

TECHNICAL NOTE

DE-SERIES FAST POWER MOSFET™

AN INTRODUCTION

Abstract

The DE-SERIES Fast Power™ MOSFETs are unique high power devices designed as a circuit element from the ground up for high speed, high frequency, high power applications. This technical note describes the patented technology utilized to achieve and optimize the electrical, thermal and mechanical performance of the DE-SERIES devices.

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Introduction

From its inception, power MOS has held great promise because of its potential speed. In fact, the particle transit time, drain to source, in any cell of the silicon die is theoretically on the order of 200ps. However conventional power MOSFET packages are poorly suited to high speed, high frequency applications.

It is interesting to note that the TO-3, a common high power package, was designed in the 1950s and mimics the octal pin and bolt pattern of a vacuum tube socket. The plastic TO-220 and TO-247 packages followed, providing some improvements, and more recent packages like the TO-254 and large block configurations have appeared. However, the topology and materials of these large high power packages are highly inductive, their thermal performance poor, and their mounting configuration at variance with low impedance circuit layout.

Even Radio Frequency (RF) type packages, when used with large power MOSFET die, suffer from similar problems. In short, die packaging has been addressed as a mechanical tooling convenience more than a circuit element. And in the interim, die chemistry and topology have been altered to stabilize operation because of these shortcomings.

The DE-SERIES Fast Power™ MOSFETs illustrated in Figure 1 are a new class of unique high power devices designed as a circuit element from the ground up for high speed, high frequency, high power applications. DEI's Fast Power™ technology features low insertion inductance ($\approx 1.5\text{nH}$), and a low profile low cost plastic package, with a $R_{\theta\text{JC}}$ as low as 0.10°C/W , which provides exceptional switching speeds and power handling capabilities.

The DE-SERIES, available in 5 power ranges (DE-150, DE-275, DE-275X2, DE-375 and the DE-475) offer 10 times the speed and 3 times the power dissipation, with 1/2 the volume, 1/3 the weight and greatly reduced die stress, of comparable conventional power MOSFET devices. This article describes the patented technology utilized to achieve and optimize the electrical, thermal and mechanical performance of the DE-SERIES.

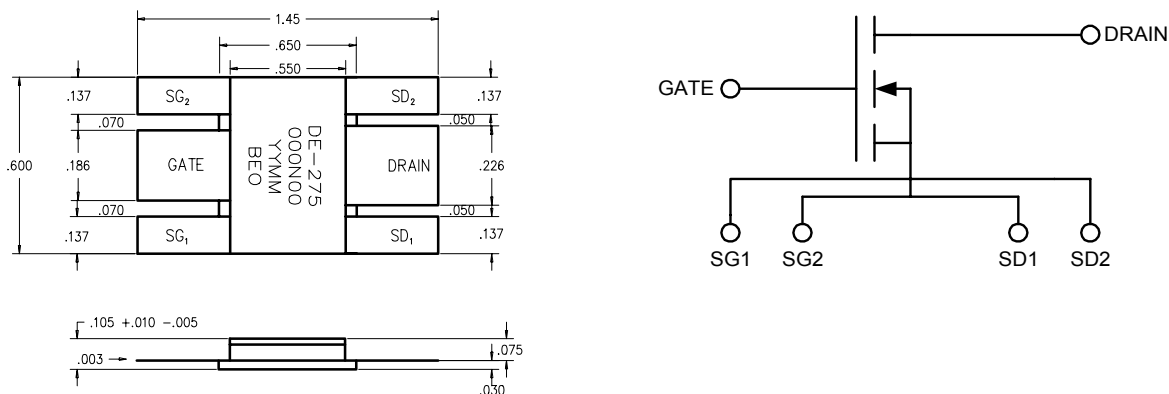


FIGURE 1 DE-SERIES Fast Power MOSFET™

Standard Packaging

In order to more clearly understand the necessity for the mechanical topology of the DE-SERIES, it is useful to first look at some of the negative feedback terms in power MOSFETs.

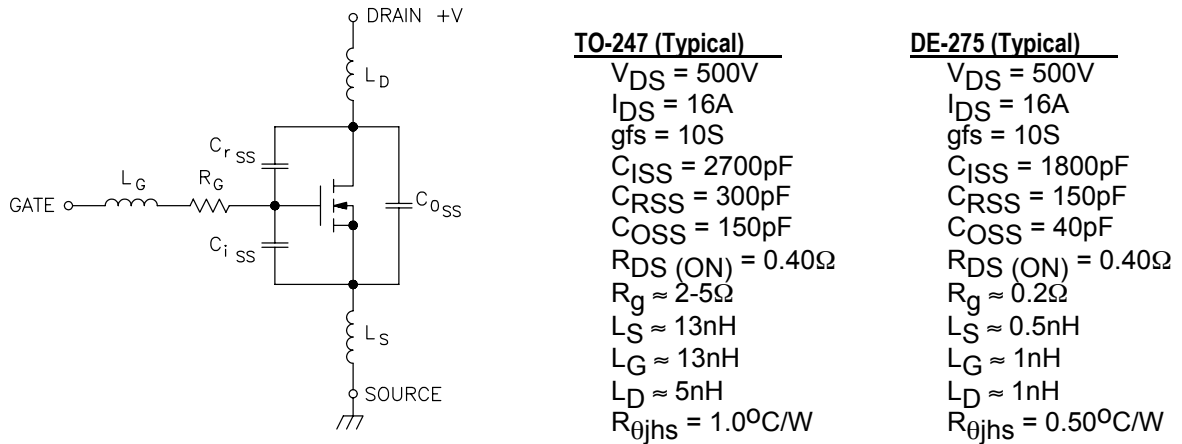


Figure 2 MOSFET Circuit Model

Figure 2 illustrates the circuit model for a conventional MOSFET. The same analysis applies to bipolar devices. The effect of the L_D term is on the output circuit and is often of little consequence. There are several parasitic elements that inhibit high-speed operation. At turn-on, if we apply a step voltage function to the external gate terminal, with $T_r = 0$ and $Z_o = 0$, the parasitic elements L_G , R_G and L_S isolate in time the capacitance of the internal gate structure of the power MOSFET such that the rate of voltage rise on the gate structure is limited to the quarter wave time of this network ($T_r = 1/4F$), thus slowing the turn-on of the device. Furthermore, this L_G , L_S , R_G , C_{ISS} , C_{RSS} network forms a resonant tank circuit which can oscillate and cause spurious operation of the MOSFET. This resonance will limit the maximum useful frequency of the device.

When the device turns on, there are additional parasitic elements that further inhibit high-speed operation. As current rises in the drain circuit, the voltage developed across L_S provides a negative feedback term, which further limits the turn on speed. In conjunction with the L_S term, as current rises in the drain circuit, the voltage fall at the drain is coupled to the gate circuit via C_{RSS} (the Miller effect), providing additional negative feedback to the gate.

It is clear that a new packaging concept, a new paradigm, is necessary to address and, as much as practical, eliminate these parasitic inductive elements. To explore this further, let us look at the mechanical nature of these inductive terms.

Inductance in Three Dimensional Space

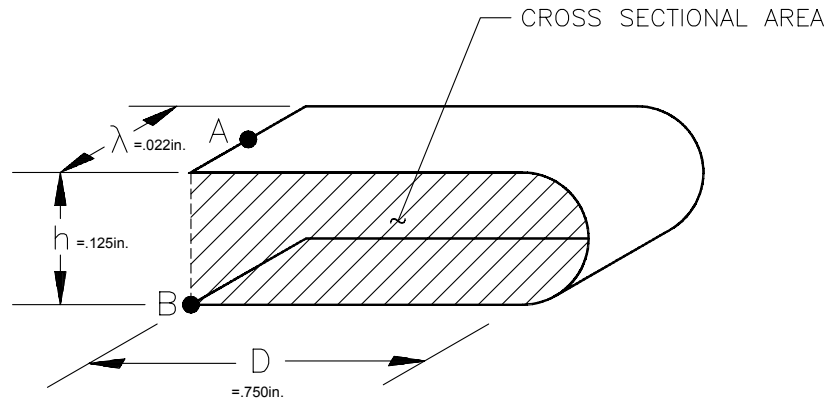


Figure 3 One Turn Inductor

Recalling the previous discussion on the effects of stray inductance, it is useful to examine just how big, physically, a 26nH inductor is. This lets us see, in a dynamic way, the need for extreme care in package and die design as well as circuit layout.

The one turn inductor shown in Figure 3 is equivalent to one turn of 0.022 inch wide conductor (λ) wound on a 0.125 inch diameter (h). With distance (D) equal to 0.750 inches, the inductance of this one turn coil is given by equation 11:

$$E1. \quad L \approx \left[\frac{K\mu_0\mu_r N^2 A}{\lambda} \right]$$

Where:

L = inductance in Henrys

K = a dimensionless constant, form factor correction (10.) ($K=.2$)

μ_0 = the permeability of free space, ($\mu_0 = 4\pi E-7$ H/M)

μ_r = the relative permeability ($\mu_r = 1$)

N = the number of turns ($N = 1$)

A = the cross sectional area of the coil ($A = 5.81E-5M^2$)

λ = width of the conductor ($\lambda = 5.5E-4M$)

Inserting values as described for Figure 5 in equation 11, we get:

$$E2. \quad L \approx \frac{.2 \left[\left(12.5E-7 \frac{H}{M} \right) \cdot \left(5.81E-5 \frac{H}{M} \right) \right]}{5.5E-4M} = 26nH$$

This is the inductance for the mechanical loop of Figure 3 and is equal to the L_G+L_S loop inductance for the MOSFET of Figure 2. Given the small size of the loop, it would appear that any attempt to reduce its inductance would prove futile. However the reduction of the inductance, as shown earlier, can provide exceptional improvement in performance and is therefore worth the effort.

Recalling equation 1, we can simplify this equation so that we can get a feel for what parameters are driving the inductance.

Let: μ_0 , N and $\mu_r = 1$, then:

$$E3. \quad L \propto \frac{A}{\lambda}$$

From equation 3 we see that we must minimize the cross sectional area A (Area Minimization) (Figure 3) and maximize the width λ (Multiple Distributed Paths). If we reduce A by 10 or increase λ by 10, the inductance would be reduced to 2.6 nH. However there are practical limits that will limit how far we can push these parameters. This means that we must invoke additional physics to drive the inductive term even lower.

If we recall that the inductive term is actually derived from the energy stored in the magnetic field, and if we can reduce or eliminate the energy stored in the magnetic field (B), then the inductive term will be reduced accordingly. We can do this by coupling magnetic field vectors of equal magnitude 180° out of phase to yield a resultant of ≈ 0 . This is the patented technique we call EM-Symmetry. In fact, EM-Symmetry by necessity invokes Area Minimization (A) and Multiple Distributed Paths (λ), which are subsets of the complete process.

Electrical Advantages

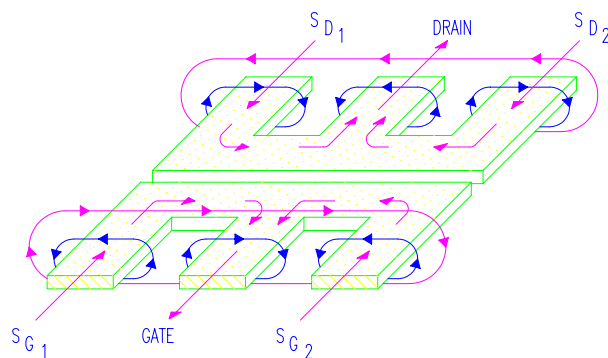


Figure 4 Coplanar DE-Series Structure

EM-Symmetry

DEI developed EM-Symmetry, shown in Figure 4, to address the need for a true low inductance, high speed, and high power device. The package design is best described as a distributed coplanar transmission line.

In a coplanar line the ground tracks lie on either side of the signal track. This topology provides several benefits. The distribution of the E and B fields are symmetric and uniform, the currents flow in sheets, and the voltage gradient changes are smooth and continuous. Referring to Figure 4, the conductors and die are shown as one element. In the DE-SERIES devices they form a coplanar transmission line. As illustrated, S_{G1} and S_{G2} are the ground tracks for the Gate signal while S_{D1} and S_{D2} are the power ground tracks used for the Drain signal. By circuit topology we insure that:

E4. $I_G = I_{SG1} + I_{SG2}$ and $I_{SD1} \approx I_{SD2}$ so that $B_{IGS1} + B_{IGS2} \Rightarrow 0$

Furthermore:

E5. $I_D = I_{SD1} + I_{SD2}$ and $I_{SD1} \approx I_{SD2}$ so that $B_{IDS1} + B_{IDS2} \Rightarrow 0$

This symmetry (E4 and E5) provides cancellation of magnetic field vectors in the far field, effectively reducing the insertion inductance. To enhance switching speed further, the source lead inductance negative feedback term $L_S di/dt$ found in all conventional devices has been eliminated by integrating a differential Kelvin lead with EM-Symmetry of the input leads. Thus, the gate drive reference plane floats on the $L_S di/dt$ term, and therefore the drain source currents flowing in S_{D1} and S_{D2} are prevented by topology from flowing in S_{G1} and S_{G2} .

Some manufacturers have invoked a Kelvin lead with no reduction in insertion inductance. This can have serious effects on device stability and reliability.

Die Topology

The DE-SERIES die, shown in Figure 5, are manufactured with epitaxial material to more precisely control material properties. They are also designed with "small" horizontal and vertical structures and "small" cell size so that particle transit times are consistent with the desired operating frequency. These die employ multiple gate and source pads consistent with the coplaner package design of the DE-SERIES. The die also has a metal gate structure that provides an extraordinarily low value of R_G .

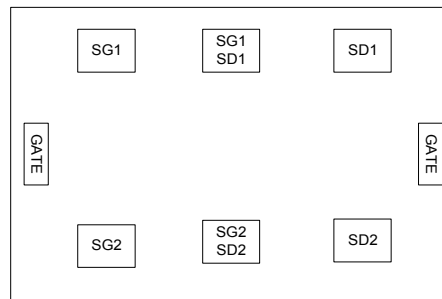
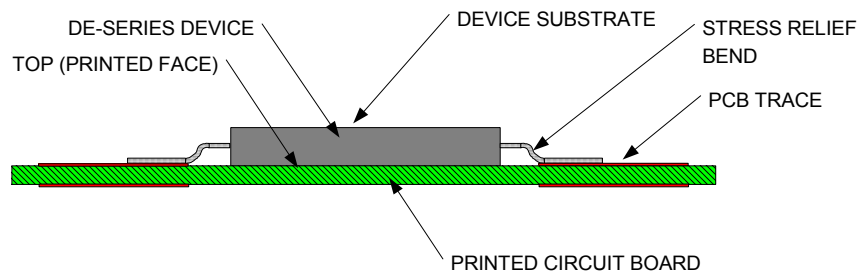


Figure 5 DE-SERIES Die Topology



SIDE CROSS-SECTION VIEW

Figure 9 Low Power Mounting

For low average power applications, the device may be mounted on the component side in traditional surface mount style as shown in Figure 9. (Low power is defined as that power level which will not exceed the free air dissipation rating of the device.) The MOSFET is mounted on the component side of the PCB, with the top (printed face) of the device flat against the PCB.

Quality and Reliability

DEI / IXYS are committed to setting a new standard for excellence in power semiconductors. Reflecting our dedication to industry leadership in the manufacture of medium to high power devices, reliability has assumed a primary position in raw material selection, design, and process technology. Reliability utilizes information derived from applied research, engineering design, analysis of field applications and accelerated stress testing and integrates this knowledge to optimize device design and manufacturing processes. All areas that impact reliability have received considerable attention in order to achieve our goal to be the #1 reliability supplier of power semiconductor products.

We believe DEI / IXYS products should be the most reliable components in your system. We have committed significant resources to continuously improve and optimize our device design, wafer fab processes, assembly processes and test capabilities. As a result of this investment, DEI / IXYS has realized a dramatic improvement in reliability performance on all standardized tests throughout the product line. Excellence in product reliability is “built-in”, not tested-in. Moreover, it requires a total systems approach, involving all parties: from design to raw materials to manufacturing. In addition to qualifying new products released to the market, life and environmental tests are periodically performed on standard products to maintain feedback on assembly and fabrication performance to assure product reliability.

To that end the following tests are preformed: High Temperature Reverse Bias (HTRB), High Temperature Gate Bias (HTGB), Temperature Cycle Humidity Test and Power Cycling. More information is available on ixysrf.com and www.ixys.com).

Conclusion

The DE-SERIES devices provide a combination of unparalleled speed, power and frequency. The specific advantages are reviewed below.

Key Advantages of the DE-SERIES

1. **Switching Speed:** \leq HF RF MOSFET devices and \approx 5-10 times faster than conventional MOSFETs.
2. **Frequency:** Equal to many HF RF devices and at least 5-10 times higher than conventional MOSFETs.
3. **High gain:** Approximately 3 times higher than HF RF MOSFET devices.
4. **Power Dissipation:** Approximately twice that of HF RF MOSFET devices and over 3 times higher than conventional MOSFET devices.
5. **High Power Surface mount design:** This allows the device to be loaded on to the PCB with all the other components in a high or low power configuration, simplifying mechanical assembly of the system.
6. **Lowered Mechanical Stress:** The device floats on the thermal compound such that the mounting hardware will not induce further package stress.
7. **Low Inductance Packaging:** The DE-SERIES has the lowest insertion inductance of any equivalent power device.
8. **Economical High Power Mounting:** The mounting configuration does not require machining of the PCB or an expensive clamping mechanism.

The DE-SERIES employs the most electrically, mechanically and thermally advanced high-speed device design available today. The combination of silicon die and packaging make the DE-SERIES the device of choice for high power high-speed applications.

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