Heat Removal from Transistors

The operation of any semiconductor device involves the dissipation of power with a consequent rise in junction temperature. Because the maximum admissible junction temperature must be not exceeded, careful circuit design with due regard not only to the electrical, but also the thermal performance of a semiconductor circuit, is essential.

If the dissipated power is low, then sufficient heat is radiated from the surface of the case; if the dissipation is high, however, additional steps may have to be taken to promote this process by reducing the thermal resistance between the junction and the ambient air. This can be achieved either by pushing a staror flag-shaped heat dissipator over the case, or by bolting the semiconductor device to a heat sink.

P, the power to be dissipated, T_j the junction temperature, and T_{amb}, the ambient temperature are related by the formula.

$$P = \frac{T_j - T_{amb}}{R_{thA}} = \frac{T_j - T_{amb}}{R_{thC} + R_{thS}}$$

where R_{thA} is the total thermal resistance between junction and ambient air. The total thermal resistance in turn comprises an internal thermal resistance R_{thC} between the junction and the mounting base, and an outer thermal resistance R_{thS} between the case and the surrounding air (or any other cooling medium), It should be noted that only the outer thermal resistance is affected by the design of the heat sink. To determine the size of the heat sink required to meet given operating conditions, proceed as follows: First calculate the outer thermal resistance by use of the formula

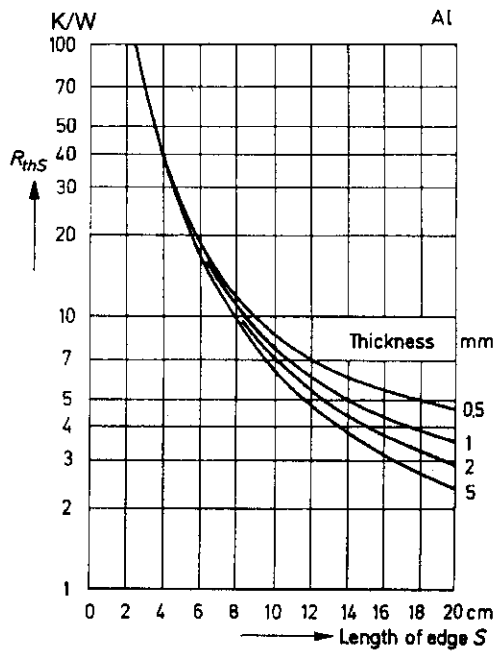
$$R_{thS} < \frac{T_j - T_{amb}}{P} - R_{thC}$$

and then, by use of the diagrams, determine the size of the heat sink which provides the calculated R_{thS}-value. To determine the maximum admissible device dissipation and ambient temperature limit for a given heat sink, proceed in the reverse order to that described above.

The calculations are based on the following assumptions: Use of a squareshaped heat sink without any finish, mounted in a vertical position; semiconductor device located in the centre of the sink; heat sink operated in still air and not subjected to any additional heat radiation. The calculated area should be increased by a factor of 1.3 if the sink is mounted horizontally, and can be reduced by a factor of approximately 0.7 if a black finish is used.

The curves give the thermal to ambient resistance of square vertical heat sinks as a function of side length. It is assumed that the heat is applied at the centre of the square.

Aluminium Cooling Fin



Steel Cooling Fin