

General information

Sizing capacitors at the motor load

Sizing Capacitors at the Motor Load

When the determination is made that power factor correction capacitors ARE a good investment for a particular electrical system, you need to know:

- How many capacitors are needed?
- What sizes are appropriate?

The capacitor provides a local source of reactive current. With respect to inductive motor load, this reactive power is the magnetizing or "no-load current" which the motor requires to operate.

A capacitor is properly sized when its full load current rating is 90% of the no-load current of the motor. This 90% rating avoids overcorrection and the accompanying problems such as overvoltages.

One Selection Method: Using Formulas

If no-load current is known . . .

The most accurate method of selecting a capacitor is to take the no-load current of the motor, and multiply by .90 (90%). Take this resulting figure, turn to the appropriate catalog page, and determine which kvar size is needed, catalog number, enclosure type, and price.

EXAMPLE: Size a capacitor for a 100hp, 460V 3-phase motor which has a full load current of 124 amps and a no-load current of 37 amps.

1. Multiply the no-load current figure of 37 amps by 90%.

$$37 \text{ no load amps} \times 90\% = 33 \text{ no load amps}$$

2. Turning to the catalog page for 480 volt, 3-phase capacitors, find the closest amp rating to, but NOT OVER 33 amps. See Table 1, sample catalog pricing chart. Per the sample chart the closest amperage is 32.5 amps. The proper capacitor unit, then is 27 kvar and the appropriate catalog number depends on the type enclosure desired.

NOTE: The formula method corrects power factor to approximately .95

If the no load current is not known . . .

If the no-load current is unknown, a reasonable estimate for 3-phase motors is to take the full load amps and multiply by 30%. Then take that figure and multiply times the 90% rating figure being used to avoid overcorrection and overvoltages. EXAMPLE: Size a capacitor for a 75hp, 460V 3-phase motor which has a full load current of 92 amps and an unknown no-load current.

1. First, find the no-load current by multiplying the full load current times 30%.
 $92 \text{ (full load amps)} \times 30\% = 28 \text{ estimated no-load amps}$
2. Multiply 28 no-load amps by 90%.
 $28 \text{ no-load amps} \times 90\% = 25 \text{ no-load amps}$
3. Now examine the capacitor pricing and selection chart for 480 volt, 3-phase capacitors. Refer again to Table 1. Here it will be seen that the closest capacitor to 25 amps full load current without going over is a 20 kvar unit, rated at 24.1 amps.
4. The correct selection, then, is 20 kvar!

TABLE 1
480 VOLT, 60 Hz., 3-Phase

Enclosure Size	kvar Rating	Rated Current Per Phase	Approx. Shipping Weight (Lbs.)	Indoor - Nema 1	Outdoor - Nema 3R	Indoor - Nema 12
				Catalog Number	Catalog Number	Catalog Number
	1.5	1.8	8	C484G1.5	C484R1.5	C484D1.5
	2	2.4	8	C484G2	C484R2	C484D2
	2.5	3.0	8	C484G2.5	C484R2.5	C484D2.5
	3	3.6	8	C484G3	C484R3	C484D3
	4	4.8	8	C484G4	C484R4	C484D4
	6	7.2	13	C484G6	C484R6	C484D6
	8	9.6	13	C484G8	C484R8	C484D8
	10	12.0	13	C484G10	C484R10	C484D10
	12	14.4	13	C484G12	C484R12	C484D12
	15	18.0	13	C484G15	C484R15	C484D15
	18	21.6	13	C484G18	C484R18	C484D18
	19	22.8	13	C484G19	C484R19	C484D19
	20	24.1	13	C484G20	C484R20	C484D20
	21	25.3	13	C484G21	C484R21	C484D21
	22	26.5	13	C484G22	C484R22	C484D22
	22.5	27.1	13	C484G22.5	C484R22.5	C484D22.5
	24	28.8	13	C484G24	C484R24	C484D24
	25	30.0	13	C484G25	C484R25	C484D25

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Using charts

An Alternate Selection Method — Using Charts

TABLE 2: Suggested Maximum Capacitor Ratings for T-Frame NEMA Class B Motors

Induction motor rating (HP)	NOMINAL MOTOR SPEED											
	3600 R/MIN		1800 R/MIN		1200 R/MIN		900 R/MIN		720 R/MIN		600 R/MIN	
	Capacitor rating (kvar)	Line current reduction (%)	Capacitor rating (kvar)	Line current reductions (%)	Capacitor rating (kvar)	Line current reduction (%)	Capacitor rating (kvar)	Line current reduction (%)	Capacitor rating (kvar)	Line current reduction (%)	Capacitor rating (kvar)	Line current reduction (%)
3	1.5	14	1.5	23	2.5	28	3	38	3	40	4	40
5	2	14	2.5	22	3	26	4	31	4	40	5	40
7.5	2.5	14	3	20	4	21	5	28	5	38	6	45
10	4	14	4	18	5	21	6	27	7.5	36	8	38
15	5	12	5	18	6	20	7.5	24	8	32	10	34
20	6	12	6	17	7.5	19	9	23	12	25	18	30
25	7.5	12	7.5	17	8	19	10	23	12	25	18	30
30	8	11	8	16	10	19	14	22	15	24	22.5	30
40	12	12	13	15	16	19	18	21	22.5	24	25	30
50	15	12	18	15	20	19	22.5	21	24	24	30	30
60	18	12	21	14	22.5	17	26	20	30	22	35	28
75	20	12	23	14	25	15	28	17	33	14	40	19
100	22.5	11	30	14	30	12	35	16	40	15	45	17
125	25	10	36	12	35	12	42	14	45	15	50	17
150	30	10	42	12	40	12	52.5	14	52.5	14	60	17
200	35	10	50	11	50	10	65	13	68	13	90	17
250	40	11	60	10	62.5	10	82	13	87.5	13	100	17
300	45	11	68	10	75	12	100	14	100	13	120	17
350	50	12	75	8	90	12	120	13	120	13	135	15
400	75	10	80	8	100	12	130	13	140	13	150	15
450	80	8	90	8	120	10	140	12	160	14	160	15
500	100	8	120	9	150	12	160	12	180	13	180	15

Applies to three-phase, 60Hz motors when switched with capacitors as a single unit.

Another method of selecting the proper capacitor employs the use of only a selection chart shown in Table 2 or 3. These tables take other variables such as motor RPM into consideration in making recommendations for capacitor applications. They are convenient because they only require that the user know the horsepower and RPM of the motor. Both tables estimate the percentage reduction in full load current drawn by the motor as a result of the capacitor's installation.

TABLE 3: Suggested Maximum Capacitor Ratings for U-Frame NEMA Class B Motors

NEMA Motor Design A or B
Normal Starting Torque
Normal Running Current

H.P. Rating	3600 RPM		1800 RPM		1200 RPM		900 RPM		720 RPM		600 RPM	
	kvar	%AR	kvar	%AR	kvar	%AR	kvar	%AR	kvar	%AR	kvar	%AR
3	1.5	14	1.5	15	1.5	20	2	27	2.5	35	3.5	41
5	2	12	2	13	2	17	3	25	4	32	4.5	37
7.5	2.5	11	2.5	13	2	15	4	22	5.5	30	6	34
10	3	10	3	11	3.5	14	5	21	6.5	27	7.5	31
15	4	9	4	10	5	13	6.5	18	8	23	9.5	27
20	5	9	5	10	5	11	7.5	18	10	20	10	25
25	5	6	5	8	7.5	11	7.5	13	10	20	10	21
30	5	5	5	8	7.5	11	10	15	15	22	15	25
40	7.5	8	10	8	10	10	15	16	15	18	15	20
50	10	7	10	8	10	9	15	12	20	15	25	22
60	10	6	10	8	15	10	15	11	20	15	25	20
75	15	7	15	8	15	9	20	11	30	15	40	20
100	20	8	20	8	25	9	30	11	40	14	45	18
125	20	6	25	7	30	9	30	10	45	14	50	17
150	30	6	30	7	35	9	40	10	50	17	60	17
200	40	6	40	7	45	8	55	11	60	12	75	17
250	45	5	45	6	60	9	70	10	75	12	100	17
300	50	5	50	6	75	9	75	9	80	12	105	17

Applies to three-phase, 60Hz motors when switched with capacitors as a single unit.

WARNING!

Never oversize capacitors or exceed 1.0 power factor or resulting problems with the motor can occur!!

If calculations or a kvar determination chart indicate a kvar rating not found in a pricing and selection chart, always refer to the next lower kvar rating!

EXAMPLE: A manufacturer needs to determine the proper capacitors required for a 1200 RPM, 75HP T-Frame NEMA class B motor.

1. First find 75 in the horsepower column of the chart.
2. Locate the 1200 RPM capacitor rating (kvar) column. Note the figure of 25 kvar.
3. Now refer to the appropriate pricing and selection chart Table 1, page 19.5. The appropriate kvar rating is 25 kvar. Depending on the desired enclosure, the price and catalog number can then be easily determined.

NOTE

Using the above charts for selecting capacitors will correct power factor to approximately .95.