General Information on BERNSTEIN Magnetic Switches

Electromechanical and electronic variants

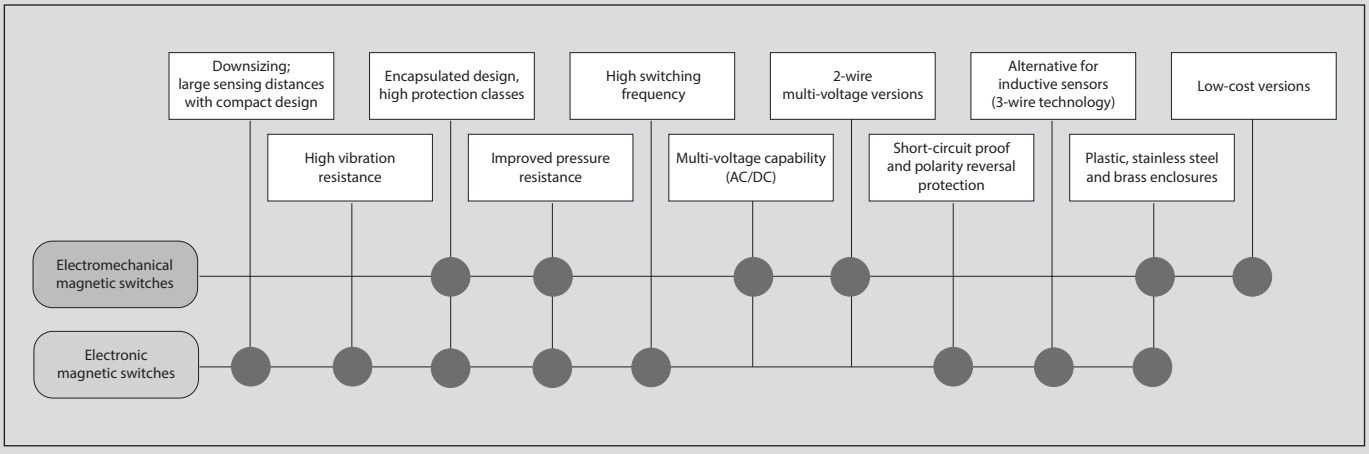
BERNSTEIN has extended its range of electromechanical magnetic switches with electronic versions which operate according to the Hall and magnetoresistive principle.

Electromechanical and electronic magnetic switches have special properties which ensure optimum use in their respective environments.

The electronic versions are characterised by their enhanced mechanical properties (extremely high resistance to vibration, shock or impact) and are not prone to wear in operation.
Thanks to the use of only one single "active" component (reed contact), "traditional" electromechanical magnetic switches are extremely reliable in operation. The universal current capability and low procurement costs allow these switches to be used in a wide range of applications.
The matrix below highlights the main features of each functional principle and helps you to decide on which magnetic switch to use for your application.

Technical features and applications

More detailed information on the technical features and applications relating to the different functional principles are provided in the following sections.



Electromechanical Magnetic Switches

Special features of electromechanical magnetic switches

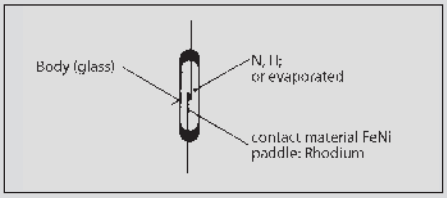
- Reliable under extreme ambient conditions such as dirt, humidity, gas, dust, etc.
- Protection class up to IP 67
- Stable switching point, reproducible switching point accuracy of approx. 0.1 mm
- Can be operated from several directions
- Can be mounted in any position
- High operational reliability ensured by the use of only one single component
- Easy to install
- Long electrical service life (depending on the load to be switched) more than 10^8 switching cycles if contacts are suitably protected
- Special versions available for extreme temperatures from –40 °C to +150 °C
- Can be connected to direct and alternating voltage sources

Design, function and operating principle of an electromechanical magnetic switch

The basic elements of this type of switch are the components which change their electrical characteristics in response to the approach of an actuating magnet. The contact paddles assume opposing polarity (north and south pole) under the influence of a magnetic field.

The approach can be made by either permanent magnets or electromagnets; the sensitivity of the switch and the field strength of the magnet determine the distance between the switch and magnet. Opening and closing of the contact studs is determined by the magnet correspondingly approaching or moving away from the switch. Normally-closed, normally-open and changeover contacts as well as bistable versions are included in our range of products.

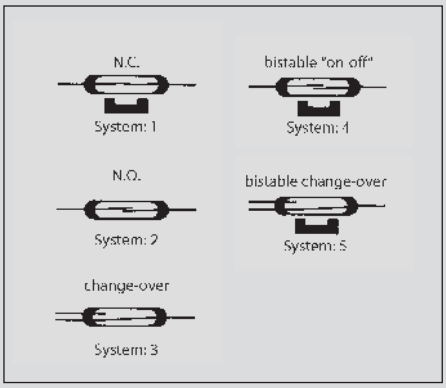
The magnetically influenced parts and their auxiliary components (resistor, diode, triac, output stage, etc.) are cast in high quality insulating material or casting compound to increase the vibration / impact strength and guarantee a protection class up to IP 67. Metal versions (stainless steel, aluminium and brass) as well as standard plastic versions are available for use under extreme ambient conditions such as wider temperature ranges.



Design of a reed contact

Biasing (bistable)

Bias magnets energise or hold the contact closed. The contact of the bistable normally-open or normally-closed contact is held closed until a stronger magnet with opposite polarity neutralises the biasing.



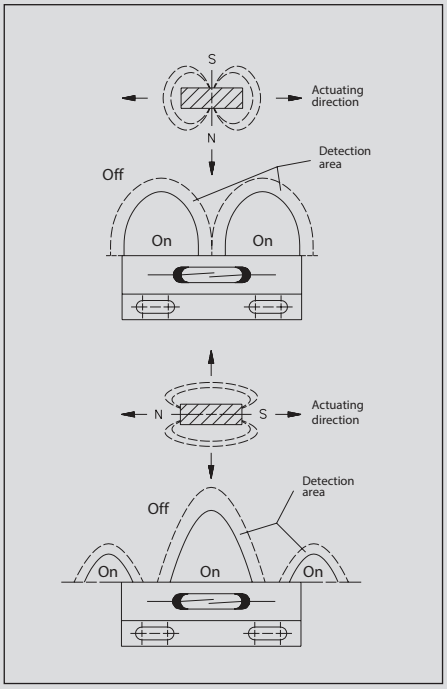
Types of reed contact switches

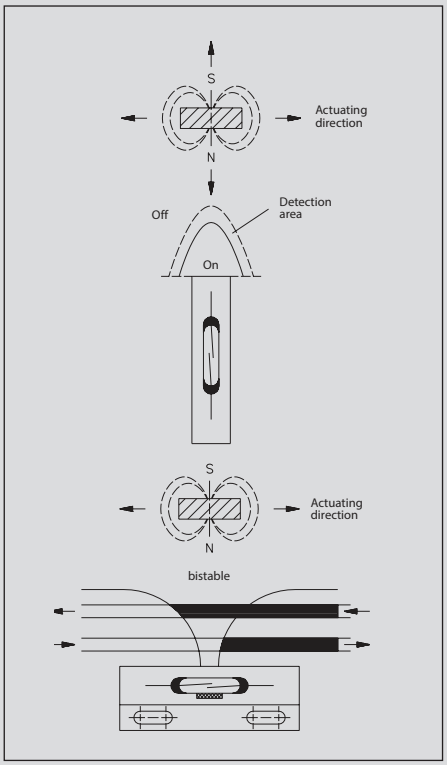
Actuation and switching characteristics

The switching characteristics are principally determined by the approach and polarity of the magnet. The following drawings show typical characteristics. Materials and external dimensions are specified in the product overview. Magnetic switches with reed contact output are identified by an "A" in the second position of the type code (MA...).

Switching frequency

Up to 200 Hz, depending on the size of load to be switched (considerably faster than relays, contactors etc.).





Switching distances

Refer to the tables in this catalogue to identify which switching magnets may be used as well as the minimum achievable switching distance.

Temperature ranges

The standard version may be used in a temperature range from –5 °C to +70 °C. Special types are also available offering an extended operating temperature range from –40 °C to +150 °C.

Electrical service life

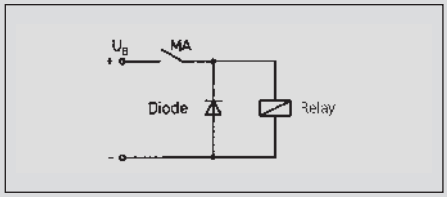
To maintain a long service life of the electrical contacts, it is important to ensure the maximum supply voltage and maximum switching current are not exceeded. Refer to the diagrams on Page 67 for the load values.

Guidelines for reed contact protection

The values for current, voltage and power specified in the catalogue apply only to purely resistive loads. Very often, however, these loads are exposed to inductive or capacitive components. In these cases it is advisable to protect the reed contacts against voltage and current peaks. Whilst it is not possible to recommend a safe contact protection concept that applies to all load ranges (each individual case will require its own evaluation), we would like to present general guidelines on how reed contacts may be connected to different loads in order to avoid premature failure.

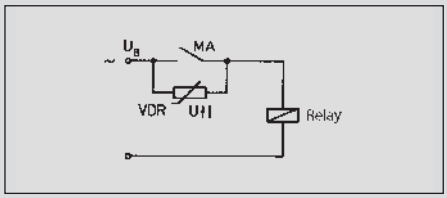
1. Inductive loads

In DC applications, contact protection is relatively easy to realise with the aid of a free-wheeling diode connected in parallel to the load. The diode polarity must be selected so that it blocks when normal operating voltage is applied but will short-circuit the voltage induced after the switch is opened (voltage peaks can significantly exceed the operating voltage).



Suppression of voltage peaks with a free-wheeling diode

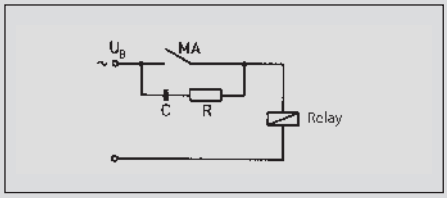
1) Voltage peaks induced by switching off inductive loads are suppressed by connecting a voltage-dependent resistor (VDR) in parallel to the reed contact.



Suppression of voltage peaks with a VDR

2) In AC voltage applications effective protection is achieved with a combination of a resistor and a capacitor (RC element).

Generally, the RC element is connected parallel to the contact and therefore in series to the load (vice versa is also possible).



Suppression of voltage peaks with RC element

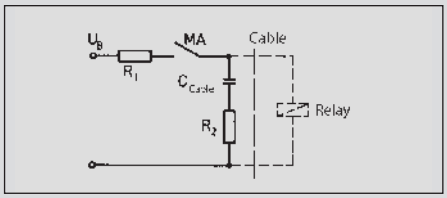
2. Capacitive loads

In contrast to inductive loads, an increase of making currents can occur in connection with capacitive loads and lamp loads that could damage and even weld contacts closed. When capacitors are switched (e.g. cable capacitance) a very high peak current occurs with its intensity depending on the capacitance and length of the cable leading to the switch.

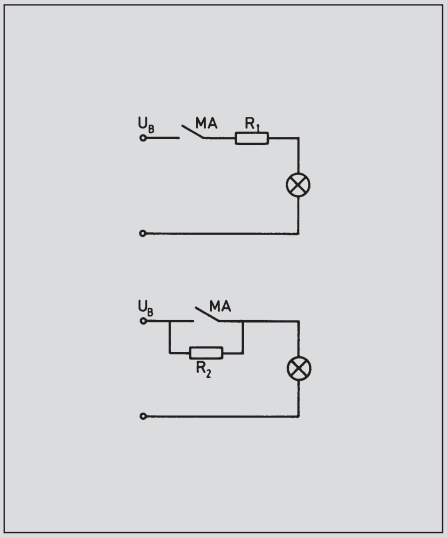
A resistor connected in series to the contact will reduce this current. The size of the resistor is determined by the characteristics of the corresponding electric circuit.

It should, however, be as large as possible to reduce the current to a permissible value, thus ensuring reliable contact protection.

Contact protection with resistors for limiting current:

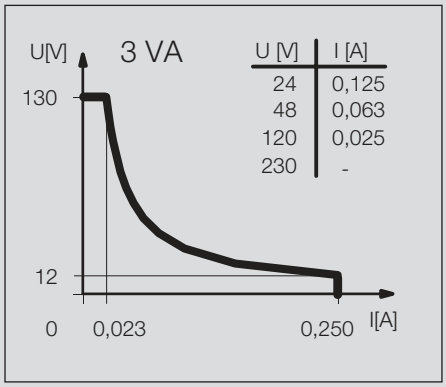


Capacitive load

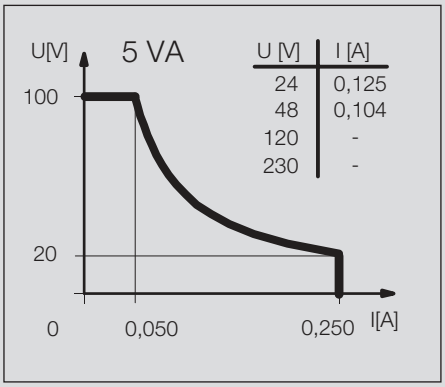


Lamp load

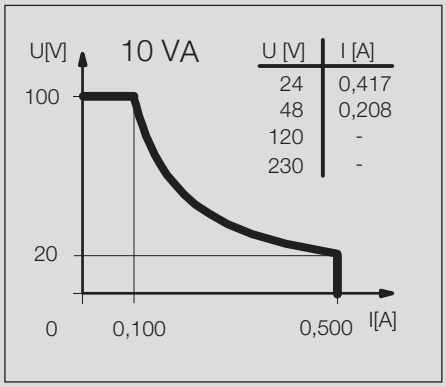
Performance diagrams for electromechanical magnetic switches



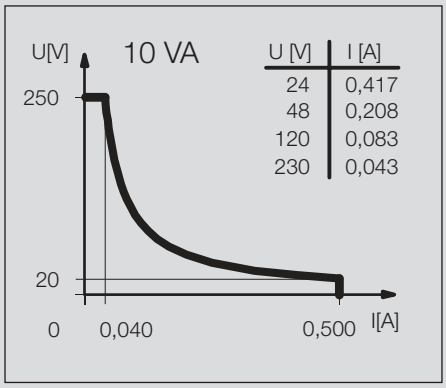
(1)



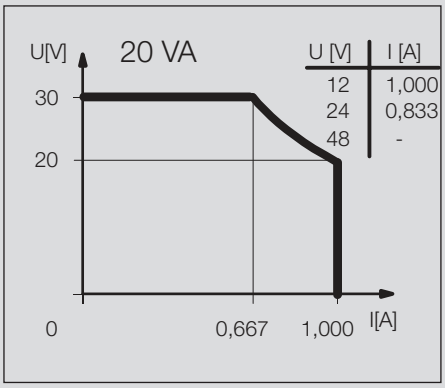
(2)



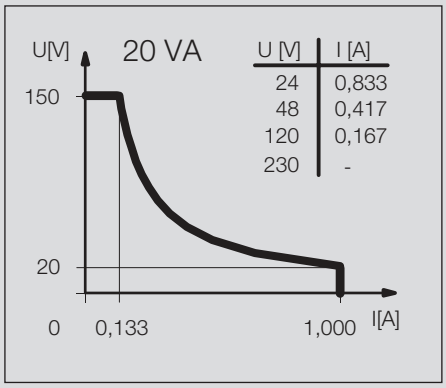
(3)



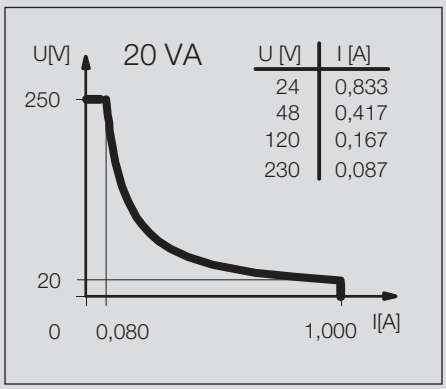
(4)



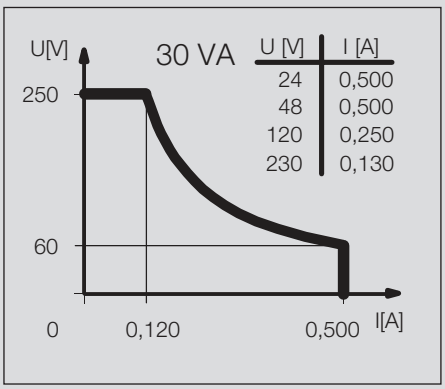
(5)



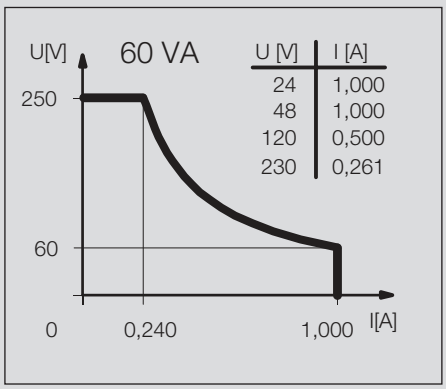
(6)



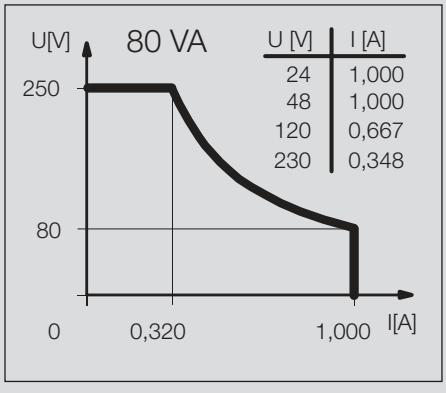
(7)



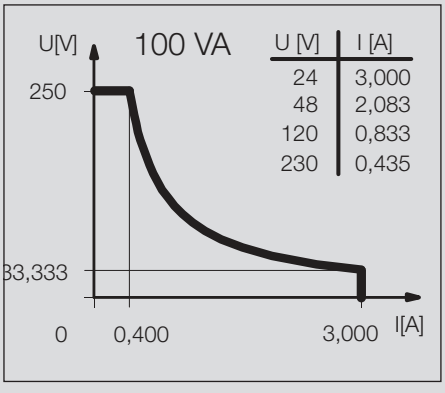
(8)



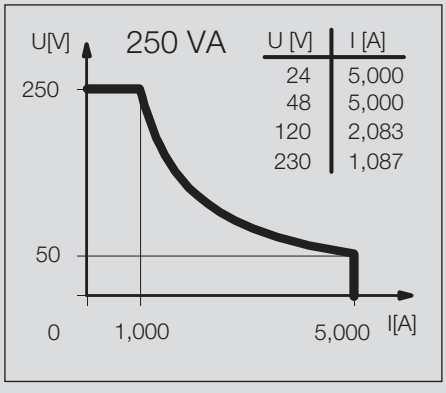
(9)



(10)



(11)



(12)