



S+S Regeltechnik supplies measuring instruments for CO₂ or VOC measurement in various types of design and, in contrast to other manufacturers, combined devices for CO₂ and VOC measurement with separate sensors for both of these measurands in addition to several switchable measuring ranges.

The most important aspect of ventilation on an as-needed basis is the general room air quality, often also referred to as the "comfort zone". Aside from the generally known and accepted control variables, such as relative humidity and temperature, CO₂ and VOC concentrations in the air are also important parameters to be controlled. Each individual interprets room air and its quality differently.

For that reason, air quality can only be defined in rather general terms. The air must be perceived as pleasant by a majority of people and it must not lead to any discomfort. Air must not contain any hazardous concentrations of pollutants. In this respect, the opinions of persons entering the room are decisive. This is because they soon become accustomed to their surroundings and therefore to the various pollution burdens, which they then no longer notice. An important function of systems for energy-saving ventilation on an as-needed basis is to guarantee good room air quality.

Carbon dioxide

A measuring system based on NDIR (non-dispersive infra-red sensor) technology for CO₂ measurement consists of a light source and a receptor. A certain range of wavelengths of light radiated by the source is damped and absorbed by CO₂ molecules in the measured section. This damping is detected by the receptor.

In building automation applications, detection of the CO₂ content in air is primarily undertaken to control non-smoking rooms occupied by varying numbers of persons, such as conference rooms, break rooms, cinemas, schools, etc. Here, the increased CO₂ content caused by the presence of persons is interpreted as a "deterioration" of the air quality.

Over the last few years, a standard measuring range of 0...2000 ppm (parts per million) has become established for CO₂ measuring instruments. Although this measuring range covers the recommended maximum CO₂ concentrations for working and residential rooms (1000...1500 ppm), in practice however it became apparent that in many applications the measuring range of 2000 ppm does not suffice. Therefore, we have developed and launched a new generation of devices with switchable upper measuring range limits of 2000 ppm, 5000 ppm, and 10000 ppm.

Mixed gas VOC

VOC is the abbreviation for Volatile Organic Compounds. According to the definition by the World Health Organization WHO, VOC are organic substances with a boiling range from +60 to +250°C.

Examples of VOCs include compounds of the substance groups alkanes / alkenes, aromatic compounds, terpenes, halogenated hydrocarbons, esters, aldehydes, and ketones. There is a large number of naturally occurring VOCs, some of which are also released into the atmosphere in substantial quantities, e.g. terpenes and isoprene from forests.

Environmental pollution by VOC caused by human activities increased significantly throughout the last century. The biggest contributor is traffic, followed in second place by the construction sector with construction chemistry products such as coating compounds, adhesives, or sealing compounds. Potential sources of VOC in indoor spaces in addition to construction materials include furnishing objects, cleaning and care products, hobby and do-it-yourself products, office chemicals and, above all, tobacco smoke. An essential carrier of VOC is floor carpeting. Odour problems due to VOC can also be caused by microbes, or metabolic substances from bacteria and fungi.

It is precisely these types of substances mentioned and their increased occurrence that are ascertained. Since the air to be monitored contains a multitude of different substances to which the sensor reacts and since gas mixtures are forming, this sensor does not function selectively but reflects the overall air quality. Also the statement as to what constitutes "good air" or "bad air" cannot be definitively made, as this is an entirely subjective sensation. Ventilation is recommended starting from a value between 60 - 80% VOC.

The sensor alters its conductivity depending on the concentration, the nature, and the mixture ratio of reducing molecules in ambient air.

CO₂ and/ or VOC?

The above explanations demonstrate that there are applications for CO₂ measurement, for VOC measurement, but from our perspective, above all, for a combination of both measurands. The crucial factor in this respect is that both of these measurands are not convertible into each other and derivations to or from one another cannot be made. A NDIR CO₂ measuring instrument measures selectively and cannot detect any VOC, a VOC mixed gas sensor cannot recognize CO₂ molecules.

The new duct sensor featuring the Tyr2 housing design with PLEUROFORM™ multi-channel pipe handles this separation perfectly, can record both CO₂ concentration as well as VOC mixed gas (or gas pressure) and, if necessary, can function as a genuine multifunctional device that delivers humidity and temperature data.