



APPLICATION NOTE NO. 71

Revised January 2014

Desiccant Use and Regeneration (drying)

This application note applies to all Sea-Bird instruments intended for underwater use. The application note covers:

- When to replace desiccant
- Storage and handling of desiccant
- Replacement of desiccant
- Regeneration (drying) of desiccant bags
- Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for desiccant bags – see Süd-Chemie website (www.sud-chemie.com) for updates

When to Replace Desiccant

Before delivery of the instrument, a desiccant package is placed in the housing, and the electronics chamber is filled with dry Argon. These measures help prevent condensation. To ensure proper functioning:

1. Install new desiccant each time you open the housing and expose the electronics.
2. If possible, dry gas backfill each time you open the housing and expose the electronics. If you cannot, wait at least 24 hours before redeploying, to allow the desiccant to remove any moisture from the chamber.

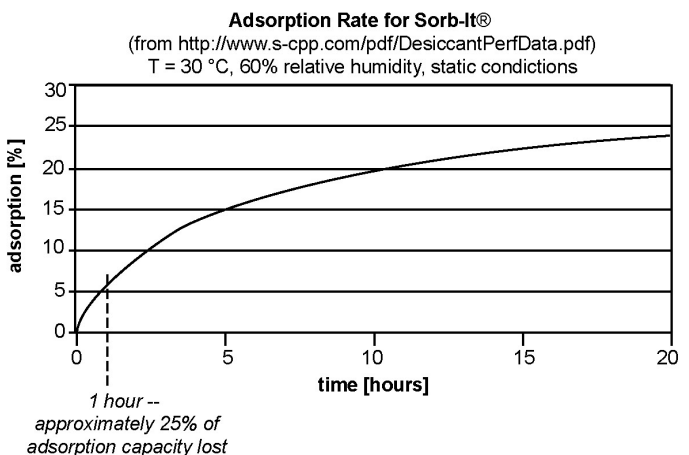
What do we mean by *expose the electronics*?

- For most battery-powered Sea-Bird instruments (such as SBE 16, 16*plus*, 16*plus* V2, 16*plus*-IM, 16*plus*-IM V2, 17*plus*, 19, 19*plus*, 19*plus* V2, 25, 25*plus*, 26, 26*plus*, 37[SM, SMP, SMP-IDO, SMP-ODO, IM, IMP, IMP-IDO, IMP-ODO], 44, 53, 54, 55, Auto Fire Module [AFM]), there is a bulkhead between the battery and electronics compartments. Battery replacement does not affect desiccation of the electronics, as the batteries are removed without removing the electronics and no significant gas exchange is possible through the bulkhead. Therefore, opening the battery compartment to replace the batteries does not expose the electronics; you do not need to install new desiccant in the electronics compartment each time you open the battery compartment. For these instruments, install new desiccant if you open the electronics compartment to access the printed circuit boards.
- For the SBE 39, 39-IM, and 48, the electronics must be removed or exposed to access the battery. Install new desiccant each time you open the housing.
- For the SBE 39*plus* and 56, the electronics must be removed or exposed to access the battery and/or the internal USB connector. Therefore, install new desiccant each time you open the housing.

Storage and Handling

Testing by Süd-Chemie (desiccant bag manufacturer) at 60% relative humidity and 30 °C shows that approximately 25% of the desiccant's adsorbing capacity is used up after only 1 hour of exposure to a constantly replenished supply of moisture in the air. In other words, if you take desiccant out of a container and leave it out on a workbench for 1 hour, one-fourth of its capacity is gone before you ever install it in the instrument. Therefore:

- Keep desiccant in a tightly sealed, impermeable container until you are ready to use it. Open the container, remove the desiccant, and quickly close the container again.
- Once you remove the desiccant from the sealed container, rapidly install the desiccant in the instrument housing and close the housing. **Do not use the desiccant if exposed to air for more than a total of 30 minutes.**



Replacement of Desiccant

Replacements are available from Sea-Bird (except as noted, all desiccant is manufactured by Süd-Chemie, a division of Clariant):

- PN 60039 is a metal can containing 25 1-gram desiccant bags and 1 humidity indicator card. The 1-gram bags (PN 30558) are used in smaller diameter housings, such as SBE 3 (*plus*, F, and S), 4 (M and C), 5T and 5P, 37 (SI, SIP, SIP-IDO, SIP-ODO, SM, SMP, SMP-IDO, SMP-ODO, IM, IMP, IMP-IDO, IMP-ODO), 38, 39, 39-IM, 39*plus* (version with no external connector), 43, 44, 45, 48, 49, 50, and 63.
- PN 31180 is a 1/3-ounce desiccant bag, used in SBE 16*plus*, 16*plus* V2, 16*plus*-IM, 16*plus*-IM V2, 19*plus*, 19*plus* V2, 21, and 52-MP.
- PN 30051 is a 1-ounce desiccant bag used in larger diameter housings, such as SBE 9*plus*, 16, 17*plus*, 19, 25, 25*plus*, 26, 26*plus*, 32, 53 BPR, 54, 55, AFM, and PDIM.
- PN 60058 is a glass bottle containing 5 desiccant capsules (PN 31044) for use in SBE 39*plus* (version with external connector) and 56. These DriCap capsules are manufactured by Multisorb Technologies.

Regeneration (drying) of Desiccant Bags

If you run out of **bags**, you can regenerate your existing bags using the following procedure provided by the bag manufacturer (Süd-Chemie, a division of Clariant).

NOTE: This regeneration procedure is **not applicable** to the **desiccant capsules** used in the **SBE 39*plus* (version with external connector) or SBE 56**.

MIL-D-3464 Desiccant Regeneration Procedure

Regeneration of the United Desiccants' Tyvek Desi Pak[®] or Sorb-It[®] bags or United Desiccants' X-Crepe Desi Pak[®] or Sorb-It[®] bags can be accomplished by the following method:

1. Arrange the bags on a wire tray in a single layer to allow for adequate air flow around the bags during the drying process. The oven's inside temperature should be room or ambient temperature (25 – 29.4 °C [77 – 85 °F]). **A convection, circulating, forced-air type oven is recommended for this regeneration process. Seal failures may occur if any other type of heating unit or appliance is used.**
2. When placed in forced air, circulating air, or convection oven, allow a minimum of 3.8 to 5.1 cm (1.5 to 2.0 inches) of air space between the top of the bags and the next metal tray above the bags. If placed in a radiating exposed infrared-element type oven, shield the bags from direct exposure to the heating element, giving the closest bags a minimum of 40.6 cm (16 inches) clearance from the heat shield. Excessive surface film temperature due to infrared radiation will cause the Tyvek material to melt and/or the seals to fail. Seal failure may also occur if the temperature is allowed to increase rapidly. This is due to the fact that the water vapor is not given sufficient time to diffuse through the Tyvek material, thus creating internal pressure within the bag, resulting in a seal rupture. Temperature should not increase faster than 0.14 to 0.28 °C (0.25 to 0.50 °F) per minute.
3. Set the temperature of the oven to 118.3 °C (245 °F), and allow the bags of desiccant to reach equilibrium temperature. **WARNING:** Tyvek has a melt temperature of 121.1 – 126.7 °C (250 – 260 °F) (Non MIL-D-3464E activation or reactivation of both silica gel and Bentonite clay can be achieved at temperatures of 104.4 °C [220 °F]).
4. Desiccant bags should be allowed to remain in the oven at the assigned temperature for 24 hours. At the end of the time period, the bags should be immediately removed and placed in a desiccator jar or dry (0% relative humidity) airtight container for cooling. If this procedure is not followed precisely, any water vapor driven off during reactivation may be re-adsorbed during cooling and/or handling.
5. After the bags of desiccant have been allowed to cool in an airtight desiccator, they may be removed and placed in either an appropriate type polyliner tightly sealed to prevent moisture adsorption, or a container that prevents moisture from coming into contact with the regenerated desiccant.

NOTE: Use only a metal or glass container with a tight fitting metal or glass lid to store the regenerated desiccant. Keep the container lid **closed tightly** to preserve adsorption properties of the desiccant.

Application Note Revision History

Date	Description
November 2002	Initial release.
September 2003	Add reference to newer instruments – SBE 16 <i>plus</i> -IM, 37-SMP, 37-IMP.
July 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add information on SBE 37-SIP, 39-IM, 52-MP, and 53 BPR.• Remove '90208' from AFM name (90208 is AFM with standard connectors).
Mar 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add information on V2 SeaCATs (16<i>plus</i> V2, 16<i>plus</i>-IM V2, 19<i>plus</i> V2).• Add information on SBE 5P, 54, and 55.
October 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add information on SBE 25<i>plus</i>, SBE 37 IDO and ODO MicroCATs, and SBE 63.• Update MSDS from Süd-Chemie.• Change ownership information for Süd-Chemie.
January 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add information on SBE 25<i>plus</i>, 39<i>plus</i>, and 56.