

# Proper Bias-T Usage to Avoid PPG Damage

**MP1800A Series**  
Signal Quality Analyzer

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## 1. Introduction

It is sometimes necessary for chip / module vendors to bias devices under test (DUTs) using an external Bias-T. These useful tools provide a dynamic method for engineers to vary both RF and DC conditions applied to the input of their DUTs. However, both simulations and empirical data have demonstrated that voltage transients can be produced under certain conditions that may be damaging to PPG outputs. This document offers several recommendations by Anritsu's R&D team for the safe usage of Bias T's with Anritsu PPGs.

## 2. Precautions for using Bias-T

Figure 1 illustrates a typical Bias-T application with a Pulse Pattern Generator (PPG) driving the DUT.

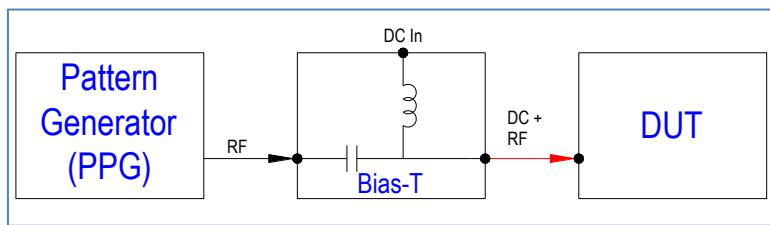


Figure 1. Typical Bias-T Usage

The voltage transients are likely to occur if the connection at the Bias-T's **DC+RF** port (the **red connection** in Figure 1) is shorted to ground while DC is being applied to the **DC In** port. The likelihood of this accidental occurrence may be greater if a probe is being used to make the **red connection** rather than typical coaxial connections, although it is still possible to short the center pin while making a coaxial connection. Simulations have also determined that excessive transients are also possible even when a separate DC block is used between the Bias-T and the PPG output.

Anritsu strongly recommends the following precautions be taken when using Bias-T's at PPG outputs for biasing DUTs:

- I. **If possible, add series resistance between the power supply and Bias-T DC input to avoid / reduce possible voltage transients.**
- II. **Set the current compliance level on the Bias-T power supply to a level suitable for the DUT.**
- III. **Keep the Bias-T power supply turned OFF while connections are being made between the PPG, Bias-T and the DUT.**
- IV. **Turn the Bias-T power supply ON ONLY AFTER all connections to the measurement system have been established.**
- V. **Turn the Bias-T power supply OFF BEORE DISCONNECTING the PPG, Bias-T or the DUT.**

### 3. Simulation Data

This model's objective was to reveal the voltage and current transients potentially seen by PPG output when the probe in the simulation is shorted to ground. This shorting action represents the inadvertent situation where a connection to the DUT is being attempted while DC power is being applied to the Bias-T's **DC In** port.

Model Elements (Figures 2 & 3):

- PPG output is represented by a  $50\Omega$  resistor
- DUT input is represented by a  $50\Omega$  resistor
- Bias-T RF capacitor is  $0.1\text{ }\mu\text{F}$
- Bias-T DC network is  $1000\text{ }\mu\text{H}$  inductor in series with  $6\Omega$  series resistance
- Bias-T DC input is  $0.5\text{ V}$  (without series resistor) and  $1.0\text{ V}$  (while using series resistor)
- A switch is used to simulate shorting the DC+RF connection of the Bias-T to ground

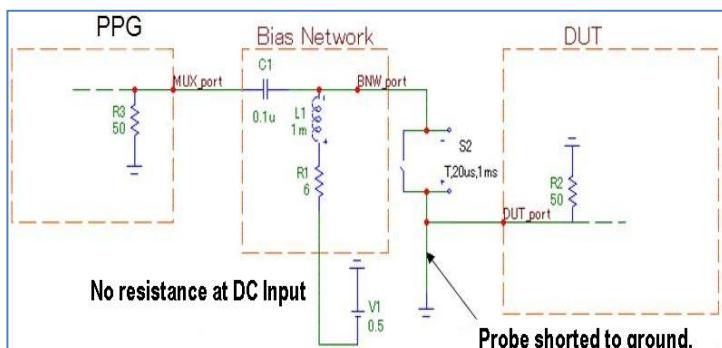


Figure 2. Model with no resistance at Bias-T DC In

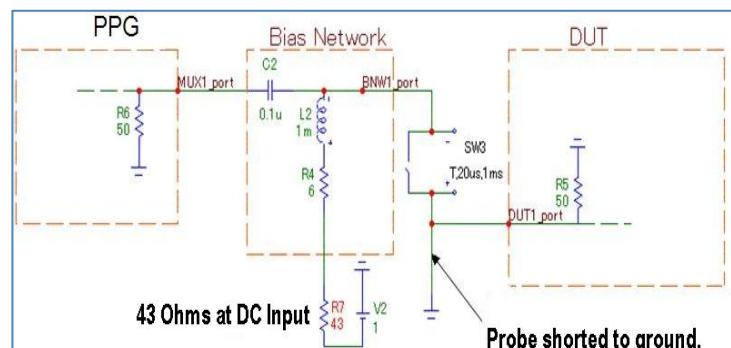


Figure 3. Model with 43Ω at Bias-T DC In

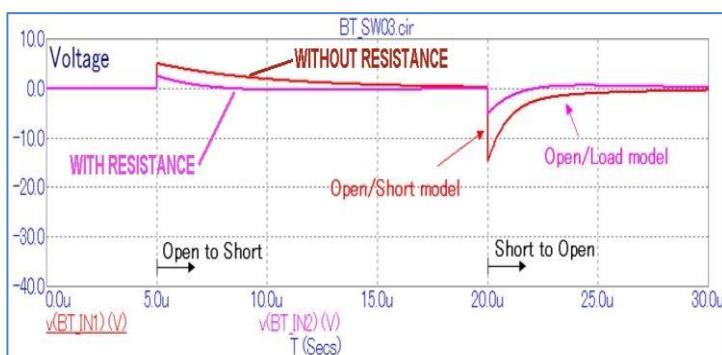


Figure 4. Simulated voltage at PPG output

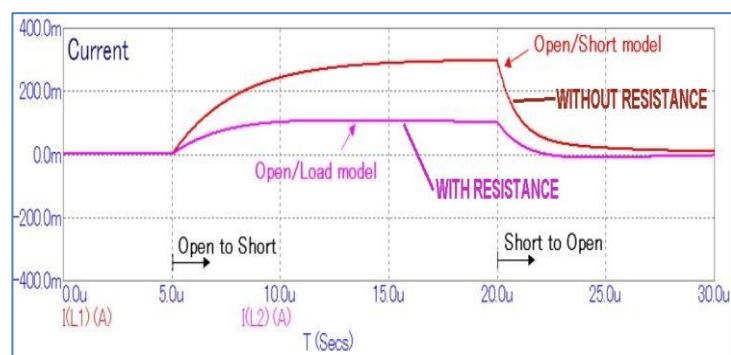


Figure 5. Simulated current at PPG output

Figures 2 and 3 show the modeled circuit with (2) and without (3) an external resistor at the Bias-T's **DC In** port. The simulated behavior of these circuits provided in Figures 4 and 5 show a significant difference between the magnitude of transients **with resistance** and **without resistance** applied at the Bias-T's **DC In** port. Similar observations were made for both voltage and current transients. Without resistance, the PPG is exposed to a potentially damaging voltage transient exceeding  $-10\text{V}$ . Simulations show that the magnitudes of the voltage and current transients are reduced by applying external series resistance to the Bias-T's **DC In** port, even when DC supply has been increased to compensate for the drop across the resistor.

#### 4. Empirical Data

The same circuit as shown in the model was implemented on the bench during an attempt to reproduce the simulation data. The block diagram of this setup is shown in Figure 6. The actual implementation is shown in Figure 7.

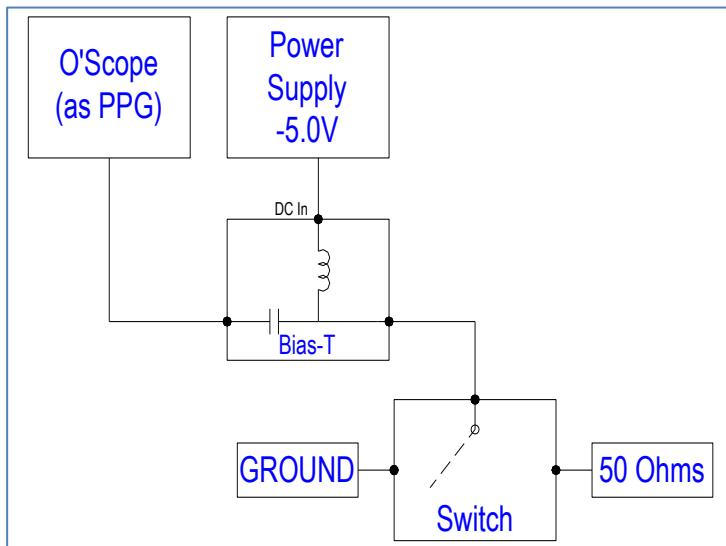


Figure 6. Bench setup block diagram

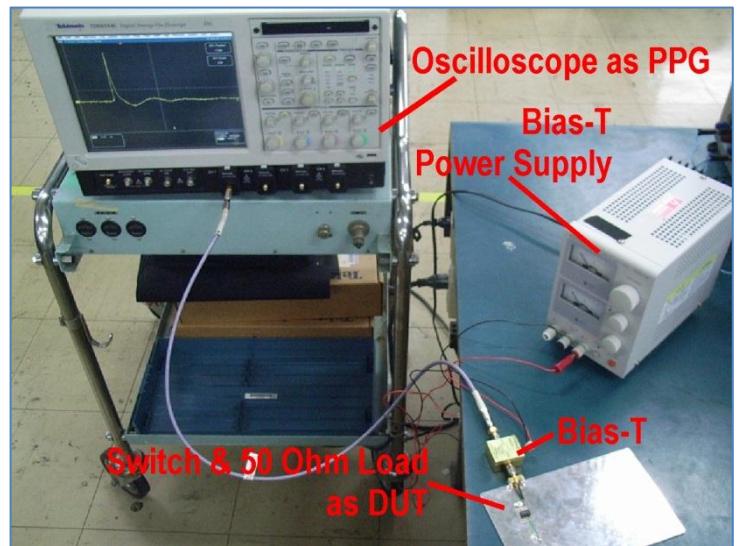


Figure 7. Bench setup photo

In this test system, the  $50\Omega$  input of the O'Scope represents the  $50\Omega$  output of a PPG. This simplifies the setup and allows the O'Scope to trigger on and observe the same transients that would otherwise appear at the PPG output. The screen captures below reveal the induced transients when the output is switched from open to short (Figure 8) and from short to open (Figure 9) while DC is being applied to the Bias-T's DC In port.

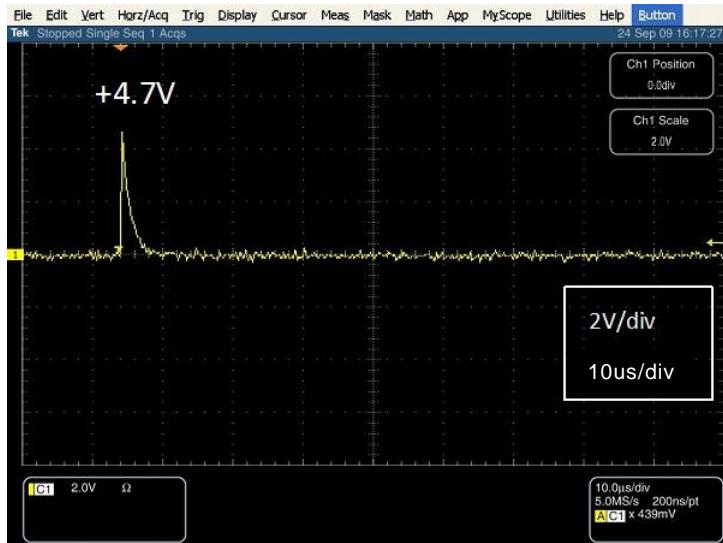


Figure 8. Probe OPEN to SHORT

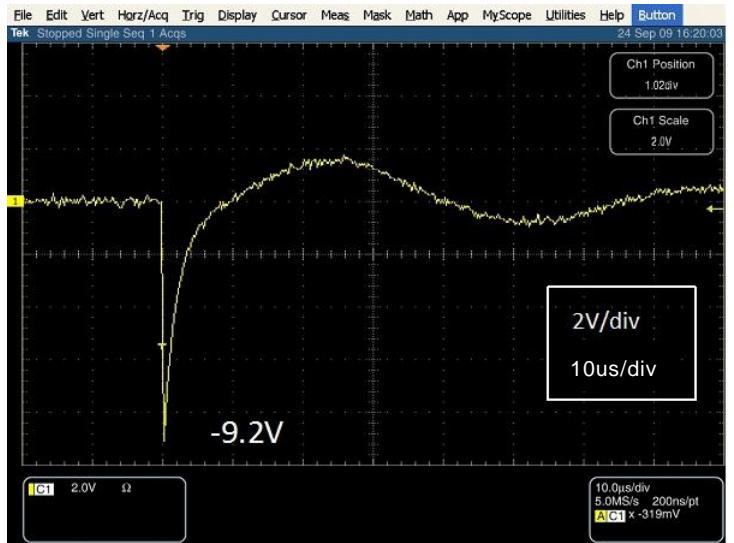


Figure 9. Probe SHORT to OPEN

It should be noted that transients will also occur even when going from an open state to a  $50\Omega$  condition while DC is applied to the Bias-T's **DC In** port. This would represent a condition when the Bias-T's **DC+RF** port makes a direct connection to the DUT input without accidentally shorting to ground first. The following screen captures reveal the induced transients when the Bias-T output is switched from open to  $50\Omega$  (Figure 10) and from  $50\Omega$  to open (Figure 11) while DC is being applied to the Bias-T's **DC In** port.

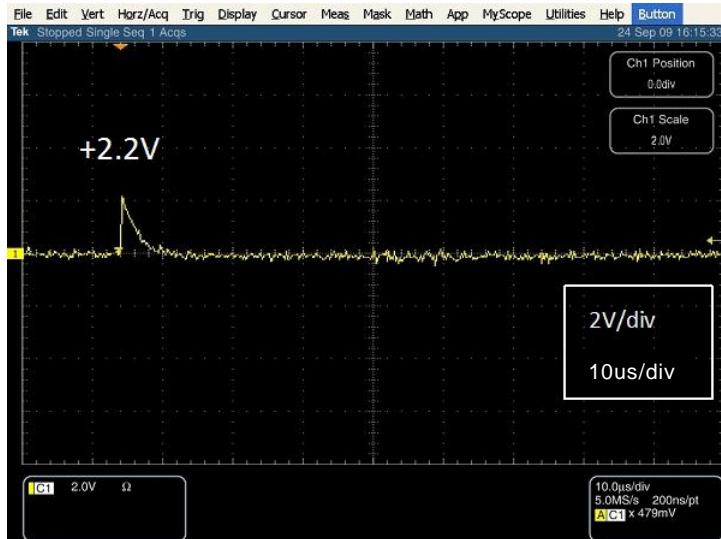


Figure 10. Probe OPEN to  $50\Omega$

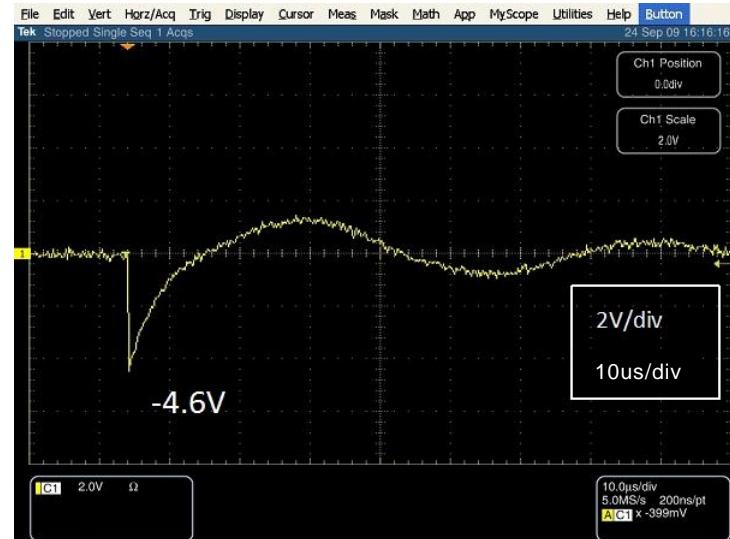


Figure 11. Probe  $50\Omega$  to OPEN

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the simulation and test results, a potential difference is caused by the Bias-T inductor due to changes in the current flow. Because the Bias-T capacitor's reactance is small compared to  $50\Omega$ , the potential is generated at the PPG output. This voltage can be excessive if the current fluctuation is sufficiently large. The possibility of PPG output damage exists if the PPG's absolute maximum ratings are exceeded during such an event.

To avoid potential PPG damage, Anritsu recommends that users take the necessary precautions as outlined on page 1 of this document when using Bias-T's.

● **United States**

**Anritsu Company**

1155 East Collins Blvd., Suite 100, Richardson, TX 75081, U.S.A.  
Toll Free: 1-800-267-4878  
Phone: +1-972-644-1777  
Fax: +1-972-671-1877

● **Canada**

**Anritsu Electronics Ltd.**

700 Silver Seven Road, Suite 120, Kanata, Ontario K2V 1C3, Canada  
Phone: +1-613-591-2003  
Fax: +1-613-591-1006

● **Brazil**

**Anritsu Eletrônica Ltda.**

Praça Amadeu Amaral, 27 - 1 Andar  
01327-010 - Bela Vista - São Paulo - SP - Brazil  
Phone: +55-11-3283-2511  
Fax: +55-11-3288-6940

● **Mexico**

**Anritsu Company, S.A. de C.V.**

Av. Ejército Nacional No. 579 Piso 9, Col. Granada 11520 México, D.F., México  
Phone: +52-55-1101-2370  
Fax: +52-55-5254-3147

● **United Kingdom**

**Anritsu EMEA Ltd.**

200 Capability Green, Luton, Bedfordshire, LU1 3LU, U.K.  
Phone: +44-1582-433200  
Fax: +44-1582-731303

● **France**

**Anritsu S.A.**

12 avenue du Québec, Bâtiment Iris 1-Silic 612, 91140 VILLEBON SUR YVETTE, France  
Phone: +33-1-60-92-15-50  
Fax: +33-1-64-46-10-65

● **Germany**

**Anritsu GmbH**

Nemetschek Haus, Konrad-Zuse-Platz 1 81829 München, Germany  
Phone: +49-89-442308-0  
Fax: +49-89-442308-55

● **Italy**

**Anritsu S.r.l.**

Via Elio Vittorini 129, 00144 Roma, Italy  
Phone: +39-6-509-9711  
Fax: +39-6-502-2425

● **Sweden**

**Anritsu AB**

Kistagången 20B, 164 40 KISTA, Sweden  
Phone: +46-8-534-707-00  
Fax: +46-8-534-707-30

● **Finland**

**Anritsu AB**

Teknoblevardi 3-5, FI-01530 VANTAA, Finland  
Phone: +358-20-741-8100  
Fax: +358-20-741-8111

● **Denmark**

**Anritsu A/S**

Kay Fiskers Plads 9, 2300 Copenhagen S, Denmark  
Phone: +45-7211-2200  
Fax: +45-7211-2210

● **Russia**

**Anritsu EMEA Ltd.**

**Representation Office in Russia**

Tverskaya str. 16/2, bld. 1, 7th floor.  
Russia, 125009, Moscow  
Phone: +7-495-363-1694  
Fax: +7-495-935-8962

● **United Arab Emirates**

**Anritsu EMEA Ltd.**

**Dubai Liaison Office**

P O Box 500413 - Dubai Internet City  
Al Thuraya Building, Tower 1, Suit 701, 7th Floor  
Dubai, United Arab Emirates  
Phone: +971-4-3670352  
Fax: +971-4-3688460

● **India**

**Anritsu India Private Limited**

2nd & 3rd Floor, #837/1, Binnamangla 1st Stage,  
Indiranagar, 100ft Road, Bangalore - 560038, India  
Phone: +91-80-4058-1300  
Fax: +91-80-4058-1301

● **Singapore**

**Anritsu Pte. Ltd.**

11 Chang Charn Road, #04-01, Shiro House  
Singapore 959640  
Phone: +65-6282-2400  
Fax: +65-6282-2533

● **P.R. China (Shanghai)**

**Anritsu (China) Co., Ltd.**

Room 2701-2705, Tower A,  
New Caohejing International Business Center  
No. 391 Gui Ping Road Shanghai, 200233, P.R. China  
Phone: +86-21-6237-0898  
Fax: +86-21-6237-0899

● **P.R. China (Hong Kong)**

**Anritsu Company Ltd.**

Unit 1006-7, 10/F., Greenfield Tower, Concordia Plaza,  
No. 1 Science Museum Road, Tsim Sha Tsui East,  
Kowloon, Hong Kong, P.R. China  
Phone: +852-2301-4980  
Fax: +852-2301-3545

● **Japan**

**Anritsu Corporation**

8-5, Tamura-cho, Atsugi-shi, Kanagawa, 243-0016 Japan  
Phone: +81-46-296-1221  
Fax: +81-46-296-1238

● **Korea**

**Anritsu Corporation, Ltd.**

5FL, 235 Pangyoeko-ro, Bundang-gu, Seongnam-si,  
Gyeonggi-do, 463-400 Korea  
Phone: +82-31-696-7750  
Fax: +82-31-696-7751

● **Australia**

**Anritsu Pty. Ltd.**

Unit 21/270 Ferntree Gully Road, Notting Hill,  
Victoria 3168, Australia  
Phone: +61-3-9558-8177  
Fax: +61-3-9558-8255

● **Taiwan**

**Anritsu Company Inc.**

7F, No. 316, Sec. 1, NeiHu Rd., Taipei 114, Taiwan  
Phone: +886-2-8751-1816  
Fax: +886-2-8751-1817

*Please Contact:*