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Technical Reference

Capstone MicroTurbine™ Systems Emissions

Summary

Capstone MicroTurbine™ systems are inherently clean and can meet some of the strictest emissions standards in the world. This technical reference is to provide customers with information that may be requested by local air permitting organizations or to compare air quality impacts of different technologies for a specific project. The preferred units of measure are "output based"; meaning that the quantity of a particular exhaust emission is reported relative to the useable output of the microturbine – typically in pounds per megawatt hour for electrical generating equipment. This technical reference also provides volumetric measurements in parts per million and milligrams per normal cubic meter. A conversion between several common units is also provided.

Maximum Exhaust Emissions at ISO Conditions

Table 1 below summarizes the exhaust emissions at full power and ISO conditions for different Capstone microturbine models. Note that the fuel can have a significant impact on certain emissions. For example landfill and digester gas can be made up of a wide variety of fuel elements and impurities, and typically contains some percentage of carbon dioxide (CO_2). This CO_2 dilutes the fuel, makes complete combustion more difficult, and results in higher carbon monoxide emissions (CO) than for pipeline-quality natural gas.

Table 1. Emission for Different Capstone Microturbine Models in [lb/MWhe]

Model	Fuel	NOx	CO	VOC (5)
C30 NG	Natural Gas (1)	0.64	1.8	0.23
CR30 MBTU	Landfill Gas (2)	0.64	22.0	1.00
CR30 MBTU	Digester Gas (3)	0.64	11.0	1.00
C30 Liquid	Diesel #2 (4)	2.60	0.41	0.23
C65 NG Standard	Natural Gas (1)	0.46	1.25	0.10
C65 NG Low NOx	Natural Gas (1)	0.17	1.30	0.10
C65 NG CARB	Natural Gas (1)	0.17	0.24	0.05
CR65 Landfill	Landfill Gas (2)	0.46	4.0	0.10
CR65 Digester	Digester Gas (3)	0.46	4.0	0.10
C200 NG	Natural Gas (1)	0.40	1.10	0.10
C200 NG CARB	Natural Gas (1)	0.14	0.20	0.04
CR200 Digester	Digester Gas (3)	0.40	3.6	0.10

Notes:

(1) Emissions for standard natural gas at 1,000 BTU/scf (HHV) or 39.4 MJ/m3 (HHV)
(2) Emissions for surrogate gas containing 42% natural gas, 39% CO2, and 19% Nitrogen
(3) Emissions for surrogate gas containing 63% natural gas and 37% CO2
(4) Emissions for Diesel #2 according to ASTM D975-07b
(5) Expressed as Methane

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Table 2 provides the same output-based information shown in Table 1, but expressed in grams per horsepower hour (g/hp-hr).

Table 2. Emission for Different Capstone Microturbine Models in [g/hp-hr]

Model	Fuel	NOx	CO	VOC [5]
C30 NG	Natural Gas [1]	0.22	0.60	0.078
CR30 MBTU	Landfill Gas [2]	0.22	7.4	0.340
CR30 MBTU	Digester Gas [3]	0.22	3.7	0.340
C30 Liquid	Diesel #2 [4]	0.90	0.14	0.078
C65 NG Standard	Natural Gas [1]	0.16	0.42	0.034
C65 NG Low NOx	Natural Gas [1]	0.06	0.44	0.034
C65 NG CARB	Natural Gas [1]	0.06	0.08	0.017
CR65 Landfill	Landfill Gas [2]	0.16	1.4	0.034
CR65 Digester	Digester Gas [3]	0.16	1.4	0.034
C200 NG	Natural Gas [1]	0.14	0.37	0.034
C200 NG CARB	Natural Gas [1]	0.05	0.07	0.014
CR200 Digester	Digester Gas [3]	0.14	1.3	0.034

Notes: - same as for Table 1

Emissions may also be reported on a volumetric basis, with the most common unit of measurement being parts per million. This is typically a measurement that is corrected to specific oxygen content in the exhaust and without considering moisture content. The abbreviation for this unit of measurement is “ppmvd” (parts per million by volume, dry) and is corrected to 15% oxygen for electrical generating equipment such as microturbines. The relationship between an output based measurement like pounds per MWh and a volumetric measurement like ppmvd depends on the characteristics of the generating equipment and the molecular weight of the criteria pollutant being measured. Table 3 expresses the emissions in ppmvd at 15% oxygen for the Capstone microturbine models shown in Table 1. Note that raw measurements expressed in ppmv will typically be lower than the corrected values shown in Table 3 because the microturbine exhaust has greater than 15% oxygen.

Another volumetric unit of measurement expresses the mass of a specific criteria pollutant per standard unit of volume. Table 4 expresses the emissions in milligrams per normal cubic meter at 15% oxygen. Normal conditions for this purpose are expresses as one atmosphere of pressure and zero degrees Celsius. Note that both the ppmvd and mg/m3 measurements are for specific oxygen content. A conversion can be made to adjust either unit of measurement to other reference oxygen contents, if required. Use the equation below to convert from one reference oxygen content to another:

$$\text{Emissions at New } O_2 = \frac{(20.9 - \text{New } O_2 \text{ Percent})}{(20.9 - \text{Current } O_2 \text{ Percent})} \text{ X Emissions at Current } O_2$$

For example, to express 9 ppmvd of NOx at 15% oxygen to ppmvd at 3% oxygen:

$$\text{Emissions at 3\% } O_2 = \frac{(20.9 - 3.0)}{(20.9 - 15.0)} \text{ X } 9 = 27 \text{ ppmvd}$$

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Table 3. Emission for Different Capstone Microturbine Models in [ppmvd] at 15% O_2

Model	Fuel	NOx	CO	VOC
C30 NG	Natural Gas (1)	9	40	9
CR30 MBTU	Landfill Gas (2)	9	500	40
CR30 MBTU	Digester Gas (3)	9	250	40
C30 Liquid	Diesel #2 (4)	35	9	9
C65 NG Standard	Natural Gas (1)	9	40	7
C65 NG Low NOx	Natural Gas (1)	4	40	7
C65 NG CARB	Natural Gas (1)	4	8	3
CR65 Landfill	Landfill Gas (2)	9	130	7
CR65 Digester	Digester Gas (3)	9	130	7
C200 NG	Natural Gas (1)	9	40	7
C200 NG CARB	Natural Gas (1)	4	8	3
CR200 Digester	Digester Gas (3)	9	130	7

Notes: same as Table 1

Table 4. Emission for Different Capstone Microturbine Models in [mg/m3] at 15% O_2

Model	Fuel	NOx	CO	VOC (5)
C30 NG	Natural Gas (1)	18	50	6
CR30 MBTU	Landfill Gas (2)	18	620	30
CR30 MBTU	Digester Gas (3)	18	310	30
C30 Liquid	Diesel #2 (4)	72	11	6
C65 NG Standard	Natural Gas (1)	19	50	5
C65 NG Low NOx	Natural Gas (1)	8	50	5
C65 NG CARB	Natural Gas (1)	8	9	2
CR65 Landfill	Landfill Gas (2)	18	160	5
CR65 Digester	Digester Gas (3)	18	160	5
C200 NG	Natural Gas (1)	18	50	5
C200 NG CARB	Natural Gas (1)	8	9	2
CR200 Digester	Digester Gas (3)	18	160	5

Notes: same as Table 1

The emissions stated in Tables 1, 2, 3 and 4 are guaranteed by Capstone for new microturbines during the standard warranty period. They are also the expected emissions for a properly maintained microturbine according to manufacturer's published maintenance schedule for the useful life of the equipment.

Emissions at Full Power but Not at ISO Conditions

The maximum emissions in Tables 1, 2, 3 and 4 are at full power under ISO conditions. These levels are also the expected values at full power operation over the published allowable ambient temperature and elevation ranges.

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Emissions at Part Power

Capstone microturbines are designed to maintain combustion stability and low emissions over a wide operating range. Capstone microturbines utilize multiple fuel injectors, which are switched on or off depending on the power output of the turbine. All injectors are typically on when maximum power is demanded, regardless of the ambient temperature or elevation. As the load requirements of the microturbine are decreased, injectors will be switched off to maintain stability and low emissions. However, the emissions relative to the lower power output may increase. This effect differs for each microturbine model.

Emissions Calculations for Permitting

Air Permitting agencies are normally concerned with the maximum amount of a given pollutant being emitted per unit of time (for example pounds per day of NOx). The simplest way to make this calculation is to use the maximum microturbine full electrical power output (expressed in MW) multiplied by the emissions rate in pounds per MWhe times the number of hours per day. For example, the C65 CARB microturbine operating on natural gas would have a NOx emissions rate of:

NOx = .17 X (65/1000) X 24 = .27 pounds per day

This would be representative of operating the equipment full time, 24 hours per day, at full power output of 65 kWe.

As a general rule, if local permitting is required, use the published agency levels as the stated emissions for the permit and make sure that this permitted level is above the calculated values in this technical reference.

Consideration of Useful Thermal Output

Capstone microturbines are often deployed where their clean exhaust can be used to provide heating or cooling, either directly or using hot water or other heat transfer fluids. In this case, the local permitting or standards agencies will usually consider the emissions from traditional heating sources as being displaced by the useful thermal output of the microturbine exhaust energy. This increases the useful output of the microturbine, and decreases the relative emissions of the combined heat and power system. For example, the CARB version C65 ICHP system with integral heat recovery can achieve a total system efficiency of 70% or more, depending on inlet water temperatures and other installation-specific characteristics. The electric efficiency of the CARB version C65 microturbine is 28% at ISO conditions. This means that the total NOx output based emissions, including the captured thermal value, is the electric-only emissions times the ratio of electric efficiency divided by total system efficiency:

NOx = .17 X 28/70 = .068 pounds per MWh (based on total system output)

This is typically much less than the emissions that would result from providing electric power using traditional central power plants, plus the emissions from a local hot water heater or boiler. In fact microturbine emissions are so low compared with traditional hot water heaters that installing a Capstone microturbine with heat recovery can actually decrease the local emissions of NOx and other criteria pollutants, without even considering the elimination of emissions from a remote power plant.

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Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Many gasses are considered "greenhouse gasses", and agencies have ranked them based on their global warming potential (GWP) in the atmosphere compared with carbon dioxide (CO_2), as well as their ability to maintain this effect over time. For example, methane is a greenhouse gas with a GWP of 21. Criteria pollutants like NOx and organic compounds like methane are monitored by local air permitting authorities, and are subject to strong emissions controls. Even though some of these criteria pollutants can be more troublesome for global warming than CO_2, they are released in small quantities – especially from Capstone microturbines. So the major contributor of concern is carbon dioxide, or CO_2. Emission of CO_2 depends on two things:

1. Carbon content in the fuel
2. Efficiency of converting fuel to useful energy

It is for these reasons that many local authorities are focused on using clean fuels (for example natural gas compared with diesel fuel), achieving high efficiency using combined heat and power systems, and displacing emissions from traditional power plants using renewable fuels like waste landfill and digester gasses.

Table 5 shows the typical CO_2 emissions due to combustion for different Capstone microturbine models at full power and ISO conditions. The values do not include CO_2 that may already exist in the fuel itself, which is typical for renewable fuels like landfill and digester gas. These values are expressed on an output basis, as is done for criteria pollutants in Table 1. The table shows the pounds per megawatt hour based on electric power output only, as well as considering total useful output in a CHP system with total 70% efficiency (LHV). As for criteria pollutants, the relative quantity of CO_2 released is substantially less when useful thermal output is also considered in the measurement.

Table 5. CO_2 Emission for Capstone Microturbine Models in [lb/MWh]

Model	Fuel	CO_2	
		Electric Only	70% Total CHP
C30 NG	Natural Gas (1)	1,690	625
CR30 MBTU	Landfill Gas (1)	1,690	625
CR30 MBTU	Digester Gas (1)	1,690	625
C30 Liquid	Diesel #2 (2)	2,400	855
C65 NG Standard	Natural Gas (1)	1,520	625
C65 NG Low NOx	Natural Gas (1)	1,570	625
C65 NG CARB	Natural Gas (1)	1,570	625
CR65 Landfill	Landfill Gas (1)	1,520	625
CR65 Digester	Digester Gas (1)	1,520	625
C200 NG	Natural Gas (1)	1,330	625
C200 NG CARB	Natural Gas (1)	1,330	625
CR200 Digester	Digester Gas (1)	1,330	625

Notes:

(1) Emissions due to combustion, assuming natural gas with CO_2 content of 117 lb/MMBTU (HHV)

(2) Emissions due to combustion, assuming diesel fuel with CO_2 content of 160 lb/MMBTU (HHV)

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Useful Conversions

The conversions shown in Table 6 can be used to obtain other units of emissions outputs. These are approximate conversions.

Table 6. Useful Unit Conversions

From	Multiply By	To Get
lb/MWh	0.338	g/bhp-hr
g/bhp-hr	2.96	lb/MWh
lb	0.454	kg
kg	2.20	lb
kg	1,000	g
hp (electric)	.746	kW
kW	1.34	hp (electric)
MW	1,000	kW
kW	0.001	MW

Definitions

- ISO conditions are defined as: 15 °C (59 °F), 60% relative humidity, and sea level pressure of 101.3 kPa (14.696 psia).
- HHV: Higher Heating Value
- LHV: Lower Heating Value
- kW_{th}: Kilowatt (thermal)
- kW_e : Kilowatt (electric)
- MWh: Megawatt-hour
- hp-hr: horsepower-hour (sometimes referred to as “electric horsepower-hour”)
- Scf: Standard cubic foot (standard references ISO temperature and pressure)
- m3: Normal cubic meter (normal references 0 °C and one atmosphere pressure)

Capstone Contact Information

If questions arise regarding this technical reference, please contact Capstone Turbine Corporation for assistance and information:

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