INDUSTRIAL GRADE CERAMIC THERMOCOUPLE PROTECTION TUBES

A standard 8 gauge Type K Thermocouple:

The ceramic mullite protection tube it goes in:

ADVANTAGES

1. Longer life than the metallic sheathed thermocouples or exposed thermocouples.
2. No metal spalling in the kiln.
3. Protection from contamination found in clay such as sulfur.
4. Cheaper replacement cost for thermocouples.

SAVE MONEY ON TC REPLACEMENTS

One major advantage of these protection tubes is that you can replace your old thermocouples with the cheaper standard 8 gauge thermocouples without changing the protection tube. A replacement 8 gauge thermocouple is less expensive than the metal-sheathed thermocouples. Over time the protection tubes may have to be replaced if they get contaminated from materials in the kiln; however, it should take a long time for contaminants to leach through the relatively impervious 1/8" thick mullite tube. The tube can be easily replaced independently from the thermocouples - they are not sealed or cemented together.

SIZE AND DESCRIPTION

The protection tubes are ¾" in outside diameter with a ½" inside diameter (which accommodates the standard 8 gauge Type K thermocouple). There is a flange on the back end of the thermocouple to prevent it from going into the kiln. If you are retrofitting an older kiln you will have to drill out the brick to ¾". This is no problem. In fact the stainless steel where the thermocouples go through is, in most cases, punched at 1" diameter.

L&L TEST PROGRAM

The industrial 2300mi thermocouples that had been used for several years are no longer available because Hoskins, who made the material, is no longer in business. This is L&L's careful response to this issue.

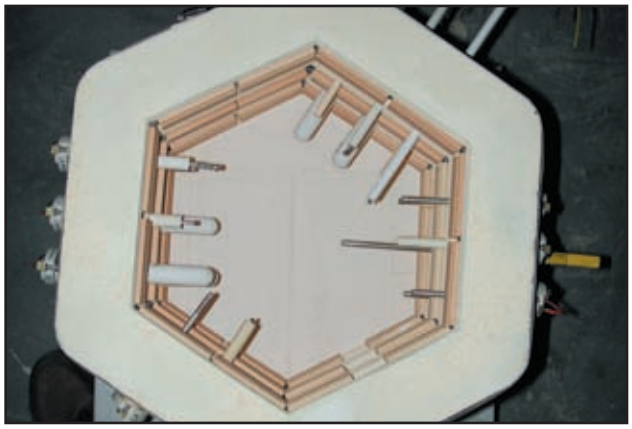
Mullite ceramic protection tubes over 8 gauge type k thermocouples offer superior life than 2300mi thermocouples.

L&L tested 23 different thermocouples in a kiln by firing them to Cone 10 (2350°F) and soaking the kiln for one hour repeatedly and then measuring the thermocouples with a sophisticated datalogger. The main thermocouple to control the kiln was a platinum Type S. The various test thermocouples were our standard 8 gauge thermocouple with a butt-welded end, one with a twisted end, both in a heavy mullite protection tube and exposed to air, 14 gauge Type K exposed thermocouples, Type N thermocouples of various types, a Hoskins 2300mi, several metallic sheathed thermocouples with Inconel and various grades of Pyrocil (the replacement for the 2300mi), etc.

One of our standard Type K 8 gauge thermocouples in the industrial protection tube achieved 139 firings. The standard 8 gauge thermocouple without a protection tube made it to 100 firings. The metal-sheathed Pyrocil was good but not as good as the 8 gauge with the protection tube (it worked for 130 firings). An 8 gauge Type N did slightly better (143 firings) but the potential confusion of using this outweighed the simplicity and backward compatibility of the Type K.

The conclusion from the test is that a standard 8 gauge thermocouple with an industrial mullite ceramic protection tube offered the best combination for cost of replacement, cleanliness (there is no contamination of the kiln with metal spalling), resistance to contaminants in the kiln like sulfur, backward compatibility, and long life.

The kiln the thermocouples were tested in, before and after the test:



THERMOCOUPLE & CONE OFFSETS

A thermocouple in a protection tube has a slightly delayed response and hence an offset from a more sensitive thermocouple like the metallic sheathed thermocouple. However, our test indicated that every thermocouple measured slightly different temperatures anyway. A detailed analysis of responses after about 130 firings showed the 8-gauge Type K thermocouple in the protection tube to be between the control Type S platinum thermocouple and the metallic sheathed Pyrocil Type K. In any case the DynaTrol control has thermocouple offsets and cone offsets to allow you to compensate for any such effects. For ceramic work we recommend calibrating the kiln performance with cones and adjusting the control to match the performance of the firing cones. The most important thing is to get a consistent reading from the thermocouples. In a separate series of tests in our Easy-Fire kilns we came up with the exact offsets that seemed to work time and again. We ran various Easy-Fire cone programs on the DynaTrol with various offsets programmed into the control and measured accuracy of results with Large Self-Supporting Cones. The "Blue" DynaTrol (in use since April 2003) comes with these Thermocouple Offsets and Cone Offsets preprogrammed. From cone 022 to cone 017 the cone offsets are set at 9020. All other cones are preset at 0000. The Thermocouple Offset comes programmed into the control at 0018 (+18°F) when it leaves the factory. Note the room temperature will show around 90°F to 100°F. You can easily program these settings into the older "Green" DynaTrol. If you do not use the thermocouple protection tubes then you need to change thermocouple and cone offsets to 0000. See ***dynatrol-basic-operation.pdf*** in the OPERATION section for more information on calibration. (Note that we used a greater offset from April 2003 to Oct 2004 because the protection tubes were not as sensitive as the ones we currently use.)

METALLIC PYROCIL TC OPTION

For those who prefer the metal-sheathed thermocouples for greater sensitivity they are available by special order.

See the separate PDF file on this:
hotkilns.com/metallic-tc