DigitalFlow™ GF868
Panametrics Ultrasonic Flare Gas Mass Flowmeter

DigitalFlow GF868 is a Panametrics product. Panametrics has joined other GE high-technology sensing businesses under a new name—GE Industrial, Sensing
Flare Gas Mass Flowmeter

The DigitalFlow GF868 ultrasonic flowmeter uses the patented Correlation Transit-Time™ technique, digital signal processing, and an accurate method of calculating molecular weight. Add to these features the inherent advantages of ultrasonic flow measurement—reliability with no routine maintenance, high accuracy, fast response, wide rangeability—and the DigitalFlow GF868 flowmeter is the clear choice for flare gas applications.

Patented Molecular Weight Measurement Method

The DigitalFlow GF868 uses a patented method for calculating the average molecular weight of hydrocarbon mixtures. This proprietary algorithm extends the range for measuring average molecular weight, while improving accuracy and compensating for nonhydrocarbon gases better than ever before possible. Higher accuracy mass flow data and more precise knowledge of flare gas composition can improve the efficiency of plant operation, enabling correct metering of steam injection at the flare tip, rapid trouble-shooting of leaks into the flare stream, early detection of process control problems, and accurate plant balance.

Best Technology for Flare Gas

Ultrasonic flow measurement, the ideal technology for flare gas applications, is independent of gas properties, and does not interfere with the flow in any way. All-metal ultrasonic transducers installed in the pipe send sound pulses upstream and downstream through the gas. From the difference in these transit times between the transducers, with and against the flow, the DigitalFlow GF868’s onboard computer uses advanced signal processing and correlation detection to calculate velocity, and volumetric and mass flow rate. Temperature and pressure inputs enable the meter to calculate standard volumetric flow. For maximum accuracy, use the two-channel version and measure along two different paths at the same location. The two-channel meter can also measure the flow in two separate pipes or at two different places on the same pipe.

One Meter, Wide Range of Flow Conditions

The DigitalFlow GF868 meter achieves rangeability of 2750 to 1. It measures velocities from 0.1 to 275 ft/s (0.03 to 85 m/s) in both directions, in steady or rapidly changing flow, in pipes from 3 in to 120 in (76 mm to 3 m) in diameter. With this range of operation, one DigitalFlow GF868 flowmeter performs measurements under most of the conditions that may occur in a flare line.

Simple Installation

The flowmeter system consists of a pair of transducers for each channel, preamplifiers, and an electronics console. The transducers can be installed as part of a flowcell, or directly into the pipe with a hot- or cold-tapping procedure. The electronics console of the DigitalFlow GF868 meter can be located up to 1,000 ft (300 m) from the transducers.
Identify Leak Sources, Reduce Steam Usage and Improve Plant Material Balance

Leaks and excess steam delivery are two major causes of loss of product and energy. Reducing them immediately improves the overall efficiency in refinery and chemical plant operation. Payback for the entire DigitalFlow GF868 installation usually occurs within a matter of months. In the long term, the DigitalFlow GF868 can help save millions of dollars in reduced losses.

Once the sound speed of the gas has been determined by the DigitalFlow GF868, its on-board computer uses temperature and pressure inputs in conjunction with the sound speed to calculate instantaneous average molecular weight and mass flow rate of the gas. These parameters are used to help identify sources of leaks into the flare system. Detection of even a small increase in flow rate into the flare system may indicate a leak source such as partially unseated relief valve. An accompanying change in the average molecular weight of the flare gas may be used to help locate the leak source. Quick identification and elimination of leak sources into the flare system saves significant amounts of potentially lost energy and product.

Mass flow rate may be used to perform a mass balance calculation and to control flare tip steam injection. By knowing the exact amount of gas flow and average molecular weight in the flare stack, delivery of the correct amount of steam required at the flare tip can be accurately controlled. Steam usage can be reduced while maintaining compliance with pollution control regulations.

Correlation Transit-Time Technology Is Ideal for Flare Gas Flow Measurement

The DigitalFlow GF868 uses the patented Correlation Transit-Time technique that has distinct advantages over other methods of flare gas flow measurement, and it is used to solve a variety of difficult problems. Typically, gas in flare stacks, headers or laterals, is a mixture of components from different sources. Flow rate in flare systems may be unsteady or even bidirectional. Pulsating pressure, varying composition and temperature, harsh environment, and wide flow range further complicate the measurement. The GF868 is designed for superior performance under these conditions.

Designed for Flare Gas Environment

The DigitalFlow GF868 flowmeter has no moving parts to clog or wear out. Its patented ultrasonic transducers are constructed of titanium or other metals that withstand the corrosive environment usually found in flare gas applications. The transducers are designed for use in hazardous locations. Wide rangeability allows measurement of flow rate from 0.1 up to 275 ft/s (0.03 to 85 m/s). In contrast to thermal flowmeters, the ultrasonic transit-time technique does not depend on the heat transfer coefficient of the flare gas and does not require regular maintenance. These and other features make the DigitalFlow GF868 unique among flare gas flowmeters.
GF868 Specifications

Operation and Performance

Fluid Types
Flare and vent gases

Pipe Sizes
2 in to 120 in NB (50 mm to 3,000 mm) and larger

Pipe Materials
All metals. Consult GE for other materials.

Flow Accuracy (Velocity)
- 1 path measurement: ±2% to 5% of reading at ±1 to 275 ft/s (±0.3 to 85 m/s)
- 2-path measurement: ±1.4% to 3.5% of reading at ±1 to 275 ft/s (±0.3 to 85 m/s)

Molecular Weight Accuracy (Hydrocarbon Mixtures)
MW 2 to 120 gr/gr mole/±1.8%, optimizable for other gas compositions

Mass Flow Accuracy (Hydrocarbon Mixtures)
- 1-path: 3% to 7%
- 2-path: 2.4% to 5%

Dependent on accuracy of temperature and pressure inputs.

Accuracy depends on pipe size and whether measurement is one-path or two-path. Accuracy to ±0.5% of reading may be achievable with process calibration.

Repeatability
±1% at 5 to 100 ft/s (15 cm/s to 30 m/s)

Range (Bidirectional)
–275 to 275 ft/s (–84 to 84 m/s)

Rangeability (Overall)
2750:1

Specifications assume a fully developed flow profile (typically 20 diameters upstream and 10 diameters downstream of straight pipe run) and flow velocity greater than 3 ft/s (1 m/s).

Measurement Parameters
Mass flow, standard and actual volumetric flow, totalized flow, and flow velocity

Electronics

Flow Measurement
Patented Correlation Transit-Time mode

Enclosures
- Standard: Epoxy-coated aluminum weatherproof Type 4X/IP66 Class I, Division 2, Groups A,B,C&D FM and CSA
- Optional: Stainless steel, fiberglass, explosion-proof, flameproof

Dimensions
- Weight 11 lb (5 kg)
- Size (h x w x d) 14.24 in x 11.4 in x 5.12 in (362 mm x 290 mm x 130 mm)

DigitalFlow GF868 field installation on a typical flare system. Insert shows transducers installed on the flare header that leads to the flare stack.
GF868 Specifications

Channels
- Standard: One channel
- Optional: Two channels (for two pipes or two-path averaging)

Display
Two independent software-configurable 64 x 128 pixel backlit LCD graphic displays

Keypad
39-key tactile-feedback membrane

Power Supplies
- Standard: 100 to 130 VAC, 50/60 Hz or 200 to 265 VAC, 50/60 Hz
- Optional: 12 to 28 VDC, ±5%

Power Consumption
20W maximum

Operating Temperature
-4°F to 131°F (–20°C to 55°C)

Storage Temperature
-67°F to 167°F (–55°C to 75°C)

Standard Inputs
Two isolated 0/4 to 20 mA inputs (121 Ω) with integral 24 VDC power supply

For required temperature and pressure inputs

Standard Outputs
- Six 4 to 20 mA outputs, software assignable two outputs for 550 Ω maximum load
- Four outputs for 1000 Ω maximum load.

Optional Inputs/Outputs
There are four additional slots available for any combination of the following I/O boards:
- Analog outputs: Select up to three additional output boards, each with four isolated 0/4 to 20 mA outputs, 1 kΩ maximum load
- Analog inputs: Select up to three boards of one of the following types:
  - Analog input board with two isolated 4 to 20 mA inputs and 24V loop power
  - RTD input board with two isolated, three-wire, RTD inputs; span –148°F to 662°F (~–100°C to 350°C); 100 Ω Pt
- Totalizer/frequency outputs: Select up to three totalizer/frequency output boards, each with four outputs per board, 10-kHz maximum. All boards allow software-selectable functioning in two modes:
  - Totalizer mode: Pulse per defined unit of parameter (e.g., 1 pulse/ft³)
  - Frequency mode: Pulse frequency proportional to magnitude of parameter (e.g., 10 Hz = 1 ft³/h)
- Alarm relays: Select up to two boards of one of the following types:
  - General purpose: Relay board with three Form C relays; 120 VAC, 28 VDC maximum, 5A maximum; DC 30W maximum, AC 60 VA
  - Hermetically sealed: Relay board with three hermetically sealed Form C relays; 120 VAC, 28 VDC maximum, 2A maximum; DC 56W maximum, AC 60 VA

Digital Interfaces
- Standard: RS232
- Optional: RS485 (multiuser)
- Optional: HART® protocol
- Optional: Modbus® protocol
- Optional: Ethernet TCP/IP

Site Parameter Programming
Menu-driven operator interface using keypad and "soft" function keys

Data Logging
Memory capacity (linear and/or circular type) to log more than 43,000 flow data points

Display Functions
- Graphic display shows flow in numerical or graphic format
- Displays logged data and diagnostics

European Compliance
Complies with EMC Directive 89/336/EEC, 73/23/EEC LVD (Installation Category II, Pollution Degree 2) and PED 97/23/EC for DN<25
GF868 Specifications

Wetted Ultrasonic Flow Transducers

Transducer Type
- Standard: T5
- Optional: Other types available upon request

Temperature Ranges
- Standard: -94°F to 300°F (-70°C to 150°C)
- Optional
  - High temperature: -94°F to 536°F (-70°C to 280°C)
  - Low temperature: -364°F to 248°F (-220°C to 120°C)

Pressure Range
0 to 1500 psig (1 to 105 bar)

Transducer Materials
- Standard: Titanium
- Optional: Monel® or Hastelloy® alloys

Process Connections
Flanged and compression fittings

Mountings
Flanged flowcell, hot tap or cold tap

Area Classifications
- Standard: General purpose
- Optional: Weatherproof Type 4X/IP65
- Optional: Explosion-proof Class I, Division 1, Groups C&D
- Optional: Flameproof
  II 2 G Ex d IIC T6

Transducers and flowcells for specific applications are available. Consult GE for details.

Transducer Cables
- Standard: One pair of coaxial cables, type RG62 AU, or as specified for transducer type
- Optional: Lengths to 1000 ft (330 m) maximum

Pressure and Temperature Transducers
Available upon request.

Additional Options

PanaView™ PC-Interface Software
The DigitalFlow GF868 communicates with a PC through a serial interface and Windows® operating systems. Consult the manual for details on sites, logs and other operations with a PC.
GE Sensing

Spoolpiece

- Best/preferred solution
- New build
- Planned shutdown

Hot/Cold Tap

- Large lines
- New build-shutdown/turn around
- Retrofit
Hybrid Clamped “Tee”

- Retrofit
- No welding
- Special requirements