

Installation and Maintenance of ESD Protective Work Surfaces



Foreword

To enhance your understanding of this technical bulletin we recommend that you read the following Standards:

- EN 61340-5-1: Electrostatics - General Requirements
- EN 61340-5-2: Electrostatics - User Guide

These documents can be purchased from the British Standards Institution web site: www.bsi-global.com.

Introduction

The purpose of an ESD protective work surface is to aid in the prevention of damage to ESD sensitive components and assemblies from electrostatic discharge. An ESD protective work surface provides protection in the following two ways:

1. Providing an antistatic work surface area that will not allow static electricity to be generated at potentially hazardous levels.
2. Removing the charge from a conductive object placed on the work surface.

ESD protective work surfaces are categorized into two general categories: conductive and dissipative.

A conductive work surface is defined by most documents as a material that has a surface resistivity of less than 1×10^5 ohms. Conductive materials are the quickest to ground a charge, but they can also cause damage by discharging too rapidly. Conductive materials are usually used as floormats or flooring products.

A dissipative work surface is defined as being materials having a surface resistivity of at least 1×10^5 , but less than 1×10^{12} ohms. Dissipative materials minimize the generation of static charges, and will dissipate a charge slow enough so that a spark will not occur. Dissipative materials are usually the preferred choice for bench top work surfaces.

General Guidelines

1. EN 61340-5-1 requires that all conductors, including personnel, must be electrically connected and attached to a known ground.
2. Per EN 61340-5-1, the ESD control program can in no way replace or supercede and requirements for personnel safety. Ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI) and other safety protection should be considered wherever personnel might come into contact with electrical sources.
3. All electrical circuits at an ESD protected workstation, especially those used as the tie-in point to the utility ground, should be verified for proper wiring configuration, ground impedance and GFCI function when the station is installed and periodically thereafter.
4. The selection of ground cords is intimately related to the material selected for an ESD protected work area, personnel safety, and the products' relationship to the organization's material handling procedures. It is important for a user to be familiar with their organization's grounding specifications and ESD control procedures prior to selecting ground cords.

Earth Bonding Points

An earth bonding point is defined by the EOS/ESD-S6.1, "Recommended Grounding Practices" as:

1. A grounded device where two or more conductors are bonded.
2. A system or method for connecting two or more grounding conductors to the same electrical potential.

Examples of conventional earth bonding points are illustrated below.

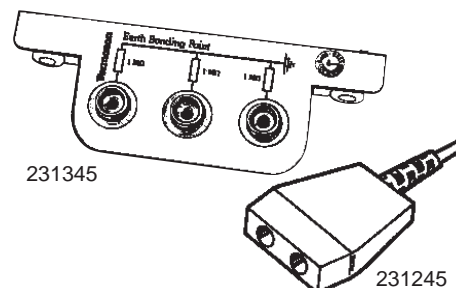


Figure 1. Typical earth bonding points.



Figure 2. Other ground cords.

Earth bonding points are designed to provide earth ground for table mats and wrist straps. **NOTE: DO NOT DAISY CHAIN.** Because of the high resistances inherent to many types of protective surfaces, daisy chaining of these materials can severely limit their ability to properly dissipate and protect against static charges.

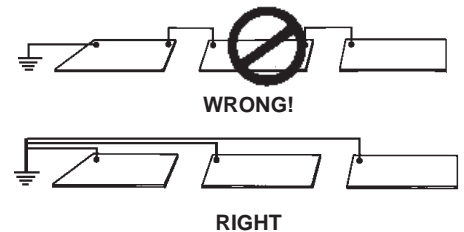


Figure 3. ESD work surface should never be grounded in series, i.e. daisy chained.

Grounding Methods

Method 1 (Grounding via ground cords)

1. Vermason recommends using an earth bonding point cord when grounding via ground cords. Most earth bonding point cords will ground your ESD protective work surface and provide banana jacks for two wrist strap grounds.
2. An earth bonding point should be installed at each workstation and should be connected directly to a verified utility "green wire" ground or to a verified grounding bus which is connected to the utility ground. Only one groundable point should exist on a work surface.

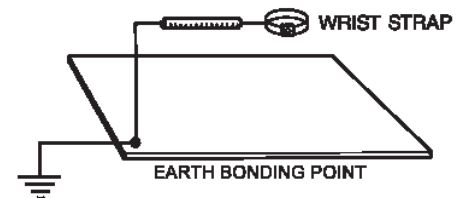


Figure 4. Earth bonding point for each workstation.

- Wrist straps should never be grounded through a work surface, as the added resistance of the work surface material will prevent the wrist strap from operating properly.

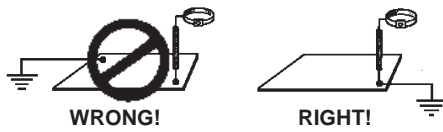


Figure 5. Proper grounding of wrist straps.

- A current limiting resistor in the wrist strap ground cord is recommended. The EOS/ESD Standard S-1 calls for this to be a one megohm resistor.

Method 2 (Grounding via a grounded conductive surface)

- This alternate form of grounding should only be employed when using a homogeneous dissipative material with a volume resistivity of less than 10E8 ohms/centimeter.
- The dissipative or conductive work surface may be placed on a properly grounded laminate, metal or other conductive surface. The worksurface will electrically couple to the grounded surface and may not require separate grounding.
- When using this type of grounding method be sure to test that the worksurface is properly grounded.

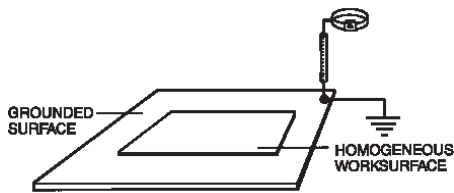


Figure 6. Alternate grounding method

Groundable Point Installation

- Before installing a groundable point on your work surface you must first determine whether you will need a snap socket or stud, the type of snap hardware and the location.

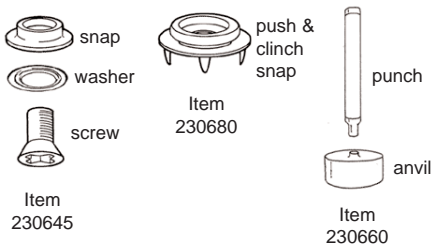


Figure 7. Snap kits and tools

- Vermason has three types of 10mm field installable mat grounding snaps. The first type is a screw-on snap kit designed for use on homogeneous mats, but it can also be used on two-layer work surfaces without ill effect. This is Vermason item number 230645.

- Determine the position of the grounding snap (**one only per mat**). Punch a hole through the material with a small phillips screwdriver or awl.
- Remove the release paper from the circular label and affix it so that it aligns with the hole on the material.
- Select one of the screws as follows:
ESD working surface bench top - wood screw
ESD matting - machined screw
- Insert the screw through the bottom on the snap fastener, the washer, and the material. Affix the assembly with the conical nut supplied with the kit and tighten down the screws.

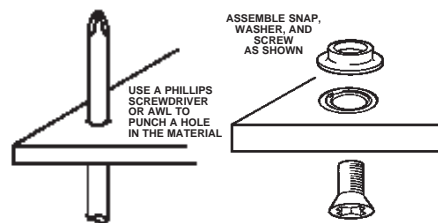


Figure 8. Installing screw-on mat grounding snap.

- The second type of mat grounding snap is the push and clinch snap. This snap is designed for use with any type of soft mat material: dissipative, conductive or multi-layered. It is recommended for use with three-layered material, because it provides excellent contact with the internal conductive layer. It is recommended that before inserting this snap, the mat be punctured with a sharp tool where the snap will be placed. This type of snap is available as a snap socket, item 230680, or stud, item 230670.

Center the prongs on the snap assembly with the label. Apply pressure to the snap until the prongs come through the back of the mat, then clinch over prongs to secure snap as shown in Figure 9.



Figure 9. Installing push and clinch mat grounding snap.

- Earth grounding points must be riveted through bench and floor mats to connect ground cords. The Vermason 230660 Punch and Anvil are simple but effective tools to achieve a neat finish with firm materials no more than 4mm thick.

- Punch a 5mm diameter hole at the desired location of the mat.
- Insert the post from underneath and apply the stud over the protruding post on the top side.
- Fit the anvil under the post and place the punch inside the stud and hammer the post until it rolls and a tight assembly is achieved.

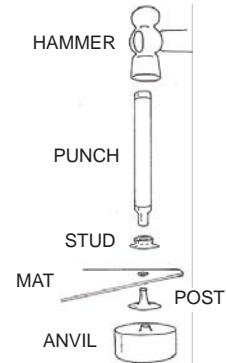


Figure 11. Using the 230660 Punch and Anvil.

Selection of Common Point & Floor Mat Grounding Systems

- Determine the type of common point grounding system you will use: barrier strip, bus bar, grounding block, or common point ground cord. Vermason recommends the use of our common point ground cords or our earth bonding point.
- If you determine that you will use ground cords, you must now determine the type of ground cord you will use for your workstation grounds. EOS/ESD-S6.1 recommends that a non-resistor ground cord be used to ground work surfaces and floor mats. Selection of the ground cord is determined by user needs and specifications.
- Vermason offers a variety of ground cords designed to ground work surfaces or floor mats. See web site for details on ground cords.
- The Vermason 231345 earth bonding point allows the grounding of multiple operators at one common point. The 231345 mounts easily under the front edge of a workstation. For detailed information on this common point grounding device see Technical Drawing 231345.

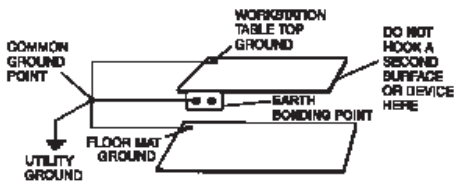


Figure 11. Earth bonding point installation.

- The Vermason 231280 floor mat ground may be either attached to a mat by snapping onto a 10mm socket, or by bolting it to the mat with the hardware supplied with the cord. When bolting the 231280 to the mat use a 9.5mm diameter hole punch to create the hole for mounting. This will allow cord to sit flush on the mat. **Note:** For both applications, remove screw from floor mat ground before attaching to mat.

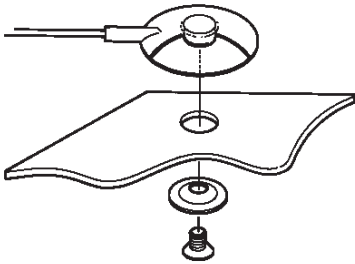


Figure 12. Installing 231280 to mat using supplied hardware.

Mat Installation

- For best results, allow the mats to lay flat for about four hours at room temperature before installing. This will give the material time to flatten out from being rolled for shipment.
- Test all workstation grounds for proper impedance to ground.
- Lay the mat in position and snap the ground cord to it. Bring the other end of the ground cord to the common ground point and attach it using the ring terminal. A suggested ground point is the center screw of a standard outlet. Testing is recommended to ensure that the screw is properly grounded. Tie the ground wire to the bench to keep it out of the way and neat. You may cut and strip the ground wire to a shorter length and attach it with the extra ring terminal included with each Vermason ground cord.
- If your kit includes a floor mat, you should duplicate step 2 and attach the floor mat ground to the same point as the worksurface ground.
- Measure the resistance from the ground snap on the mat to the common ground point. It should read 1 megohm \pm 20 percent if you are using a ground cord with a resistor, and less than 10 ohms if you are using a non-resistor ground cord.

- If you have a surface resistance or resistance to ground tester available, you may wish to test the resistance to ground from the mat surface. Note: depending upon the accuracy of the instrument you are using, you may get a wide range of results in resistance to ground tests. **Any reading below 10E12 Ohms is acceptable for lower cost "field grade" instruments.** In order to get the electrical readings specified for the materials you must use laboratory instruments under controlled conditions per ESD S4.1. This will require a megohmmeter with 100 volt open test circuit voltage and two five pound electrodes per ASTM-150. Vermason sells this as the Surface Resistance Test Kit, Item 222630. See Technical Bulletin TB-7545.

- If you are using a mat kit that includes the wrist strap, install the wrist strap directly to the common point mat ground cord. Again, test the resistance from the backplate of the wrist strap to the common ground point. It should read 1 Megohm \pm 20 percent.

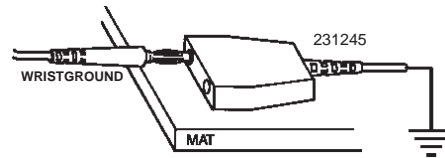


Figure 13. Adding the wriststrap.

- Your completed installation of a Vermason ESD workstation should comply with one of the electrical diagrams illustrated in Figure 14.



Figure 14. Proper wiring diagrams for conductive and dissipative ESD workstations.

BE SURE YOU TEST ALL GROUNDS AND THE WRIST STRAP FREQUENTLY.

The following bulletin is available from Vermason:
TB-7504 Wrist Straps, Grounding, Testing, Maintenance

Cleaning

For optimum electrical performance, surfaces must be cleaned regularly with a mild detergent and water solution or an anti-static cleaner. Vermason recommends our Reztore™ Surface and Mat Cleaner, item 229020. **DO NOT USE CLEANERS WITH SILICONE.** They will build up a silicone coating on the surface which will cause the surface to become an insulator. Many common household cleaners contain silicone.

Limited Warranty

Vermason expressly warrants that for a period of one (1) year from the date of purchase, Vermason work surfaces and grounding components will be free of defects in material (parts) and workmanship (labour). Within the warranty period, a unit will be tested, repaired or replaced at Vermason's option, free of charge. Call Customer Service at 0044 (0) 1462 672005 for a Return Material Authorisation (RMA) and for proper shipping instructions and address. Any unit under warranty should be shipped prepaid to the Vermason factory. You should include a copy of your original packing slip, invoice, or other proof of purchase date. Warranty repairs will take approximately two weeks.

If your unit is out of warranty, Vermason will quote repair charges necessary to bring your unit to factory standards. Call Customer Service at 0044 (0) 1462 672005 for a Return Material Authorisation (RMA) and proper shipping instructions and address.

Warranty Exclusions

THE FOREGOING EXPRESS WARRANTY IS MADE IN LIEU OF ALL OTHER PRODUCT WARRANTIES, EXPRESSED AND IMPLIED, INCLUDING MERCHANTABILITY AND FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE WHICH ARE SPECIFICALLY DISCLAIMED. The express warranty will not apply to defects or damage due to accidents, neglect, misuse, alterations, operator error, or failure to properly maintain, clean or repair products.

Limit of liability

In no event will Vermason or any seller be responsible or liable for any injury, loss or damage, direct or consequential, arising out of the use of or the inability to use the product. Before using, users shall determine the suitability of the product for their intended use, and users assume all risk and liability whatsoever in connection therewith.