

considerably. It has been established that in these localities during 50 per cent of the time, the outdoor wet-bulb temperature varies from 60 to 70 F and the cooling tower water, for the same periods, varies from 65 to 75 F. When the outdoor wet-bulb temperature drops below 60 F, which occurs approximately 30 per cent of the time, the condensing water temperature is still lower. The cost of water used for condensing is small as the only water required is that used to make up the loss by evaporation in the cooling tower itself. Refer to the section on Cooling Towers in Chapter 26.

Shell and coil condensers are in general use for medium sized condensing units, and consist of a coil of tubing mounted inside a shell. The cooling water passes through the coil.

Evaporative Condensers

Due to the high cost of city water for condenser purposes, and due to ordinances in some localities prohibiting the discharge of large quantities of such water into the sewage systems, there has been developed a condenser which uses a minimum amount of water on a finned surface, cooling it to approximately the wet-bulb temperature of the surrounding atmosphere.

The end view of a typical evaporative condenser is shown in Fig. 8. The fan draws the air over a finned tube condenser which is kept wet by a water spray. The discharge refrigerant gas from the compressor enters the top of the condenser coil and the liquid refrigerant is drained from the bottom of the coil into a liquid receiver and then circulates through the remaining portion of the system in the usual way.

The water is circulated through the spray nozzles and the level is maintained in the sump by means of a float valve. The eliminator plates are placed in the path of the water-air mixture so as to remove the entrained water. The air leaving the unit is almost completely saturated, so that care must be taken in locating discharge ducts to prevent condensation.

Evaporative condensers are available in sizes up to 100 tons or more. These units use only a small portion of the water required for a water cooled condenser. The water is vaporized by the heat of the refrigerant so that each pound of water used extracts approximately 1000 Btu from the refrigerant, whereas under standard rating conditions where the water temperature rise is 20 F, each pound of water extracts only 20 Btu from the refrigerant. Including the water lost by entrainment in the discharge air, by overflow and stand-by evaporation, the water used is about 3 to 5 per cent of the amount that would be required for a water cooled condenser.

The evaporative condenser requires more maintenance, occupies greater space (must be located where air is available), and has a higher first cost than the water cooled condenser, but where the use of water is restricted or expensive, the evaporative condenser has become widely accepted. Compared with a water cooled condenser and cooling tower, which combination uses about the same quantity of water, the evaporative condenser has the advantage of lower cost and smaller space requirements.

EVAPORATORS AND COOLERS

The types of coolers used in connection with air conditioning work fall into three general groups. The *first*, is the direct cooling of water; the

second, direct cooling of air; and the *third*, cooling of brine for circulation in a closed system, which can cool either water or air. One method of the direct cooling of water is to install direct expansion coils in the spray chamber so that the water sprayed into the air comes in direct contact with the cooling coils. Another common and efficient method of cooling spray water is to use a Baudelot type of heat absorber where the water flows over direct expansion coils at a rate sufficiently high to give efficient heat transfer from water to refrigerant.

Another type of spray water cooler is the shell and tube heat exchanger in which the refrigerant is expanded into a shell enclosing the tubes

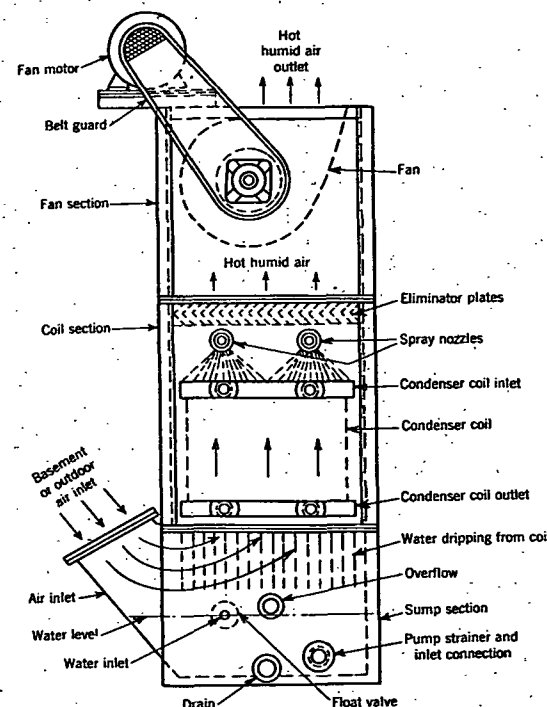


FIG. 8. SCHEMATIC VIEW OF AN EVAPORATIVE CONDENSER

through which the water flows. The velocity of the water in the tubes affects the rate of heat transfer, and as the refrigerant is in the shell completely surrounding the tubes at all times, good contact and a high rate of heat transfer are insured. The disadvantage of such a system is that with the falling off of load on the compressor the suction temperature or the temperature in the evaporator drops and there is a possibility of freezing the water in the tubes, which, of course, might split the tubes and allow the refrigerant to escape into the water passage. This danger can be eliminated by automatic safety devices.

Another system of cooling spray water is to submerge coils in the spray collecting tank, or in a separate tank used for storage. The heat transmission through the walls of the coils, however, is low and a great deal