# AR ${AR}: Install Variable Frequency Drive (VFD) on Electric Motor

**Recommended Action**

Install a variable frequency drive (VFD) on electric motors that are running on partial load.

**Summary of Estimated Savings and Implementation Cost**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Annual Cost Savings | ${ACS} |
| Implementation Cost | ${MIC} |
| Payback Period | ${PB} |
| Annual Electricity Savings | ${ES} kWh |
| Annual Demand Savings | ${DS} kW |
| ARC Number | 2.4146.1 |

**Current Practice and Observations**

In many commercial and industrial environments, the application of variable speed control is cost effective. Energy savings results from reduced power consumption by the motor. As the system power requirements are reduced, the power consumed by the equipment can be reduced by an amount significantly greater than can be achieved with the existing controls. During the visit it was identified that the motor running the ${MT} operation is a good candidate for a VFD based on partial load throughout the production cycle.

**Anticipated Savings**

The affinity laws estimate that the change in power on the motor varies as the cube of the speed of the motor, or flow, as follows:

This relationship is used to estimate the energy use of a given motor with a variable frequency drive. The table below shows the relative power consumption of a motor using VFD control, compared to a motor with standard controls[[1]](#footnote-1). Notice that the affinity laws are not exactly followed for VFD power consumption. This is a result of losses incurred by the variable frequency drive, which reduces the motor’s efficiency. Therefore, with VFD control, as the flow rate decreases the VFD/motor system efficiency decreases. Consequently, the actual power consumption is higher than the theoretical power consumption estimated by the affinity laws with more deviation at lower flow rates. More accurate power consumption estimates can be obtained for varying flows, if pump or fan curves from the manufacturers are available.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Load %** | **Power Consumption of Motor** | |
| **No Control %** | **VFD %** |
| 100 | 100 | 105 |
| 95 | 100 | 86 |
| 90 | 100 | 73 |
| 85 | 100 | 64 |
| 80 | 100 | 57 |
| 75 | 100 | 50 |
| 70 | 100 | 44 |
| 65 | 100 | 38 |
| 60 | 100 | 32 |
| 55 | 100 | 26 |
| 50 | 100 | 21 |
| 45 | 100 | 17 |
| 40 | 100 | 14 |
| 35 | 100 | 11 |
| 30 | 100 | 8 |
| 25 | 100 | 6 |
| 20 | 100 | 5 |

Table 1: Power Consumption of Motor with RPM.

The current power draw for a given motor, CPD, and the proposed power draw for a given motor with VFD, PPD, can be estimated as follows:

CPD = HP × C1 / ηExist

and

PPD = HP × C1 × FR / ηProp

where,

HP = Horsepower of motor; ${HP} HP

C­1 = Conversion constant; 0.746 kW/HP

FR = Proposed power consumption of motor with VFD, at average ${LF}% load;

= ${FR}% (from table)

ηExist = Efficiency of the existing motor; ${ETAE}%

ηProp = Efficiency of the motor with VFD; ${ETAP}%

CPD = ${HP} HP × 0.746 kW/HP / ${ETAE}%

= ${CPD} kW

PPD = ${HP} HP × 0.746 kW/HP × ${FR}% / ${ETAE}%

= ${PPD} kW

The annual electricity savings, ES, for a given piece of equipment can be estimated as follows:

ES = (CPD - PPD)× OH

where,

OH = Annual operating hours when compressor is in use; ${OH} hrs/yr (${HR} hours/day, ${DY} days/week, ${WK} weeks per year)

ES = (${CPD} kW – ${PPD} kW) × ${OH} hrs/yr

= ${ES} kWh/yr

The annual demand savings, DS, for a given piece of equipment can be estimated as follows:

DS = (${CPD} kW − ${PPD} kW) × CF × C2

where,

CF = Coincidence factor – probability that the equipment contributes to the facility peak demand each month; ${CF}% per month

C2 = Conversion constant; 12 mos/yr

DS= (${CPD} kW − ${PPD} kW) × ${CF}%/mo × 12 mos/yr

= ${DS} kW/yr.

The annual cost savings, ACS, is:

ACS = ES × Electricity Cost + DS × Demand Cost,

= ${ES} kWh/yr × ${EC}/kWh + ${DS} kW/yr × ${DC}/kW

= ${ECS}/yr + ${DCS}/yr.

= ${ACS}/yr.

**Implementation Cost**

The cost for a ${HP} HP VFD system is estimated at ${VFD}, with an additional ${AIC} in installation costs. Therefore, total cost for this recommendation, IC, is estimated at ${IC}. The plant could contact a contractor for a more accurate price for the VFD and installation.

Rebates are available for switching to VFD in a manufacturing environment (see appendix). The estimated rebate is:

RB = ${RR}/kWh⋅yr × ES

= ${RR}/ kWh⋅yr × ${ES} kWh/yr

= ${RB}

The incentives are capped at 50% of the project cost and makes the modified rebate savings MRB equals to ${MRB}. Hence, the modified implementation cost (MIC) is estimated as follows:

MIC = IC – MRB (Note: Rebate can’t exceed 50% of project cost)

= ${IC} - ${MRB}

= ${MIC}

Therefore, the total implementation cost is: ${MIC}.

**The total annual electricity savings for this AR is ${ES} kWh, and the annual demand savings is ${DS} kW/yr. The annual cost savings is likely to be ${ACS} and, with an implementation cost of ${MIC}, the payback period is about ${PB}.**

**Implementation Cost References**

The below links are for implementation cost references. We do not endorse/recommend these brands or products. Furthermore, these products may or may not be suitable for the application. The client should contact a vendor(s) to conduct a detailed study of the process, in order to determine the best product for the recommended application.

* <https://www.driveswarehouse.com/P1-00930-HFUF>
* https://www.grainger.com/product/SCHNEIDER-ELECTRIC-Variable-Frequency-Drive-480V-55WR81
* <https://www.wolfautomation.com/products/ac-drives/40_hp/>
* <https://vfds.com/40hp-50hp-460v-weg-vfd-cfw090060tgz>

1. Electric Power Research Institute, Adjustable Speed Drives Directory, Table 3.1, p. 18, 1991. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)