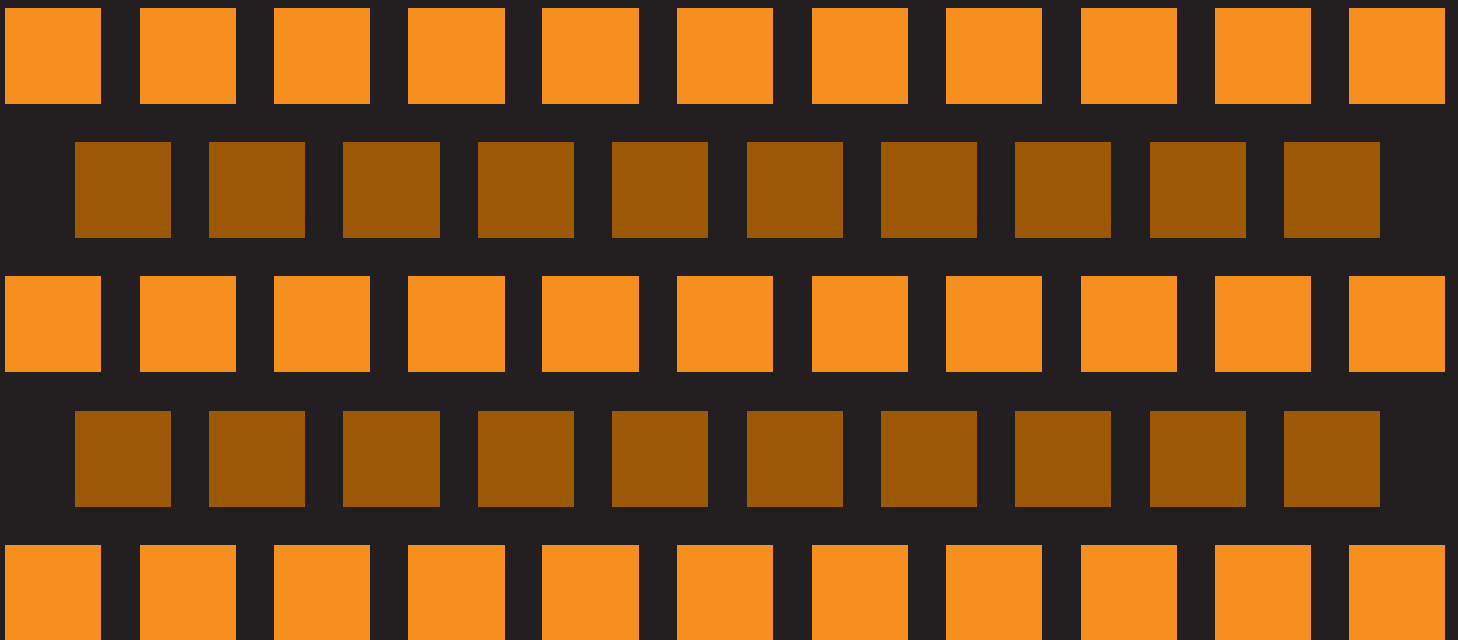


CORROSION OF A193 GRADE B7 BOLT MATERIAL IN BWR SODIUM PENTABORATE SOLUTIONS



STP-NU-068

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND.....	1
2	TEST METHODOLOGY	2
	2.1 Coupon Tests	2
	2.2 Flange Tests	3
3	COUPON TESTING.....	5
	3.1 Coupon Tests at ~95°F.....	5
	3.1.1 Visual Observations.....	5
	3.1.2 Weight Measurements	7
	3.2 Bolt Exposure at 95°F	12
	3.3 Coupon Tests at ~185°F.....	13
	3.3.1 Visual Observations.....	13
	3.3.2 Weight Measurements	13
4	FLANGE TESTS	23
	4.1 Flange Tests at ~99°F	23
	4.2 Flange Tests at 203°F	24
5	SUMMARY	40
6	REFERENCES.....	41
	Appendix A: Certificates of Compliance.....	42
	Appendix B: Low Temperature Test Photographs.....	44
	Appendix C: High Temperature Test Photographs.....	58

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2-1:	Coupon Design.....	2
Figure 2-2:	Coupon and Bolt Material Composition	3
Figure 2-3:	A193 Grade B7 Bolt Dimensions	3
Figure 2-4:	Schematic of Flange Configuration	4
Figure 2-5:	Flange Test Configuration.....	4
Figure 3-1:	C1010 Test Coupons 1, 2, 3 and 4	5
Figure 3-2:	C4140 Test Coupons 7, 8, 9 and 10 (Front Face)	6
Figure 3-3:	C4140 Test Coupons 7, 8, 9 and 10 (Back Face).....	6
Figure 3-4:	Effect of Exposure Time on Coupon Weight Loss	8
Figure 3-5:	Effect of Exposure Time on Coupon Weight Loss per Unit Area	9
Figure 3-6:	Effect of Exposure Time on Coupon Weight Change per Unit Area.....	10
Figure 3-7:	Visual Observations of Coupons Exposed to 12% Sodium Pentaborate Solutions at 95°F.....	11
Figure 3-8:	Coupon Weight Changes after 20 and 60 Day Exposure to 12% Sodium Pentaborate Solution at 95°F	12
Figure 3-9:	Table 3:1 Corrosion of A193 Grade B7 Bolts during Two Month Exposure at 95°F.....	13

Figure 3-10: C410 Test Coupons 5, 6, 7 and 8 after Two Months of Exposure	15
Figure 3-11: C1010 Test Coupons 5, 6, 7 and 8 after Two Months of Exposure	16
Figure 3-12: C4110 Test Coupons 11, 12, 13 and 14 after Two Months of Exposure	17
Figure 3-13: C4340 Test Coupons 5, 6, 7 and 8 after Two Months of Exposure	18
Figure 3-14: Coupon Weight Changes after Exposure to Sodium Pentaborate Solution at 185°F	19
Figure 3-15: Effect of Exposure Time on Coupon Weight Loss	20
Figure 3-16: Effect of Exposure Time on Coupon Weight Loss per Unit Area	21
Figure 3-17: Effect of Exposure Time on Coupon Weight Change per Unit Area.....	22
Figure 4-1: Bolt Weight Changes after Exposure to Sodium Pentaborate Solution at 95°F	26
Figure 4-2: Bolt Weight Changes after Exposure to Sodium Pentaborate Solution at 200°F	27
Figure 4-3: Flange #1 Bolt Configuration as Viewed from Top of Flange.....	28
Figure 4-4: Flange #2 Bolt Configuration as Viewed from Top of Flange.....	28
Figure 4-5: Flange #3 Bolt Configuration as Viewed from Top of Flange.....	29
Figure 4-6: Low Temperature Flange Injection Flow Rates.....	29
Figure 4-7: Flange #2 Prior to Removing Salts after 27 Days of Exposure.....	30
Figure 4-8: Flange #2 after Removing Salts after 27 Days of Exposure	30
Figure 4-9: Flange # 4 Injection Flow Rate	31
Figure 4-10: Flange #4 Bolt Configuration as Viewed from Top of Flange.....	31
Figure 4-11: Flange #4 after One Week Exposure at 200°F.....	32
Figure 4-12: Bolt 13 before and after Initial Deposit Removal	33
Figure 4-13: Bolt 14 before and after Initial Deposit Removal	34
Figure 4-14: Bolt 15 before and after Initial Deposit Removal	35
Figure 4-15: Bolt 16 before and after Initial Deposit Removal	36
Figure 4-16: Bolt 13 after Final Cleaning.....	37
Figure 4-17: Bolt 16 after Final Cleaning.....	38
Figure 4-18: Measurements of Bolt Shank Diameter	39

FOREWORD

The effect of corrosion of typical Boiler Water Reactor (BWR) borated water system bolting used in stainless steel valve flanges installed in BWR sodium pentaborate systems has been recently questioned. A better understanding of BWR borated water system bolt corrosion will help determine whether BWR borated water is not as corrosive as PWR borated water. This report was undertaken to assess the use of A193 Grade B7 bolts in stainless steel flanges installed in a BWR sodium pentaborate systems. The research was conducted by NWT Corporation at the request of Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI).

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1 INTRODUCTION

To better determine the impacts of using A193 Grade B7 bolts in stainless steel flanges installed in a Boiler Water Reactor (BWR) sodium pentaborate (NaPB) systems, quantification of the corrosion rates of this material in NaPB solutions was investigated. Two types of tests were performed. First, coupons of 4140 (the base material for A193 Grade B7), C4340 low alloy steel, C1010 carbon steel and 410 stainless steel were immersed in a 12% NaPB solution at ~95°F and a 12 to 20% solution at ~185°F. An A193 Grade B7 bolt was also immersed in a 12% NaPB solution and in demineralized water at 95°F. Coupons and bolts were intermittently examined and photographed, and weight change measurements were made to assess corrosion rates after three weeks and two months of exposure.

Second, tests to assess corrosion of A193 Grade B7 bolts when leakage occurs across stainless steel flange seal surfaces were performed. The test flanges had a 4-inch diameter and a bolt circle diameter of ~3 inches. Three flanges were exposed at ~99°F, and one flange was exposed at ~203°F. Leakage of the NaPB solution was simulated by injecting a 12 weight percent NaPB solution through a small diameter Teflon tube onto one of the four bolts in each flange at a rate of ~0.1 ml per minute. One flange was allowed to accumulate borate salts as a result of the leakage. The exterior surface of the other flange was brushed clean approximately every two weeks. The third 100°F flange was insulated with NUKON™ and was not cleaned during the test period. The 203°F flange was not insulated and was allowed to accumulate borate salts over the test period. Flanges were exposed for approximately two months.

After the nearly two month exposures, the flanges were disassembled, and the bolts and flanges were photographed and inspected. The bolts were rinsed of borate salts, weighed, de-scaled, and reweighed to determine metal loss. Local corrosion depths were estimated based on the weight losses.

Test methodology is summarized in Section 2. Coupon test results are summarized in Section 3. Flange bolt testing is summarized in Section 4.

2 TEST METHODOLOGY

2.1 Coupon Tests

Rectangular coupons of C1010 (carbon steel), C4340 and C4140 low alloy steel and 410 stainless steel were exposed at static conditions to a sodium pentaborate solution with an initial concentration of 12% at temperatures of $\sim 95^{\circ}\text{F}$ and 185°F . 4140 is the base material for the A193 Grade B7 bolts. The other materials were selected since their corrosion behavior in PWR boric acid solutions had been previously evaluated [1][2]. The coupons were intermittently removed for inspection and weighing to assess corrosion.

Composition of the coupons is shown in Figure 2-2 [3]. Dimensions are shown in Figure 2-1. Total area of each coupon was $\sim 3 \text{ in}^2$ or 0.194 dm^2 . The coupons were finished using a 120 grit belt prior to exposure [3]. The pH and conductivity of the 12% NaPB solution at $\sim 25^{\circ}\text{C}$ were 7.08 and $11,600 \mu\text{S/cm}$, respectively.

Coupons were cleaned with acetone and weighed before testing. Four coupons of each alloy were suspended by nylon lines in separate 800 ml glass beakers and covered with polycarbonate sheet for testing during the 95°F tests. A similar approach was used for the tests at 185°F except the beakers were polycarbonate. The coupons were completely submerged in the 12% NaPB solution. Solutions were air saturated. Coupons were visually inspected, dried and weighed after approximately 20 days and also after two months of exposure.

The NaPB solution concentration remained at 12% throughout the tests at 95°F since evaporative water losses were minimal. However, water losses during the 185°F tests were significant, and solution losses were initially compensated for by adding a 12% NaPB solution. This led to an increase in the solution NaPB concentration from 12% to $\sim 18\%$ over the first 10 days of testing. At that time, the solution concentration was adjusted to 12%, and demineralized water was subsequently added to compensate for water losses. The solution concentration remained at 12% for the remainder of the exposures.

Figure 2-1: Coupon Design

