Module 8:

EMC Regulations

Introduction

The goal of electromagnetic compatibility, or EMC, is to design electronic systems that are electromagnetically compatible with their environment. EMC requirements exist so that electronic systems designers have a set of guidelines that explain the limits of what is considered electromagnetically compatible. There is not, however, one all-encompassing set of EMC guidelines. Instead, EMC guidelines are created by individual product manufacturers, and by the government. Requirements set forth by the government are legal requirements that products must meet, while the requirements set forth by the manufacturer are self-imposed and often more stringent than those set forth by the government.

Government Requirements

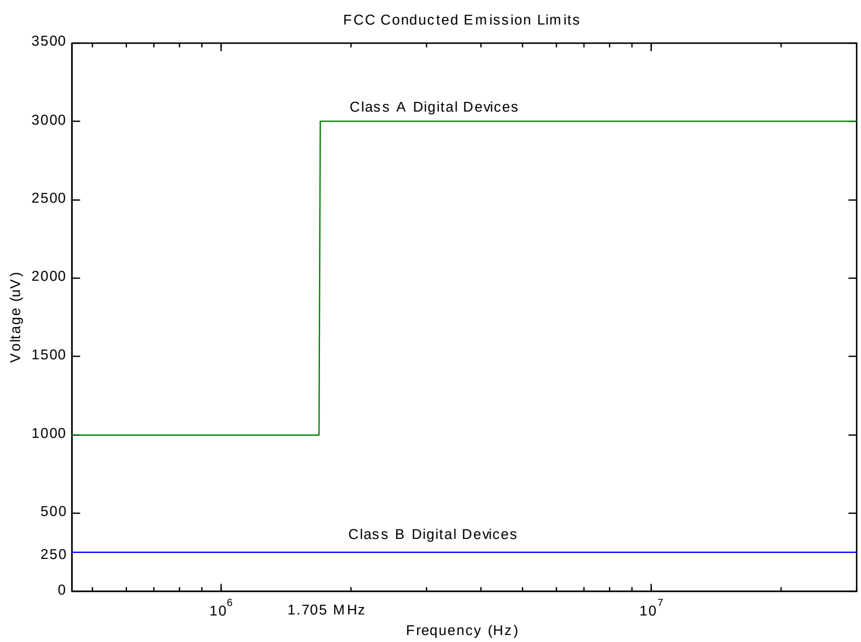
Not all countries have the same EMC requirements. In fact, each country is responsible to enforce their own set of requirements. This does not, however, mean that each country has a unique set of EMC requirements. In fact, the various EMC requirements set forth by all the countries of the world are very similar, and many countries are moving toward accepting an international standard for EMC requirements know as the CISPR 22 standards. These standards have been adopted throughout much of Europe and were developed in 1985 by CISPR (the French translation meaning International Special Committee on Radio Interference).

In the United States the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is charged with the regulation of radio and wire communication. Radio frequency devices are the primary concern in EMC. A radio frequency device is defined by the FCC as any device that is capable of emitting radio frequency energy by radiation, conduction or other means whether intentionally or not. Radio frequencies are defined by the FCC to be the range of frequencies extending from 9 kHz to 3000 GHz. Some examples of radio frequency devices are digital computers whose clock signals generate radiated emissions, blenders that have dc motors where arcing at the brushes generates energy in this frequency range, and televisions that employ digital circuitry. In fact nearly all digital devices are considered radio frequency devices.

With the advent of computers and other digital devices becoming popular, the FCC realized that it was necessary to impose limits on the electromagnetic emissions of these devices in order to minimize the potential that they would interfere with radio and wire communications. As a result the FCC set limits on the radiated and conducted emissions of digital devices. Digital devices are defined by the FCC as any unintentional radiator (device or system) that generates and uses timing pulses at a rate in excess of 9000 pulses (cycles) per second and uses digital techniques… . All electronic devices with digital circuitry and a clock signal in excess of 9 kHz are covered under this rule, although there are a few exceptions.

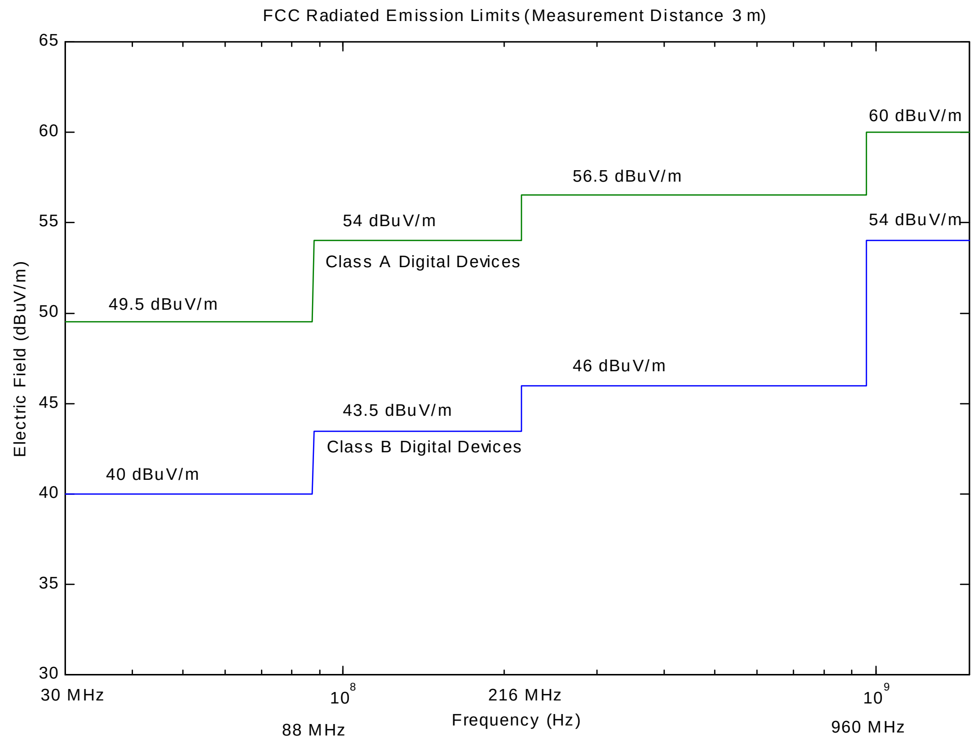
The law makes it illegal to market digital devices that have not had their conducted and radiated emissions measured and verified to be within the limits set for by the FCC regulations. This means that digital devices that have not been measured to pass the requirements can not be sold, marketed, shipped, or even be offered for sale. Although the penalties for violating these regulations include fines and or jail time, companies are more concerned with the negative publicity that would ensue once it became known that they had marketed a product that fails to meet FCC regulations. Furthermore, if the product in question were already made available to the public, the company would be forced to recall the product. Thus it is important that every unit that a company produces is FCC compliant. Although the FCC does not test each and every module, they do perform random tests on products and if a single unit fails to comply, the entire product line can be recalled.

The FCC has different sets of regulations for different types of digital devices. Devices that are marketed for use in commercial, industrial or business environments are classified as Class A digital devices. Devices that are marketed for us in residential environments, notwithstanding their use in commercial, industrial, or business environments are classified as Class B digital devices. In general the regulations for Class B devices are more stringent than those for Class A devices. This is because in general digital devices are in closer proximity in residential environments, and the owners of the devices are less likely to have the abilities and or resources to correct potential problems. The following table shows a comparison of the Class A and Class B conducted emissions limits, where you can clearly see that the regulation for Class B devices are more strict than those for Class A devices. A comparison for radiated emissions will be shown later. Personal computers are a subcategory of Class B devices and are regulated more strictly than other digital devices. Computer manufacturers must test their devices and submit their test results to the FCC. No other digital devices require that test data be sent to the FCC, rather the manufacturer is expected to test their own devices to be sure they are electromagnetically compatible and the FCC will police the industry through testing of random product samples.



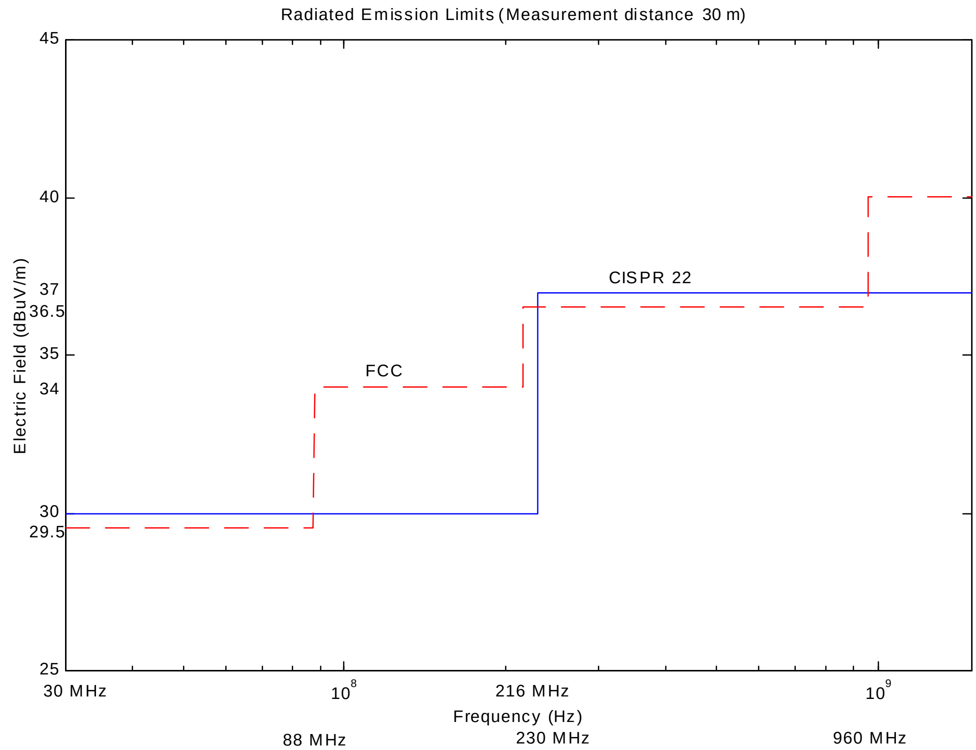
Since the FCC regulations are concerned with radiated and conducted emissions of digital products, it is useful to understand what these emissions are. Conducted emissions are the currents that are passed out through the unit's AC power cord and placed on the common power net. Conducted emissions are undesirable because once these currents are onto the building wiring they radiate very efficiently as the network of wires acts like a large antenna. The frequency range of conducted emissions extends from 450 kHz to 30 MHz. Devices are tested for compliance with conducted emissions regulations by inserting a line impedance stabilization network (LISN) into the unit's AC power cord. Current passes through the AC power line and into the LISN, which measures the interference current and outputs a voltage for measurement purposes. The actual FCC regulations set limits on these output voltages from the LISN even though the current is what is truly being regulated. Radiated emissions are the electric and magnetic fields radiated by the device that may be received by other devices, and cause interference in those devices. Although radiated emissions are both electric and magnetic fields, the FCC and other regulatory agencies only require that electric fields be measured for certification. The magnitudes of these fields are measured in dBμV/m and the frequency range for radiated emissions extends from 30 MHz to 40 GHz. Radiated field measurements for FCC compliance are done in either a semianechoic chamber or at an open field test site. The product under test must be rotated so that the maximum radiation will be achieved and measurements must be made both with the measurement antenna in vertical and horizontal polarizations with respect to the ground plane.

The method for measuring radiated emissions varies depending on the type of device being measured. Class A digital devices must be measured at a distance of 10 m from the product and Class B devices are to be measured at a distance of 3 m from the product. As explained earlier, the Class B devices, which are marketed for residential use, have stricter regulations and thus must be measured in closer proximity than Class A devices. The following graph displays the radiated emission limits that are defined by the FCC for Class A and Class B digital devices. Because the measurement distances defined by the two requirements are different, we must scale the measurement distances so that they are both at the same distances in order to achieve an accurate comparison. One way to do this is with the inverse distance method, which assumes that emissions fall off linearly with increasing distance to the measurement antenna. Thus emissions at 3 m are assumed to be reduced by 3/10 if the antenna is moved out to a distance of 10 m. So, to translate Class A limits from a distance of 10 m to 3 m , we add $20\log_{10}(3/10) = 10.46$ dB to the Class A limits. This approximation is only valid, however, if the measurements are taken in the far field of the emitter. We can assume that the far field boundary is three wavelengths from the emitter, and with the radiated emissions frequency range defined as 30 MHz to 40 GHz, the maximum distance from the emitter that the measurements will be in the far field is 30 m. Thus, at 10 m not all measurements will be in the far field. At 10 m frequencies of 90 MHz and higher will be in the far zone. So, for the case of this plot, the inverse distance method can be assumed to be accurate for frequencies above 90 MHz, but begins to break down at lower frequencies. However, this comparison still nicely demonstrated how Class B limits tend to be roughly 10 dB more strict than Class A radiated emission requirements.

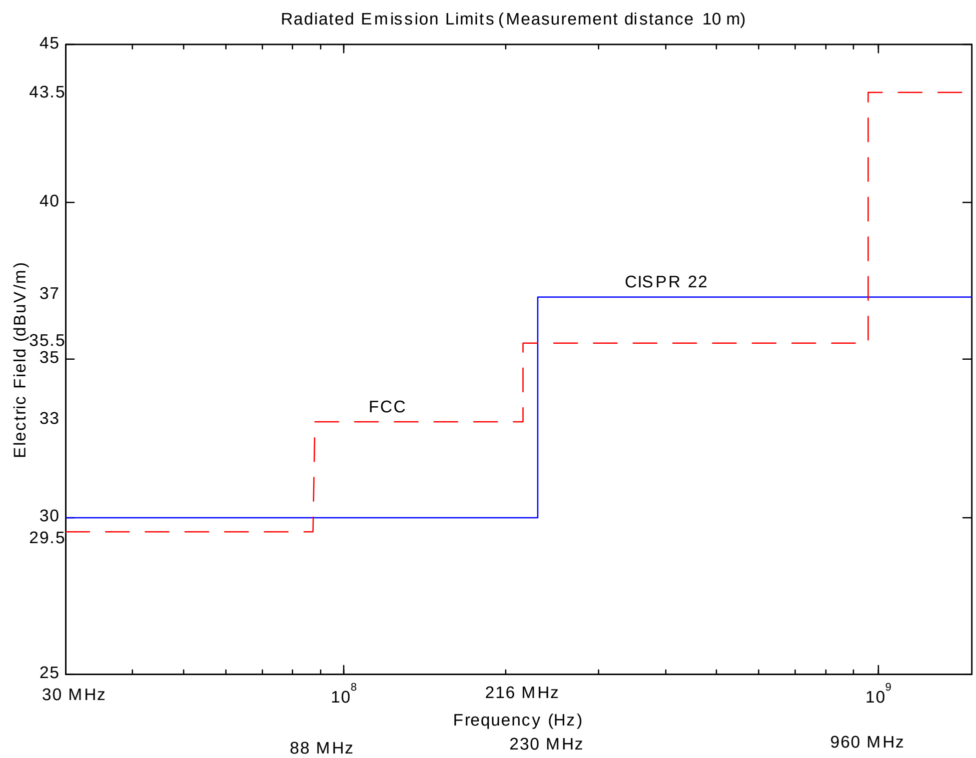


Internationally EMC requirements differ from those in the United States. As discussed earlier, each country is responsible for its own set of EMC regulations. Since the CISPR 22 regulations have been adopted by several countries we will examine them and compare them to the FCC regulations in the United States. CISPR 22 regulations require that radiated emissions measurements for Class A devices be measured at a distance of 30 m and Class B devices be measured at a distance of 10 m. Again using the inverse distance method, we can scale the measurement limits to a common distance and plot the CISPR 22 and FCC regulations together to compare them. As you can see, although the regulations vary slightly in different frequency ranges, there isn't much difference between the FCC and CISPR 22 regulations for radiated emissions.

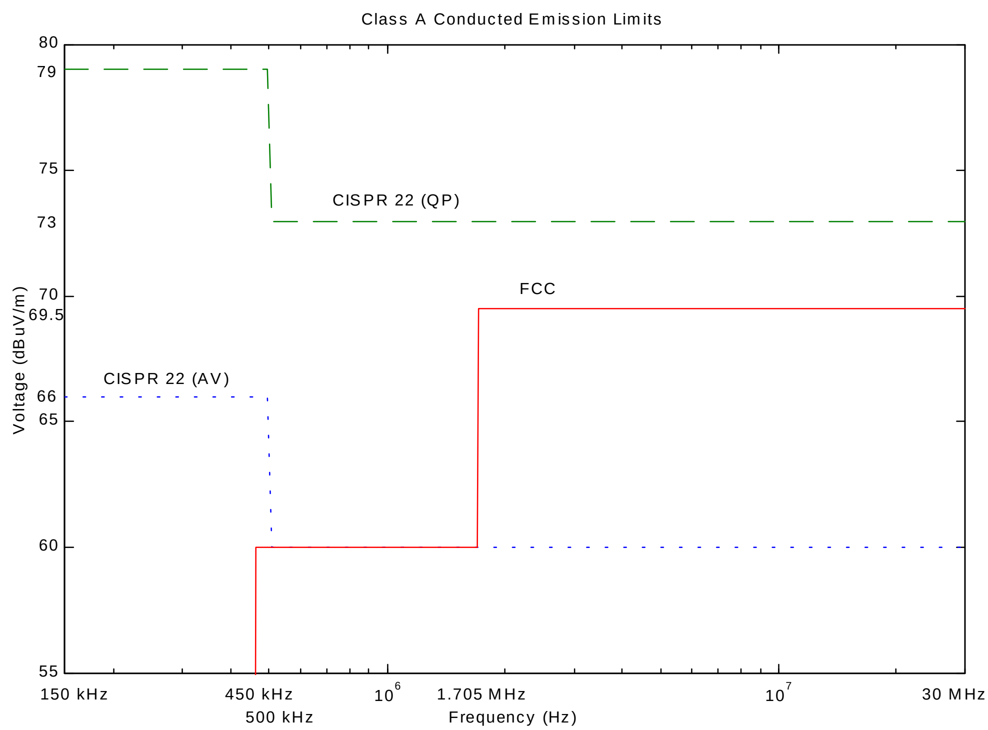
Radiated Emissions Limits for Class A Digital Devices

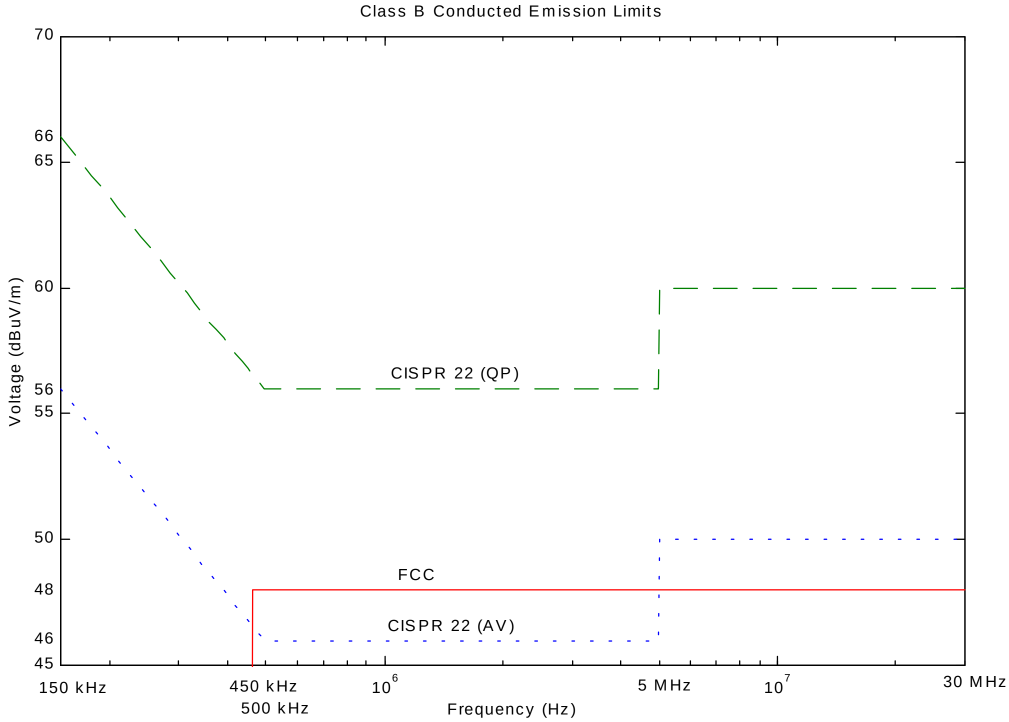


Radiated Emissions Limits for Class B Digital Devices



The differences in the FCC and CISPR 22 regulations become much more obvious when looking at the conducted emissions limits. The most notable difference is the frequency range that is regulated for conducted emissions. While they both have a maximum frequency of 30 MHz, the CISPR 22 regulations extend down to 150 kHz, while the FCC regulations only extend down to 450 kHz. You can see that the CISPR 22 limit for class B devices rises for frequencies below 500 kHz. This extension was put in place to cover the emissions of switching power supplies, which are growing in importance over linear power supplies due to their efficiency and light weight. Another difference is that the CISPR 22 regulations for conducted emissions are given for when the receiver uses a quasi-peak detector (QP) and when the receiver uses an average detector (AV). FCC conducted emissions limits and CISPR 22 and FCC conducted emissions limits all apply to the use of a quasi-peak detector.



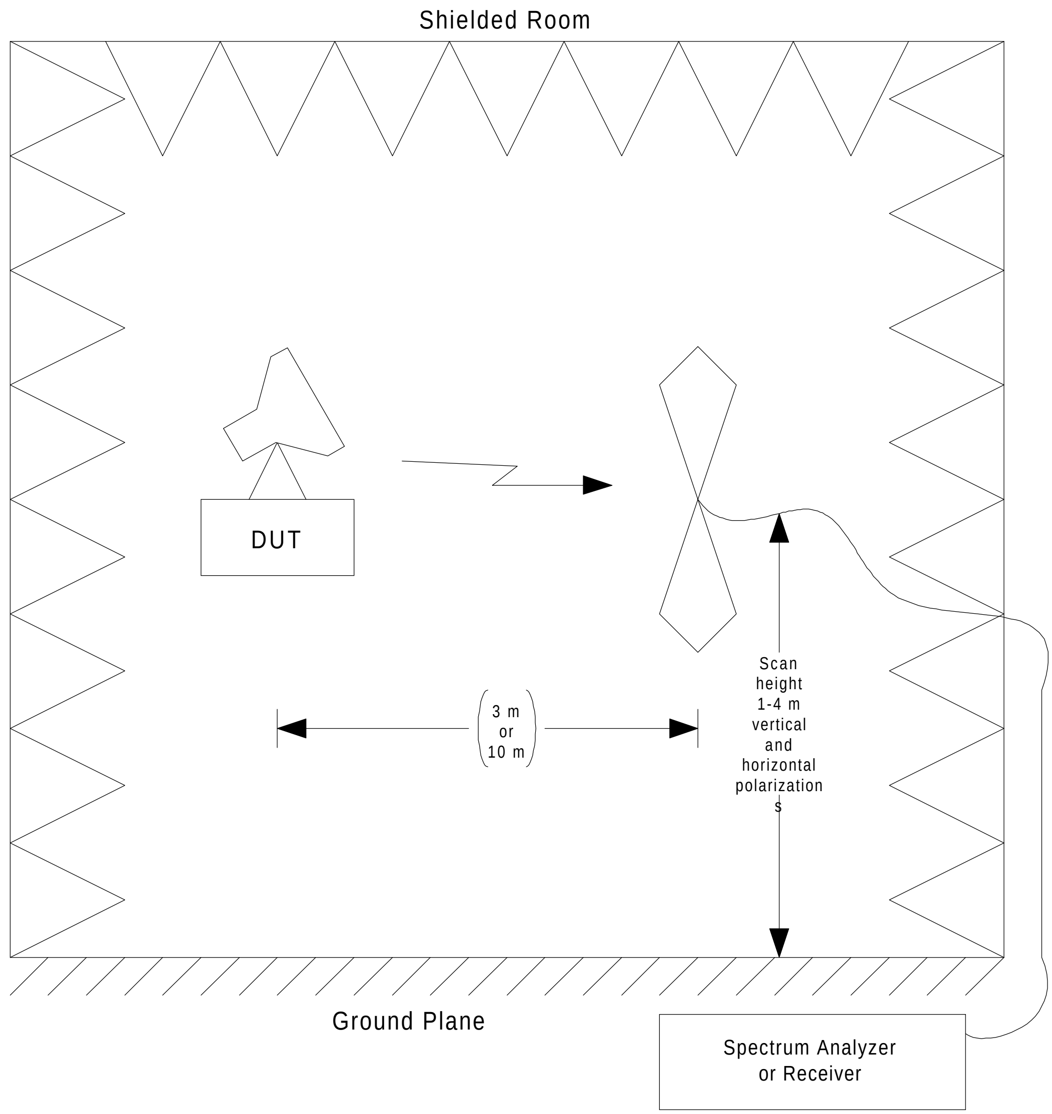


Military EMC regulations also exist. As you would expect, EMC issues are very important in military applications so that missions will not be compromised. Along with conducted and radiated emissions, the military also regulates susceptibility. This is very important in military applications, as it is vital that military equipment is immune to outside interference. The military is more strict in its regulations than the FCC or CISPR and it also has a much larger frequency range that is regulated and has several subdivisions within that frequency range. Additionally, the military may deem to have the EMC requirements waived for certain applications if it is judged that it is necessary to mission success. CISPR and FCC regulations cannot be waived for commercial products.

Measuring Radiated Emissions

In order to ensure that testing for radiated emissions are accurate, the FCC and CISPR have testing standards that explain how testing must be done. This ensures that the testing is accurate and repeatable. For radiated emissions the FCC specifies that the measurements of radiated and conducted emissions must be performed on the complete system. All interconnect cables to peripheral equipment must be connected and the system must be in a typical configuration. The cables and the system must also be configured in a representative way such that the emissions are maximized. For instance, a unit with interior wire harnesses must have the harnesses configured in such that for all possible ways the unit can be assembled with those wire harnesses, the way with the most radiated emissions must be tested. This ensures that for mass production of a unit, the worst case scenario is taken into consideration.

The testing standards set forth by the FCC for radiated emissions testing are very specific and difficult to automate. Radiated emissions are to be measured at a distance of 10 m for Class A devices and at a distance of 3 m for Class B devices. These measurements are to be made over a ground plane using a tuned dipole antenna at an open field test site. Additionally, the tests are to be made with the measurement antenna in both the vertical and horizontal positions. During development of products, however, most companies test their products in a semianechoic chamber, which is a shielded room with radio frequency absorbing cones on the walls and ceiling. This semianechoic chamber simulates an open field test site, and eliminates any ambientambient signals that may be present in an open field environment. An example of this setup can be seen in the following figure.



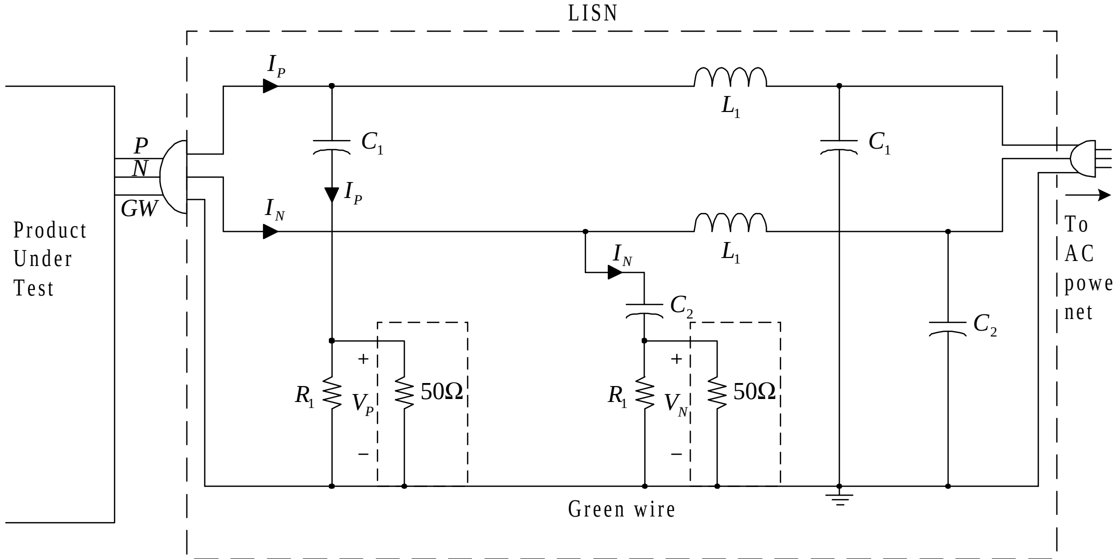
Another way that companies simplify the FCC test procedure is by using a broadband antenna such as a log-periodic or discone antenna. Such antennas are desireable since, unlike a tuned dipole, their length does not need to be adjusted with each frequency change. This allows companies to test their products using a frequency sweep rather than having to do each frequency separately and adjusting the dipole lengths with each measurement.

One last test requirement for radiated emissions testing is the bandwidth of the receiver being used to measure the signal must be at least 100 kHz. By having such a large bandwidth, the test will not pick up intended narrowband signals such as clock signals, but it will detect emissions from broadband sources such as the arcing at the brushes of a dc motor. A related issue is the detector used in the output stage of the receiver. Although typical spectrum analyzers us peak detectors, the FCC and CISPR test procedures require that the receiver use a quasi-peak detector. This ensures that fast changing, momentary signals such as randomly occurring spikes will not charge up the quasi-peak detector to as high a level as periodic signals. After all, the FCC is not concerned with randomly occurring one time signals. Rather, they are concerned with more significant and frequent emissions that would cause interference with radio and wire communications.

Measurement Requirements for Conducted Emissions

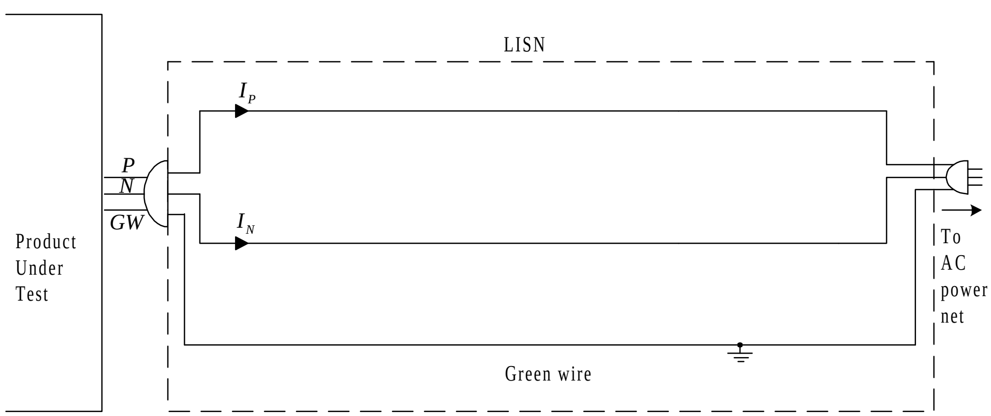
The intent of conducted emissions limits is to prevent noise currents from passing out through the AC power cord of the device onto the common power net of the installation. The common power net of an installation is an array of interconnected wires in the installation walls, and can be seen as a large antenna. Noise currents placed onto the common power net will consequently radiate very efficiently. An example of this is the interference that occurs on your television or radio when you use the blender. The arcing of the brushes of the dc motor in the blender causes noise currents that pass out through the power cord of the blender and into the common power net of your house. The wiring in the house acts as an antenna and radiates the noise, which is picked up as interference in your television and radio.

Therefore, conducted emissions are concerned with the current that is passed out through the power cord of the device. However, the FCC and CISPR 22 conducted emission limits are given in units of volts. This is because the LISN, which is used to measure conducted emissions converts the noise currents to voltage. In order to understand the function of the LISN it is important to understand the standard ac power distribution system. In the United States, AC voltage used in residential and business environments has a frequency of 60 Hz and an RMS voltage of 120 V. The power wires in a home consist of 3 wires, a phase wire, a neutral wire, and the green wire. Both the phase and neutral wires carry the 60 Hz power and the potential between each wire and ground is 120 V. The currents that need to be measured for conducted emissions tests are the currents that occur on the phase and neutral wires.

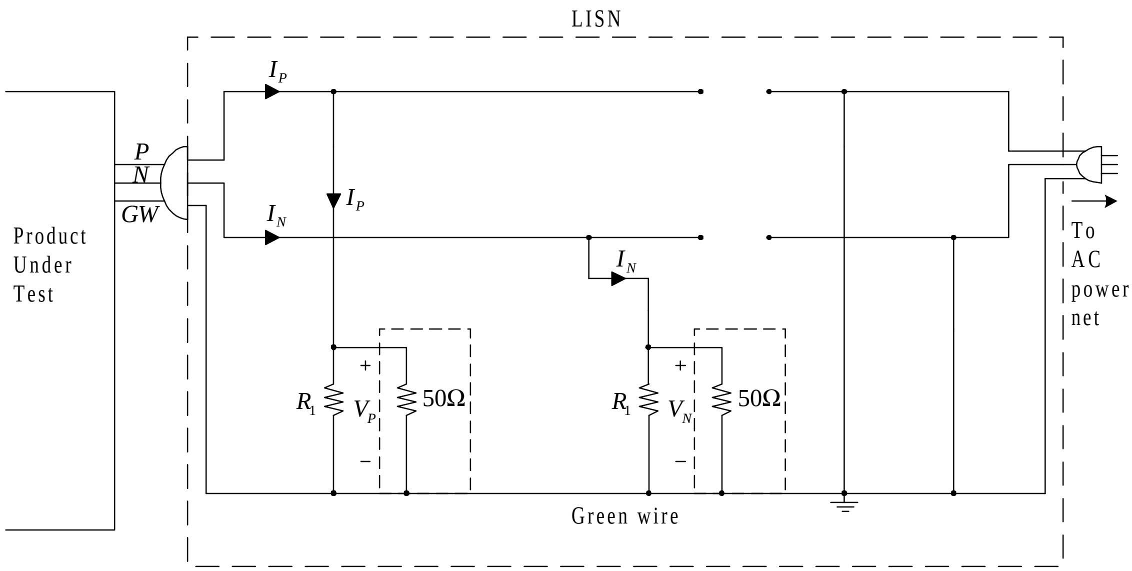


The above figure shows the LISN used for FCC conducted emissions tests. A similar LISN is used for CISPR 22 conducted emissions testing, but the component values are different due to the different frequency range defined by CISPR for conducted emissions testing. The LISN has two functions. The first function is to isolate external noise from the common ac net from contaminating the measurement. The second purpose of the LISN is to present a constant impedance in frequency from site to site to the product between phase and ground and between neutral and ground.

Following is an explanation of how the LISN works. First, one of the 50 Ω resistors represents the input impedance of the spectrum analyzer, and the other 50 Ω resistor is a dummy load. The capacitors C_1 =0.1 μF is in place to prevent any dc from overloading the test receiver and the resistors R_1=1kW are in place to provide a path an path for C_1 to discharge in the event the 50 Ω resistors are disconnected. The product under test should operate normally at 60 Hz power frequencies. Thus, at 60 Hz the capacitors will look like open circuits and the inductors will look like short circuits, and the equivalent circuit will look like this:



Thus the product under test will operate as if there were nothing between it and the ac power net at 60 Hz. In the frequency range of conducted emissions (450 kHz-30 MHz), however, the conductors will look like short circuits and the inductors will look like open circuits. The equivalent circuit will look like this:



Thus, the currents on the neutral and phase lines can be isolated and measured at the 50 Ω resistors. Notice that the currents on the phase and neutral lines have no path that they can get onto the ac power net with.

Additional Product Requirements

As stated earlier, the FCC and CISPR 22 regulations are requirements set forth by law to regulate digital devices. Individual companies, however, self impose their own set of regulations on their products, which are often much more stringent than the required regulations. The automobile industry, for example is exempt from FCC requirements, yet their self-imposed regulations far exceed those that the FCC sets forth for normal digital devices. This is because companies stand to lose far more money as a result of a faulty or poorly designed product, than they would by investing to make sure their product is safe and well designed. After all, people put their lives in the hands of auto manufacturers every time they drive a vehicle, and auto manufacturers cannot afford to have lax standards.

Aside from imposing stricter versions of government regulations on themselves, many companies also impose design constraints on their products that protect against, radiated immunity, conducted immunity, and electrostatic discharge (ESD). The FCC does not regulate these areas because they do not pose a threat to radio or wire communications, so individual manufacturers are left to create their own standards. Furthermore, as each of these categories pertains to a products ability to function despite outside interference, they are of the utmost importance for manufacturers to guard against. Radiated immunity is a products ability to operate in the face of high power transmitters, such as AM and FM transmitters and airport surveillance radars. Manufacturers test their products by illuminating their product with typical waveforms and signal strengths that simulate worst case exposure that the product could encounter. Conducted immunity is the ability of a product to operate despite a variety of interferences that enter the device via the ac power cord. An obvious example of such interference would be a power surge caused by lightning strike. Manufacturers must design tests that would simulate the effect of lightning induced transients and design their product to resist such interference accordingly. Electrostatic discharge is when static charge builds up on the human body or furniture and is subsequently discharged to the product when the person or furniture comes in contact with the product. Such static voltage can approach 25 kV in magnitude. When the discharge through the product occurs, large currents momentarily coarse through the product. These currents can cause machines to reset, IC memories to clear, etc. Manufacturers test their products by subjecting them to controlled ESD events and design their product to operate successfully in the event of such ESD occurances.

References

1. Paul, C. Introduction to Electromagnetic Compatibility, John Wiley & Sons, 1992