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HYDROGEN FILLING METHOD, HYDROGEN FILLING APPARATUS, PROGRAM, AND RECORD MEDIUM

Abstract

To enable a hydrogen tank to be efficiently filled with hydrogen even when the hydrogen tank has a large capacity, hydrogen filling at the nozzle flow is prohibited when the nozzle flow of a nozzle is larger than the receptacle flow of a receptacle or when the receptacle flow is unknown under the condition that the nozzle and the receptacle can be connected to each other.

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Background/Summary

INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE [0001] This is a continuation application of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 17/810,676, filed Jul. 5, 2022, which claims the disclosure of Japanese Patent Application No. 2021-118815 filed on Jul. 19, 2021 and Japanese Patent Application No. 2021-180744 filed on Nov. 5, 2021, which both are incorporated herein by reference in their entireties.

FIELD

[0002] The present disclosure relates to hydrogen filling.

BACKGROUND

[0003] Patent Literature 1 discloses a hydrogen filling device adapted to transmit information on a vehicle to be filled with hydrogen (for example, the capacity of a hydrogen tank) to a control unit through infrared communication, the control unit specifying hydrogen filling control (protocol). It is shown there that in hydrogen filling, the pressure rise rate is determined by the capacity of the tank, the initial pressure, and the outside air temperature.

CITATION LIST

Patent Literature

[0004] Patent Literature 1: JP 2019-2515 A

SUMMARY

Technical Problem

[0005] When a large-sized vehicle is a fuel cell electric vehicle, the capacity of hydrogen gas filling within 30 kg, which is provided by the existing standard, cannot keep driving distance of the large-sized vehicle sufficient. In this case, the filling amount at one time increases because the capacity of hydrogen gas increases. Thus, the filling time tends to be longer, and not only filling at a conventional filling speed but also filling at a faster speed (so-called large flow) is necessary for short-term filling.

[0006] As described above, conventional hydrogen filling is controlled on the assumption that a hydrogen tank has a capacity up to 30 kg. When conventional control is performed with a hydrogen tank having a capacity more than 30 kg (e.g., hydrogen tank installed in a large-sized vehicle), the filling time may be longer, or the supply of hydrogen may be stopped at the time point when the tank has been filled with 30 kg hydrogen.

[0007] In view of the above problems, an object of the present disclosure is to enable a hydrogen tank to be efficiently filled with hydrogen even when the hydrogen tank has a large capacity.

Solution to Problem

[0008] As a result of their intensive research, the inventors of the present application found that the factor influencing filling of a hydrogen tank of a particularly large capacity with hydrogen is not only the capacity of the hydrogen tank but also the type of filling port, and a proper pressure rise rate based on these factor is in inverse proportion relation to the capacity of the hydrogen tank.

[0009] Here, “pressure rise rate” means rise pressure per unit time in a hydrogen tank, and is represented by, for example, “MPa/min”. Hydrogen filling at a proper pressure rise rate allows the

hydrogen tank to be efficiently and properly filled with hydrogen.

[0010] A nozzle at the head of a hydrogen supply pipe provided in a hydrogen filling apparatus, and a filling port (receptacle) provided at a hydrogen introducing pipe disposed in a fuel cell electric vehicle are connected to each other, and then a hydrogen tank is filled with hydrogen. Usually, there are plural types of nozzle and receptacle according to the allowable maximum hydrogen pressures and maximum hydrogen flows. The connection of a nozzle and a receptacle that are different types from each other may cause some fault in hydrogen filling. For example, such fault tends to be noticeable when a nozzle of a larger allowable maximum hydrogen pressure or maximum hydrogen flow than a receptacle is combined to this receptacle.

[0011] For this, one may use a structure of a nozzle and a receptacle which prevents the nozzle and the receptacle from being physically connected to each other, and prohibit hydrogen filling when the nozzle and the receptacle of different types from each other are combined. However, the complete prohibition when such a nozzle and a receptacle are combined causes a case where filling is prohibited to be more often, and prevents efficient hydrogen filling in terms of wide use. Therefore, for efficient filling, the inventors of the present application arrived at an idea that it is a significant benefit for the improvement of efficiency that filling can be performed even when a nozzle and a receptacle that are different types from each other are connected.

[0012] Based on the above findings, the present application discloses, as one means for solving the problems, a method of filling a hydrogen tank with hydrogen, the method comprising: prohibiting hydrogen filling at a nozzle flow when the nozzle flow of a nozzle is larger than a receptacle flow of a receptacle or when the receptacle flow is unknown under a condition that the nozzle and the receptacle can be connected to each other.

[0013] The method may further comprise performing the hydrogen filling at the receptacle flow or less.

[0014] In the method, the nozzle and the receptacle can be connected to each other when a nozzle pressure of the nozzle is equal to or lower than a receptacle pressure of the receptacle.

[0015] The method may further comprise: determining a pressure rise rate in the hydrogen filling based on inverse proportion relation to a capacity of the hydrogen tank from a type of receptacle and the capacity of the hydrogen tank.

[0016] In the method, a map where a value of the pressure rise rate is determined based on the inverse proportion relation may be created, and the pressure rise rate may be determined by the map.

[0017] As another aspect of the present disclosure, disclosed is a hydrogen filling apparatus adapted to fill a hydrogen tank with hydrogen, the apparatus comprising: an accumulator; a compressor; a hydrogen supply pipe, a nozzle disposed at a head of the hydrogen supply pipe; and a control unit controlling the compressor, wherein the control unit performs a calculation of prohibition of hydrogen filling at a nozzle flow when the nozzle flow of the nozzle is larger than a receptacle flow of a receptacle or when the receptacle flow is unknown under a condition that the nozzle and the receptacle can be connected to each other.

[0018] In the hydrogen filling apparatus, the control unit may determine that the hydrogen filling is performed at the receptacle flow or less.

[0019] In the hydrogen filling apparatus, the nozzle and the receptacle can be connected to each other when a nozzle pressure of the nozzle is equal to or lower than a receptacle pressure of the receptacle.

[0020] In the hydrogen filling apparatus, the control unit may perform a calculation of determining a pressure rise rate based on inverse proportion relation to a capacity of the hydrogen tank from a type of receptacle and the capacity of the hydrogen tank.

[0021] In the hydrogen filling apparatus, a map where a value of the pressure rise rate is based on the inverse proportion relation may be recorded in the control unit, and the pressure rise rate may be determined by the map.

[0022] As another aspect of the present disclosure, disclosed is a program to execute control of filling a hydrogen tank with hydrogen, the program comprising: prohibiting hydrogen filling at a nozzle flow when the nozzle flow of a nozzle is larger than a receptacle flow of a receptacle or when the receptacle flow is unknown.

[0023] The program may further comprise determining that the hydrogen filling is performed at the receptacle flow or less.

[0024] The program may further comprise: obtaining a pressure rise rate based on inverse proportion relation to a capacity of the hydrogen tank from a type of receptacle and the capacity of the hydrogen tank.

[0025] A record medium storing the above program is also disclosed.

Advantageous Effects

[0026] According to the present disclosure, a hydrogen tank can be efficiently filled with hydrogen even when the hydrogen tank has a large capacity.

Description

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

[0027] FIG. 1 schematically shows a hydrogen filling apparatus **10**;

[0028] FIG. 2 schematically shows a control unit **14**;

[0029] FIG. 3 shows a flow of a hydrogen filling method **S10**;

[0030] FIG. 4 shows an example of the relation between the capacity of a hydrogen tank and the pressure rise rate;

[0031] FIG. 5 explanatorily shows one example of maps;

[0032] FIG. 6 shows one example of nozzles and receptacles connectable and non-connectable to each other; and

[0033] FIG. 7 shows a flow of a hydrogen filling method **S20**.

DESCRIPTION OF EMBODIMENTS

1. Hydrogen Filling Apparatus

[0034] A hydrogen filling apparatus according to one example will be described with reference to drawings. FIG. 1 conceptually shows a hydrogen filling apparatus **10**. The hydrogen filling apparatus **10** is provided at a so-called hydrogen station. Hydrogen is supplied from the hydrogen filling apparatus **10** to a hydrogen tank **2** that is included in an automobile (fuel cell electric vehicle) **1** equipped with a fuel cell.

[0035] Here, the fuel cell electric vehicle **1** is as known. A fuel cell system is provided inside a body of the fuel cell electric vehicle **1**. The fuel cell system is provided with a fuel cell and the hydrogen tank **2**. Hydrogen is supplied from the hydrogen tank **2** to the fuel cell. The fuel cell generates electricity by oxidizing, with a separately supplied oxidizing gas (air), hydrogen that is supplied from the hydrogen tank **2** and used as a fuel gas. A motor that is a driving source of the vehicle is rotated by this generated electricity. According to the present disclosure, as described above, the hydrogen tank **2** can be efficiently filled with hydrogen even when the fuel cell electric vehicle **1** is such a particularly large-sized vehicle that the hydrogen tank **2** has a capacity more than 30 kg.

[0036] The hydrogen filling apparatus **10** is provided with an accumulator **11** in which hydrogen is sealed, a compressor **12** to compress (pressurize) hydrogen released from the accumulator **11** to piping, a hydrogen supply pipe **13** to supply the pressurized hydrogen from the compressor **12** to the fuel cell electric vehicle **1**, and a control unit **14** controlling the supply of hydrogen. Here, known ones may be used as the accumulator **11**, the compressor **12** and the hydrogen supply pipe **13** without any particular limitations. The hydrogen tank **2** is filled with hydrogen by connecting a nozzle **13a** provided at the head of the hydrogen supply pipe **13** to a receptacle (filling port) **3a**

provided at the head of a hydrogen introducing pipe **3** of the fuel cell electric vehicle **1**, compressing hydrogen released from the inside of the accumulator **11** by the compressor **12**, and passing the released hydrogen through the hydrogen supply pipe **13** and the hydrogen introducing pipe **3** of the fuel cell electric vehicle **1**.

[0037] The control unit **14** controls respective parts of the hydrogen filling apparatus **10**. As conceptually shown in FIG. **2**, the control unit **14** is provided with a CPU (Central Processing Unit) **14a** that is a processor, a RAM (Random Access Memory) **14b** that operates as a work area, a ROM (Read-Only Memory) **14c** that operates as a record medium, a reception unit **14d** that is an interface for the control unit **14** to receive both wired information and wireless information, and a transmission unit **14e** that is an interface for the control unit **14** to transmit both wired information and wireless information to the outside.

[0038] Therefore, the control unit **14** is configured to be connected to other devices via the reception unit **14d** and the transmission unit **14e** so as to be able to transmit and receive signals.

[0039] A control program for controlling respective parts of the hydrogen filling apparatus **10** is stored in the control unit **14**. In the control unit **14**, the CPU **14a**, the RAM **14b** and the ROM **14c** as hardware resources cooperate with the control programs as computer programs. Specifically, the CPU **14a** executes, in the RAM **14b** that operates as a work area, computer programs recorded in the ROM **14c**, thereby enabling various functions. Information acquired or created by the CPU **14a** is stored in the RAM **14b**.

[0040] In this embodiment, the control unit **14** acquires, from the control unit **4** of the fuel cell electric vehicle **1** via the reception unit **14d**, the type of filling port (receptacle) **3a** of the fuel cell electric vehicle **1**, and the capacity of the hydrogen tank **2**. The number of the filling port(s) (receptacle(s)) **3a** may be acquired if necessary.

[0041] In this embodiment, based on the acquired information, the control unit **14** executes computer programs recorded in the ROM **14c**, for example, using a database recorded in the ROM **14c**, determines the pressure rise rate in hydrogen filling, and records the determined rate in the RAM **14b**. The control unit **14** controls the compressor **12** via the transmission unit **14e** so that hydrogen filling can be performed at the determined pressure rise rate, and then the hydrogen tank **2** is filled with hydrogen. A specific method of determining the pressure rise rate will be described later.

[0042] In addition, the control unit **14** executes computer programs recorded based on information (signals) from provided sensors and devices, and controls respective parts of the hydrogen filling apparatus **10**. Examples of the sensors and devices include a hydrogen flow meter, a temperature sensor, a pressure sensor, and valves adapted to control the flow of hydrogen.

2. Hydrogen Filling

[0043] Next, hydrogen filling will be described.

2.1. Control of Pressure Rise Rate

[0044] The fuel cell electric vehicle **1** is filled with hydrogen as described above. In the present disclosure, when hydrogen filling is performed, the pressure rise rate for hydrogen filling is calculated and hydrogen filling is controlled based on its result. Here, the method of determining the pressure rise rate will be described. Hydrogen filling can be controlled by creating a computer program having a step corresponding to respective steps of this method, storing the created programs in the ROM **14c** that operates as a record medium of the control unit **14**, and executing the programs. Hereinafter a hydrogen filling method according to one example will be described. A computer program created based on this method functions as one component of the hydrogen filling apparatus **10** by recording this program in the ROM **14c** of the control unit **14** as described above.

[0045] FIG. **3** shows the flow of a hydrogen filling method **S10** according to one embodiment. As can be seen from FIG. **3**, the hydrogen filling method **S10** has step **S11** of acquiring information, step **S12** of determining the pressure rise rate, and step **S13** of hydrogen filling. Hereinafter

respective steps will be described.

2.1a. Step of Acquiring Information

[0046] In step **S11** of acquiring information, the type of filling port (receptacle) **3a** for hydrogen in the fuel cell electric vehicle **1**, and the capacity of the hydrogen tank **2** are acquired from the fuel cell electric vehicle **1**, which is to be filled with hydrogen from now on. The number of the filling port(s) **3a** may be acquired if necessary.

[0047] Information may be either automatically or manually acquired, or may be information recorded in the control unit **14** as a database in advance.

[0048] Information may be automatically acquired by, for example, receiving, with the reception unit **14d** provided in the control unit **14** of the hydrogen filling apparatus **10**, information on the type of filling port (receptacle) **3a**, the number of the filling port(s) **3a**, and the capacity of the hydrogen tank **2** which is wirelessly transmitted from the control unit **4** installed in the fuel cell electric vehicle **1**.

[0049] Information may be manually acquired by, for example, receiving, with the reception unit **14d** provided in the control unit **14** of the hydrogen filling apparatus **10**, information on the type of filling port (receptacle) **3**, the number of the filling port(s) **3a**, and the capacity of the hydrogen tank **2** via a human input operation with an input means **15** such as a keyboard and a touch panel.

2.1b. Determining Pressure Rise Rate

[0050] In step **S12** of determining the pressure rise rate, the pressure rise rate in hydrogen filling is determined based on the information acquired in step **S11** of acquiring information. In the present disclosure, the pressure rise rate is basically determined by inverse proportion relation to the capacity of the hydrogen tank **2**. That is, the pressure rise rate is computed using

$R=K(1/M)$ [0051] where the pressure rise rate is R (MPa/min), and the capacity of the hydrogen tank **2** is M (kg).

[0052] Here, K is a coefficient, and is determined by the type of filling port **3a** (and further the number of the filling port(s) **3a** if necessary), and is obtained in advance by experiment or the like. The temperature in the hydrogen tank and the outside air temperature may be considered when the coefficient K is determined. The coefficient K may be obtained both in view of such temperature, and based on an actual measurement by experiment or any existing map (e.g., SAE J2601 (North American Standard) or JPEC-S 0003 (Japanese Standards)).

[0053] FIG. **4** is a graph showing the relation between the capacity (kg) of the hydrogen tank and the pressure rise rate (MPa/min) according to one example. The pressure rise rate is obtained from the capacity of the hydrogen tank **2** by applying a relational expression in inverse proportion which is obtained in advance according to the type of filling port **3a** (and further the number of the filling port(s) **3a** if necessary) like this.

[0054] The pressure rise rate can be obtained by calculation as described above each time. The pressure rise rate may be obtained by making classification by predetermined conditions or ranges, obtaining the pressure rise rate according to the classification in advance (in the same way as described above), recording the obtained pressure rise rates in the ROM **14c** or the like in the form of a list (map), and calling the map of a classification corresponding to a condition based on the information acquired in step **S11** of acquiring information.

[0055] For example, as shown in FIG. **5**, classification is made according to the hydrogen tank capacity into predetermined ranges (e.g., the range from 10 kg to less than 20 kg, the range from 20 kg to less than 30 kg, the range from 30 kg to less than 40 kg, the range from 40 kg to less than 50 kg, the range from 50 kg to less than 60 kg, . . .). The respective ranges (classifications) are further classified according to the type of filling port, and the number of the filling port(s), the pressure rise rates are calculated, and the results thereof are shown in the form of a list (map). The pressure rise rate obtained from a map corresponding to a condition is called based on the information acquired in step **S11** of acquiring information. These maps may be recorded in, for example, the

ROM **14c** of the control unit **14**.

[0056] Similarly, one may make classification according to the type of filling port (and further, the number of the filling port(s) if necessary), further classify the respective types (or the respective numbers) according to the hydrogen tank capacity, calculate the pressure rise rates and show the results thereof in the form of a list (map), and call the pressure rise rate obtained from a map corresponding to a condition based on the information acquired in step **S11** of acquiring information.

2.1c. Hydrogen Filling

[0057] In step **S13** of hydrogen filling, hydrogen filling is performed at the pressure rise rate determined in step **S12** of determining the pressure rise rate. Hydrogen filling is performed at a proper pressure rise rate as the supply pressure of hydrogen is adjusted by controlling the compressor **12** by the control unit **14** via the transmission unit **14e** based on the information on the determined pressure rise rate.

2.1d. Effect of Controlling Pressure Rise Rate etc.

[0058] The hydrogen filling apparatus **10**, and the control of the pressure rise rate by the hydrogen filling method **S10** described above allow the hydrogen tank **2** to be efficiently filled with hydrogen even when the hydrogen tank **2** has a particularly large capacity. In other words, for example, the time for hydrogen filling can be shortened, and at the same time the load to the hydrogen tank can be suppressed even when the hydrogen tank has a capacity more than 30 kg (e.g., a hydrogen tank installed in a large-sized vehicle).

[0059] The pressure rise rate is computed by the control unit **14** provided in the hydrogen filling apparatus **10** as described above as an example. The present disclosure is not limited to this. In addition to this, the pressure rise rate may be calculated by a control unit (engine control unit or ECU, or the like) **4** provided in the fuel cell electric vehicle **1**. At this time, for example, for improvement of safety, one may compare the pressure rise rate obtained in the hydrogen filling apparatus and the pressure rise rate obtained in the fuel cell electric vehicle, and allow filling if the difference between the values thereof is within a certain range and prohibit filling if not, or perform filling at a lower pressure rise rate in both the pressure rise rates.

2.2. Control Based on Relation Between Nozzle and Receptacle

[0060] As described above, the nozzle **13a** at the head of the hydrogen supply pipe **13** provided in the hydrogen filling apparatus **10**, and the filling port (receptacle) **3a** provided at the hydrogen introducing pipe **3** disposed in the fuel cell electric vehicle **1** are connected to each other, and then the hydrogen tank **2** is filled with hydrogen. Usually, there are plural types of nozzle **13a** and receptacle **3a** according to the allowable maximum hydrogen pressures and maximum hydrogen flows. The connection of the nozzle **13a** and the receptacle **3a** that are different types from each other even allows hydrogen filling, but in some cases, may cause efficiency of the filling to decrease, or some fault. For example, such decrease or fault tends to be shown or occur noticeably when the nozzle **13a** of a larger allowable maximum hydrogen pressure or maximum hydrogen flow than the receptacle **3a** is combined to this receptacle **3a**.

[0061] For this, for hydrogen filling, one may configure the combination of the nozzle **13a** and the receptacle **3a** that are different types from each other in such a way that the nozzle **13a** and the receptacle **3a** cannot to be physically connected to each other. "Cannot be physically connected" means that at least one of the nozzle **13a** and the receptacle **3a** has a structure that prevents both from being connected to each other. For example, the receptacle **3a** may be provided with a projection to prevent the nozzle **13a** from being connected thereto. It is noted that the structure is not limited to this.

[0062] On the contrary, however, when the nozzle **13a** and the receptacle **3a** cannot be connected to each other at all when the nozzle **13a** and the receptacle **3a** that are different types from each other are combined, a case where filling is prohibited becomes more often, and efficient hydrogen filling in terms of wide use is prevented.

[0063] Therefore, in the present disclosure, the combination of the nozzle **13a** and the receptacle **3a** that are at least some different types from each other is configured in such a way that the nozzle **13a** and the receptacle **3a** can be physically connected to each other, and then hydrogen filling is controlled by the control unit **14**. Further specific descriptions are as follows.

2.2.1. Type of Nozzle and Receptacle

[0064] As described above, there are plural types of nozzle **13a** and receptacle **3a** according to the allowable maximum hydrogen pressures and maximum hydrogen flows. Here, as expressions, “nozzle pressure” means the allowable maximum hydrogen pressure of the nozzle, and “nozzle flow” means the allowable maximum hydrogen flow of the nozzle. Likewise, “receptacle pressure” means the allowable maximum hydrogen pressure of the receptacle, and “receptacle flow” means the allowable maximum hydrogen flow of the receptacle.

[0065] The number of the types of nozzle **13a** and receptacle **3a** is not particular limited. Here, as one example, a description in a case where there are the following types of nozzle **13a** and receptacle **3a** will be given. The relation among pressures by magnitude is as follows: pressure $A < \text{pressure } B < \text{pressure } C < \text{pressure } D$. The relation among the flows by volume is as follows: small flow $< \text{moderate flow} < \text{large flow}$. [0066] Nozzle 1 (N1): nozzle pressure is pressure A, nozzle flow is small flow [0067] Nozzle 2 (N2): nozzle pressure is pressure B, nozzle flow is small flow [0068] Nozzle 3 (N3): nozzle pressure is pressure C, nozzle flow is small flow [0069] Nozzle 4 (N4): nozzle pressure is pressure C, nozzle flow is large flow [0070] Nozzle 5 (N5): nozzle pressure is pressure D, nozzle flow is small flow [0071] Nozzle 6 (N6): nozzle pressure is pressure D, nozzle flow is moderate flow [0072] Nozzle 7 (N7): nozzle pressure is pressure D, nozzle flow is large flow [0073] Receptacle 1 (R1): receptacle pressure is pressure A, receptacle flow is small flow [0074] Receptacle 2 (R2): receptacle pressure is pressure B, receptacle flow is small flow [0075] Receptacle 3 (R3): receptacle pressure is pressure C, receptacle flow is small flow [0076] Receptacle 4 (R4): receptacle pressure is pressure C, receptacle flow is large flow [0077] Receptacle 5 (R5): receptacle pressure is pressure D, receptacle flow is small flow [0078] Receptacle 6 (R6): receptacle pressure is pressure D, receptacle flow is moderate flow [0079] Receptacle 7 (R7): receptacle pressure is pressure D, receptacle flow is large flow

[0080] Here, specific values of the nozzle pressure, the receptacle pressure, the nozzle flow, and the receptacle flow are not particularly limited. For example, pressure A may be 11 MPa, pressure B may be 25 MPa, pressure C may be 35 MPa, pressure D may be 70 MPa, small flow may be 60 g/s, moderate flow may be 90 g/s and large flow may be 120 g/s.

2.2.2. Example of Nozzles and Receptacles Connectable and Non-Connectable to Each Other

[0081] For enabling hydrogen filling, it is necessary that the nozzle **13a** and the receptacle **3a** can be physically connected. FIG. 6 shows the nozzles and the receptacles connectable and non-connectable to each other in this example. In FIG. 6, the combination of the nozzle and the receptacle that can be connected to each other is indicated by the circle or the double circle, and the combination of the nozzle and the receptacle that cannot be connected to each other is indicated by the cross.

[0082] In this example, basically, the nozzle and the receptacle are physically connectable when the nozzle having a nozzle pressure equal to or smaller than the receptacle pressure of the receptacle and having a nozzle flow equal to or smaller than the receptacle flow of the receptacle is combined with this receptacle; and physically non-connectable unless satisfying the above condition.

[0083] In this example, as an exception, the nozzle and the receptacle can be connected when the receptacle having a low flow and the nozzle having a moderate or large flow are combined, and when the receptacle having a moderate flow and the nozzle having a large flow are combined under the condition that the nozzle **13a** having a nozzle pressure of pressure D and the receptacle **3a** having a receptacle pressure of pressure D are combined, as indicated by the double circle in FIG. 6. To ease the conditions for enabling the nozzle and the receptacle to be connected to each other when the nozzle having a higher nozzle pressure and the receptacle having a higher receptacle

pressure are combined as described above allows, for example, a case where a hydrogen tank particularly having a capacity more than 30 kg (e.g., a hydrogen tank installed in a large-sized vehicle) is filled with hydrogen to be more often to result in wider use, and thus allows the efficiency for filling to be improved.

2.2.3. Control of Hydrogen Filling

[0084] As described above, when the nozzle **13a** and the receptacle **3a** that can be connected to each other are combined, their connection allows hydrogen filling. In contrast, when the combination of the nozzle and the receptacle is an exception as shown by the double circle in FIG. **6**, or when the control unit **14** of the hydrogen filling apparatus **10** cannot recognize the type of receptacle **3a** provided in the fuel cell electric vehicle **1**, an unconditional flow of hydrogen to the receptacle **3a** having a receptacle flow smaller than the nozzle flow of the nozzle **13a** based on the nozzle flow makes the occurrence of faults more likely.

[0085] Therefore, in this embodiment, in hydrogen filling, the following control is executed, using the control unit **14**, on the nozzle **13a** and the receptacle **3a** in combination which have been physically connected. FIG. **7** shows the flow of a method **S20** of this control.

[0086] The fuel cell electric vehicle **1** is filled with hydrogen under the control by the method **S20** as described below. In this method, hydrogen filling can be also controlled by creating a computer program having a step corresponding to respective steps of this method, storing the created programs in the ROM **14c** that operates as a record medium of the control unit **14**, and executing the programs. Hereinafter a hydrogen filling method **S20** according to one example will be described. A computer program created based on this method functions as one component of the hydrogen filling apparatus **10** by recording this program in the ROM **14c** of the control unit **14** as described above.

[0087] As can be seen from FIG. **7**, the hydrogen filling method **S20** has step **S21** of executing acquisition of information, step **S22** of determining whether or not the type has been acquired, step **S23** of determining filling at the small flow or less, step **S24** of comparing the nozzle flow and the receptacle flow, step **S25** of determining filling at the receptacle flow or less, step **S26** of determining filling at the nozzle flow or less, and step **S27** of hydrogen filling. Hereinafter the respective steps will be described.

2.2.3a. Step **S21** of Executing Acquisition of Information

[0088] In step **S21** of executing acquisition of information, at least the type of receptacle **3a** in the fuel cell electric vehicle **1** is tried to be acquired from the fuel cell electric vehicle **1** to be filled with hydrogen.

[0089] The acquisition of information may be executed by, for example, receiving, with the reception unit **14d** provided in the control unit **14** of the hydrogen filling apparatus **10**, information on the type of receptacle **3a** which is wirelessly transmitted from the control unit **4** installed in the fuel cell electric vehicle **1**.

2.2.3b. Step **S22** of Determining Whether or not Type has been Acquired

[0090] In step **S22** of determining whether or not the type has been acquired, it is determined whether the information on the type of receptacle **3a** has been acquired in step **S21** of executing acquisition of information.

[0091] When it is determined that the type of receptacle **3a** has been acquired, Yes is selected, and the process moves to step **S24** of comparing the nozzle flow and the receptacle flow.

[0092] When it is determined that the type of receptacle **3a** cannot be acquired, No is selected, and the process moves to step **S23** of determining filling at the small flow or less. Here, the reason why the type of receptacle **3a** cannot be acquired is not particularly limited. The reason may be that the control unit **4** is originally not installed in the fuel cell electric vehicle **1** and thus any information cannot be outputted, or that the information cannot be outputted due to any fault or the like even when the control unit **4** is installed.

2.2.3c. Step **S23** of Determining Filling at Small Flow or Less

[0093] When it is determined that the type of receptacle **3a** cannot be acquired in step **S22** of determining whether or not the type has been acquired, and No is selected, the process moves to step **S23** of determining filling at the small flow or less, and it is determined that hydrogen filling is performed at the small flow or less. Thereafter the process moves to step **S27** of hydrogen filling, and hydrogen filling is performed based on this determination.

[0094] According to this step, hydrogen filling at the nozzle flow is prohibited when the type of receptacle **3a** cannot be acquired, and the nozzle **13a** and the receptacle **3a** have been connected to each other but their relation by flow is unknown. Then, hydrogen filling is performed at the small flow, thereby can prevent faults from occurring.

2.2.3d. Step **S24** of Comparing Nozzle Flow and Receptacle Flow

[0095] When it is determined that the type of receptacle **3a** has been acquired in step **S22** of determining whether or not the type has been acquired, and Yes is selected, the process moves to step **S24** of comparing the nozzle flow and the receptacle flow, and the nozzle flow and the receptacle flow are compared to each other.

[0096] In this step, when it is determined that the nozzle flow is larger than the receptacle flow by the information obtained in step **S22** of determining whether or not the type has been acquired, Yes is selected, and the process moves to step **S25** of determining filling at the receptacle flow or smaller.

[0097] When it is determined that the nozzle flow is equal to or smaller than the receptacle flow by the information acquired in step **S22** of determining whether or not the type has been acquired, No is selected, and the process moves to step **S26** of determining filling at the nozzle flow or less.

2.2.3e. Step **S25** of Determining Filling at Receptacle Flow or Less

[0098] When it is determined that the nozzle flow is larger than the receptacle flow in step **S24** of comparing the nozzle flow and the receptacle flow, Yes is selected, the process moves to step **S25** of determining filling at the receptacle flow or less, and it is determined that hydrogen filling is performed at the receptacle flow or less. Thereafter the process moves to step **S27** of hydrogen filling, and hydrogen filling is performed based on this determination.

[0099] According to this step, hydrogen filling at the nozzle flow is prohibited when the nozzle flow is larger than the receptacle flow. Hydrogen filling is performed at a flow according to and not exceeding the receptacle flow. Then, faults can be prevented from occurring even when the nozzle and the receptacle that is a type of a receptacle flow smaller than the nozzle flow are connected.

2.2.3f. Step **S26** of Determining Filling at Nozzle Flow or Less

[0100] When it is determined that the nozzle flow is equal to or smaller than the receptacle flow in step **S24** of comparing the nozzle flow and the receptacle flow, No is selected, the process moves to step **S26** of determining filling at the nozzle flow or less, and it is determined that hydrogen filling is performed at the nozzle flow or less. Thereafter the process moves to step **S27** of hydrogen filling, and hydrogen filling is performed based on this determination.

[0101] According to this step, hydrogen filling is performed according to the nozzle flow since the nozzle flow is equal to or smaller than the receptacle flow. Thus, faults can be prevented from occurring.

2.2.3g. Step **S27** of Hydrogen Filling

[0102] In step **S27** of hydrogen filling, hydrogen filling is performed at the flow based on the determination in step **S23** of determining filling at the small flow or less, step **S25** of determining filling at the receptacle flow or less, or step **S26** of determining filling at the nozzle flow or less. Hydrogen filling is performed at a proper flow by, for example, controlling the compressor **12** by the control unit **14** via the transmission unit **14e** based on information on the determined flow, and then adjusting the supply pressure of hydrogen. One may determine the pressure rise rate in hydrogen filling by the above described method **S10**, and progress the hydrogen filling at the determined pressure rise rate. This allows further efficient hydrogen filling. It is noted that the pressure rise rate is not limited to this.

2.2.4. Effect of Control Based on Relation Between Nozzle and Receptacle Etc.

[0103] According to the above described hydrogen filling control with the hydrogen filling apparatus **10**, by the hydrogen filling method **S20**, etc., at least part of the combinations of the nozzle **13a** and the receptacle **3a** is allowed when the nozzle **13a** and the receptacle **3a** are different types from each other, and then hydrogen filling can be performed. Thus, a case of hydrogen filling can become more often, and efficient filling in terms of wide use can be performed.

REFERENCE SIGNS LIST

[0104] **10** hydrogen filling apparatus [0105] **11** accumulator [0106] **12** compressor [0107] **13** hydrogen supply pipe [0108] **13a** nozzle [0109] **14** control unit [0110] **S10** hydrogen filling method [0111] **S20** hydrogen filling method

Claims

1. A fuel cell electric vehicle comprising: a fuel cell system provided with a fuel cell and a hydrogen tank; a receptacle for connection to a nozzle, the receptacle being provided at the head of a hydrogen introducing pipe of the fuel cell electric vehicle; and a control unit adapted to transmit information on the type of receptacle of the fuel cell electric vehicle for determining a proper flow for hydrogen filling of the hydrogen tank.
 2. The fuel cell electric vehicle according to claim 1, wherein the control unit is adapted to transmit the capacity of the hydrogen tank.
 3. The fuel cell electric vehicle according to claim 1, further comprising multiple receptacles.
 4. The fuel cell electric vehicle according to claim 1, wherein the control unit is adapted to transmit the number of the receptacle(s).
 5. The fuel cell electric vehicle according to claim 1, wherein the control unit is adapted to transmit wirelessly.
 6. The fuel cell electric vehicle according to claim 1, wherein the control unit is adapted to calculate the pressure rise rate.
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