

Ultrasonic sensors

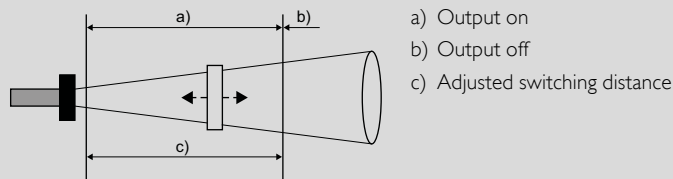
System description

Method of function

Ultrasonic proximity switches operate on the basis of echo time-of-flight measurement. An ultrasonic pulse emitted by the sensor is reflected when it hits an object. The sensor calculates the distance from the time elapsed between emission of the ultrasonic pulse and receipt of the echo. Depending on the power

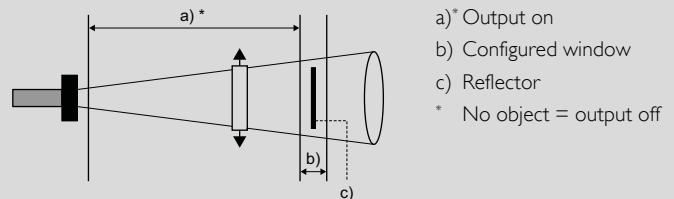
amplifier, the measured distance is converted to a current or voltage signal (analogue sensor) proportional to the distance or the switching output is activated, depending on the set switching point.

Applications



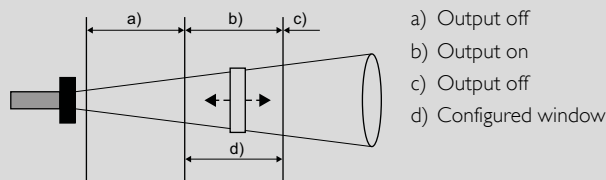
As a reflex scanner (proximity switch)

The classic operating mode uses background suppression, superior to other sensor principles. The switching output is activated when the object is located within the set switching distance. The switching point is subject to a hysteresis. This operating mode is suitable, for example, for detecting objects on a conveyor belt or for checking presence.



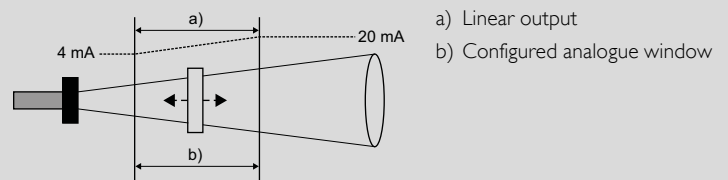
As a barrier or reflex switch

An ultrasonic sensor is used like a light barrier here, though no special reflector is employed (a piece of sheet metal is entirely sufficient here). For this purpose, the sensor in window mode is set in such a way that the reflector is located within the window. The ultrasonic reflex switch provides a signal as soon as an object is completely covered by the reflector. Whereby it is irrelevant whether the object absorbs the sound or even deflects it away. This operating mode is used for poorly detected material with irregular surfaces, e.g. foam.



In window mode

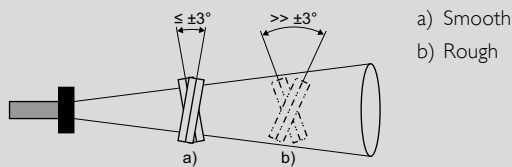
The switching output is only activated when the object is located within a window that has been defined by setting two window limits. This can be used to monitor, for example, the correct bottle size in a crate of drinks. Bottles that are too tall or too short are diverted out.



Ultrasonic sensors with analogue output

In these models a voltage (0...10 V) or current (4...20 mA) is transmitted in proportion to the object distance. The window limits can be defined and selected between falling and rising characteristic curves.

Installation



Ultrasonic sensors can be installed and operated in any orientation. Though installation locations that could lead to contamination of the sensor surface should be avoided because water droplets and encrustation can impair functional performance. Thin layers of dust and paint droplets generally have no effect.

If smooth surfaces are to be detected, sensors should be mounted as vertically as possible, i. e. at an angle of from 87° to 93° to the surface.

Rough surfaces, on the other hand, permit considerably greater angular deviations. A surface whose valley-to-peak depth is greater than or equal to the wavelength of the ultrasonic frequency is considered rough. The sound, however, is then reflected diffusely, which can lead to a reduction of the operating scanning distance. In this case the maximum permissible angular deviation and maximum scanning distance should be determined in trials.

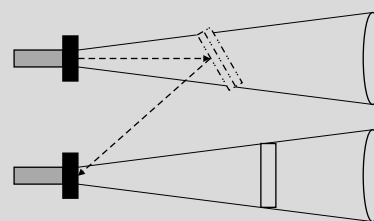
Sound-absorbing materials (such as cotton wool or foam) can further reduce the scanning distance. In contrast, liquids and solid materials are good reflectors.

Mounting distances

a) Switching distance

Sensor Range	Minimum Distance A	Minimum Distance B
0.25 m	≥ 0.35 m	≥ 2.50 m
0.35 m	≥ 0.40 m	≥ 2.50 m
1.30 m	≥ 1.10 m	≥ 8.00 m
3.40 m	≥ 2.00 m	≥ 18.00 m
6.00 m	≥ 4.00 m	≥ 30.00 m

The table provides the minimum distances between non-synchronised ultrasonic sensors. Sensors may mutually influence one another if these distances are not observed.



The above-mentioned mounting distances are only intended as a guide. In the case of tilting, the sound can be reflected towards the neighbouring sensor. The minimum distance should then be determined by means of trials. Some sensors permit synchronisation with one another and thus allow considerably lower scanning distances.