

Cables and connectors are usually the weakest part of a measuring system.

In our sensor data sheets you find recommendations for suitable cables for each accelerometer.

Choosing the right sensor cable is of particular importance for accelerometers with charge output. When a coaxial cable is subjected to bending or tension this may generate local changes in capacitance. They will result in charge transport, the so-called triboelectric effect. The produced charge signal cannot be distinguished from the sensor output. This can be troublesome when measuring low vibration with charge transducers. Therefore Metra supplies all charge transducers with a special low noise cable. This cable type has a particular dielectric with noise reduction treatment. However, it is recommended to clamp the cable to the test object.

As a rule, the cable length of sensors with charge output should not exceed 10 m.

Important: The connectors of low noise cables for charge transducers should be kept absolutely clean. Dirt or humidity inside the plug may reduce insulation resistance and will thereby increase the lower frequency limit of the sensor.

ICP® compatible transducers do not require special low noise cables. They can be connected with any standard coaxial cable.

Strong electromagnetic fields can induce error signals, particularly when charge transducers are used. Therefore it is recommended to route the sensor cable as far away as possible from electromagnetic sources, like generators, AC converters or motors. Do not route the cable along power lines and cross them right-angled.

Relative cable motion (cable whip) at the sensor body can cause erroneous sensor outputs. Miniature accelerometers and compression designs (i.e. Metra's „KD“ models) are particularly susceptible. This problem can be avoided by proper cable tie-down. Metra offers the cable clamps 004 and 020 for this purpose. Adhesive cable clamps or “O”-Rings are also suited as shown in Figure 1.

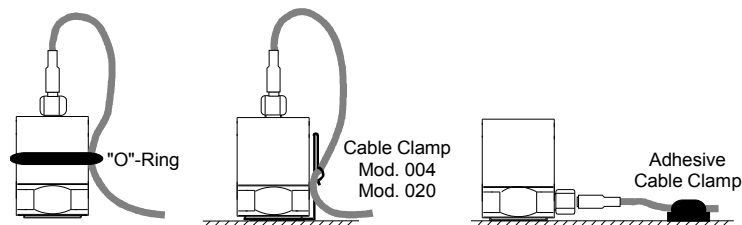


Figure 1: Methods of cable tie-down

When securing the cable, leave enough slack to allow free movement of the sensor.

Before starting the measurement, make sure that all connectors are carefully tightened. Loose connector nuts are a typical source of measuring errors. Do not use a pliers. Hand tightening is sufficient. A small amount of thread-locking compound can be applied on the male thread. Avoid contamination of the insulator.

Metra standard accelerometer cables may have the following connectors:

- *Microdot*: coaxial connector with UNF 10-32 thread
- *Subminiature*: coaxial connector with M3 thread
- *TNC*: coaxial connector with UNF7/16-28 thread and IP44
- *BNC*: coaxial connector with bayonet closure
- *Binder 707*: circular 4 pin connector with M5 thread
- *Binder 711*: circular 4 pin connector with M9 thread
- *Binder 713*: circular 4 pin connector with M12 thread and IP67
- *Binder 718*: circular 4 pin connector with M8 thread and IP67

The following standard cables are available from Metra:

Transducer Type	End 1	End 2	L m	Ø mm	T_{MAX} °C	Mod.
charge	Microdot	Microdot	1.5	2.2	80	009
charge	Microdot	Microdot	1.5	2.0	200	009/T
charge	TNC	Microdot	1.5	2.2	80	012
charge	Subminiature	Subminiature	1.5	2.2	80	013
charge	Microdot	Microdot	5	3.8	80	010/5
charge	Microdot	Microdot	10	3.8	80	010/10
charge	Microdot	Microdot	15	3.8	80	010/15
charge	Microdot	Microdot	20	3.8	80	010/20
ICP®	Microdot	Microdot	1.5	2.5	80	050
ICP®	BNC	Microdot	1.5	2.5	80	051
ICP®	TNC	Microdot	1.5	2.5	80	052
ICP®	TNC	BNC	1.5	2.5	80	053
ICP®	Subminiature	Microdot	1.5	1,0	120	054
ICP®	Binder 711 m.	Binder 711 f.	1.5	2.8	80	080
ICP®	Binder 713	pigtail	5	6	85	085
ICP®	Binder 713	BNC	5	6	85	086
ICP®	Binder 718	pigtail	5	3.9	80	087
ICP®	Binder 718	BNC	5	3.9	80	088
charge	Binder 718	3 x Microdot	2.5	6,0	80	089
charge	Binder 718	3 x BNC	2.5	6,0	80	090
ICP®	Binder 707	Binder 711	3	3,0	80	091
ICP®	Binder 707	Binder 711	3	3,0	120	091/T

Customized cables can be supplied on demand.

Additionally, Metra offers a selection of plug adapters:

Purpose	Mod.
Adapter Microdot plug to BNC socket	017
Adapter Microdot plug to TNC socket	025
Coupler for Microdot plugs	016
Microdot socket for front panel mounting	032
Adapter Binder 711 (f.) to 3 Microdot plugs (m.)	033
Adapter Binder 711 (f.) to 3 BNC plugs (m.)	034

Avoiding Ground Loops

The most typical source of errors in connection with sensors and AC measuring instruments are ground loops. They are a result of unwanted potential differences in the electric circuit between the sensor and the instrument. Such problems usually occur along ground or earth cables. Possible reasons are:

- Long distance between sensor and instrument
- Voltage drop over insufficient cables in the grounding network
- Measurement close to powerful electric engines which may cause considerable current transients in the grounding system.

These potential differences may cause balancing currents through the shield of the sensor cable. The result are voltage drops which will be added as an error component to the sensor signal at the input of the instrument. Typically these error signals have strong frequency components at 50 or 100 Hz or, in the presence of pulsed drives, also at higher frequencies.

For this reason the current path between the sensor mounting location and the instrument should be interrupted.

The following practical method usually helps to avoid ground loops:

The entire measuring chain is grounded at only one point, if grounding cannot be avoided completely. The transducer, a preamplifier (if required) and the cable shield are insulated from ground / earth potential. The only connection to ground / earth potential is made at the input of the instrument, if necessary.

Poor grounding circuit:

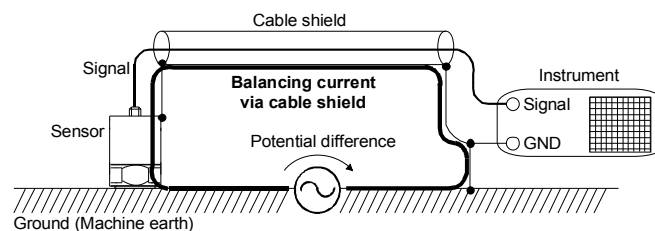


Figure 2: Sensor mounting without insulation causes ground loop

Better:

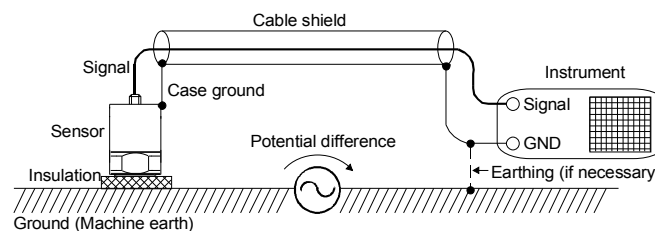


Figure 3: Insulated sensor mounting avoids ground loops

A central grounding point is of particular importance in multichannel measuring systems.

We recommend to use accelerometers with insulated base to avoid grounding problems, for example Models **KS74** and **KS80**. The insulating flanges **006**, **106**, **206**, **029** and **129** are also suited.