HOW TO CHOOSE PRECISION SNAP-ACTING SWITCHES AND ACTUATORS

This catalog describes electric switches that satisfy the following definition: “A precision snap-acting switch is a mechanically operated electric switch having predetermined and accurately controlled characteristics and having contacts other than blade-and-jaw, or mercury-type, where the maximum separation between any butting contacts is 1/8 inch.”

In choosing a switch, the first thing to consider is its electrical rating. As a basic part of an electric control system, the switch must be able to carry the full load current in the system, to interrupt this current, and to handle any surge of current that may occur when the switch contacts close or any transients that occur when contacts open.

The method of applying mechanical force to operate the switch influences the choice of actuator. Basic switches are provided with leaf spring, levers, or other linkages between the switch plunger and the actuating device, which are typically used to provide additional overtravel and reduce the operating force. The differential travel measured at the free end of the leaf or lever is considerably greater than that measured at the switch plunger and max. operating force is adequately smaller. Table 1 relates types of actuators to means of applying operating force.

MOTION OF APPLIED OPERATING FORCES	ACTUATOR								
	Pin	Overtravel Plunger	Roller Plunger	Leaf	Roller Leaf	Hinged Lever	Hinged Roller Lever	Reverse-Acting Hinged Lever	Reverse-Acting Hinged Roller Lever
	Basic	D, Q, J	R	L	W	T	A	Y	F
CAM Rotary			√	√	√	√	√	√[1]	√[1]
LEVER Angular	√	√[2]	√[2]	√	√	√	√	√	√
SLIDE Wedge			√		√		√		√
PLUNGER In-Line	√[3]	√		√		√		√	
BI-METAL or BELLOWS Slow In-Line	√	√							

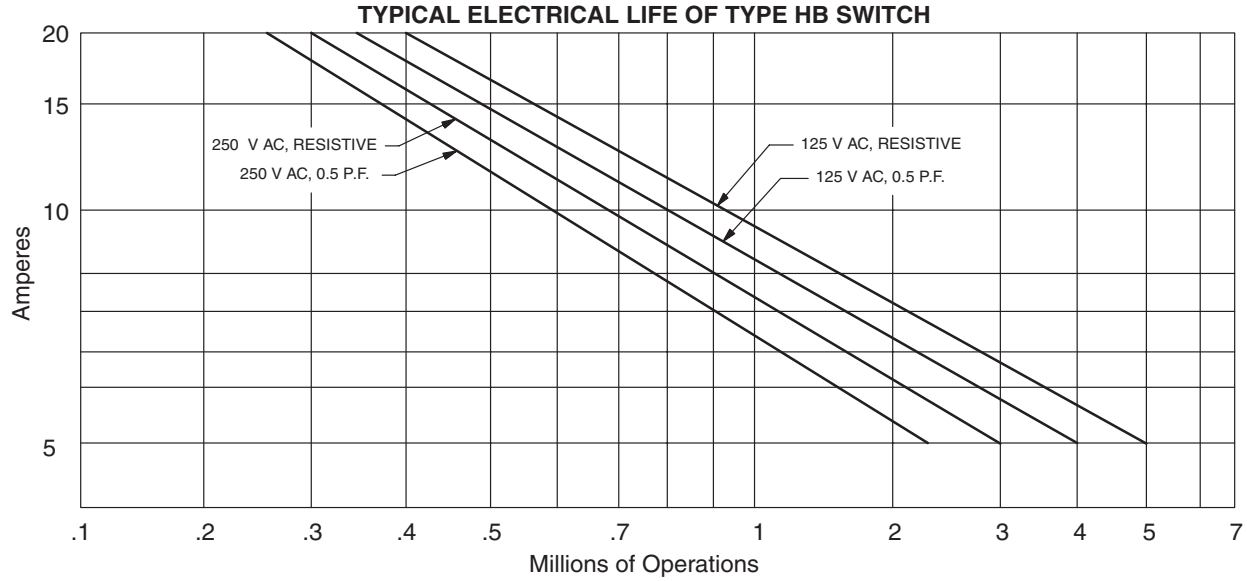
√ Suitable for this actuating method.

[1] Where large overtravel is required. [2] Do not use when there is side thrust.

[3] Use only where the actuating device contains provisions for absorbing excess over travel.

ELECTRICAL LIFE CHARACTERISTICS FOR SNAP-ACTING SWITCHES

The primary limitation to electrical life of a switch is wear of the contacts. In general, contacts wear out more quickly as current or voltage is increased and as power-factor is decreased. This is indicated by the graph below, which shows electrical life of switches tested under ordinary atmospheric conditions, operated 60 times a minute, with AC power handled on both the normally open and the normally closed contacts. The high inrush current encountered in lamp loads and in motor or other inductive loads is responsible for decreased contact life under such loading.



MECHANICAL LIFE CHARACTERISTICS FOR SNAP-ACTING SWITCHES

Fatigue of the internal spring blade is the limiting factor in the mechanical life of a switch. This fatigue can often be reduced and the life thereby extended, by reducing overtravel. One method is to use a leaf or lever actuator or a plunger containing an overtravel-absorbing spring. Tests on switches of the types covered in this catalog indicate that the mechanical life of a lever actuated switch is more than double that of a switch having the operating force applied directly on the pin.

Mechanical life is also affected by the combination of total travel and operating force. Thus a high-sensitivity switch which has small travel and light force, has about twice the life expectancy of a high current type switch, in which the travel/ force combination is relatively high. Experience indicates that million of operations is a reasonable mechanical life expectancy for a basic snap switch.

For the best mechanical life, the applied overtravel force should not exceed three times the operating force.

AC RATINGS FOR SNAP-ACTING SWITCHES

Switches used to control alternating current loads, up to the ratings shown in this catalog, will maintain repeatability of characteristics and provide long electrical life (refer to graph on page K-3). In special circumstances, higher currents or voltages may be controlled, but changes in performance must be anticipated.

Switches used to control “dry circuits” can be furnished, but factory recommendations should be secured.

DC RATINGS FOR SNAP-ACTING SWITCHES

To use the table below, determine the contact separation of the switch and select the ratings from the appropriate line. The maximum current rating must be limited to the current value listed for that switch type in the body of the catalog.

CONTACT SEPARATION	DIRECT CURRENT VOLTAGE	ACTUATOR				INDUCTIVE			
		Heater Load		Lamp Load (tungsten)		Motor, Relay, or Solenoid Load			
						Sea Level		50,000 Feet	
		Normally Open Contact	Normally Closed Contact	Normally Open Contact	Normally Closed Contact	Normally Open Contact	Normally Closed Contact	Normally Open Contact	Normally Closed Contact
Inches	Volts	Amperes	Amperes	Amperes	Amperes	Amperes	Amperes	Amperes	Amperes
.010	6-8	15.0	20.0	1.5	3.0	8.0	8.0	7.0	7.0
	12-14	15.0	20.0	1.5	3.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
	24-30	2.0	2.0	1.5	2.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
	110-115	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.02
	220-230	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.01
.020	6-8	15.0	20.0	1.5	3.0	15.0	20.0	15.0	15.0
	12-14	15.0	20.0	1.5	3.0	10.0	10.0	8.0	8.0
	24-30	6.0	6.0	1.5	2.0	5.0	5.0	2.0	2.0
	110-115	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.05	0.05	0.03	0.03
	220-230	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.02
.040	6-8	15.0	20.0	1.5	3.0	15.0	20.0	150	150
	12-14	15.0	20.0	1.5	3.0	15.0	20.0	15.0	15.0
	24-30	10.0	10.0	1.5	2.0	10.0	10.0	5.0	5.0
	110-115	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.1	0.1	0.05	0.05
	220-230	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.05	0.05	0.03	0.03
.070	6-8	15.0	20.0	1.5	3.0	15.0	20.0	15.0	15.0
	12-14	15.0	20.0	1.5	3.0	15.0	20.0	15.0	15.0
	24-30	15.0	20.0	1.5	2.0	10.0	10.0	7.5	7.5
	110-115	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.2
	220-230	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1