

# Signal Conditioners and Converters Tutorial

Signal conditioners, signal converters, transmitters and amplifiers are devices which represent the majority of the instrumentation requirement for transducers. They are provided with flow, temperature, pressure, as well as many other transducer sensor types.

In some cases the signal conditioner/converter is provided by the sensor manufacturer so the user will have his desired output signal.

However, in other cases, there is a need for an external signal conditioner/converter to provide the desired output signal or to provide it at a more attractive price.

Signal conditioners and converters are ancillary devices intended to amplify, filter, condition, scale, and convert the low level "raw" signals produced by many transducers and convert it into the desired, industry standard high level signal before transmitting it across a potentially noisy environment. In some cases, a secondary function is providing signal isolation.

Generally, the output signals from the sensor may be in the form of either a pulse or analog current / voltage that is proportional to the span of the signal being measured. Open collector transistors are common as pulse output signals. The most common analog signal is a 4-20mA.

In many flowmeter types the frequency of the raw input signal carries the flow information. The frequency is related to flow rate. Each pulse or cycle is related to a small equivalent quantity of flow. The quantity represented by each pulse varies with each individual meter and must be scaled to obtain engineering units.

The input signal to a pulse signal conditioner may be a contact closure, a magnetic pickup, or a low level pulse. Some conditioner/converters scale the pulse signal such that each pulse represents a engineering quantity of flow, for example 1 pulse per gallon). Some converters convert the variable frequency signal into a current proportional to flow rate.

In nearly all cases the signal conditioner/converter is intended to be powered by a DC supply voltage normally available in most instruments with 24 VDC being the most common.

Enclosures are available for outdoor weatherproof and also hazardous locations.

Signal Conditioner/Converters are applied in most PLC and PC based control systems to adapt the raw process transducer signals into the standardized levels provides on I/O Cards.

Only the most common signal conditioner/converters applicable for flow metering are shown in the data sheets to follow.

## Typical Application:

