# Engineering guidelines for Mass Flow Controllers (SFC6xxx) and Mass Flow Meters (SFM6xxx)

### Summary

This guide provides recommendations for evaluation, testing and integration of Sensirion Mass Flow Controllers and Meters. It is applicable to SFC6xxx as well as SFM6xxx products.

For clarity, the document was written for Mass Flow Controllers, yet most guidelines are also valid for Mass Flow Meters.

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# 1. How to choose your Mass Flow Controller (Mass Flow Meter)

Sensirion offers several families of Mass Flow Controllers and Meters. The following covers the 6000 series family.

- SFC6000 (SFM6000) family offers the best price to performance ratio for a mass flow controller in a compact and lightweight package and is fully customisable to your needs. Minimum order quantities apply when purchasing from Sensirion.
- SFC6000D (SFM6000D) are SFC6000 mass flow controllers and SFM6000 mass flow meters available in fixed configurations with pre-configured multiple gas calibrations, different flow ranges and exchangeable fittings available via distribution.

To help you choose the right Mass Flow Controller, a "Selection guide" is available on the Sensirion website. Please see the <u>useful resources</u> section below.

# 1.1. Flow Selection for SFC6000(D)/SFM6000(D)

The Sensirion SFC6000 flow controllers and SFM6000 flow meteres are available for full flow rates from 0.5 slm to 50 slm. SFC6000D and SFM6000D are available at different flow ranges, shown in **Table 1**, to suit your application best.

Product	Variant	Flow Range
	5 slm	5 slm – 0 slm
SFC6000D-/SFM6000D-	20 slm	20 slm – 0 slm
	50 slm	50 slm – 0 slm

**Table 1.** Flow ranges of the respective product variants of SFC6000D and SFM6000D

# 2. How to operate your Mass Flow Controller

The evaluation method depends on whether your Mass Flow Controller has a digital or an analog interface.

# 2.1. Digital interface

There are several ways to operate Sensirion digital Mass Flow Controllers exist. They vary in complexity and implementation flexibilities.

- The EK-F5x evaluation kit together with Sensirion <u>Control Center</u> is the fastest way to start working with your device. It is a plug-and-play solution, which will enable you to control and configure your device (e.g. choose the gas calibration). The EK-F5x evaluation kit combines a power supply (adapters for most sockets worldwide are included) and a USB-A plug for your PC. It connects to your device with a M8 or DB9 plug (an adapter is available for other plugs please contact Sensirion). EK-F5x is available from distribution. Please note, Mass Flow Controller or Flow Meter are not included and must be purchased separately.
- Most OEM projects will require designing custom cabling (including a power supply) together with an implementation in the desired programming language. The SFC6000 provides an I<sup>2</sup>C and a RS-485 interface (the respective guides are found in Section 7.1 in <u>Useful Resources</u>). Sensirion provides ready-to-use libraries in C and Python, as illustrated in **Table 2**. These libraries can be used to control multiple devices at the same time (please make sure the devices have unique SHDLC and I<sup>2</sup>C addresses for RS-485 and I<sup>2</sup>C interfaces, respectively). However, this also involves the highest implementation effort out of the options mentioned here.

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I<sup>2</sup>C: Custom design with full implementation flexibility: Coming Soon



Figure 1. Overview of different options for evaluating digital Mass Flow Controllers and Mass Flow Meters

The following illustrates the available software drivers for respective PC interfaces for the SFC6000 and SFM6000 variants.

PC interface	Python driver	C driver	Sensirion Control Center
USB (EK-F5x Evaluation kit)	Available	Available (For Raspberry pi)	Available
RS-485	Under Development	Available (Arduino shield)	-
12C	-	Under Development (For Arduino)	-

Table 2. The available drivers for different modes of communication for the SFC6000 and SFM6000. Links to the software can be found in the software tools section below.

#### 2.2. Analog interface

The analog output pin gives out an analog linear voltage representing the flow value in standard liter per minute (slm). The formula for converting the voltage value to slm is given by:

$$Flow = \left(\frac{V_{out}}{4} - \frac{1}{8}\right) *$$
 "Full scale Flow" slm

i.e. the analog voltage range from 0.5 V to 4.5 V is linearly mapped to the flow range of 0 slm to full scale flow slm. The identical conversion formula applies for the analog input voltage.

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# 3. Testing recommendations

It is recommended to start by testing the communication with the device, using the EK-F5x Evaluation Kit and Control Center.

As a second step, connect the device to a gas supply (or a source of vacuum). For better accuracy, mount the Mass Flow Controller horizontally and use the same pressure as during factory-calibration (specified in the datasheet, by default for most products 3 bar inlet vs outlet).

Try using different setpoint steps to test the Mass Flow Controller. If the chosen setpoint can't be reached, try increasing the supply pressure, removing fluidic resistances like filters, or using tubes with a larger diameter. If the supply pressure used is significantly lower than the calibration pressure, the controller can be slower than expected. On the other hand, if the supply pressure is significantly larger than the calibration pressure, the Mass Flow Controller may become unstable. In these cases, lowering or increasing the controller gain to adapt the controller accordingly. This can be done conveniently with Sensirion Control Center. For detailed instructions, see the "Control Center manual", linked in "Useful resources" Section <u>7.3.1</u>.

# 4. Common pitfalls

# 4.1. Flow appears to be off by several %

If the flow appears to be off by several % (especially around 7%) against your reference, there are good chances the flow units of the two devices are not the same. The conversion difference between standard litres and norm litres is around 7%, due to the different reference temperatures used for standard and norm litres. Please make sure that the Mass Flow Controller and your reference are using the same units when testing. Further information about the flow unit conversion can be found in a dedicated application note, "Reference and Flow Conversions between mass and volumetric flow", in the "Useful resources" Section 7.1.

# 4.2. Settling time is longer than specified

The most common cause for observing longer than expected settling time is trying to verify it from a position of fully closed valve. Solenoid valves are commonly affected by so-called "sticking effect". To open the valve from closed position (setpoint 0), a certain overvoltage is required to overcome the stiction effect. This can lead to a spike in the flow (especially for low setpoints) or a longer than expected settling time. By adjusting the "Initstep" or "Controller gain" of the Mass Flow Controller, the behaviour can be tuned to the specific requirements.

The settling time of Sensirion's Mass Flow Controllers is specified for a step answer from 10% to 100% of full scale within 5% of setpoint. When starting from zero flow the settling time may be longer than specification.

# 5. Design recommendations

# 5.1. The effect of orientation and temperature on accuracy

To achieve best accuracy, it is recommended to use a design where the Mass Flow Controller is mounted horizontally.

The operation of the valve produces a significant amount of heat. The Mass Flow Controller should therefore not be placed in a hermetically sealed space. It is recommended to design a cooling flow over the Mass Flow Controller in order to counteract the heating from the valve. Large temperature gradient between the Mass Flow Controller and the gas it is used to control, may adversely influence the accuracy of the device.

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# 5.2. The effect of vibrations on valve function

The valve used in the Mass Flow Controllers (proportional valve) is an oscillating system. Try to avoid sources of vibrations or decouple these sources mechanically from the Mass Flow Controller. They can interfere with the proper function of the valve.

# 5.3. Pressure drop, temperature and input pressure

Pressure drop is generated when gas passes through the valve of a mass flow controller. The magnitude of the pressure drop is proportional to the flow rate and the density of the gas. Additionally, the maximum flow rate can be affected by temperature. The magnetization of the valve decreases with a higher valve temperature caused by continuous operation or high ambient temperature. The maximum flow decreases, as the valve is less open.

It is important to verify that at the maximum required flow rate, for a given gas, the inlet pressure is higher than the pressure drop. If this cannot be achieved, contact Sensirion – it might be possible to order a similar mass flow controller with larger-sized valve. Larger valves offer a lower pressure drop at the cost of a decreased accuracy/resolution at low flows.



# 6. Fluidic and electrical connectors

Product reference	Fluidic connector	Electrical connector
SFC6000D/ SFM6000D	Push-in: tube outer diameter 6 mm, Downmount (exchangeable with Festo QSP 18 mm interface)	M8 (4 pin)

Table 3. Fluidic and electrical connectors

# 6.1. Mounting guide

The SFC6000 can be mounted from the bottom, the top or on a downmount manifold depending on application requirements. A more comprehensive description of the mounting options is coming soon.

### 6.1.1. Mounting from the bottom of device

With the help of tapping screws (PT-screw K30, diameter = 3mm) the devices can be secured on the plate from the bottom. One should not screw the tapping screws more than 8 mm into the body of the device. Do not use larger screws, as this introduces stress to the device, influencing performance.

### 6.1.2. Mounting from the top of device

The SFC6000 and SFM6000 can also be mounted from the top when removing their cap. This is done with M2.5 X 20 screws.

#### 6.1.3. Downmount manifold

Downmount connectors are included with each distribution SFC6000D and SFM6000D.



Figure 2. Dowmount fittings on SFM6000(D) (left) and SFC6000(D) (right).

When using products with downmount connectors, a specific manifold must be designed and manufactured by the user. In **Table 4** in the <u>useful resources section</u>, CAD models for a suggested manifold designs for SFC6000(D) / SFM6000(D) can be found. They can be used as a starting point for a custom design.

4 screws can be used for mounting. The O-rings must be placed on the Mass Flow Controller side. The manifold pictured below can be used as a starting point for the design. A mass Flow Controller is placed on top of the manifold.



Figure 3. Downmount manifold design for SFM6000(D) (left) and SFC6000(D) (right).

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#### 7. Useful resources

#### 7.1. Documentation

Various guides and application notes are available on Sensirion website. Mass Flow Controllers (SFC): Product catalog (sensirion.com) Mass Flow Meters (SFM): Product catalog (sensirion.com) General technical download section: sensirion.com/products/downloads/

The most relevant resources are linked below.

Datasheet





#### SFC6000 gas fittings guide



#### SHDLC Communication Interface Reference

SFC6xxx and SFM6xxx RS485 SHDLC Interface



Document Summary This document describes the SHDLC RS485 communication interface of the Sensirion SFC6xxx mass flow controller and SFM6xx mass flow meter. The intention of defining the SHDLC protocol was to have a single protocol for different Sensirion devices as massflow controllers, meters, and other microcontroller devices. The protocol is based on serial communication and is easy to implement. It allows communication between a single master and several connected slaw devices.

- In the following, there are some of the SHDLC protocol key features:
- Based on an byte orientated hardware (like UART....)
- · Half-duplex system, which allows to use half-duplex hardware
- Single Master/Multiple Slaves protocol without the need for bus arbitration
- Allows up to 255 bytes payload data for read or write transfers
- · Broadcasting allows to safe bus load and synchronize devices

# Reference and Flow Conversions between mass and

#### volumetric flow

Reference and Flow Conversions Applicable to following sensors All SFMs Concept of mass flow vs. volumetric flow Conversion between different reference conditions Conversion from mass-flow to volumetric-flow the difference between I manufacturer of flow i 1 Introduction Gas is a well compressible media, and the gas density therefore depends on the pressus gas. As such, a fixed volume of gas contains a different number of gas molecules, varyi pressure. To include differine aspecific gas down, which is a massence of a volume of gas necessary to reference the conditions under which the measurement is performed. Dep and the manufacture of flow meters, these reference conditions are different and low v direduly be compressed without converting them to behical reference conditions. Gas flow can either be measured in units of volumetric flow or mass flow The most common units are "Iters per unit of time under the referenced pressure and ter The most common units are "Iters per minute [limin]" or "actual cubic feet per minute [acfm]" s flow or standard volumetric flow dard volumetric flow refers to the volumetric flow at standard conditions defined for temperature and sur. Common units are "standard flores per minute [stim]", "standard cubic contimeters per minute [stim] h liters per minute [httmin]". mi' o c now a referenced to a defined reingerature 1 and pressure p, the humber of can be calculated using the ideal gas law (p V = n + T). In other words, standard number of molecules per unit of time and therefore to the mass per unit of time. For no vulnimetric (bus et standard conditions will deliver the same readinos as a mass. w meters of the STMoxx series are based on the thermal flow measurement principle and provide a mass which is a mass flow unit. For example, 1 standard Itre per minute (sIm) means that the w corresponds to a volumetric flow of 1 thre per minute under standard conditions. Seria/sinfor 3 flow value in units of sim or occam are derined at standard conditions 100 can 1013mbar



#### **Brochure Mass Flow Controllers**



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<b>REACH and RoHS declaration SFC</b>			
REACH- and RoHS - Declaration			
We declare that all these Mass Flow Controller	rs for Gases su	upplied by Sensi	rion AG comply with
Mass Flow Controllers for Gases	REACH	RoHS	
SFC3xxx	yes	yes	
SFC4xxx	yes	yes	
SFC5xxx	yes	yes	
SFC6xxx	yes	yes	
Eval-Kit EK-F5x	yes	yes	
Chemicals, REACH (Reg. 1907/2006) E i.e. the following fimit values are not ex- Subdances of Very High Concents (C) The information is based on data provid No attempt has been made to verify this • the EU regulation on the Restriction of 1+ equipment, RoHS (Reg. 2011/05/EU ar i.e. the following fimit values are not ex- - Lead (PC), Mercury (Hg), Hoxavahrt - Cadhuim (C3) • Polytorominated byhenyls (PBB) and • Phinatates: DEHP, BBP, DEP and DI • Copper alloy in the plags of the eval-k	IC), seeded SVHC) e dby our supp information by tazardous Subs nd the delegate seeded Chromium (CrV Polybrominated BP itts: Co	liers. third party analy stances in electri d directive 2015/ (1) d diphenyl ethers mpliant with exc	1000 ppm sis. cal and electronic 66XEU) 1000 ppm 1000 ppm 10
The information given doesn't imply giving a war	ranty within the	e meaning of the	warranty law.
Signed for and on behalf of Sensirion AG			
Staefa, 22 February 2023			
Dr. Adran Ruf EHS Manager			





# Informational video: 4 Questions at 4 PM



# 7.2. CAD models

Product	CAD model	Link
	Push in with green cap,	https://sensirion.com/resource/cad/sfc-sfm6000
	Downmount with green cap,	
3F1010000D	Downmount manifold	

 Table 4. SFC6000D and SFM6000D and downmount manifold CAD models.

# 7.3. Software tools

# 7.3.1. Control Center software

Sensiron Control Center and manual <a href="https://sensirion.com/products/sensor-evaluation/control-center/">https://sensirion.com/products/sensor-evaluation/control-center/</a>

# 7.3.2. Software drivers

Python driver (For use with EK-F5x evaluation kit or custom cabling) https://github.com/Sensirion/python-uart-sfx6xxx

C driver (For use with Raspberry-Pi) https://github.com/Sensirion/raspberry-pi-uart-sfx6xxx

Arduino Library https://github.com/Sensirion/arduino-uart-sfx6xxx

# 7.4. Calibration and FAQ

Thanks to the stability of the MEMS-based sensor element and the robust mechanical design, Sensirion Mass Flow Controllers do not drift and do not require recalibration in the field.

High manufacturing standards used during production ensure that our Mass Flow Controllers are extremely reliable and have a very low failure rate. This is supported by field surveys and measurements.

FAQ: sensirion.com/products/support/fag/

### **Important Notices**

#### Warning, Personal Injury

Do not use this product as safety or emergency stop devices or in any other application where failure of the product could result in personal injury. Do not use this product for applications other than its intended and authorized use. Before installing, handling, using or servicing this product, please consult the data sheet and application notes. Failure to comply with these instructions could result in death or serious injury.

If the Buyer shall purchase or use SENSIRION products for any unintended or unauthorized application, Buyer shall defend, indemnify and hold harmless SENSIRION and its officers, employees, subsidiaries, affiliates and distributors against all claims, costs, damages and expenses, and reasonable attorney fees arising out of, directly or indirectly, any claim of personal injury or death associated with such unintended or unauthorized use, even if SENSIRION shall be allegedly negligent with respect to the design or the manufacture of the product.

#### **ESD** Precautions

The inherent design of this component causes it to be sensitive to electrostatic discharge (ESD). To prevent ESD-induced damage and/or degradation, take customary and statutory ESD precautions when handling this product. See application note "ESD, Latch up and EMC" for more information.

#### Warranty

SENSIRION warrants solely to the original purchaser of this product for a period of 12 months (one year) from the date of delivery that this product shall be of the quality, material and workmanship defined in SENSIRION's published specifications of the product. Within such period, if proven to be defective, SENSIRION shall repair and/or replace this product, in SENSIRION's discretion, free of charge to the Buyer, provided that:

- notice in writing describing the defects shall be given to SENSIRION within fourteen (14) days after their appearance;
- such defects shall be found, to SENSIRION's reasonable satisfaction, to have arisen from SENSIRION's faulty design, material, or workmanship;
- the defective product shall be returned to SENSIRION's factory at the Buyer's expense; and
- the warranty period for any repaired or replaced product shall be limited to the unexpired portion of the original period.

This warranty does not apply to any equipment which has not been installed and used within the specifications recommended by SENSIRION for the intended and proper use of the equipment. EXCEPT FOR THE WARRANTIES EXPRESSLY SET FORTH HEREIN, SENSIRION MAKES NO WARRANTIES, EITHER EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, WITH RESPECT TO THE PRODUCT. ANY AND ALL WARRANTIES, INCLUDING WITHOUT LIMITATION, WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE, ARE EXPRESSLY EXCLUDED AND DECLINED.

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