2.5 μm in aerodynamic diameter ($\text{PM}_{2.5}$), 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 pulse-jet 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.

Table 1. Typical Industrial Applications of Pulse-Jet 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
Ferrous Metals Processing:	
Iron and Steel Production	3-03-008...009
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/m^3 (0.001 to 0.005 gr/ft^3). (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 pulse-jet cleaned fabric filters. The costs are expressed in 2002 dollars. The cost estimates assume a conventional design under typical operating conditions and do not include auxiliary equipment such as fans and ductwork. The costs for pulse-jet cleaned systems are generated using EPA's cost-estimating spreadsheet for fabric filters (EPA, 1998b).

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 m³/sec (1,000,000 scfm) and 1.0 m³/sec (2,000 scfm), respectively, and a pollutant loading of 9 g/m³ (4.0 gr/ft³).

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 75% and the operational and maintenance (O&M) cost could increase by as much as 20%.

- a. **Capital Cost:** \$13,000 to \$55,000 per sm³/s (\$6 to \$26 per scfm)
- b. **O & M Cost:** \$11,000 to \$50,000 per sm³/s (\$5 to \$24 per scfm), annually
- c. **Annualized Cost:** \$13,000 to \$83,000 per sm³/s (\$6 to \$39 per scfm), annually
- d. **Cost Effectiveness:** \$46 to \$293 per metric ton (\$42 to \$266 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 MW utility boiler may have 5,000 separate bags with a total fabric area approaching 46,500 m² (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.

Pulse-jet cleaning of fabric filters is relatively new compared to other types of fabric filters, since they have only been used for the past 30 years. This cleaning mechanism has consistently grown in popularity because it can treat high dust loadings, operate at constant pressure drop, and occupy less space than other types of fabric filters. Pulse-jet cleaned fabric filters can only operate as external cake collection devices. The bags are closed at the bottom, open at the top, and supported by internal retainers, called cages. Particulate-laden gas flows into the bag, with diffusers often used to prevent oversized particles from damaging the bags. The gas flows from the outside to the inside of the bags, and then out the gas exhaust. The particles are collected on the outside of the bags and drop into a hopper below the fabric filter. (EPA, 1998a)

During pulse-jet cleaning, a short burst, 0.03 to 0.1 seconds in duration, of high pressure [415 to 830 kiloPascals (kPa) (60 to 120 pounds per square inch gage (psig))] air is injected into the bags (EPA, 1998a; AWMA, 1992). The pulse is blown through a venturi nozzle at the top of the bags and establishes a shock wave that continues onto the bottom of the bag. The wave flexes the fabric, pushing it away from the cage, and then snaps it back dislodging the dust cake. The cleaning cycle is regulated by a remote timer connected to a solenoid valve. The burst of air is controlled by the solenoid valve and is released into blow pipes that have nozzles located above the bags. The bags are usually cleaned row by row (EPA, 1998a).

There are several unique attributes of pulse-jet cleaning. Because the cleaning pulse is very brief, the flow of dusty gas does not have to be stopped during cleaning. The other bags continue to filter, taking on extra duty because of the bags being cleaned. In general, there is no change in fabric filter pressure drop or performance as a result of pulse-jet cleaning. This enables the pulse-jet fabric filters to operate on a continuous basis with solenoid valves as the only significant moving parts. Pulse-jet cleaning is also more intense and occurs with greater frequency than the other fabric filter cleaning methods. This intense cleaning dislodges nearly all of the dust cake each time the bag is pulsed. As a result, pulse-jet filters do not rely on a dust cake to provide filtration. Felted (non-woven) fabrics are used in pulse-jet fabric filters because they do not require a dust cake to achieve high collection efficiencies. It has been found that woven fabrics used with pulse-jet fabric filters leak a great deal of dust after they are cleaned. (EPA, 1998a)

Since bags cleaned by the pulse-jet method do not need to be isolated for cleaning, pulse-jet cleaned fabric filters do not need extra compartments to maintain adequate filtration during cleaning. Also, because of the intense and frequent nature of the cleaning, they can treat higher gas flow rates with higher dust loadings. Consequently, fabric filters cleaned by the pulse-jet method can be smaller than other types of fabric filters in the treatment of the same amount of gas and dust, making higher gas-to-cloth ratios achievable. (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/m³ (22 gr/ft³), 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)

A specific disadvantage of pulse-jet units that use very high gas velocities is that the dust from the cleaned bags can be drawn immediately to the other bags. If this occurs, little of the dust falls into the hopper and the dust layer on the bags becomes too thick. To prevent this, pulse-jet fabric filters can be designed with separate compartments that can be isolated for cleaning. (EPA, 1998a)

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)

References:

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