Design Guidelines

The major factors that need to be considered when specifying THF finned tubular heaters are as follows:

- Minimum FPM airflow velocity at heater inlet. Is it continuous or fluctuating
- Inlet air temperature
- Outlet air temperature and temperature rise through heating elements
- Selection of element watt density to keep sheath material within its temperature limits
- Sheath material selection
- Condition of air or gas to be heated
- Mounting & airflow restrictions around elements
- KW sizing and # of circuits required (48 amp max/circuit)
- Temperature sensors & flow controls

Heater KW Sizing

Once the inlet temperature, outlet temperature, process CFM, and operating pressure are known, the KW required for the application can be determined using the following equations. If the process is heating air & operating from ambient temperature and atmospheric pressure (70°+/- 10°F & 14.7 psi), the following formula can be used;

KW = {[SCFM x (T2-T1)] ÷ 3190} + S.F.

Where:
T2 = °F outlet temperature
T1 = °F inlet temperature
SCFM = standard air flow in cu.ft./min. at atmospheric pressure and ambient temperature
S.F. = safety factor % to account for process losses

Converting CFM to SCFM

If the air heating process is pressurized or operating at an inlet temperature other than at or near ambient, the CFM at a point in the process with a known pressure & temperature must be used & converted to standard SCFM by the following formula;

SCFM = 35.4 x CFM2 x {(P2+14.7) ÷ (T2 + 460°)}

Where CFM_2 is cu.ft./min. air flow at process pressure P2.
P_2 = process pressure (psig)
T_2 = inlet °F or temperature at point of measured CFM2

Using the SCFM and the heater face flow area we can now calculate the air velocity in SFPM into the heater core as follows;
SFPM = SCFM ÷ A1
SFPM = inlet air velocity at standard conditions.
A1 = Sq.Ft. of inlet flow area at heater

An alternate method for calculating KW needed to heat air or other gas, from any inlet to outlet temperature can be done using the following general energy equation;
KW = {[60 min/hr x SCFM x Density x Sp Ht x ∅T] ÷3412} + S.F.
Where:
SCFM = standard air flow in cubic feet/min (@ 70°F & 14.7 psia)
Density = Gas density in lbs/cuft at standard conditions or if pressurized process at process pressure and inlet temperature. (see table)
Sp Ht = Specific heat of gas in Btu/lb-°F at standard conditions or if pressurized process at process pressure and inlet temperature. (values for air are shown in the gas density table)
∅T = Process gas temperature rise -°F
3412 = conversion factor for Btu/hr to KW (1 KW = 3412 Btu/hr)
S.F. = safety factor % to account for process losses.

Using the inlet air velocity at the heater and the maximum outlet temperature desired the maximum sheath watt density can now be determined from the following charts for the type of heater being specified if a cataloged design is not suitable. The physical size and constraints of the application will dictate the final configuration and number of heaters required. For large installations, 3 phase circuits need to be balanced and all circuits limited no more than 48 amps per circuit. If voltages are higher than 250V, .375, .430, or .475 diameter elements are recommended.

Sheath Watt Density

The maximum sheath watt density to be specified is directly determined by the operating variables of FPM airflow velocity and inlet/outlet air/gas temperatures required. It must be selected such that sheath operating temperatures are not exceeded; 750°F for steel sheath-steel finned, or 1200°F for stainless steel/alloy sheath with stainless fins. Cataloged heaters are designed to operate within these parameters. The following charts will help guide the user in selecting proper watt density.

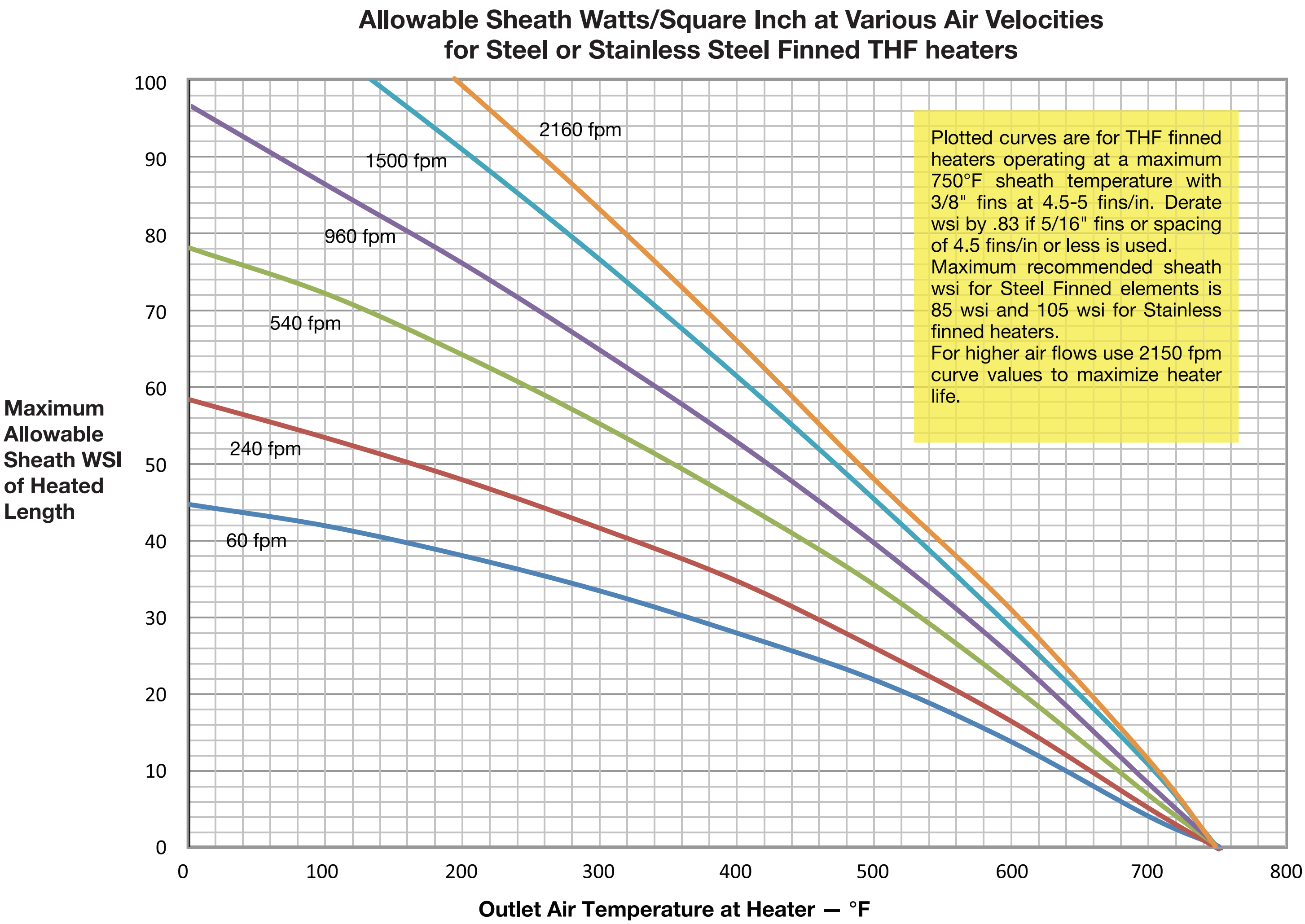

Chart 1 for steel (or SS) finned elements relates the maximum allowable sheath wsi to outlet air temperature that will be obtained at various air velocity levels.

These curves are for 750°F (or lower) sheath operating temperature.

The following Examples Illustrate the Graph's Use

Example 1

An application requires a heater to output 275°F air at an air velocity of 750 FPM. Entering the curves with 275°F, then up to 750 FPM level we find that a maximum of 62-64 wsi can be applied. Depending on voltage and space constraints either a .315 or .430 diameter catalog heater could be used.

Example 2

A curing oven needed 325°F outlet air at a minimum velocity of 1500 FPM. Entering chart at 325°F up to the 1500 FPM curve, we see that the heater could have a maximum of 70-72 sheath wsi. If a higher outlet air temperature is required, or if the airflow velocity is lower, then a reduced a sheath wsi would have to be specified.

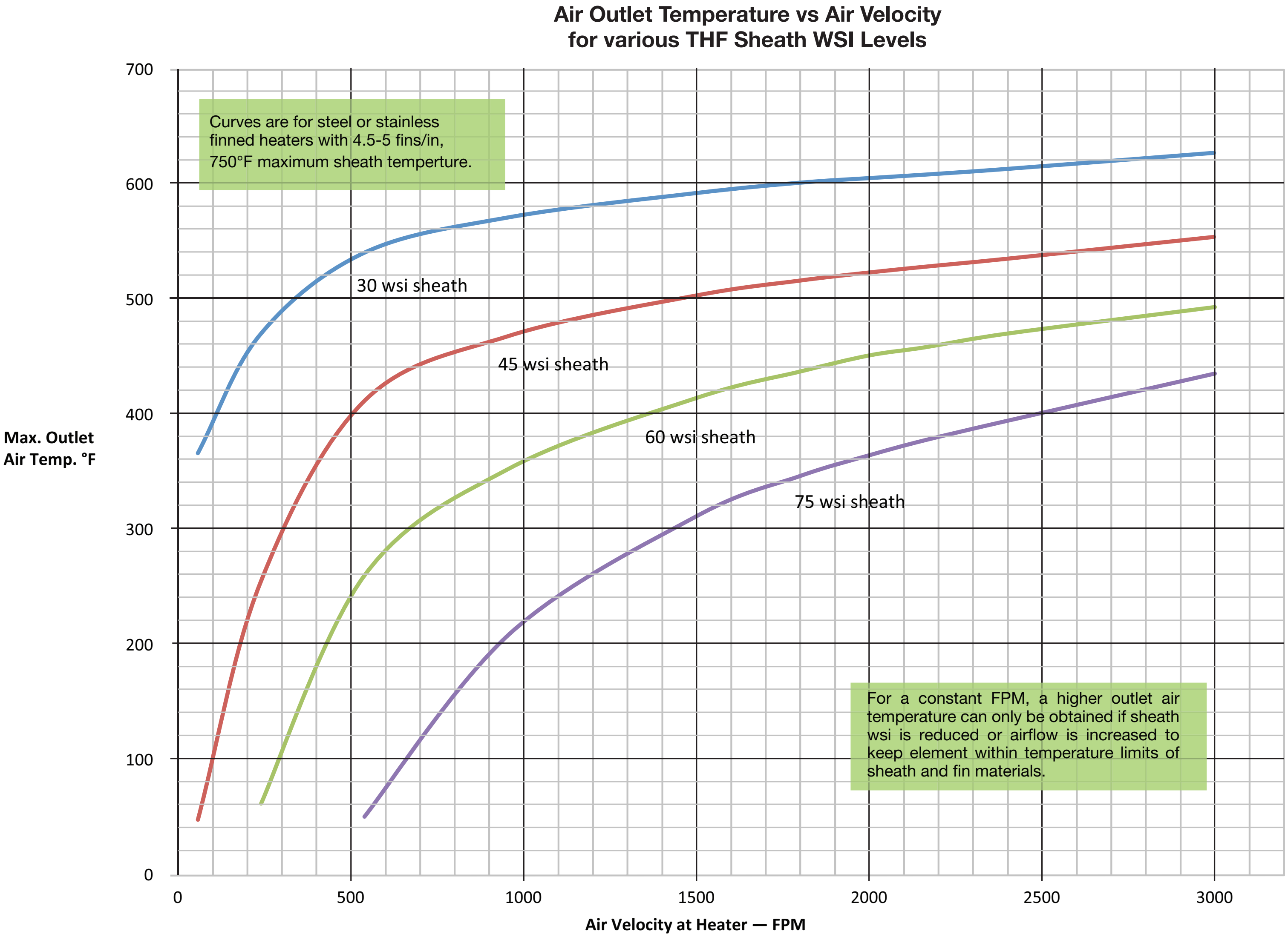

Chart 2 shows the relationship of maximum outlet air temperature obtained vs inlet air velocity at several sheath wsi levels.

This chart can be used for either steel or stainless steel finned elements operating at a maximum of 750°F and provides a way of establishing either airflow required or outlet temperature that will be obtained when sheath wsi is known for an application.

These curves show that to obtain a higher air outlet temperature at a constant FPM, the sheath wsi must be reduced to keep the element within the 750°F temperature limit of sheath & fin materials. These curves are for air entering a heater at or near ambient (60°-105°F).

Sheath Temperature vs wsi for THF Finned Tubular Elements in various velocities of forced air at 80°F

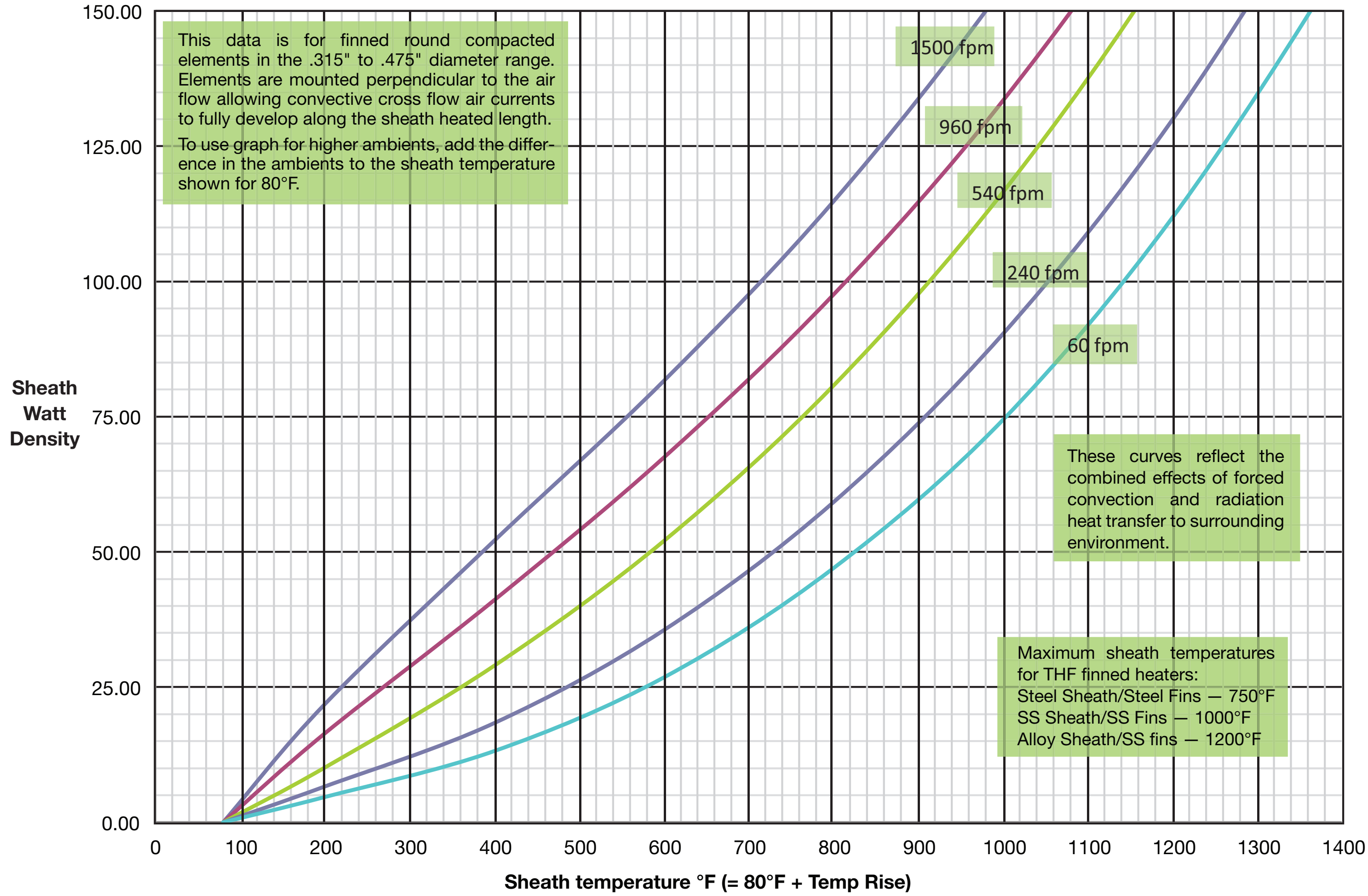

Chart 3 is a plot of sheath temperature and sheath watt density at various levels of inlet forced air at 80°F

It can be used to determine a maximum allowable sheath wsi for heating applications not restricted to the steel sheath limit of 750°. It can be used directly for most ambient air heating processes using Incoloy or Stainless Steel sheathed elements with stainless steel fins.

The following Example Illustrates the Graph's use when Operating in a Higher Ambient

Application

A recirculating process oven with organic vapors, moisture & other air contamination present, requires 500°F air at a minimum flow velocity of 900 FPM. Can a Stainless steel finned alloy sheathed heater at 80 wsi be used?

Using the Graph

Entering this chart at 900 FPM and 80 wsi, we find the sheath temperature when operating at 80°F ambient will be 700°F. The ambient temperature difference from the graph value of 80°F to the new higher 500°F ambient is 420°F (500-80). The new sheath temperature when operating in the 500°F ambient will be approximately 1120°F. (700 + 420). This is just 80° lower than the 1200°F limit for a stainless steel finned heater.

To conserve heater life it would be best to use a lower watt density & operate the heater at the lowest point possible given voltage, size, and construction constraints of the application. Consideration should be given to increasing the air velocity or using un-finned alloy sheath tubular heaters for this application. (See page 11-104)

Tech note: The reverse is true if element is operating in an ambient lower than 80°F. The sheath temperature would be reduced by the difference in the temperatures. The WSI range shown on the chart is approximately 4.25 times an unfinned tubular. The data has been confirmed by Tempco lab testing on .430 & .475 diameter finned heaters with 4.5-5 fins/in.