



# TECHNICAL REPORT

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**Superconductivity –  
Part 20: Superconducting wires – Categories of practical superconducting  
wires – General characteristics and guidance**

INTERNATIONAL  
ELECTROTECHNICAL  
COMMISSION

PRICE CODE

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## CONTENTS

FOREWORD.....	4
INTRODUCTION.....	6
1 Scope.....	7
2 Normative references .....	7
3 Terms and definitions .....	7
4 Categories of practical SC wires.....	7
5 Technical sheet assisting in the specification and the use of practical SC wires.....	8
6 Class of practical SC wires.....	8
7 Product parameters .....	8
8 Joints .....	8
9 Appearance .....	8
10 Quality assurance.....	8
11 Test methods.....	8
12 Inspection.....	9
13 Shipping label.....	9
Annex A (informative) Structural characteristics of practical SC wires.....	10
A.1 General.....	10
A.2 Overview of SC materials.....	10
A.3 Overview of functional components.....	10
A.3.1 Matrix materials.....	10
A.3.2 Stabilizer .....	11
A.3.3 Reinforcing component.....	11
A.3.4 Insulation.....	11
Annex B (informative) Classes of practical SC wires .....	13
B.1 Nb-Ti group.....	13
B.2 Nb <sub>3</sub> Sn group.....	13
B.3 MgB <sub>2</sub> .....	14
B.4 BSCCO group .....	15
B.5 REBCO group .....	15
Annex C (informative) Technical information assisting in the specification and use of practical SC wires.....	17
C.1 General.....	17
C.2 Product parameters .....	17
C.3 Appearance .....	17
C.4 Quality assurance .....	17
C.5 Test methods .....	17
C.6 Technical record .....	18
Bibliography.....	19

Table B.1 – Constituents composing the Nb-Ti group SC wires .....	13
Table B.2 – Constituents composing the Nb <sub>3</sub> Sn group SC wires .....	14
Table B.3 – Constituents composing the MgB <sub>2</sub> SC wires .....	14
Table B.4 – Constituents composing the BSCCO SC wires .....	15
Table B.5 – Constituents composing REBCO SC wires .....	16

## INTERNATIONAL ELECTROTECHNICAL COMMISSION

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**SUPERCONDUCTIVITY –****Part 20: Superconducting wires –  
Categories of practical superconducting wires –  
General characteristics and guidance****FOREWORD**

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IEC 61788-20, which is a technical report, has been prepared by IEC technical committee 90: Superconductivity.

The text of this technical report is based on the following documents:

Enquiry draft	Report on voting
90/335/DTR	90/344/RVC

Full information on the voting for the approval of this technical report can be found in the report on voting indicated in the above table.

This publication has been drafted in accordance with the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

A list of all parts of the IEC 61788-20 series, published under the general title *Superconductivity*, can be found on the IEC website.

The committee has decided that the contents of this publication will remain unchanged until the stability date indicated on the IEC web site under "<http://webstore.iec.ch>" in the data related to the specific publication. At this date, the publication will be

- reconfirmed,
- withdrawn,
- replaced by a revised edition, or
- amended.

A bilingual version of this publication may be issued at a later date.

## INTRODUCTION

Superconducting (SC) wires are a central and often enabling technology of many important industrial products. Consensus-based standards for SC wires greatly facilitate the creation of procurement specifications, design and engineering of components, certification of quality, description of operating devices, and generalization of use in industrial technologies.

The present technical report (TR IEC61788-20) provides a description of the general features of practical SC wires. The practical low temperature superconducting (LTS) wires have been used extensively in a variety of applications since the late 1960s. These applications include magnetic resonance imaging magnets, research and accelerator magnets, and systems for cutting-edge scientific research. High temperature superconductors (HTS), discovered in 1986, allow operation of superconductor-based technologies with less expensive and more efficient refrigeration systems. These new materials will provide wires that will enable new applications, some of which may not be possible with LTS wires. Many fabrication routes and conductor architectures are well established for superconducting wires, and these engineering routes have a number of general characteristics that are fundamental to enabling industrial products.

Practical superconducting wires are those forms of SC wires that are nearly identical to other common electrical conductors such as those made from copper or aluminium. The appearance of low temperature superconductive wires is, for instance, very similar to commercial electrical copper wires or tin-plated copper wires, because they are covered with stabilization or reinforcing components consisting of metallic elements. Often practical SC wires are supplied in long lengths on wire spools. As such, practical SC wires can be used in products and applications almost interchangeably with common wires. The technical aspects of superconductivity impose, however, certain considerations that might be taken into account in specifications for procurement, design and engineering, testing and certification, quality control, and other commerce. These aspects can be complicated, making practical SC wires less accessible to the non-technical user despite the best efforts of SC wire suppliers to market their products. This document intends to provide descriptions of the technical aspects of practical SC wires in terms of simple general characteristics to assist in the specification and use of superconducting wire products. It might be noted that this document gives some general characteristics of practical SC wires at the present state, but not any type of specifications for the wires or for the processing of the wire.

Thus the present technical report that provides general characteristics and guidance with respect to practical SC wires is recommended as a first priority for both producers and users of superconducting technology.

## **SUPERCONDUCTIVITY –**

### **Part 20: Superconducting wires – Categories of practical superconducting wires – General characteristics and guidance**

#### **1 Scope**

This part of IEC 61788, which is a technical report, provides general characteristics and guidance on practical SC wires. Particular focus is given to the characteristics that are different from those of ordinary copper and aluminium wires, since practical SC wires have appearance nearly identical to common electrical wires and can be used interchangeably with them. On the other hand, the practical SC wires are typically composite materials consisting of several functional materials as described in Annex A.

Many forms of SC wires are described in Section 4 of IEC 60050-815, including single core wires, multi-filamentary superconducting wires, composite superconductors and coated conductors. These wires as well as others that might be described as monolithic composite superconducting wires will be the focus in this technical report. A wire is considered as being practical if it can be procured in sufficiently continuous lengths under ordinary commercial transactions to build devices.

Conductors made of multiple wires, such as cables, for example, are not included in this scope.

Since this report only addresses the characteristics of practical wires, other wires such as prototype, test sample and developmental wires are not included in the scope of this technical report.

#### **2 Normative references**

The following documents, in whole or in part, are normatively referenced in this document and are indispensable for its application. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

IEC 60050 (all parts), *International Electrotechnical Vocabulary* (available at: <<http://www.electropedia.org>>)