

centages of their wide-open capacity. Variations in efficiency accompany variations in pressures and power consumption which are characteristic of the individual designs and which are influenced particularly by the shape and angularity of the blades. Such variations in pressure, power, and efficiency are shown by characteristic curves.

Characteristic curves of fans are determined by tests performed in accordance with the Standard Test Code for Centrifugal and Axial Fans¹ prepared jointly by the AMERICAN SOCIETY OF HEATING AND VENTILATING ENGINEERS and the National Association of Fan Manufacturers. The results of tests are plotted in different ways: the abscissae may be the

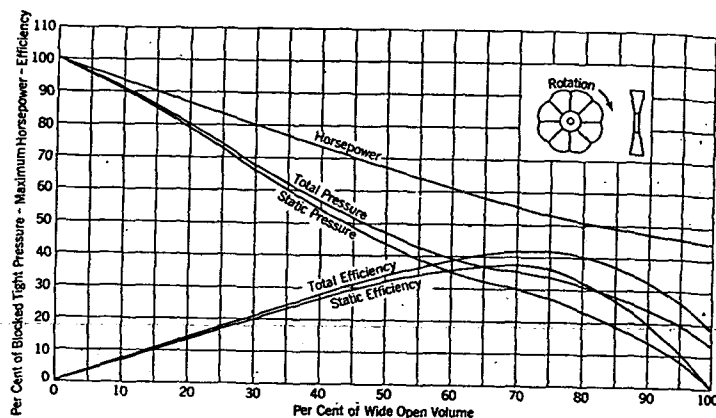


FIG. 1. OPERATING CHARACTERISTICS OF AN AXIAL FLOW FAN

ratio of delivery, assuming full open discharge as 100 per cent, and the ordinates may be static pressure, dynamic pressure, horsepower and efficiency. Pressures may be expressed in per cent of the maximum pressure in the manner shown in the illustrations in this chapter, but in engineering calculations they are sometimes expressed in proportion to the pressures due to the peripheral velocity.

It should be noted that characteristic curves of fan performance are plotted for a constant speed. Some variation in values of efficiency may occur at different speeds but such variation is usually slight within a wide range of speeds. Fans of similar design but of different size will also show some difference in efficiency. Figs. 1 to 4 show characteristic curves for different types of fans using blades of various shapes, but without reference to the design of housing employed. The efficiency curves are therefore not serviceable for making rigid comparisons of efficiencies obtainable with blades of the various shapes but are intended merely to show reasonable values and more particularly to show the manner in which variations occur with changes in fan capacity.

¹A.S.H.V.E. TRANSACTIONS, Vol. 29, 1923, p. 407. Amended in A.S.H.V.E. TRANSACTIONS, Vol. 37, 1931, p. 363. Third Edition of 1938.

Axial flow fan characteristics are indicated by Figs. 1 and 2. These fans, when properly designed, have a satisfactory efficiency at low resistance, comparing favorably in this respect with centrifugal fans. They are low in cost and economical in operation and occupy relatively little space. Although this type of fan can operate against considerable resistance, the noise often becomes objectionable, so that it does not always compare favorably with centrifugal fans for such service. With most of the designs which employ blades of uniform thickness the power increases rapidly with an increase in resistance.

The curves (Fig. 1) show the rapid reduction in capacity and increase in power as the resistance increases. The low efficiency when overcoming

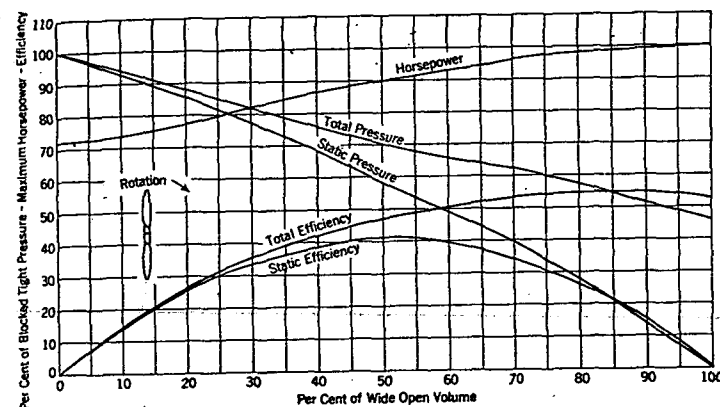


FIG. 2. OPERATING CHARACTERISTICS OF AN AIRPLANE PROPELLER FAN

heavy resistance is due to the low speed of the blades near the hub as compared to the relatively high peripheral or tip speed. The air driven by the blade area near the rim can pass back through the less effective blade area at the hub more easily than it can overcome the duct resistance.

Fig. 2 shows the performance of the *airplane propeller fan* in which the blades are similar in shape to those of an airplane propeller but of varying number according to the pressure to be developed. This fan usually operates at a higher speed than does the former type of propeller fan, and with a different power characteristic, the power remaining fairly constant throughout the range of pressures, being somewhat less at the higher than at the lower pressures. The flatness of the horsepower curve indicates the advantage of this type of fan in preventing overloading of motors where fluctuations in pressure occur. Variations in the diameter, width, pitch, camber, and the thickness of the blades provide a considerable degree of flexibility in design, so that the peak of total efficiency may be made to occur at wide-open volume or at various percentages of that volume.

Another advantage of this type of axial flow fan is its low resistance to air passage when standing still. There are some installations in which such a characteristic is desirable.