

Heat Sink: An Overview and Recent Advances

Prem Chandra¹, Kanishk Sharma²

¹Research Scholar, Department of Mechanical Engineering, JECRC University Jaipur, Rajasthan-303905, India

²Associate Professor, Department of Mechanical Engineering, JECRC University Jaipur, Rajasthan-303905, India

premsdodh@gmail.com

Abstract:

Heat sinks are integral components in thermal management systems, designed to dissipate heat generated by electronic and mechanical devices. This paper provides an overview of the principles, design, and applications of heat sinks. Furthermore, it highlights recent advances in heat sink technology, including novel materials, manufacturing techniques, and design innovations that address the growing demand for efficient thermal management in various industries. A comparison between pin-fin and straight-fin heat sinks of similar dimensions is also included to elucidate performance differences.

Keywords- Heat sink, thermal management, heat dissipation, advanced materials, cooling techniques, electronic devices.

1. Introduction:

The fast-paced progress of electronics and power systems has generated excess heat in devices and demanded advanced cooling arrangements. Heat sinks hold great importance as temperature controllers to prevent overheating and thus prevent degradation in performance or even failure of the device in question. This paper deals with the fundamentals of heat sinks and their evolution against the technological challenges posed, with particular emphasis on the comparison between pin-fin and straight-fin designs.

2. Principles of Heat Sinks:

The principles of heat transfer encompass conduction, convection, and radiation, which are harnessed by heat sinks. Their main object is to enhance heat dissipation from hot surfaces into the surroundings. Heat sink performance strongly depends on thermally conductive capabilities, surface area, and airflow.

2.1 Heat Transfer Mechanisms:

- **Conduction:** Heat transfer through the solid material of the heat sink.
- **Convection:** Heat dissipation to the surrounding air or fluid.
- **Radiation:** Emission of heat energy in the form of electromagnetic waves.

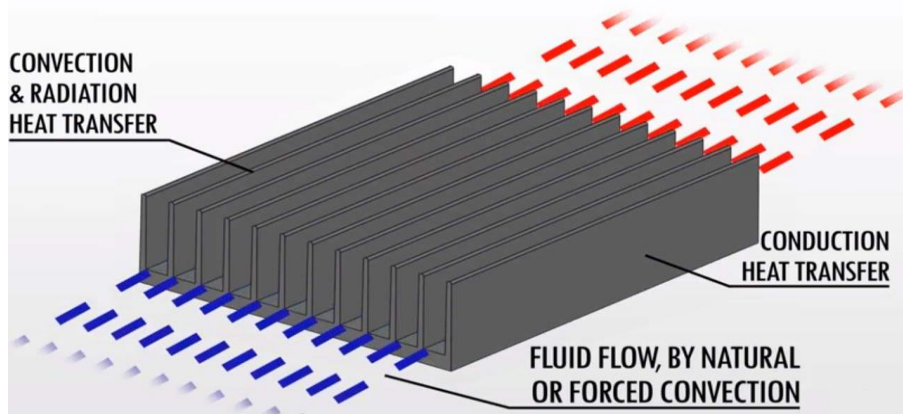


Fig.1 Heat Transfer Mechanisms

3. Design Considerations:

In the design of a heat sink, multiple aspects must be optimized for better effectiveness:

- **Material Selection:** Aluminum and copper, with high values of thermal conductivity, are materials generally used.
- **Geometry:** Fin shapes, sizes, and spacing influence the surface area and airflow.
- **Manufacturing Constraints:** Techniques like extrusion, die-casting, and additive manufacturing impact design feasibility.

4. Applications:

Heat sinks are widely used in:

- **Electronics:** Cooling processors, CPUs, and power modules.
- **Automotive:** Managing heat in electric vehicles and combustion engines.
- **Renewable Energy:** Dissipating heat in solar inverters and wind turbines.

5. Comparison of Pin-Fin and Straight-Fin Heat Sinks:

5.1 Overview of Designs:

- **Pin-Fin Heat Sinks:** These are comprised of an array of cylindrical or square pins oriented normal to the base. This configuration increases turbulence and thereby the heat transfer coefficient.

- **Straight-Fin Heat Sinks:** These have parallel fins extending from the base, which provide a more direct channel through which the airflow can travel easily and uniformly.

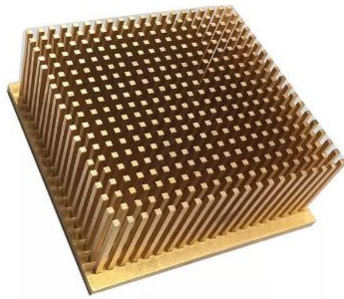


Fig. 2 Perspective view of the heat sink



Fig. 3 Straight fin heat sink

5.2 Thermal Performance:

- **Heat Dissipation Efficiency:** In terms of heat dissipation, pin fin heat sinks are usually better under forced convection conditions, owing to the turbulence and surface area involved. Straight fins do better in convection scenarios under natural conditions.
- **Pressure Drop:** Pin fin designs cause higher pressure drops with obstructed airflow, whereas straight fin heat sinks promote smoother airflow.

5.3 Manufacturing and Cost:

- **Pin-Fin:** Usually, manufacture production is more expensive because pin shapes are complex.
- **Straight-Fin:** More economical and easier to produce by extrusion or machining.

5.4 Applications:

- **Pin-Fin:** oftentimes it is more complicated to manufacture due to the intricate shapes of pins, which at times increases the production costs.
- **Straight-Fin:** It makes the production easier and cheaper through either extrusion or machining processes.

5.5 Applications:

- **Pin-fin:** Ideal for small electronics and systems that require high-performance cooling.
- **Straight-fin:** For those applications focused on cost-efficient and natural convection cooling.

6. Recent Advances in Heat Sink Technology:

With the growing demand for efficient cooling, significant advancements have been made in heat sink technology:

6.1 Advanced Materials:

- **Graphene and Carbon Nanotubes:** Exceptional thermal conductivity.
- **Phase-Change Materials (PCMs):** Enhanced heat absorption capabilities.

6.2 Innovative Manufacturing Techniques:

- **Additive Manufacturing (3D Printing):** Enables complex geometries and tailored designs.
- **Hybrid Heat Sinks:** Combination of different materials for optimized performance.

6.3 Enhanced Designs:

- **Micro channel Heat Sinks:** Improved heat transfer efficiency in compact designs.
- **Active Cooling Mechanisms:** Integration of fans or liquid cooling systems for dynamic thermal management.

7. Challenges and Future Directions:

Although paradoxical progress had been made from an oral report back to an internal corporate memo, the making of wallboards for presentations is an anomaly, as:

- Developing cost-efficient, high-performance materials.
- Integrating AI for real-time thermal management.
- Designing for sustainability and recyclability.

8. Conclusion:

Heat sinks became by far the most critical elements in modern technologies, where people keep on innovating new ways to work around the challenges concerning effective thermal management. Future heat sinks will couple new materials, novel designs, and advanced manufacturing techniques to meet the ever-evolving demands of high-performance system requirements. The comparison between pin-fin and straight-fin designs indicated the importance of the selection of the proper heat sink for given applications.

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