Guidelines for Handling Electrostatic-Discharge Sensitive (ESDS) Devices and Assemblies

SCOPE

This specification establishes the requirements for methods and materials used to protect electronic parts, devices, and assemblies (items) susceptible to damage or degradation from electrostatic discharge (ESD). The electrostatic charges referred to in this specification are generated and stored on surfaces of ordinary plastics, most common textile garments, ungrounded people's bodies, and many other commonly unnoticed static generators. The passage of these charges through an electrostatic-sensitive part may result in catastrophic failure or performance degradation of the part.

The part types for which these requirements are applicable include, but are not limited to, those listed:

1) All metal-oxide semiconductor (MOS) devices, e.g., CMOS, PMOS, etc.
2) Junction field-effect transistors (JFET)
3) Bipolar digital and linear circuits
4) Op Amps, monolithic microcircuits with MOS compensating networks, on-board MOS capacitors, or other MOS elements
5) Hybrid microcircuits and assemblies containing any of the types of devices listed
6) Printed circuit boards and any other type of assembly containing static-sensitive devices.

Definitions

1. Antistatic material: ESD protective material having a surface resistivity between 10^9 and 10^{14} Ω/square.
2. Static dissipative material: ESD protective material having surface resistivity between 10^5 and 10^9 Ω/square.
3. Conductive material: ESD protective material having a surface resistivity of 10^5 Ω/square maximum.
4. Electrostatic discharge (ESD): A transfer of electrostatic charge between bodies at different electrostatic potentials caused by direct contact or induced by an electrostatic field.
5. Surface resistivity: An inverse measure of the conductivity of a material and is the resistance of unit length and unit width of a surface. Note: Surface resistivity of a material is numerically equal to the surface resistance between two electrodes forming opposite sides of a square. The size of the square is immaterial. Surface resistivity applies to both surface and volume conductive materials and has the dimension of Ω/square.
6. Volume resistivity: Also referred to as bulk resistivity. It is normally determined by measuring the resistance (R) of a square of material (surface resistivity) and multiplying this value by the thickness (T).
7. Ionizer: A blower that generates positive and negative ions, either by electrostatic means or by means of a radioactive energy source, in an airstream, and distributes a layer of low velocity ionized air over a work area to neutralize static charges.
8. Close proximity: For the purpose of this specification, is 6 inches or less.

Device Sensitivity per Test Circuit of Method 3015, MIL-STD-883

Devices are categorized according to their susceptibility to damage resulting from electrostatic discharge (ESD), and the type packaging required to adequately protect them.

1) Device electrostatic sensitivity:

Category	ESD Sensitivity (V)	Minimum Protective Packaging
A	20-2000	Antistatic Magazine & Conductive Bag/Box
B	> 2000	Antistatic Magazine & Antistatic Bag

2) Devices are to be categorized by their sensitivity
3) Devices are to be protected from ESD damage from receipt at incoming inspection through assembly, test and shipment of completed equipment.

APPLICABLE REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

The following reference documents (of latest issue) can provide additional information on ESD controls.

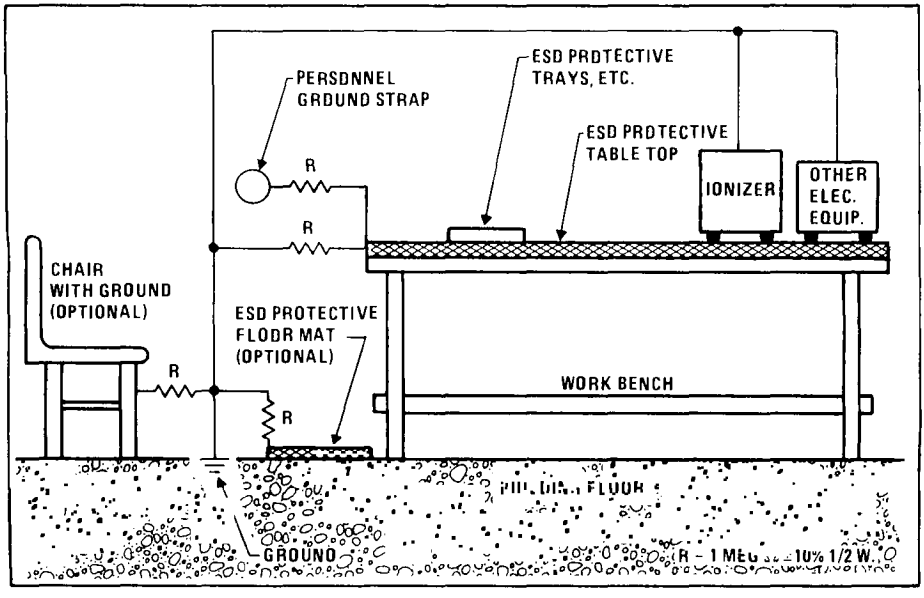
1) MIL-M-38510 Microcircuits, General Specification
2) MIL-STD-883 Test Methods and Procedures for Microelectronics
3) MIL-S-19491 Semiconductor Devices, Packaging of
4) MIL-M-55565 Microcircuits, Packaging of
5) DOD-HDBK-263 Electrostatic Discharge Control Handbook for Protection
6) DOD-STD-1686 Electrostatic Discharge Control Program
7) NAVSEA SE 003-11-TRN-010 Electrostatic Discharge Training Manual

FACILITIES FOR STATIC-FREE WORK STATION

The minimum acceptable static-free work station shall consist of the work surface covered with an ESD protective material attached to ground through a 1 MΩ ± 10% resistor, an attached grounding wrist strap with integral 1 MΩ ± 10% resistor for each operator, and air ionizer(s) of sufficient capacity for each operator. The wrist strap shall be connected to the ESD protective material. Ground shall utilize the standard building earth ground, refer to Figure 1. Conductive floor tile along with conductive shoes may be used in lieu of the conductive wrist straps. The Site Safety Engineer must review and approve all electrical connections at the static-free work station prior to its implementation.

Air ionizers shall be positioned so that the devices at the static-free work stations are within a 4-foot arc measured by a vertical line from the face of the ionizer and 45 degrees on each side of this line.

General grounding requirements are to be in accordance with Table 1.



All electrical equipment sitting on the conductive table top must be hard grounded but must be isolated from the conductive table top.

NOTE: Earth ground is not computer ground or RF ground or any other limited type ground.

Figure 1. Static-Free Work Station

Table 1. General Grounding Requirements

	TREATED WITH ANTISTATIC SOLUTION OR MADE OF CONDUCTIVE MATERIAL	GROUNDED TO COMMON POINT
Handling Equipment/Handtools	X	
Metal Parts of Fixtures and Tools/Storage Racks		X
Handling Trays/Tubes	X	
Soldering Irons/Bath		X
Table Tops/Floor Mats	X	X
Personnel		X Using Wrist Strap*

*With 1 MΩ ± 10% resistor

Usage of Antistatic Solution in Areas to Control the Generation of Static Charges

The use of antistatic chemicals (antistats) should be a supplemental part of an overall organized ESD program. Any antistatic chemical application shall be considered as a means to reduce or eliminate static charge generation on nonconductive materials in the manufacturing or storage areas.

The application of any antistatic chemical in a clean room of class 10,000 or less shall not be permitted. Accordingly, any user of antistatic solutions must consider the following precautions:

1. Do not apply antistatic spray or solutions in any form to energized electrical parts, assemblies, panels, or equipment.
2. Do not perform antistatic chemical applications in any area when bare chips, raw parts, packages, and/or personnel are exposed to spray mists and evaporation vapors.

The need for initial application and frequency of reapplication can only be established through routine electrostatic voltage measurements using an electrostatic voltmeter. The following durability schedule is a reasonable expectation.

1) Soft surfaces (carpet, fabric seats, foam padding, etc.): each 6 months or after cleaning, by spraying.
2) Hard abused surfaces (floors, table tops, tools, etc.): each week (or day for heavy use) and after cleaning, by wiping or mopping.
3) Hard unabused surfaces (cabinets, walls, fixtures, etc.): each 6 months or annually and after cleaning, by wiping or spraying.
4) Company-furnished and maintained clothing and smocks: after each cleaning, by spraying or adding antistatic concentrate to final rinse water when cleaned.

The use of antistatic chemicals, their application, and compliance with all appropriate specifications, precautions, and requirements shall be the responsibility of the Area Supervisor where antistatic chemicals are used.

ESD Labels and Signs in Work Areas

ESD caution signs at work stations and labels on static-sensitive parts and containers shall be consistent in color, symbols, class, and voltage sensitivity identification, and appropriate instructions. Signs shall be posted at all work stations performing any handling operations with static-sensitive items. These signs shall contain the following information.

CAUTION

STATIC CAN DAMAGE COMPONENTS

Do not handle ESDS items unless grounding wrist strap is properly worn and grounded. Do not let clothing or plain plastic materials contact or come in close proximity to ESDS items.

Labels shall be affixed to all containers containing static-sensitive items at a place readily visible and proper for the intended purpose. Additionally, labels must be consistently placed on containers and packages at a standard location to eliminate mishandling. Use only QC accepted and approved signs and labels to identify static-sensitive products and work areas. The use of ESD signs and labels, and their information content shall be the responsibility of the Area Supervisor to assure consistency and compatibility throughout the static-sensitive routing.

Relative Humidity Control

Since relative humidity has a significant impact on the generation of static electricity, when possible, the work area should be maintained within the following relative humidity ranges: incoming/assembly/test/storage 50%-65% (ref. Ashrae, 55—74), within ±5% to avoid static voltage monitor variations.

PREPARATION FOR WORKING AT STATIC-FREE WORK STATION

A work station with a conductive work surface connected to ground through a 1 MΩ ± 10% resistor, a grounding wrist strap with the ground wire connected to the conductive work surface, and an ionizer constitute a static-free work station (Figure 42). An operator is properly grounded when the wrist strap is in snug (no slack) contact with the bare skin, usually positioned on the left wrist for a right-handed operator. The wrist strap must be worn the entire time an operator is at a static-free work station. The operator should first touch the grounded bench top before handling static-sensitive items. This precaution should be observed in addition to wearing the grouding wrist strap. If possible, operators should avoid touching leads or contacts even though grounded.

> CAUTION
>
> Personnel shall never be attached to ground without the presence of the 1 MΩ ± 10% series resistor in the ground wire.

An operator's clothing should never make contact or come in close proximity with static sensitive items. They must be especially careful to prevent any static-sensitive items (being handled) from touching their clothing. Long sleeves must be rolled up or covered with antistatic sleeve protector banded to the bare wrist which shall "cage" the sleeve at least as far up as the elbow. Only antistatic finger cots may be used when handling static-sensitive items.

Any person not properly prepared, while at or near the work station, shall not touch or come in close proximity with any static-sensitive items. It is the responsibility of the operator and the Area Supervisor to ensure that the static-free work area is clear of unnecessary static hazards, including such personal items as plastic coated cups or wrappers, plastic cosmetic bottles or boxes, combs, tissue boxes, cigarette packages, and vinyl or plastic purses. All work-related items, including information sheets, fluid containers, tools, and parts carriers must be those approved for use at the static-free work station.

GENERAL HANDLING PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS

1. All static-sensitive items must be received in an antistatic/conductive container and must not be removed from the container except at static-free work station. All protective folders or envelopes holding documentation (lot travelers, etc.) shall be made of nonstatic-generating material.
2. Each packing (outermost) container and package (internal or intermediate) shall have a bright yellow warning label attached, stating the following information or equivalent:

   The warning label shall be legible and easily readable to normal vision at a distance of 3 feet.
3. Static-sensitive items are to remain in their protective containers except when actually in work at the static-free station.
4. Before removing the items from their protective container, the operator should place the container on the conductive grounded bench top and make sure the wrist strap fits snugly around the wrist and is properly plugged into the ground receptacle, then touch hands to the conductive bench top.
5. All operations on the items should be performed with the items in contact with the grounded bench top as much as possible. Do not allow conductive magazine to touch hard grounded test gear on bench top.

6. Ordinary plastic solder-suckers and other plastic assembly aids shall not be used.
7. In cases where it is impossible or impractical to ground the operator with a wrist strap, a conductive shoe strap may be used along with conductive tile/mats.
8. When the operator moves from any other place to the static-free station, the start-up procedure shall be the same as in PREPARATION FOR WORKING AT STATIC-FREE WORK STATION.
9. The ionizer shall be in operation prior to presenting any static-sensitive items to the static-free station, and shall be in operation during the entire time period the items are at the station.
10. "Plastic snow" polystyrene foam, "peanuts," or other high-dielectric materials shall never come in contact with or be used around electrostatic sensitive items, unless they have been treated with an antistat (as evidenced by pink color and generation of less than ± 100 volts).
11. Static-sensitive items shall not be transported or stored in trays, tote boxes, vials, or similar containers made of untreated plastic material unless items are protectively packaged in conductive material.

PACKAGING REQUIREMENTS

Packaging of static-sensitive items is to be in accordance with Device Sensitivity, item 1). The use of tape and plain plastic bags is prohibited. All outer and inner containers are to be marked as outlined in GENERAL HANDLING PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS, item 2, and conductive magazines/boxes may be used in lieu of conductive bags.

SPECIFIC HANDLING PROCEDURES FOR STATIC-SENSITIVE ITEMS

Stockroom Operations

1. Containers of static-sensitive items are not to be accepted into stock unless adequately identified as containing static-sensitive items.
2. Items may be removed from the protective container (magazine/bag, etc.) for the purpose of subdividing for order issue only by a properly grounded operator at an approved static-free station as defined in FACILITIES FOR and PREPARATION FOR WORKING AT STATIC-FREE WORK STATION.
3. All subdivided lots must be carefully repackaged in protective containers (magazine/bag, etc.) prior to removal from the static-free work station and labeled to indicate that the package(s) contain static-sensitive items. If it is suspected that a static-sensitive item is not adequately protected, do not transfer it to another container, return it to the originator for disposition unless the originator is a Customer. In that case, the QC Engineer should contact the Customer and negotiate an appropriate disposition.
4. It is the responsibility of the Stockroom Supervisor to ensure that all personnel assigned to this operation are familiar with handling procedures as outlined in this specification. A copy of this specification is to be posted in the vicinity so that it is accessible to the operators. Stock handlers and all others who might have occasion to move stock are to be instructed to avoid direct contact with unprotected static-sensitive items.

Module and Subassembly Operations

1. Static-sensitive items are not to be received from a stockroom, kitting, or machine insertion area unless received in approved static-protective packaging, and properly labeled to indicate that its contents are static sensitive.
2. All single station, progressive line manual assembly operators, and visual inspectors prior to wave soldering operations are to be properly grounded with a grounding wrist strap when handling static-sensitive items.
3. Progressive lines used as single stations where operators will be working on a mix of boards, both static-sensitive and nonstatic-sensitive, will require that all operators working on the line be properly grounded. This is necessary to accommodate the sliding of static-sensitive boards along the assembly bench or across positions not engaged in the assembly of this type board.
4. It is the responsibility of the Area Supervisor to ensure that all personnel handling static-sensitive items are familiar with this procedure and fully aware of the damage or degradation of these units in the event of noncompliance. A periodic inspection should be made using an electrostatic voltmeter to assure that the static-free stations are in proper working order and to ensure that operators are wearing grounding wrist straps properly (snugly in contact with bare skin).

Soldering and Lead-Forming Operations

1. All soldering machines, conveyors, cleaning machines, and equipment shall be electrically grounded to ensure that they are at the same ground potential as the grounded operators working on their stations. No machine surfaces exposed to static-sensitive items are to be above the ground potential.
2. All processing equipment shall be grounded, including all loading and unloading stations, that is, the stations before and after each piece of processing equipment.
3. All nonmetallic, static-generating components in the handling systems shall be treated to ensure protection from static.
4. All stations shall be identified by posting signs as outlined in **ESD Labels and Signs in Work Areas.**
5. Operators are to be properly grounded with a grounding wrist strap during any handling, loading, unloading, inspection, rework, or proximity to static-sensitive items.
6. Unloading operators working at a grounded station shall place static-sensitive items into approved static-protective bags or containers.
7. All manual soldering, repair, and touch-up work stations on the solder line are to be static protected. Operators are to wear grounding wrist straps when working on static-sensitive items. Only grounded-tip soldering/desoldering irons are allowed when working on static-sensitive items.
8. It is the responsibility of the Area Spervisor to ensure that all personnel handling static-sensitive items are familiar with this procedure and fully aware of the damage or degradation of these units in the event of noncompliance. A periodic inspection should be made using an electrostatic voltmeter to assure that the static-free stations are in proper working order and to ensure that operators are wearing grounding wrist straps properly (comfortably snug in contact with bare skin).

Electrical Testing Operations

1. All electrical test stations shall be static protected. Operators shall be properly grounded when working on these items.
2. Reused antistatic magazines must be monitored for maintenance of antistatic characteristics.
3. Devices should be in an antistatic/conductive environment except at the moment when actually under test.
4. Devices should not be inserted into or removed from circuits or tester with the power on or with signals applied to inputs to prevent transient voltages from causing permanent damage.
5. All unused input leads should be biased if possible.
6. Device or module repairs must be performed at static-free stations with the operator attached to a grounding wrist strap. Grounded-tip soldering irons shall be used when working on static-sensitive items.
7. Static-sensitive items shall be handled through all electrical inspections in static protective containers. Removal of the items from the protective containers shall be done at a static-free work station as discussed in **PREPARATION FOR WORKING AT A STATIC-FREE WORK STATION**. The units must be returned to the containers before leaving the station.
8. All such items shall be shipped with an ESD warning label affixed as listed.
9. It is the responsibility of the Area Supervisor to ensure that all personnel handling static-sensitive items are familiar with this procedure and fully aware of the damage or possible degradation of these units in the event of noncompliance. A periodic inspection should be made using an electrostatic voltmeter to assure that the static-free stations are in proper working order and to ensure that operators are wearing grounding straps properly (snugly in contact with bare skin).

Packing Operations

1. Static-sensitive items are not to be accepted into the packing area unless they are contained in a static-protected bag or conductive container.
2. A static-sensitive item delivered to the packer within an approved container or bag and found to be in order regarding identification shall be packed in the standard shipping carton or other regular packaging material. Containers are to be labeled in accordance with **GENERAL HANDLING PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS,** item 2.
3. Any void-fillers shall be made of an approved antistatic material.

Burn-In Operations

1. Burn-in board loading and unloading of static-sensitive items shall be done at a static-free station.
2. Shorting clips/shorted connectors shall be installed on the board plug-in tab prior to loading any units into the board sockets. The clip/connector shall be taken off just prior to plugging the board into the oven connector. The clip/connector shall be installed immediately upon removal of the board from the oven connector. Installation and removal of the clip/connector shall be done by a properly grounded operator.
3. All automatic or semiautomatic loading and unloading equipment shall be properly electrically grounded.
4. It is the responsibility of the Area Supervisor to ensure that all personnel handling static-sensitive items are familiar with this procedure and fully aware of the damage or possible degradation of these units in the event of noncompliance. A periodic inspection should be made using an electrostatic voltmeter to assure that the static-free stations are in proper working order and to ensure that operators are wearing grounding straps properly (snugly in contact with bare skin).

CUSTOMER RETURNED ITEM HANDLING PROCEDURE

Receipt of ESDS-labeled items is to be done at a static-free work station and handled in accordance with applicable sections within this guideline.

QUALITY CONTROL PROVISIONS

Sampling

Each manufacturing, stockroom, and testing operation handling ESDS devices will be audited a minimum of once each quarter for compliance with all terms of this specification by the responsible process control or QRA organization. Ground continuity and the presence of uncontrolled static voltages are considered critical and shall be checked more frequently as specified below.

Ground Continuity (minimum of once a week).

Ground connections (grounding wrist strap, ground wires on cords, etc.) shall be checked for electrical continuity. The presence of a 1 MΩ ± 10% resistor in the ground connections between both the operator wrist straps to the work surface and the work surface to ground connector must be verified.

Grounded Conditions (minimum of once a week).

A visual inspection shall be made to determine full compliance with this specification at static-free work stations during handling of static-sensitive items, including operator being grounded as required, static-sensitive items not being handled in unprotected or unauthorized areas, and no static-generating materials at the grounded work station.

Sleeve Protectors (minimum of once a week).

A visual check shall be made to determine that each operator wearing loose-fitting or long-sleeved clothing either has sleeves properly rolled or covered with sleeve protectors properly grounded to the bare skin at the wrist.

Static Voltage Levels (minimum of once a week).

In addition to the visual inspections, a sample inspection using an electrostatic voltmeter will be used to check for uncontrolled electrostatic voltages at or near electrostatic-controlled work stations.

Conductive Floor Tiles (minimum of once a month).

Conductive floors must have a resistance of not less than 25 kΩ from any point on the tile to earth ground. Also, resistance from any point-to-point on the tile floor 3 feet apart shall be not less than 25 kΩ. The test methods to be used are ASTM-F-150-72 and NFPA 56.

Records

Written records must be kept of all these QC audits.

TRAINING

Training is applicable for all areas where individuals come in contact with ESDS (category A) devices. It is the responsibility of each Area Supervisor to make sure that his/her people receive ESD training initially and every 12 months thereafter to maintain proficiency. Training should include static fundamentals, a review of applicable parts of this specification, and actual applications in the work area.