Reciprocating Compressors
Introduction

The current range of GE reciprocating compressors is backed by a full century of experience. In addition to the original Nuovo Pignone product line, designed and manufactured in Florence, Italy, the GE product portfolio also includes machines that began as the Gemini brand of high-speed reciprocating compressors, currently built in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, USA.

Today, GE is a world-leading manufacturer with a complete line of technologically advanced and work-proven API 618 and API 11P machines. Over 20,000 reciprocating compressors have been installed worldwide, wherever reliability and long life are essential to business success. Process applications include refineries, petrochemicals, herbicides, LPG, boil-off, refrigeration, and air. Natural gas applications include wellhead gas gathering, vapor recovery, gas re-injection, gas lift, pipeline gas transmission, gas storage, and fuel gas boosting.

Typically, the API 618 compression systems are engineered and offered directly by GE’s Oil & Gas business, while high-speed API 11P units are available through a network of authorized packagers and distributors that provide complete, cost-effective compression packages including a driven driver and a direct coupled reciprocating gas engine unit, if necessary in outcomes.

The success of the current generation of process compressors is the result of constant technological innovation that draws on the global resources and unmatched experience of GE. For example, an ethylene hyper-compressor rated for continuous duty with delivery pressure of up to 3500 bar requires the rigorous application of both modern design tools and proven product experience. These capabilities and technologies are employed throughout our lines of reciprocating compressors to provide greater efficiency, reliability, and safety.

The modular construction of GE reciprocating compressors is based on the use of standardized, well-proven components. Ease of maintenance is one benefit, full customisation at a reasonable cost is another. Our compressors are designed and manufactured using the Six-Sigma Quality system to deliver products with the highest level of performance, reliability, and availability. All of our reciprocating compressors are backed by GE’s O&G Global Services operation, which has a staff of experts that can provide installation, start-up and maintenance services anywhere in the world.

Performance, reliability and innovation.
API 618 Design

Pulsation Bottles

Pneumatic Valve Unloaders for Capacity Control

Main Oil Pump

Bearings

Connecting Rod (Die Forged Steel)

Counterweight for Balancing

Crankcase (Cast Iron)

Crankshaft (Forged Steel)

Crosshead (Steel)

Sliding Body

Ballast for Balancing of Inertia Forces

Distance Piece

Forged Cylinder

Cast Cylinder

Crankcase (Cast Iron)

Counterweight

Crankcase

Cylinder Valve

Crankshaft (Forged Steel)

Cylinder

Piston Rod

Rod Packing

Piston

Oil Wiper Packing

Oil Wiper

Hose Oil Pump

Bearing

Connecting Rod (Forged Steel)
Crankcase
The compressor crankcases are single piece cast iron castings. All medium and high power frames and 4 or 6 cylinder small power frames are equipped with tight-tolerance transverse spacers, fitted above the bearing housings between the two sides of the frame. This solution creates an extremely stiff, closed body, with an even distribution of stresses and strains. Large openings are provided in the crankcases, to cut the time and cost of maintenance procedures.

Crosshead Extensions
Crosshead extensions are made of cast iron and machined to exacting tolerances, to ensure optimum alignment of crosshead, cylinders and piston assemblies. The crosshead extensions are integral with the crankcase for the small OA, OC, HA, HB and all high speed models, while in larger frames they are separate components.

Crankshaft
All crankshafts are single-piece steel forgings. All feature balancing countermasses to minimize free inertia forces and moments. Countermasses of high-speed machines are integral with the shaft, while others are bolted on.

API 618 Features

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Bearings
Proprietary design AI-Sn (Aluminum-Tin) bi-metallic main and big end bearings are standard on all machines. They feature a much higher load capacity than the older tri-metallic bearings and do not require any adjustment at installation. The traditional central circumferential groove is replaced by two oil feeders positioned at 90 degrees with respect to the area where the maximum pin load occurs. The main bearings are split in the vertical plane to release the most heavily loaded area of surface discontinuities, increasing load capability and reliability still further. Bearings can be replaced without removing the shaft: big end and frame main bearings are identical in all machines with an open top frame.

Connecting rod
The connecting rods are made of die-forged steel. Small end bushings are of the tri-metallic type (baked shell, leaded bronze layer, galvanic white metal flash). An internal axial channel through the rod ensures reliable lubrication at both big and small ends.

Crosshead
Crossheads are made of steel and equipped with simply-squared replaceable shoes. Specific loads are kept to a minimum, resulting in an extremely high working life. Shoes are completely machine-finished and interchangeable. They do not require any manual adjustment or shimming.

Longer working life.
Hydraulic tightening devices
Depending on machine size, the main threaded connections (piston to piston rod, piston rod to crosshead, connecting rod to big end tie rods, frame crosspieces, anchor bolts, high pressure cylinder bolting) are hydraulically tightened. This method has many advantages including simple and safe operation, the highest resistance to loosening, simultaneous tightening of parallel tie rods, repeatability, and the absence of secondary bending or torsion effects on bolting.

Distance piece
All compressors are equipped with distance pieces between the crankcase and the cylinders. The distance pieces are available in many different configurations, among them single or double, pressurized or purged with inert gas, and vented to the atmosphere. The optimum configuration is selected in accordance with the process needs and Customer specifications.

Frame lubrication
The crank gear is lubricated by a forced feed system. A main mechanical pump driven by the compressor shaft and an auxiliary electric pump with similar flow are standard. On request, twin electric motor driven pumps may be supplied. All lube oils of Mains are of the twin type with chargepump valve, to allow filter maintenance during machine operation. Standard lube oil coolers are single, shell and tube, once again a twin-arrangement or different types of coolers may be supplied on request.

API 618 Features
Higher safety & reliability.

Connecting rod hydraulic tightening.

Suction valve assembly.
Suction valve components including PEEK rings and finger unloader.
API 618 Features

Cylinder lube oil console divider block type with a large capacity tank.

- Double compartment piston rod packing with nitrogen buffering.
- Piston rod packing and piston sealing elements: A complete range of state-of-the-art materials, including PEEK, is available to ensure the best performance under any condition, including non-lubricated applications or extremely high working pressures. Lubricated packings above 25 bar and all non-lubricated packings are cooled. Packing cups are made of stainless steel. The packing assembly may be configured with one or two gas recovery lines or with inert or sweet gas purging. A zero-leakage arrangement is available on request.
- Piston rod packing and rider bands: Usually of the same material used for the packing rings. The proprietary design rider band grooves are eccentric with respect to the axis of the piston rod, so that there is a higher protrusion of the rider band in the bottom part of the piston. This feature has many advantages, among them a greater thickness available for wear, and a lower average rod run-out.

Cylinder lubrication

- The cylinder bore and stuffing box may be lubricated, mini-lubricated or non-lubricated, according to process needs and Customer specification. Cylinder lubrication is of the forced feed type. Single-pump to point, divider block or a combination of the two systems may be supplied, as preferred.

Construction Materials

A wide range of materials is available to suit specific applications. For example, compressors can be manufactured in accordance with NACE standards for use in a sour gas environment. Different types of surface hardening and hard coatings, including tungsten carbide, are available for piston rods and cylinder liners.

State-of-the-art materials.
Instrumentation and controls

Provision for installation of a complete set of control and monitoring instrumentation (temperature, vibration, displacement etc.) is standard on all compressors; pressure indicator taps are provided on all cylinders. Actual instrumentation systems follow Customer specifications, and may range from simple instruments to a complete diagnostic system, enabling confident predictive maintenance of the unit.

A proprietary design control panel SCENETRON™ is also available on request, as is a wide selection of different step and/or continuous capacity control systems. Among them are valve unloaders, additional clearance pockets, recycle systems, and variable speed drives. A special automatically and continuously operated additional clearance pocket has recently been developed to make possible very precise capacity control with virtually no variation in thermodynamic efficiency.

API 618 Features

Advanced technology.

Drivers

GE’s Oil & Gas business has extensive experience with the use of every conceivable driver for a reciprocating compressor, on a wide range of applications. Among current installations are gas and steam turbines, variable and fixed speed electric motors, and gas engines. Over the years, the company has developed a unique in-house capability for the design of complete trains, including the specification of all components and the execution of both transient and steady state transient analyses.

Piping pulsation and vibration analyses and control

Piping pulsation and vibration analyses and control capabilities and experience have been under development at GE since 1965 when the first analogue simulator became available. Today, a team of world-class Oil & Gas specialists deals exclusively with piping, acoustic pulsation and mechanical vibrations using one of the most advanced computer programs, developed entirely in-house. Among its many capabilities, this program provides the input data for ‘cylinder-manifold analyses’ using advanced finite element analysis of the cylinder/pulsation bottle assembly. Cylinder-manifold analyses has been a standard part of our pulsation and vibration studies since 2002. The Oil & Gas team is also able to conduct an analysis for a complete LDPE plant (pressures up to 3500 bar), including the primary booster compressor, the hyper compressor, the reactor, the vessels and the complete interconnecting piping.

Seamless teamwork with the rest of the Oil & Gas Engineering Department ensures an optimized integrated design of the plant and compressor components from the acoustic and vibration standpoint.

The ability of the compressor manufacturer to perform all necessary pulsation and vibration analyses activities gives the Customer the great benefit of a single-source of responsibility for this highly critical function.
Every year energy companies around the world choose high speed reciprocating compressors to meet their gas compression needs. Today’s energy companies recognize that these compressors provide an economic, flexible and reliable method to develop their oil and gas resources.

To serve the needs of our Customers in the oil and gas industry, GE offers a full line of high speed reciprocating compressors, ranging from 30 HP (22 kW) to 9000 HP (6,700 kW) with a variety of piston rod load capacities and frame stroke combinations. Over 10,000 of our compressors can be found around the globe, working in gas boosting, gathering, lifting, fueling and injecting applications - operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

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GE API 11P High Speed Reciprocating Compressors

GE API 11P compressors are integrated into a package by a global network of authorized packagers and distributors. The compressor is matched with a driver, coolers, controls and piping onto a single skid, allowing the complete compressor package to be easily moved to a new location. This concept lowers your installation, site construction and re-application costs.

Our compressors are also designed to be direct connected via a flexible coupling to a variety of economical prime movers, including reciprocating natural gas engines (1700 to 1800 RPM) and electric motors (750 RPM to 1800 RPM). A variety of compressor frame strokes allows the compressor to be perfectly matched to the optimum driver.

The modular design of GE high speed reciprocating compressors allows frames and cylinders to be matched and re-arranged with only minor changes to the skid. For example, many cylinders will fit on as many as three different frames. Also, cylinders are designed to have identical flange connections, helping to keep inventory levels for idle machinery and spare parts to a minimum.

It is the nature of natural gas production that field pressures and flows often change. Therefore greater productivity can be attained if the compressor is easily adaptable to the new operating conditions. Many of our compressors feature field replaceable cylinder liners which allow the cylinder bore to be increased or decreased as conditions change. In many cases, there is no need to modify the on-skid piping and accessories, further lowering modification costs. Also, in case of damage to the cylinder bore, it is less expensive and less time consuming to replace a liner than a complete cylinder. A variety of capacity control devices are also available, including our patented variable volume clearance pockets, featuring generous clearance volumes. The ensures that horsepower is not wasted.

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The need to install a complex compression plant at a remote site or in a hostile environment often presents logistical problems which require heavy outlays or extended schedules when using conventional techniques. A simpler solution can be found in pre-packaging. A complete factory-built and pre-tested unit, designed for ease of transport and final assembly, can achieve dramatic savings.

GE has developed unique in-house resources dedicated to the design, assembly, and testing of complete compression packages. Solutions range from simple skid-mounted compressors for onshore applications to standalone modules ready to be installed on offshore platforms.

A 3-D CAD system is used to develop the plant layout. It is also capable of generating an accurate ergonomic design, detecting and correcting spatial interference, and automatically generating piping isometrics and the associated bill-of-materials.

GE reciprocating compressors for oil and gas applications are subjected to thorough inspection and testing throughout the manufacturing process, in order to ensure the highest quality and a long, productive life. All machines receive a full speed run-in test with a shop motor. The standard Quality Control Plan can be integrated with particular Customer requests, from simple additional checks on components to rigorous testing of complete compression plants, either no-load or full load. In carrying out these and other tests, GE customers can take advantage of some of the largest and most complete testing facilities in the compressor industry.

To achieve and maintain the highest technological and quality level of our products, all design, procurement, manufacturing and testing activities are carried out in accordance with a rigorous Quality Management System (QMS) based on the most widely accepted international standard, ISO 9001 Ed. 00. An internal Certified Calibration Center is used to calibrate all measurement and testing instruments in the company's plants. The QMS in operation at GE Oil & Gas business is certified by Lloyd's Register Certification.

Optimal solutions.
Global Services

Our Global Services group is dedicated to maintaining and servicing more than 3,000 installed GE reciprocating compressors. It serves as a single point of contact for Customers, providing easy and prompt access for both preventive and emergency maintenance. The range of available services includes:

- Installation, commissioning and start-up (supervision or turnkey).
- Technical assistance; event analysis, troubleshooting, and advice on operational matters.
- Parts, overhauls and repairs; revamping/improvement of existing units; Conversions, Modifications and Upgrades (CM&Us).
- On-condition maintenance through advanced monitoring and diagnostics programs.

GE’s Oil & Gas business is constantly developing innovative solutions to put the latest technology and processes to work for our Customers. For example, we were among the first to offer a continuous monitoring system for small and big end bearings based on passive sensors (no power source necessary) mounted on the connecting rods, with the receiving unit installed in a small, robust container close to the compressor.

Global Services

Training

GE offers training for the operation and maintenance of our complete line of machinery and equipment. Training can be provided either at the client’s site or at the GE Learning Center, located at the Oil & Gas headquarters in Florence, Italy. Instructors are field-seasoned experts who combine their understanding of theory with extensive practical experience. The training they provide is valued by our Customers for improving the skills of their operations and maintenance personnel, to assure safety and superior equipment efficiency and availability.

Close to the Customer

Courses and documentation are customized to meet the specific needs of our Customers, focusing on the GE machinery and equipment actually installed at their sites.

Effectiveness and efficiency

Traditional training tools are augmented with computer-based training and interactive multimedia technology. Courses and technical literature can be provided in a variety of languages.
Applications: Processing

- LDPE hypercompressor - model 12PK/2
- Polypropylene plant compressor package - model 2HA/2 during shop test
- Hydrogen Make-up compressor - model 6HG/4
- Syngas compressor - model 6HG/3
- Fuel gas boosting compressor - model B452 at 50 bar
- Offshore gas turbine driven compressor – model 4HE/2 at 280 bar
- Gas gathering-engine driven high speed compressor - model 6HM/1 at 71 bar
- Gas storage compression unit - model 6HP/1 at 71 bar

Extensive experience in a broad range of processing applications

Hydrogen Make-up compressor - model 6HG/4

Applications: Natural Gas

- Fuel gas boosting compressor - model B452 at 50 bar
- Re-injection compressor – model 4HE/2 at 370 bar
- Re-injection compressor – model 6HE/2 at 415 bar
- Offshore gas turbine driven compressor – model 4HE/2 at 280 bar

Covering the needs of all Natural Gas applications
A full century experience, characterized by intensive and never ending focus on technology improvements, the broadest line of compressors coupled with the most varied applications in all sectors, and the toughest records achieved, make GE an unquestionable world leader in oil and gas applications.

API 618 Series O and H Process Compressors
Designed in accordance with API 618, for heavy duty applications in process applications, these units fit the broadest and most stringent market requirements.

API 618 and vertical Natural Gas Compressor Series AVTN, BVTN, SHM, SHMB
AVTN, BVTN: vertical standard compressors for fuel gas service.
HM, SHM: high speed API 618, heavy duty models, designed for continuous duty in the oil and gas industry. Onshore and offshore applications. Wide cylinder line, lubricated and un lubricated.
SHMB: fully balanced, designed for vibration-free applications, offshore and onshore.

Series P Hypercompressor
Unique, compact hypercompressors for the extremely demanding conditions of LDPE production.

API 11P High Speed Reciprocating Compressors
Balanced opposed high speed compressors of rugged design for heavy duty service in oil and gas field applications.

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