



Model created in COMSOL Multiphysics 6.4

Plasma Pulsed Arc

Introduction

Thermal plasmas have nowadays a large range of industrial applications including cutting, welding, spraying, waste destruction, and surface treatment. Thermal plasmas are assumed to be under partial to complete local thermodynamic equilibrium (LTE) conditions.

Under LTE, the plasma can be considered a conductive fluid mixture and therefore, be modeled using the magnetohydrodynamics (MHD) equations. This model shows how to use the Equilibrium Discharges, In-Plane Currents interface (available in 2D and 2D axisymmetric) interface to simulate the plasma generated in a pulsed arc.

Note: This application requires the Plasma Module and AC/DC Module.

Model Definition

This model is based on the work presented in [Ref. 1](#). In [Ref. 1](#) The authors develop a complex model that includes the description of the weld pool under the action of a pulsed arc. In this work it is only simulated the plasma and the transfer of heat and currents in the metals neglecting the weld pool. This model starts by opening a model of a DC arc which solution are going to be used as initial conditions to the time-dependent problem.

The applied current consists of a pulse with a frequency of 1 Hz, a peak current of 160 A, a floor current of 80 A, and a duty cycle of 0.5. The current source is set at the cathode and the bottom plate is grounded. In the 5 mm gap between the electrodes an argon plasma arc is created that heats the metal electrodes and surrounding gas. A shielding flow is added along the cathode.

The temperature-dependent physical properties of argon are loaded from the material library under Equilibrium Discharge. The temperature range of the physical properties span from 500 K to 25,000 K. A minimum electric conductivity of 1 S/m is used for numerical stability reasons. Another important aspect to keep in mind is that the model used is not valid to describe the plasma sheath region since in this regions there is charge separation and deviations from equilibrium. From the practical point of view, having a fine resolution in the plasma-electrode region causes numerical instabilities (and does not bring a better description of the physics). To make the model more stable use a mesh coarse enough so that the plasma sheath is averaged out.

Results and Discussion

Figure 1 and Figure 2 show the fluid velocity and temperature for instants in the current peak and floor of 160 A and 80 A at 5 s. As expected, at the peak value the fluid velocity and temperature are higher. In the results shown the temperature of the substrate still has not reached a steady state that is reached at about 50 s. The final time of computation was set to 5s for practical reasons. The weld pool (not solved here) also has significant changes during the pulse different phases as shown in Ref. 1.

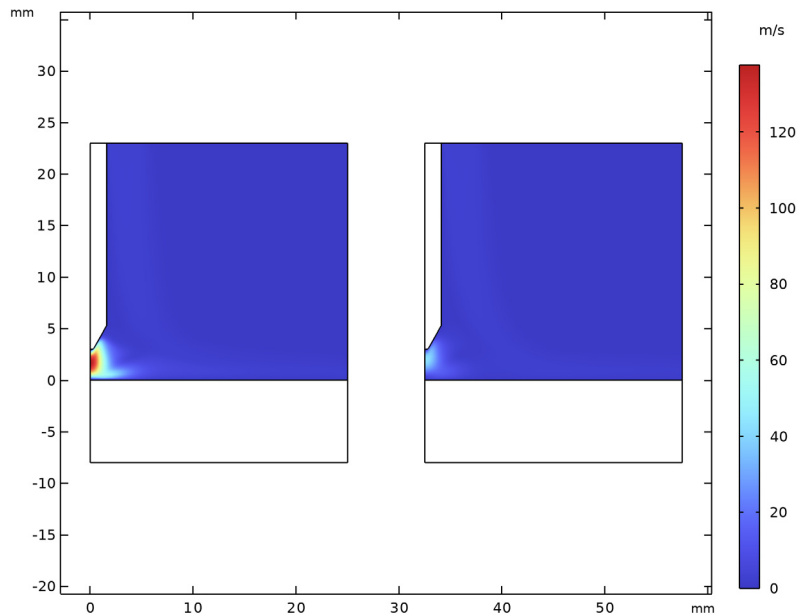


Figure 1: Plot of the velocity magnitude of the fluid at the current peak of 160 A (left) and current floor of 80 A (right).

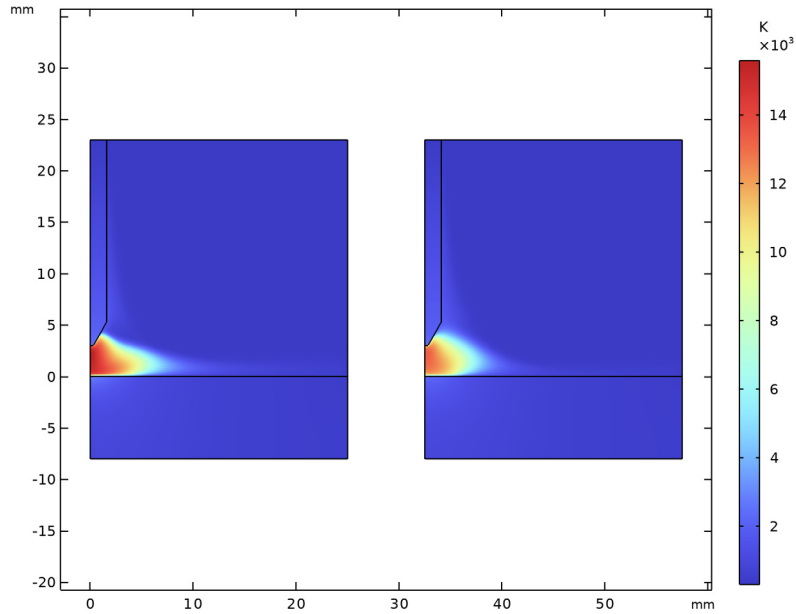


Figure 2: Plot of the plasma temperature at the current peak of 160 A (left) and current floor of 80 A (right).

Reference


1. A. Traidia, *Multiphysics Modeling and Numerical Simulation of GTA Weld Pools*, École Polytechnique, PhD Thesis, Paris, France, 2011.

Application Library path: Plasma_Module/Equilibrium_Discharges/
plasma_pulsed_arc

Modeling Instructions


This model uses an existing model from a DC arc and sets an AC excitation instead. The solution of the DC arc model are used as initial conditions to the time-dependent model.

APPLICATION LIBRARIES

- 1 From the **File** menu, choose **Application Libraries**.
- 2 In the **Application Libraries** window, select **Plasma Module > Equilibrium Discharges > plasma_dc_arc** in the tree.
- 3 Click  **Open**.

RESULTS

Temperature 3D

Click the  **Zoom Extents** button in the **Graphics** toolbar.

Add a parameter to define the floor of the current pulse.

GLOBAL DEFINITIONS

Parameters I

- 1 In the **Model Builder** window, under **Global Definitions** click **Parameters I**.
- 2 In the **Settings** window for **Parameters**, locate the **Parameters** section.
- 3 In the table, enter the following settings:

Name	Expression	Value	Description
delta	80[A]	80 A	

Add a square wave function to define the pulsed excitation.

COMPONENT I (COMP I)

In the **Model Builder** window, expand the **Component I (comp I)** node.

DEFINITIONS

Waveform I (wv I)

- 1 In the **Model Builder** window, expand the **Component I (comp I) > Definitions** node.
- 2 Right-click **Definitions** and choose **Functions > Waveform**.
- 3 In the **Settings** window for **Waveform**, type current in the **Function name** text field.
- 4 Locate the **Parameters** section. From the **Type** list, choose **Square**.
- 5 In the **Size of transition zone** text field, type 0.05.
- 6 In the T text field, type 1.
- 7 In the ϕ text field, type 180.
- 8 In the A text field, type delta/2.

Duplicate the existent Normal Current Density feature and set a pulsed current. The Normal Current Density features are disabled at the study level when needed.

MAGNETIC AND ELECTRIC FIELDS (MEF)

In the **Model Builder** window, expand the **Component 1 (comp1) > Magnetic and Electric Fields (mef)** node.

Normal Current Density 2

1 In the **Model Builder** window, expand the **Component 1 (comp1) > Magnetic and Electric Fields (mef) > Magnetic Insulation 1** node.

2 Right-click **Component 1 (comp1) > Magnetic and Electric Fields (mef) > Magnetic Insulation 1 > Normal Current Density 1** and choose **Duplicate**.

3 In the **Settings** window for **Normal Current Density**, locate the **Normal Current Density** section.

4 In the J_n text field, type $-(I_0 + \Delta I / 2 + \text{current}(t[1/s])) / (\pi * (1.6[\text{mm}])^2)$.

Disable the pulsed excitation for the stationary study. This way, if this study needs to be solved later the correct current feature is used.

STUDY 1

Step 1: Stationary

1 In the **Model Builder** window, expand the **Study 1** node, then click **Step 1: Stationary**.

2 In the **Settings** window for **Stationary**, locate the **Physics and Variables Selection** section.

3 Select the **Modify model configuration for study step** checkbox.

4 In the tree, select **Component 1 (comp1) > Magnetic and Electric Fields (mef) > Magnetic Insulation 1 > Normal Current Density 2**.

5 Click  **Disable**.

RESULTS

Electric conductivity, Magnetic Flux, Temperature, Temperature 3D, Velocity



1 In the **Model Builder** window, under **Results**, Ctrl-click to select **Temperature, Velocity, Electric conductivity, Magnetic Flux, and Temperature 3D**.

2 Right-click and choose **Group**.

DC Arc

In the **Settings** window for **Group**, type DC Arc in the **Label** text field.



ADD STUDY

- 1 In the **Home** toolbar, click  **Add Study** to open the **Add Study** window.
- 2 Go to the **Add Study** window.
- 3 Find the **Studies** subsection. In the **Select Study** tree, select **General Studies** > **Time Dependent**.
- 4 Click the **Add Study** button in the window toolbar.
- 5 In the **Home** toolbar, click  **Add Study** to close the **Add Study** window.

STUDY 2

Step 1: Time Dependent

Prepare the time-dependent study. Here, a few changes are necessary: disable the DC excitation, use previous solutions as initial conditions, use a fully coupled solver.

- 1 In the **Settings** window for **Time Dependent**, locate the **Physics and Variables Selection** section.
- 2 Select the **Modify model configuration for study step** checkbox.
- 3 In the tree, select **Component 1 (comp1)** > **Magnetic and Electric Fields (mef)** > **Magnetic Insulation 1** > **Normal Current Density 1**.
- 4 Click  **Disable**.
- 5 Locate the **Study Settings** section. In the **Output times** text field, type range (0, 0.1, 5).
- 6 In the **Study** toolbar, click  **Get Initial Value**.

RESULTS


Electric Field (mef), Magnetic Flux Density (mef), Magnetic Flux Density, Revolved Geometry (mef), Pressure (spf), Temperature (ht), Velocity (spf)

- 1 In the **Model Builder** window, under **Results**, Ctrl-click to select **Magnetic Flux Density (mef)**, **Magnetic Flux Density, Revolved Geometry (mef)**, **Electric Field (mef)**, **Temperature (ht)**, **Velocity (spf)**, and **Pressure (spf)**.
- 2 Right-click and choose **Group**.

Pulsed Arc

In the **Settings** window for **Group**, type Pulsed Arc in the **Label** text field.

Temperature Pulsed

- 1 In the **Results** toolbar, click  **2D Plot Group**.

- 2 In the **Settings** window for **2D Plot Group**, type Temperature Pulsed in the **Label** text field.
- 3 Locate the **Data** section. From the **Dataset** list, choose **Study 2/Solution 2 (sol2)**.

Surface 1

- 1 Right-click **Temperature Pulsed** and choose **Surface**.
- 2 In the **Settings** window for **Surface**, locate the **Expression** section.
- 3 In the **Expression** text field, type T.
- 4 Locate the **Coloring and Style** section. From the **Color table** list, choose **Thermal**.

STUDY 2

Step 1: Time Dependent

- 1 In the **Model Builder** window, under **Study 2** click **Step 1: Time Dependent**.
- 2 In the **Settings** window for **Time Dependent**, click to expand the **Values of Dependent Variables** section.
- 3 Find the **Initial values of variables solved for** subsection. From the **Settings** list, choose **User controlled**.
- 4 From the **Method** list, choose **Solution**.
- 5 From the **Study** list, choose **Study 1, Stationary**.

Solver Configurations

In the **Model Builder** window, expand the **Study 2 > Solver Configurations** node.

Solution 2 (sol2)


- 1 In the **Model Builder** window, expand the **Study 2 > Solver Configurations > Solution 2 (sol2)** node.
- 2 Right-click **Time-Dependent Solver 1** and choose **Fully Coupled**.
- 3 In the **Settings** window for **Fully Coupled**, click to expand the **Method and Termination** section.
- 4 In the **Damping factor** text field, type 0.8.
- 5 From the **Jacobian update** list, choose **Once per time step**.

Step 1: Time Dependent

- 1 In the **Model Builder** window, under **Study 2** click **Step 1: Time Dependent**.
- 2 In the **Settings** window for **Time Dependent**, click to expand the **Results While Solving** section.

- 3 Select the **Plot** checkbox.
- 4 In the table, enter the following settings:

Plot group	Plot window
Temperature Pulsed	Graphics

- 5 From the **Update at** list, choose **Time steps taken by solver**.
- 6 In the **Study** toolbar, click  **Compute**.

RESULTS

Magnetic Flux Density (mef)

Prepare plots to show the velocity and the temperature for the peak and floor values of the current side by side.



Velocity (spf)

- 1 In the **Model Builder** window, click **Velocity (spf)**.
- 2 In the **Settings** window for **2D Plot Group**, click to expand the **Title** section.
- 3 From the **Title type** list, choose **None**.
- 4 Click to expand the **Plot Array** section. From the **Array type** list, choose **Linear**.

Surface

- 1 In the **Model Builder** window, expand the **Velocity (spf)** node, then click **Surface**.
- 2 In the **Settings** window for **Surface**, locate the **Data** section.
- 3 From the **Dataset** list, choose **Study 2/Solution 2 (sol2)**.
- 4 From the **Time (s)** list, choose **4.6**.
- 5 Locate the **Coloring and Style** section. From the **Color table** list, choose **RainbowLight**.

Surface 2

- 1 Right-click **Surface** and choose **Duplicate**.
- 2 In the **Settings** window for **Surface**, locate the **Data** section.
- 3 From the **Time (s)** list, choose **5**.
- 4 Click to expand the **Inherit Style** section. From the **Plot** list, choose **Surface**.
- 5 In the **Velocity (spf)** toolbar, click  **Plot**.
- 6 Click the  **Zoom Extents** button in the **Graphics** toolbar.

Velocity (spf)

- 1 In the **Model Builder** window, click **Velocity (spf)**.

- 2 In the **Settings** window for **2D Plot Group**, locate the **Color Legend** section.
- 3 Select the **Show units** checkbox.


Temperature Pulsed

- 1 In the **Model Builder** window, click **Temperature Pulsed**.
- 2 In the **Settings** window for **2D Plot Group**, locate the **Title** section.
- 3 From the **Title type** list, choose **None**.
- 4 Locate the **Color Legend** section. Select the **Show units** checkbox.
- 5 Locate the **Plot Array** section. From the **Array type** list, choose **Linear**.

Surface 1

- 1 In the **Model Builder** window, click **Surface 1**.
- 2 In the **Settings** window for **Surface**, locate the **Data** section.
- 3 From the **Dataset** list, choose **Study 2/Solution 2 (sol2)**.
- 4 From the **Time (s)** list, choose **4.6**.
- 5 Locate the **Coloring and Style** section. From the **Color table** list, choose **RainbowLight**.


Surface 2

- 1 Right-click **Results > Pulsed Arc > Temperature Pulsed > Surface 1** and choose **Duplicate**.
- 2 In the **Settings** window for **Surface**, locate the **Data** section.
- 3 From the **Time (s)** list, choose **5**.
- 4 Locate the **Inherit Style** section. From the **Plot** list, choose **Surface 1**.
- 5 In the **Temperature Pulsed** toolbar, click  **Plot**.

Temperature Pulsed


Plot the temporal evolution of the applied current and the temperature of the bottom plate.

Current vs. Time


- 1 In the **Results** toolbar, click  **ID Plot Group**.
- 2 In the **Settings** window for **ID Plot Group**, type **Current vs. Time** in the **Label** text field.
- 3 Locate the **Data** section. From the **Dataset** list, choose **Study 2/Solution 2 (sol2)**.
- 4 Click to expand the **Title** section. From the **Title type** list, choose **None**.

Point Graph 1


- 1 Right-click **Current vs. Time** and choose **Point Graph**.

- 2 Select Point 4 only.
- 3 In the **Settings** window for **Point Graph**, locate the **y-Axis Data** section.
- 4 In the **Expression** text field, type $-mef.mi1.ncd2.nJ*(pi*(1.6[mm])^2)$.
- 5 In the **Current vs. Time** toolbar, click  **Plot**.

Temperature vs. Time

- 1 In the **Results** toolbar, click  **ID Plot Group**.
- 2 In the **Settings** window for **ID Plot Group**, type Temperature vs. Time in the **Label** text field.
- 3 Locate the **Data** section. From the **Dataset** list, choose **Study 2/Solution 2 (sol2)**.
- 4 Locate the **Title** section. From the **Title type** list, choose **None**.

Point Graph 1

- 1 Right-click **Temperature vs. Time** and choose **Point Graph**.
- 2 Select Point 1 only.
- 3 In the **Settings** window for **Point Graph**, locate the **y-Axis Data** section.
- 4 In the **Expression** text field, type T.
- 5 In the **Temperature vs. Time** toolbar, click  **Plot**.