Tech Sheet #121
Heat Exchange Institute
1300 Sumner Avenue • Cleveland, Ohio 44115-2851 • 216-241-7333 • Fax: 216-241-0105 • www.heatexchange.org

Vacuum Relief

Theoretically, a deaerator may be subject to internal pressures as low as the vapor pressure of the coldest entering water stream that may be a considerable vacuum. The vessels should be protected against damage from excessive vacuum (external pressure) by either designing for full vacuum or by the use of vacuum relief devices (vacuum breakers). Allowable external pressure may be calculated by the ASME Code.

Vacuum breaker valves may be common check valves or spring/weight loaded devices. When the User is not willing to accept some leakage from the vacuum breaker, the more costly spring or weight loaded device shall be specified.

Operation of the vacuum breaker will cause air to enter the deaerator that must be purged before full deaeration performance can be resumed. Frequent opening of the vacuum breakers indicates faulty design, maintenance, or configuration of the steam and/or level controls.

This Tech Sheet was developed by the members of the Heat Exchange Institute's (HEI) Deaerator Section. HEI is a trade association comprising the leading manufacturers of heat exchange and vacuum equipment. HEI Tech Sheets are information tools and should not be used as substitutes for instructions from individual manufacturers. Always consult with individual manufacturers for specific instructions regarding their equipment.