Effects of proof tests on the safety performance of safety-instrumented systems

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Abstract: The imperfection in the values of the average probability of failure on demand (*PFD*_{avg}) creates uncertainty about the effectiveness of safety-instrumented system (SIS). To overcome this problem, many parameters such as dangerous failures, common cause failures, diagnostic coverage rate and proof tests are taken into consideration. In order to emphasise the importance of the proof tests and show their effects on the safety performance of the SIS, a new analytical formula is developed in this study. The impact of these tests on the SIS's allocation of the safe integrity level (SIL) is shown through the results obtained in the present research.

Keywords: Safety-instrumented system; proof test; average probability of failure on demand; PFD_{avg} ; safety integrity level; SIL.

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1 Introduction

Complex industrial systems present risks to people, the environment and property. For this reason, various types of safety must be implemented: These types of safety, such as safety-instrumented system (SIS) use mean of contributing either in prevention or in protection to reduce the consequences of failures.

The role of a SIS is to detect dangerous events that could lead to an accident and then to initiate a set of actions necessary for the safe fall-back position of the equipment under control (EUC). This defines the safety integrity function (SIF) also called safety loop.

To design these systems, standards are used, including ANSI/ISA S84.01-1996 (ISA-TR84.00.02, 2002; Rausand, 2014) and IEC 61511 (IEC 61511, 2003), which is a sector process industry standard derived from the generic standard IEC 61508 (IEC 61508, 2010). So, different techniques can be used and among these techniques may be found, the reliability block diagrams (Catelani et al., 2011; Jin et al., 2016, 2015), Petri networks (Signoret et al., 2013; Liu and Rausand, 2016), the Markov chains (Torres-Echeverria et al., 2011; Chebila and Innal, 2015; Dutuit et al., 2008; Innal et al., 2015; Mechri et al., 2015; Aggarwal et al., 2017; Gupta and Ram, 2018), as well as bayesian networks (Cai et al., 2016).

In this work, a new analytical formula is presented to evaluate the performance of the SIS. The proposed approach combines the considerations of the efficiency parameter ' ξ ' and the safety parameter ' γ ' related to the proof tests with the IEC 61508 standard formulas.

2 Safety-instrumented system

The safety-instrumented system is a system with one or more SIF. It consists of (Rausand, 2014):

- Sensor(s) (S): used to monitor process state (temperature, pressure, level, flow, etc.).
- Logic solver(s) (LS): determine, based on signals from the sensors elements, whether an abnormal situation has occurred and initiates the required actions.
- Final element(s) (FE): May be valves, relays, circuit breakers capable of stopping flow and isolating electrical equipment and many more.

An essential step in designing a SIS, is to establish a safety integrity level (SIL) translated into target failure measures.

2.1 Safety integrity level

For a SIS characterised by low or high (continuous) demand, the safety integrity level (SIL) should be identified by its average probability of failure on demand (PFD_{avg}) and its probability of dangerous failure per hour (PFH), respectively. The IEC 61508 standard establishes the classification of systems studied according to 4 levels, defined in Table 1.

SIL	PFD_{avg}	PFH (/h)
1	$[10^{-2}; 10^{-1}]$	$[10^{-6}; 10^{-5}]$
2	$[10^{-3}; 10^{-2}]$	$[10^{-7}; 10^{-6}]$
3	$[10^{-4}; 10^{-3}]$	$[10^{-8}; 10^{-7}]$
4	$[10^{-5}; 10^{-4}]$	$[10^{-9}; 10^{-8}]$

 Table 1
 Safety integrity level (SIL) according to PFD_{avg} and PFH

The SIF performances provided by an SIS are determined by calculating and combining the performance of their three subsystems (S, LS and FE). This can be expressed by the following equations (IEC 61508, 2010):

$$PFD_{avg} = PFD_{avg}(S) + PFD_{avg}(LS) + PFD_{avg}(FE)$$
(1)

$$PFH = PFH(S) + PFH(LS) + PFH(FE)$$
⁽²⁾

$$PFS_{avg} = PFS_{avg}(S) + PFS_{avg}(LS) + PFS_{avg}(FE)$$
(3)

$$STR_{avg} = STR_{avg}(S) + STR_{avg}(LS) + STR_{avg}(FE)$$
(4)

2.2 KooN architecture

Each of the three subsystems cited above, is represented by a KooN architecture, which makes it possible to achieve a compromise between safety, availability and installations' costs. A KooN type redundancy is a redundancy known as majority redundancy such that a function is only ensured if at least K of the existing N means are operational or functioning. The most frequently encountered SIS architectures are as follows (Rausand, 2014):

- 1001: single element architecture, such that any dangerous failure of this element prevents the correct processing of any valid alarm signal.
- 1002: architecture constituted by two elements so that each one can process the safety function.
- 2002: architecture consisting of two elements so that the safety function is activated only if both elements request it. In this scheme, production availability is ensured at the expense of safety.
- 2003: architecture consisting of three elements so that the safety function is activated only if two of the three elements demand it.

3 Failure rate

The IEC 61508 standard specifies the necessary parameters to evaluate SIS performance such as the failure rate of components, periodic test interval, mean time to restoration, diagnostic coverage rate and common cause failure factor.

3.1 Dangerous failure – safe failure

All SIS failures, random and systematic ones, can be classified, according to their effects, into one of two categories: 'safe failures' or 'dangerous failures'. The definitions of these two categories according to the IEC 61508 standard are given below:

- Dangerous failure: failure which tends to inhibit the safety function when requested by the EUC, which hence will be in a dangerous state.
- Safe failure: spurious failure which tends to anticipate the activation of the safety function (without a demand condition), leading effectively the EUC into a safe state.

From the definitions above, it can be said that a dangerous failure is a failure that tends to prevent the system from fulfilling its safety function in the event of a request from the EUC which will then be in a dangerous state. A safety failure called also safe fault which tends to anticipate the activation of the safety function, in the absence of any request, by effectively driving the EUC in a safe state. That is, the occurrence of any adverse event is no longer possible. According to IEC 61508, the random failure rate (λ) of each element can be then written as:

$$\lambda = \lambda_S + \lambda_D \tag{5}$$

Another decomposition of the failures is generated, when taking into account their detection or no detection, by on-line tests (diagnostic tests): The first ones are called 'detected failures' and the second ones 'undetected failures' (IEC 61508, 2010). Undetected failures can only be revealed during proof tests or when the EUC requests the SIS, are known as undetected failures. Figure 1 shows this double decomposition.

Figure 1 Failure decomposition according to IEC 61508 standard



3.2 Diagnostic coverage

The ability of an SIS to detect its failures online is characterised by its coverage rate or diagnostic coverage DC (IEC 61508, 2010). This coverage is expressed as a number from 0 to 1, or as a percentage.

By introducing diagnostic coverage, the various failure rates mentioned above, are defined as follows according to IEC 61508:

$$\lambda_{DD} = DC \cdot \lambda_D \tag{6}$$

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$$\lambda_{DU} = (1 - DC) \cdot \lambda_D \tag{7}$$

$$\lambda_{SD} = DC_S \cdot \lambda_S \tag{8}$$

$$\lambda_D = (1 - DC_S) \cdot \lambda_S \tag{9}$$

$$\lambda_D = \lambda_{DD} + \lambda_{DU} \tag{10}$$

$$\lambda_S = \lambda_{SD} + \lambda_{SU} \tag{11}$$

3.3 Common cause failures

There are also failures that can simultaneously affect all components of a redundant architecture called common cause failures *CCF*. To estimate their failure rate (λ_{CCF}), the IEC 61508 uses the beta-factor model (IEC 61508, 2010).

$$\lambda_x = \lambda_{xind} + \lambda_{xCCF} = (1 - \beta_x)\lambda_x + \beta_x\lambda_x \tag{12}$$

The index 'ind' means independent failures rate whose occurrence only affects the channel in question, while 'x' is used to account for the previous failures partition (DU, DD, SD and SU). In practice fact, the β factor represents the ratio between the dependent part and the total failure rate.

3.4 Proof tests

Diagnosis (online testing) and proof tests (offline testing) are very important means of verifying whether an SIS is able to fulfil its safety functions and to reveal failures that hinder the process from being safe when there is a request. Diagnosis is a means of online detection of deviations, degradation and discrepancies and is often carried out by dedicated hardware and software implemented in devices. So far, it has been assumed that proof tests and the associated repair actions are perfect in the sense that (Rausand 2014): – the proof test is carried out under conditions that are identical with and covers all relevant demand conditions; – all DU faults and all element faults that increase the likelihood of a DU fault are revealed by the proof test.; – all channels with a (revealed) DU fault are repaired and all channels are always restarted in an as-good-as-new condition. This is obviously not always realistic. Some demands are hazardous events and may occur in many different ways. To simulate a demand may also be hazardous and may need to be repeated several times to cover all aspects of the demand. Proof tests are often carried out under conditions that are different from real demand conditions and may, therefore, not be fully realistic.

4 Proposed approach

4.1 Analytical formulas review

There are several analytical equations in the literature that deal with the performance of safety-instrumented systems, the most commonly used are the formulas given by IEC 61508. There are also the formulas developed in the Norwegian organism SINTEF

(SINTEF, 2006), which implements a generalised factor, less pessimistic than used by the IEC 61508. In the US standard ISA (ISA, 2002), the formulas given represent more optimistic approximations than those of IEC 61508 standard. In Innal et al. (2015) PFD_{avg} , PFH (probability of dangerous PFH), spurious trip rate (*STR*) and analytical formulations have been developed using the Markov method. Goble (1998) calculates only PFD_{avg} and probability of failing safely (PFS) by Markovian models, while Jin et al. (2013) takes into account the detected dangerous faults and neglects β factor (common cause failures proportion) for the calculation of *PFH*.

Usually the proof test is considered perfect, but in fact, it is not the case, which means that it doesn't cover 100% of the failures not detected by the self-diagnosis test. There are researches addressing this imperfection (Jin et al., 2015; Mechri et al., 2015) and (Asklou and Noureddine, 2017). Jin et al. (2015) considers that there is λ_{DU} that cannot be detected by the proof test but can only be found when the SIS is working. While Mechri et al. (2015) processed the SIS using the Markov chain, in particular by entering two parameters: efficiency parameter ' ξ ' and safety parameter ' γ '. In Asklou and Noureddine (2017), Jin's et al. (2015) corrections are introduced into the analytical formulas derived from the IEC 61508 standard. This approach is referred to below as the IEC ξ approach in this study.

4.2 Formulas IEC 61508

IEC 61508 part 2 provides simplified formulas for the PFD_{avg} for SIS architectures with no more than three channels whose are mutually independent and homogeneous (Rausand, 2014). The different formulas of the components 1001, 1002, 2002, 2003 and reliability parameters used (λ , DC, β , ...) are grouped in Table 2.

Considering that:

$$T_{CE} = \frac{\lambda_{DU}}{\lambda_D} \times \left(\frac{T_1}{2} + MTTR\right) + \frac{\lambda_{DD}}{\lambda_D} \times MTTR$$
(13)

$$T_{GE} = \frac{\lambda_{DU}}{\lambda_D} \times \left(\frac{T_1}{3} + MTTR\right) + \frac{\lambda_{DD}}{\lambda_D} \times MTTR$$
(14)

$$\beta = 2 \times \beta_D \tag{15}$$

So:

4.3 Proof test corrections

It is very difficult to find out all potential dangerous failures by proof test and some dangerous failures still exist in the whole life period of the system instead of being found. Mechri et al. (2015) and Jin et al. (2015) consider the imperfect proof test.

Mechri et al. (2015) defines two parameters to increase the efficiency and performance of proof tests by basing its analysis on multi-phase Markov chains. The parameters considered are:

 Efficiency parameter ξ: this is the conditional probability that an undetected failure will not be detected by the proof test since the fault occurs when the proof test is started. This parameter represents the ability of the proof test to reveal latent failures. Therefore $(1 - \xi)$ represents the proof test capacity to reveal latent failures. A proof test is perfect if $\xi = 0$ since all undetected failures are revealed and a proof test is imperfect if $\xi > 0$. The corresponding possible occurrence time of the dangerous failure undetected by proof test is the system life period SL. Some analysts provide an estimate of ξ in the manual This estimate is obtained for example by conducting a detailed FMECA to assess the capacity of the proof test to reveal latent failures.

Safety parameter γ: this is the probability of failure due to the test. This parameter represents the safety of the proof test. Therefore, a proof test is ideal if γ = 0 since no failures are caused by the proof test.

Architectures	PFD_{avg}
1001	$(\lambda_{DU} + \lambda_{DD}) \times t_{CE}$
1002	$2 \times \left[\left(1 - \beta_D \right) \times \lambda_{DD} + \left(1 - \beta \right) \times \lambda_{DU} \right]^2 \times t_{CE} \times t_{GE} + \beta_D$
	$\times \lambda_{DD} \times MTTR + \beta \times \lambda_{DU} \times \left(\frac{Ti}{2} + MTTR\right)$
2002	$2\lambda_D t_{CE}$
2003	$6 \times \left[(1 - \beta_D) \times \lambda_{DD} + (1 - \beta) \times \lambda_{DU} \right]^2 \times t_{CE} \times t_{GE} + \beta_D$
	$\times \lambda_{DD} \times MTTR + \beta \times \lambda_{DU} \times \left(\frac{Ti}{2} + MTTR\right)$

 Table 2
 Analytical formulas for the PFD_{avg} of KooN architectures according to IEC 61508-6

Source: IEC 61508 (2010)

Jin et al. (2015) only considers the efficiency parameter ξ .

In consideration of the proof test coverage ξ , λ_{DU1} (that can be detected by periodic test) = ξ . λ_{DU} and λ_{DU2} (that cannot be detected by periodic test) = $(1 - \xi) \lambda_{DU}$, the dangerous failure rate of an element will consist of:

- λ_{DD} : dangerous failure rate that can be detected through self-diagnostic test.
- λ_{DU1} : dangerous failure rate that can be detected by proof test.
- λ_{DU2} : dangerous failure rate that cannot be detected by proof test.

4.4 Proposed IECξy approach

In this section, we propose to combine the consideration of Mechri et al. (2015), linked to the failure rate not detected by the proof test, with the formulas of IEC 61508 standard in order to improve the evaluation of the performance of low-demand safety-instrumented systems, safe failures are not covered in the presented models. This proposal will be referred to as the IEC $\xi\gamma$ approach.

Taking into account Mechri's consideration by introducing the two parameters ξ and γ into equations (13) and (14), the formulas below can be obtained:

$$T_{CE} = \frac{\xi(1-\gamma)\lambda_{DU}}{\lambda_D} \times \left(\frac{T_1}{2} + MTTR\right) + \frac{\lambda_{DD}}{\lambda_D} \times MTTR + \frac{(1-\xi)\lambda_{DU}}{\lambda_D} \times \left(\frac{SL}{2} + MTTR\right)$$
(16)

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$$T_{GE} = \frac{\xi(1-\gamma)\lambda_{DU}}{\lambda_D} \times \left(\frac{T_1}{3} + MTTR\right) + \frac{\lambda_{DD}}{\lambda_D} \times MTTR + \frac{(1-\xi)\lambda_{DU}}{\lambda_D} \times \left(\frac{SL}{3} + MTTR\right)$$
(17)

These new equations are used to generate the PFD_{avg} formulas in the IEC $\xi\gamma$ approach, given in Table 3.

Table 3Proposed 'IEC $\xi\gamma$ ' formulas for PFD_{avg}

Architecture	PFD_{avg}
1001	$(\lambda_{DU} + \lambda_{DD}) imes t_{CE}$
1002	$2 \times \left[\left(1 - \beta_D \right) \times \lambda_{DD} + \left(1 - \beta \right) \times \lambda_{DU} \right]^2 \times t_{CE} \times t_{GE} + \beta_D \times \lambda_{DD} \times MTTR$
	$+\beta \left[\zeta(1-\gamma)\lambda_{DU} \times \left(\frac{Ti}{2} + MTTR\right) + (1-\zeta)\lambda_{DU} \times \left(\frac{SL}{2} + MTTR\right) \right]$
2002	$2(\lambda_{DU} + \lambda_{DD}) \times t_{CE}$
2003	$6 \times \left[\left(1 - \beta_D \right) \times \lambda_{DD} + \left(1 - \beta \right) \times \lambda_{DU} \right]^2 \times t_{CE} \times t_{GE} + \beta_D \times \lambda_{DD} \times MTTR$
	$+\beta \left[\xi(1-\gamma)\lambda_{DU} \times \left(\frac{Ti}{2} + MTTR\right) + (1-\xi)\lambda_{DU} \times \left(\frac{SL}{2} + MTTR\right) \right]$

5 Case study

The case considered is an example inspired from Torres-Echeverria et al. (2011) and Mechri et al. (2015). Figure 2 shows the layout of the SIS being studied, which makes it possible to secure a chemical reactor. This type of system can be set up when a temperature or pressure exceedance is detected, the safety system cuts off the reactor supply to avoid a runaway reaction.

Figure 2 (Chemical	reactor	SIS
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5.1 Reliability diagram

The four subsystems that make up the SIS are: two temperature sensors, two pressure sensors, three logic solvers and three valves.

The KooN architecture of the four subsystems is as follows:

- Sub-system SI (S1, S2: pressure sensors): 1002.
- Sub-system SII (S3, S4: temperature sensors): 1002.
- Sub-system LS (LS1, LS2, LS3: logic solvers): 1003.
- Sub-system FE (FE1, FE2, FE3: valves): 1003.

The reliability block diagram corresponding to this SIS is given in figure 3.

Figure 3 SIS reliability diagram



On this case study, we apply the proposed approach IEC $\xi\gamma$ by calculating the probability of failure on demand average (*PFD*_{avg}) of the SIS.

The reliability data in Table 4 from the reference Solfrid et al. (2013) in Iddir (2015) coupled with the example of Mechri et al. (2015) are retained.

Sub-system	pressure sensors	temperature	Logic solvers	Valves (FE1, FE2, FE3)	
Caractéristiques	(S1, S2)	sensors (S3, S4)	(LS1, LS2, LS3)		
$\lambda D (10^{-6}/h)$	1.5	1.5	1.1	2.7	
DC	0.74	0.74	0.9	0.3	
B(%)	6	6	3	5	
$eta_D(\%)$	3	3	1.5	2.5	
<i>MTTR</i> (h)	96	96	96	96	
T(h)	4,380	4,380	8,760	8,760	
$\xi, C_{S}(\%)$	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.3	
γ(%)	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.05	
<i>SL</i> (h)	87,600	87,600	87,600	87,600	

 Table 4
 Reliability data characterising the SIS

5.2 Presentation of results

For this system, the probability of average failure on demand is calculated using both IEC $\xi\gamma$ and IEC61508 approaches, taking into account the results obtained by the IEC ξ approach (Asklou and Noureddine, 2017). Thus, the results obtained from *PFD*_{avg} using IEC $\xi\gamma$, IEC61508 and IEC $\xi\gamma$ approaches are presented in Table 5.

5.3 Interpretation of results

In this work, the determination of PFD_{avg} of the SIS using the proposed IEC $\xi\gamma$ approach, is evaluated as follows:

$$PFD_{avg} = 3.4188 \cdot 10^{-3}$$

With regard to this PFD_{avg} value and the normative values of the safety integrity levels (Table 1), this SIS is evaluated at a SIL 2.

A comparison of this level of integrity with those obtained by the other two approaches IEC 61508 and IEC ξ is presented in Table 5.

From these results, it can be seen that the IEC $\xi\gamma$ approach shows the influence of the precision brought to the level of the proof tests on the average value of PFD_{avg} of the SIS, whereas these parameters are often neglected in practice. These results show that there is an impact on the SIL integrity level.

Compared to the $PFD_{avg} = 2.3433 \cdot 10^{-4}$ value obtained by the IEC 61508 approach, the IEC $\xi\gamma$ approach allows a risk decrease of the order of 10.

The $PFD_{avg} = 3.4236 \cdot 10^{-3}$ value obtained by the IEC ξ approach gives the same order of risk as the IEC $\xi\gamma$ approach. However, it allows for a refinement of the calculated value, which could result in a better cost ratio as well.

Therefore, the effects of the proof tests should be taken into account when conducting the accurate quantitative calculation of the safety-instrumented system performance.

Approach	PFD_{avg}	SIL
ΙΕϹξγ	$3.4188 \cdot 10^{-3}$	2
IEC61508	$2.3433 \cdot 10^{-4}$	3
IECξ	$3.4236 \cdot 10^{-3}$	2

Table 5Comparison of results

6 Conclusions

Proof tests are very important means to verify whether a SIS is able to perform its safety functions and to detect failures that impede the process from being safe when there is a request. However, their effectiveness is not completely controlled, which has been shown throughout this study.

After a review of the different analytical formulas for assessing SIS performance, a new model was proposed, taking into account the efficiency and performance of proof tests. This formula, referred to as the IEC $\xi\gamma$ approach is based on the IEC 61508 standard model, in which two parameters were introduced: the efficiency parameter ξ which

represents the ability of the proof test to reveal latent failures and, the parameter γ which represents the safety of the proof test.

The model was applied to a SIS and the results obtained through the study show that the proposed modeling, using the IEC $\xi\gamma$ approach, is more accurate than the IEC 61508 approach and the IEC ξ approach studied previously. Indeed, the impact of the precision brought to the proof tests on the average value of PFD_{avg} of the SIS can be clearly seen by using the IEC $\xi\gamma$ model. The direct consequence has an impact on the allocation of the SIL integrity level. Compared to IEC 61508, the IEC $\xi\gamma$ approach allows a better safety with a better cost ratio compared to the IEC ξ approach.

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Nomenclature

IEC	International Electrotechnical Commission	
DC	Diagnostic coverage for dangerous failures	[%]
CCF	Common cause failures	
DCs	Diagnostic coverage for safe failures	[%]
EUC	Equipment under control	
FE	Final Element	
ISA	Instrumentation, Systems and Automation Society	
KooN	K out of N	
LS	Logic solver	
MTTR	Mean time to repair	[h]
PFD _{avg}	Average probability of failure on demand	
PFH	Probability of dangerous failure per hour (average)	[/h]
PFS	Probability of failing safely	
S	Sensor	
SINTEF	Stiftelsen for industriellogtekniskforskning	
STR	Spurious trip rate (average)	
SIF	Safety integrity function	
SIL	Safety integrity level	
SIS	Safety-instrumented system	
SL	System life	

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$t_{\rm CE}$	Channel equivalent mean down time (hour) for 1001, 1002, 2002 and 2003 architectures (this is the combined down time for all the components in the channel of the subsystem)	[h]
t _{GE}	Voted group equivalent mean down time (hour) for 1002 and 2003 architectures (this is the combined down time for all the channels in the voted group)	[h]
Т	Proof tests interval	[h]
β	CCF proportion (β factor)	[%]
$\beta_{\rm D}$	β for dangerous detected (DD) failures	[%]
γ	Safety of the proof test	[%]
λ	Failure rate	[/h]
λ_{D}	Dangerous failure rate	[/h]
λ_{DD}	Dangerous detected failure rate	[/h]
λ_{CCF}	Dependent failure rate	[/h]
λ_{DU}	Dangerous undetected failure rate	[/h]
λ_{DU1}	Dangerous failure rate that can be detected by proof test	[/h]
λ_{DU2}	Dangerous failure rate that cannot be detected by proof test	[/h]
$\lambda_{\rm S}$	Safe failure rate	[/h]
$\lambda_{\rm SD}$	Safe detected failure rate	[/h]
$\lambda_{\rm SU}$	Safe undetected failure rate	[/h]
ξ	Ability of the periodic test to reveal latent failures	[%]

Nomenclature (continued)