Passive Autocatalytic Recombiner

Hydrogen Control and Mitigation for Combustible Gas Control
Passive Autocatalytic Recombiner (PAR)
Severe Accident-Qualified PAR for Combustible Gas Control

Passive safety systems play an important part in long-term accident mitigation. Their main benefit is that they require neither operator action nor power supply. In the event of severe accidents due to loss of coolant, large amounts of hydrogen might be released within the reactor containment, leading to a high concentration of explosive gas, which might ultimately affect the integrity of the containment.

Based on the principle of catalytic oxidization, AREVA has developed a hydrogen reduction system which is based on the AREVA Passive Autocatalytic Recombiner (PAR). With a gas treating capacity of up to 880 ft³/min per PAR unit, the hydrogen concentration can be kept within certain limits even under severe accident conditions.

PAR Catalyst Design and Function
The catalyst design is based on thin stainless steel plates coated with multiple precious metals at a large reaction surface. It allows for low start temperatures and is very efficient in severe accident situations. To promote natural convection, the PAR has a metal housing with a gas inlet at the bottom and a lateral gas outlet at the top. The housing’s horizontal cover protects the catalyst from direct spraying of water and aerosol deposition. The numerous parallel plates at the bottom are arranged vertically. An inspection drawer ensures quick access to the catalytic plates.

Upon contact with the catalyst in the lower part of the housing, the gas mixtures containing hydrogen are recombined. The heat from this reaction causes a reduction in gas density that leads to buoyancy-driven flow, thus supplying the catalyst with a large amount of hydrogen that ensures a highly-efficient recombination.

The dimensions of the recombiner and catalyst are well-balanced, allowing for a maximum rate of hydrogen recombination while keeping the size of the components and the number of necessary units as low as possible.

Highly Efficient and Reliable
The AREVA PAR combines high functional reliability with excellent hydrogen mitigation performance, while the investment remains low. Thanks to the thin plate technology and its high capacity, the AREVA PAR allows for an efficient mitigation of hydrogen-related risk within the containment.

Backed by decades of international experience and a constant exchange of information with our customers, we have gathered broad expertise in the design and installation of PAR systems including on-site activities such as inspection and regeneration services. This is why the AREVA PAR was selected for improving the safety of many existing NPPs. It is also the solution of choice for the latest generation of nuclear power plants: the EPR™ plant.
Severe Accident-Qualified PAR

Improved plant safety with AREVA’s high-capacity PAR with a gas treating capacity of up to 880 ft³/min

Operating Experience

To date, AREVA has delivered and installed PAR-based H₂ control systems in more than 100 nuclear power plants in Europe, Asia and Africa, including test equipment and, if required, with a regeneration mode. Excellent operating results were achieved even under adverse conditions such as oil fire or oil aerosols from the main coolant pump, boric acid or a significant high concentration of organic carbon-hydrogen compounds.

The AREVA PAR FR1-380T
Qualification and Functional Tests
The AREVA PAR has been subjected to extensive and long-term testing to evaluate its performance in various accident scenarios in both PWRs and BWRs.

Behavior under the Following Conditions
• Different pressures, temperatures, steam and hydrogen concentrations
• Exposure to catalytic poisons (I₂, CO, H₃BO₃, CH₃I), chemicals caused by thermal cable degradation, and aerosols from a molten core substitute
• Following hydrogen combustion, submergence in water, oil fire, cable fire (French / US-cable)
• Within in-spray water systems (French and Swedish / Korean PWR conditions)
• Low temperature, high humidity atmospheres (CANDU conditions)

• Low oxygen content
• With wetness during start-up; with direct water spray on the catalyst
• Under nitrogen pre-inerted atmosphere (e.g., U.S. BWR power plant conditions)
• After long-term recombination and deflagration
• In a severe accident atmosphere with a degraded core

Large Multi-Compartment Containment Geometries (Battelle Model Containment)
These tests verify hydrogen reduction by catalytic recombination in various ambient conditions:
• Recombination in a multi-compartment geometry with full scale FR1-1500T PAR
• Multi-recombiner tests with simultaneous operation of three PARs
• Experiments on the efficiency of hydrogen mitigation methods

Examinations for the AREVA PAR Qualification
The most important qualification test was performed during the PHEBUS FPT3 (Fission Product Test 3) in Cadarache (France) with participation of various authorities, research institutes and different PAR suppliers. Catalysts of various manufacturers were tested for the first time under real severe accident conditions with a degraded core.

Further testing included:
• Resistance to thermal aging
• Resistance to radiation (operational radiation, radiation following a core melt accident)
• Resistance against operational and seismic vibrations
• Resistance against flow caused by pressure differences following LOCA
• Ignition behavior, up to steam-inerted condition (> 55 vol-% steam)
Hydrogen control and mitigation applications with AREVA PARs

- Replacement of existing hydrogen recombiners for design-basis accidents
- Hydrogen mitigation during severe accidents
- General limitation of combustible gas concentration
- Combination with post-accident venting and ignition functions possible
Recent Results of International PAR-Severe Accident Qualification

During tests in the frame of the EC/IRSN Core Melt Program PHEBUS (with real molten core), AREVA’s PARs showed the best performance in these categories:

- Very fast start-up
- Highest efficiency
- Absolutely constant hydrogen depletion rates

International Testing, Severe Accident PAR Qualifications

Joint In-pile Severe Accident Research Program PHEBUS (FPT3) Results

The temperature graph indicates an intensive surface kinetic reaction regime of the AREVA PAR which triggers the catalytic reaction very quickly, even after exposure to a severe accident atmosphere with a degraded core.

These comprehensive real severe accident tests could be the model for a new international PAR qualification standard. From the results of this extensive qualification program, it can be deduced that the AREVA PAR is qualified for design-basis and severe accident environmental conditions.

Testing and Maintenance

As soon as the PAR housings with the catalysts are assembled, the hydrogen reduction system is ready for operation. A functional check of a process section of the PAR will confirm this during the site acceptance tests and the in-service inspections to be performed later.

The design allows for a quick and easy removal of the catalytic plates. The functionality of this process section is usually tested under representative conditions with test gas containing hydrogen. The testing device is comprised of a movable trolley, a heated cabinet, measurements, an operational panel, an analysis unit and gas supply. The start of the catalytic reaction is indicated by a decreasing hydrogen concentration in the test gas. The result shows that the PAR reaches its nominal hydrogen depletion performance.

“More than 100 nuclear power plants are equipped with AREVA’s PARs.”
Benefits at a Glance

**Low investment and high cost benefit**
- Simple design that requires neither power supply nor operator action / automation
- Easy maintenance and in-service inspection
- Flexible: available as safety-classified / non-safety-classified PAR type

**High hydrogen depletion and flow rate of up to 880 ft³/min per unit**
- Generation of strong and large convection loops increasing atmosphere mixing that results in enhanced system efficiency
- Low number of PAR units within the containment
- Little space required for PAR system installation
- Reduced maintenance effort during plant operation

**Reliable and flexible system**
- Patented design, applied in more than 100 NPPs worldwide
- Design-basis and severe-accident qualified hardware
- H₂-depletion even under inert conditions
- Long-term H₂ / O₂ control
- High catalytic performance due to multiple precious metal catalyst with high inner porosity
- High proportion of precious metal content providing important design margins

**Thin-plate technology**
- Fast heat-up of catalytic plates
- Self-acceleration (autocatalytic) of recombination
- High inlet cross section (98% free area) due to thin catalytic plates' low pressure drop
- High inlet flow velocity up to 1 m/s

Technical Data
The AREVA PAR is available in different sizes, allowing for the best possible arrangement in the various compartment areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FR1-150</th>
<th>FR1-320</th>
<th>FR1-960</th>
<th>FR1-380T</th>
<th>FR1-750T</th>
<th>FR1-1500T</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length (in.)</strong></td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>61</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Depth (in.)</strong></td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>12.8</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Height (in.)</strong></td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>55</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Approx. weight (lbs.)</strong></td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>57.3</td>
<td>132.3</td>
<td>110.2</td>
<td>176.3</td>
<td>286.6</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>No. of catalytic plates</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Inlet flow rate at 14.5 psi and 140° F (ft³/min) up to</strong></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>880</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Depletion rate (lbs/h) at 21.8 psi and 4 vol-%</strong></td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>5.3</td>
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