

ESD TR18.0-01-14

ESD Association Technical Report

ESD TR18.0-01-14
Revision of ESD TR18.01-11

*For ESD Electronic Design
Automation Checks*

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ESD Association



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Published by:

**Electrostatic Discharge Association
7900 Turin Road, Bldg. 3
Rome, NY 13440**

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Printed in the United States of America

This technical report was originally designated ESD TR18.0-01-11 and was published on September 21, 2011. ESD TR18.0-01-14 is a revision of ESD TR18.0-01-11 and was published on January 9, 2015. At the time TR18.0-01-14 was prepared, the EDA Tool subcommittee had the following members:

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 PURPOSE	1
2.0 INTRODUCTION	1
3.0 ESD CHECKS THROUGHOUT IC DESIGN FLOW	2
3.1 PRODUCT DEFINITION PHASE	3
3.2 CHIP ARCHITECTURE PHASE	4
3.3 MODULE AND FULL IC DESIGN PHASE.....	4
3.3.1 <i>Floorplanning of the Chip Architecture Modules and the Standard Digital I/O and Power Banks</i>	4
3.3.2 <i>Design of IP Modules and Analog I/O Pad Rings</i>	4
3.3.3 <i>Full Chip IP and I/O Integration, Including Package</i>	5
3.4 DESIGN QUALIFICATION PHASE.....	5
4.0 BASIC ESD CONCEPTS	6
4.1 ESD DESIGN WINDOW.....	6
4.2 SINGLE DEVICES FAILURE CONDITIONS.....	7
4.2.1 <i>Passive Elements</i>	8
4.2.2 <i>Diodes</i>	9
4.2.3 <i>Bipolar Transistors</i>	10
4.2.4 <i>MOS Transistors</i>	11
4.3 GENERIC TOPOLOGY FAILURE CONDITIONS.....	12
4.3.1 <i>Serial Connections</i>	12
4.3.2 <i>Parallel Connections</i>	13
4.4 ESD PROTECTION TOPOLOGY FAILURE CONDITIONS.....	14
4.5 OVERVIEW OF ESD PROTECTION APPROACHES.....	16
4.5.1 <i>ESD Protection Devices</i>	16
4.5.2 <i>ESD Protection Circuits</i>	17
5.0 VERIFICATION OF CIRCUITS TO BE PROTECTED FROM ESD	20
5.1 VERIFICATION OF CIRCUITS THAT CANNOT SHUNT ESD ENERGY	20
Rule 5.1.1 <i>Verify Protection of Pad-Connected Gate Oxides</i>	20
Rule 5.1.2 <i>Verify Protection of Decoupling Capacitors (VDD-VSS)</i>	24
Rule 5.1.3 <i>Verify Protection of Gates along Power Cross Domains Paths</i>	25
Rule 5.1.4 <i>Verify Protection of Weak Devices (e.g. DeNMOS, LDMOS, Small Width Devices, etc.)</i>	27
5.2 VERIFICATION OF CIRCUITS THAT ARE REQUIRED TO SHUNT ALL ESD ENERGY.....	30
Rule 5.2.1 <i>Verify Self-Protecting Transistors (e.g. I/O Buffer) have Appropriate Parameters (Width, Gate Length, Metal Routing, etc.)</i>	31
Rule 5.2.2 <i>Verify Self-Protecting Embedded/Body Diodes have Appropriate Parameters (Perimeter, Anode-Cathode Spacing, Metal Routing, etc.)</i>	31
Rule 5.2.3 <i>Verify Self-Protecting Capacitors have Appropriate Capacitance</i>	31

5.3	VERIFICATION OF CIRCUITS THAT ARE ABLE TO SHUNT A PORTION OF THE ESD ENERGY	32
Rule 5.3.1	Verify Avoidance of Big Buffer Topologies Forming Low Impedance Path during ESD.....	33
Rule 5.3.2	Verify Avoidance of Parasitics Forming Low Impedance Path During ESD.....	35
Rule 5.3.3	Verify Avoidance of any Topologies with Ability to Sustain ESD Current in Normal Device Operating Mode (Diode, BJT, FET, Mixed-Voltages) Forming Low Impedance Path during ESD.....	39
6.0	VERIFICATION OF ESD PROTECTION NETWORK INTEGRATION	41
6.1	CELL LEVEL ESD CHECKS	42
Rule 6.1.1	Verify that Correct Version of the Device/Design Kit/Cell/Library is being used when using Standard Library Cells or Parameterized Cells (PCELLs)	43
Rule 6.1.2	Verify Compliance of Individual and Multiple Cell Devices with ESD Geometrical Rules	43
Rule 6.1.3	Verify ESD Protection Element between I/O and Power (VDD, VSS) Rails, including Correct Device Polarity, within I/O Cell	44
Rule 6.1.4	Verify Power Clamp Between Power Rails (VDD, VSS), Including Correct Device Polarity, within I/O or Supply Cell	46
Rule 6.1.5	Verify Trigger Circuit Implementation in Transient-Triggered Designs.....	48
Rule 6.1.6	Verify Termination Cell Implementation.....	51
Rule 6.1.7	Verify Interface Cell Implementation.....	52
Rule 6.1.8	Verify Device Rating Compliance in Cell Implementation	55
Rule 6.1.9	Verify Robustness of Metal Lines and Interconnects along the ESD Protection Discharge Path.....	57
Rule 6.1.10	Verify Compliance of Extracted Metal Resistances of the Paths within the Cell with Allowed Design Limits.....	57
Rule 6.1.11	Verify Implementation of Secondary ESD Protection Scheme.....	59
6.2	INTRA POWER DOMAIN ESD CHECKS	61
Rule 6.2.1	Verify that the Correct Type and Most Recent Version of I/O Cell is used in the I/O Bank.....	61
Rule 6.2.2	Verify the Compliance with I/O Placement Rules for ESD Distributed Schemes.....	63
Rule 6.2.3	Verify the Presence of Intended ESD Current Path for Each Pin-Pair Combination within an I/O Bank	64
Rule 6.2.4	Verify Robustness of Metal Lines and Interconnects for all ESD Discharge Paths within an I/O Bank.....	66
Rule 6.2.5	Verify Compliance of Estimated Bus Resistance Between Pad and ESD Cell/ Device in an I/O Bank.....	67
Rule 6.2.6	Check the Integration of ESD Protection Elements and Bumps/Bondpads	69
Rule 6.2.7	Verify the ESD Triggering and Clamping Characteristics taking into Account Power Domain Capacitance	73
Rule 6.2.8	Perform First Order Evaluation of ESD Robustness by Calculating Pad Voltage for ESD Stress within the I/O Bank.....	75
6.3	INTER POWER DOMAIN ESD VERIFICATION	78

<i>Rule 6.3.1</i>	<i>Verify that the Correct Type and Most Recent Versions of ESD Cells Between Power Domains are used</i>	<i>78</i>
<i>Rule 6.3.2</i>	<i>Verify the Presence of Intended ESD Current Paths Between any Pin Pairs Belonging to Different Power Domains.....</i>	<i>78</i>
<i>Rule 6.3.3</i>	<i>Verify Placement/Connectivity of Correct ESD Cells Between Power Domains.....</i>	<i>80</i>
<i>Rule 6.3.4</i>	<i>Verify Metal Width and Interconnect for Routes Between Power Domains, Including ESD Cells Along the ESD Discharge Path.....</i>	<i>82</i>
<i>Rule 6.3.5</i>	<i>Verify Compliance of Estimated Bus Resistance Between Two Pads in Different Power Domains with Design Limits.....</i>	<i>86</i>
<i>Rule 6.3.6</i>	<i>Perform First Order Evaluation of ESD Robustness by Calculating Pad Voltage for ESD Stress Between Power Domains</i>	<i>87</i>
6.4	PACKAGE LEVEL ESD CHECKS	90
<i>Rule 6.4.1</i>	<i>Verify the Integrity of the Overall ESD Protection Network Achieved at Package Pin Level</i>	<i>90</i>
<i>Rule 6.4.2</i>	<i>Verify that Package RLC Network is Compatible with Overall ESD Protection Scheme.....</i>	<i>93</i>
<i>Rule 6.4.3</i>	<i>Verify the Integrity of the Overall ESD Protection Network Achieved at Package Pin Level when Having Multi-Die (System in a Package) Designs</i>	<i>95</i>
<i>Rule 6.4.4</i>	<i>Verify that CDM Peak Current of the Package-Die System is Below the Maximum CDM Current Tolerated by the IC</i>	<i>96</i>
7.0	OVERVIEW OF ESD EDA VERIFICATION APPROACHES	99
8.0	CONCLUSIONS	104
9.0	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	104
10.0	GLOSSARY/DEFINITIONS.....	104
11.0	REFERENCES	107

TABLES

Table 1.	Cell Level ESD Check Summary	43
Table 2.	Example of an RC-Triggered Clamp Design Specification	50
Table 3.	ESD EDA Rules Summary	101

FIGURES

Figure 1:	Simple ESD Verification Flow Mapped to Sample IC Design Flow and Referenced to Rules.	2
Figure 2:	Generic ESD Design Window.	6
Figure 3:	Wunsch-Bell Model for Power to Failure vs. Time to Failure.....	7
Figure 4:	Voltage Acceleration of NFET Stressed in Inversion for Seven Oxide Thicknesses (6.85 to 1.1 nm).....	8
Figure 5:	Generic Two-Pin Representation of Passives.	8

Figure 6:	Generic Two-Pin Representation of Diodes.	9
Figure 7:	Generic NPN Bipolar Representation.	10
Figure 8:	Generic MOS Representation.	11
Figure 9:	Generic Serial Connection.	12
Figure 10:	Example Topology for Serial Connection.	13
Figure 11:	Generic Parallel Connection of Basic Element.	13
Figure 12:	Example Topology for Parallel Connection.	14
Figure 13:	Design Case with ESD Energy Shunted Through the ESD Clamping Device.	15
Figure 14:	Design Case with ESD Energy Shunted Through the Circuits to be Protected.	15
Figure 15:	Design Case with ESD Energy Shared Between the ESD Clamp Circuit and the Circuit to be Protected.	16
Figure 16:	ESD Elements with Various Triggering Mechanisms.	17
Figure 17:	Rail Clamp vs. Local Clamp Based Protection Approaches.	18
Figure 18:	Using Low Resistance Master VSS Bus vs. APD Connected Ground Domains.	19
Figure 19:	Breakdown Voltage Acceleration as a Function of the Physical Oxide Thickness for NFET and PFET Stressed at 25°C in the HBM Range of Time for a Normalized Size of 1.2 μm^2	21
Figure 20:	Pad-Connected Gate Oxide.	21
Figure 21:	Generic Secondary Protection Element to Reduce Voltage Built Across a Gate Oxide.	23
Figure 22:	As the Parasitic Resistance from the Primary ESD Protection Element to VSS Pad Exceeds a Critical Value, the Need for a Secondary ESD Protection Element to the Input Arises	23
Figure 23:	Decoupling Capacitor Example (VDD-VSS)	24
Figure 24:	Example Case of Decoupling Cap Insertion for Flip-Chip ESD Protection in I/O	25
Figure 25:	Typical Signal Cross-Domain ESD Issue.	25
Figure 26:	Simplified Cross-Domain Resistive ESD Network Model	26
Figure 27:	Full-Chip Cross-Domain Voltage Map for Stress Between Domain 3 and Domain 1, with Indication of Over-Voltage Situation at the I/O Interface of Domain 1	26
Figure 28:	Screenshot of the Results of the Cross-Domain Schematic Checking Tool, Highlighting an NFET Device (N10) Whose Terminals are Connected to Two Different Power Domains	27
Figure 29:	Illustration of ESD Shell Models for MOSFETS	28
Figure 30:	Tool Flow Chart.	29
Figure 31:	ESD Verification Flow From.	29
Figure 32:	A Cross-Section Image of the Parasitic Bipolar that can be Formed when an N- Well is Connected to an I/O Pad that is too Close to Another N-Well Connected to a Different Pad	30
Figure 33:	Screenshot of the DRC Tool Results Showing Error Regions Where an N-Well Resistor is Placed too Close to a PFET	30
Figure 34:	Generic Representation of Distributed Decoupling Capacitors Between Power Supplies	32
Figure 35:	Generic Ballasting Resistor to Protect a Topology Able to Withstand a Finite Current During ESD Conditions.	33
Figure 36:	“Big-Buffer” ESD Example	34
Figure 37:	Instruction Set Example in a Commercial Tool to Screen out Big-Buffer Topology in a Design Netlist	35

Figure 38: Generic Parasitic Bipolar Embedded in MOS.....	35
Figure 39: “Hot” Parasitic Bipolar NPN Formed by Adjacent n-type Diffusions in the Same Substrate.....	36
Figure 40: Hot Transistor, Source Connected to Signal Pin (I/O) and Drain Connected to Ground Pin (VSS).....	37
Figure 41: Hot NPN Parasitic Formed with Emitter Connected to Signal Pin, Collector Connected to Ground Pin, and Base Connected to Ground Pin.....	37
Figure 42: Typical ESD Snap-Back I-V and its Parameters.....	38
Figure 43: An ESD Network Graph, Representing the ESD Elements Through the Parameters of ESD IV's and Connectivity.....	38
Figure 44: Generic Inverter with Explicit Body-Diodes D1 And D2.....	39
Figure 45: Example of a Typical Circuit Using Mixed-Voltage Device Design.....	40
Figure 46: IC Schematic with Protection Circuits to be Extracted.....	40
Figure 47: Identified Possible ESD Active Devices in the ESD 'Critical' Path for the Circuit In Figure 46, and Devices ESD I-V Parameters.....	41
Figure 48: Examples of Intended ESD Discharge Paths.....	42
Figure 49: Example of Silicide Block Spacing Rule.....	44
Figure 50: ESD I/O Protection Element Verification.....	45
Figure 51: Example Case for Flip-Chip ESD Protection in I/O.....	45
Figure 52: Optimization of ESD Protection Elements.....	45
Figure 53: Comprehensive and Fast ESD Discharging Path Check with Connectivity, Resistance, and Current Density Checks.....	46
Figure 54: ESD Power Clamp Verification.....	47
Figure 55: A Cross-Domain Layout Example.....	47
Figure 56: A Cross-Domain Circuit Schematic Example.....	48
Figure 57: Typical RC-Triggered Clamp Schematic.....	49
Figure 58: Example of a Remote Trigger RC Power Clamp Topology.....	49
Figure 59: Example of a Possible Clamp Integration Problem.....	51
Figure 60: Example of Rule 6.1.6.....	52
Figure 61: Two Examples of Different Interface Cells Used Between Power Domains to be Checked by Rule 6.1.7.....	53
Figure 62: Illustrative Example Of “Controller” Placement.....	54
Figure 63: Check Flow for Top Level Verification.....	54
Figure 64: Example of Rule 6.1.8.....	55
Figure 65: Example of I/O Controller Component.....	56
Figure 66: Improperly Connected Gates and Power Domains in a Digital Circuit.....	56
Figure 67: ESD Metallization Robustness Verification.....	57
Figure 68: Example of Rule 6.1.10.....	58
Figure 69: An Approach for Resistance and Current Density Checks for ESD Protection Network.....	59
Figure 70: Secondary ESD Protection Implementation Example in CMOS and Bipolar Technologies.....	60
Figure 71: ESD Verification Flow and Circuit Topology used to Check Gate Oxide Protection Crossing Power Domains.....	60
Figure 72: ESD Checker Tool Verification Flow.....	62
Figure 73: ESD Checker Tool Error Viewer GUI.....	62

Figure 74: ESD Distributed Scheme Verification	63
Figure 75: Floorplan Example of Different I/O Cells for I/O Ring Layout.....	64
Figure 76: Example Placement of the Clamp (M1), Trigger Circuit (T) and Decoupling Capacitor (C1) I/O Cells in a Self-Protecting 24 I/O Bank	64
Figure 77: Checking Missing ESD Protection Between VDD and VSS When I/O 1 and I/O 2 Share the Same Power/Ground Domains	65
Figure 78: Lacking of Both a Supply Clamp Cell and a Supply Controller Highlighting Rule 6.2.3 Violation	65
Figure 79: Typical I-V Curve for a Snapback Clamp and I-V Curve for a Diode is a Degenerate Case with $V_h=V_{t1}$	66
Figure 80: Current Density Check of an HBM/MM Event with Diodes/Clamps Represented as I-V Curves	66
Figure 81: ESD EM Map Shows the HBM Failure on P2 and AVSS Nets.....	67
Figure 82: Schematic Illustration of Metal Bus Resistance Between a Pad and ESD Device.....	67
Figure 83: Methodology Steps to Verify ESD Protection Network Using Validation Software to Analyze the Design Netlist	68
Figure 84: Software Highlights Parallel Power Clamps in Discharge Paths from V _{dde} Pad to V _{sse} Pad.....	68
Figure 85: Example of Rule 6.2.6 Showing that any VDD/VSS Bump Should be Electrically Close to an ESD Protection Element Within R _{crit} Ohm.....	70
Figure 86: Flip-Chip Example.....	70
Figure 87: Resistance Check Methodology Flow Diagram	71
Figure 88: Simulation Flow Diagram of Software Tool for Full Chip ESD Network Verification ..	72
Figure 89: Detailed ESD Event Analysis Highlighting the Most Critical Layers, in Terms of Resistance or Current Density Violation	72
Figure 90: Visualization of the Current Crowding Issues that were Observed in the M9 Layer ..	73
Figure 91: Example of Rule 6.2.7.....	74
Figure 92: Substrate Modeling for 3-D Mesh of RC Extraction and Distributed Well-Diode and Hooked up to Metal Grid RLC Network	74
Figure 93: CDM Failure Test Case with -500 Volt Zap on IOP Pin.....	75
Figure 94: Power/Ground Grid RLC, Signal Coupled RC, Substrate RC, Well Diodes, Package RLC, and Pogo Pin RLC are Considered in the ESD CDM Simulation During a CDM Event	75
Figure 95: Example of Pin to Pin Stress Condition on a Simple I/O Ring.....	76
Figure 96: Example of Rule 6.2.8.....	77
Figure 97: Schematic of a Power Domain with Parallel Power Clamps and the Set of Two Piece-Wise Linear I-V Characteristics of the Power Clamps used for the Permutation Method.....	77
Figure 98: Typical Multiple Power Domains Implementations	79
Figure 99: Circuit with Negative Supply Rail in Different Hierarchy	80
Figure 100: A 5-Volt VDD is Protected Against its Neighboring 3.3-Volt VDD by a Grounded-Gate FET (ggFET)	81
Figure 101: Anti-Parallel Diodes Between Neighboring VDD Busses Creates a Short and Robust ESD Protection Path.....	81
Figure 102: An Example Checking the Discharge Path Between Two I/O in Different Power Domains as Per Rule 6.3.4	82

Figure 103: Screenshot of the Results of the Current Density-Based Tool Run, Showing Regions of High Current Spots Greater than the Allowed Maximum Current Densities in a Metal Bus82

Figure 104: Optical Image of a Part After Failure Analysis, Showing Regions of BEOL Failure Matching the Predicted Failure Regions by the Current Density-Based Tool83

Figure 105: Layout and Simulated Current Densities in the Top Metal Layers and Vias of an Input Circuit Containing a Pad, Two ESD Diodes, and Two Power Nets83

Figure 106: Current Densities in Selected Layers Over the Top Half of Np-Pw ESD Diode84

Figure 107: A 3D View of the Low-Capacitance Pad84

Figure 108: Individual Metal Layers Contributions (In Percent) to Total Pad Capacitance85

Figure 109: Flowchart of Verification ESD Tool85

Figure 110: A Diagram Showing the Shortest ESD Path Found by the Verification ESD Tool86

Figure 111: Estimating the Total Bus Resistance of the Bussing Connections Between Pads Belonging to Different Power Domains87

Figure 112: An Example of I/O Ring Analysis88

Figure 113: Example of Voltage Drop Analysis in Multiple Power Domain System89

Figure 114: Schematic Representation of Power Rails with the Main ESD Protection Elements and Schematic Indication Missing Connection Between VSSB and VSSP Leading to the Fail of the Parasitic Bipolar90

Figure 115: Example of Rule 6.4.191

Figure 116: Package Level ESD Network Verification92

Figure 117: CDM Waveforms for Different Package Trace Time Delays92

Figure 118: Current Through ESD Element at the Far End of the Transmission Line on Different Chip Pad93

Figure 119: Schematic for Spice Simulation of CDM Waveforms93

Figure 120: The Presence of the Package RLC Parasitics Could Lead to the Increase of the ESD Stress Levels V_{dev} at the Internal Circuit Nodes94

Figure 121: Chip-Level CDF Model Extraction And Simulation Process Flow94

Figure 122: A Macromodel for Each Subsystem in a Chip, and Equivalent Circuits Driven by Protection Circuits, Input Buffer, and Output Buffer94

Figure 123: Example of Cross-Die ESD Path in a Multi-Die (System in a Package Design)95

Figure 124: CDM Peak Current Dependence on Package Size and Type96

Figure 125: Flip-Chip Package Cross-Section; C_{dut} is Between the Silicon Die/Package and Metal Lid that is Separated by Thermal Interface Material (TIM)97

Figure 126: Two Paths of CDM Peak Current97

Figure 127: A Package with a 3-Layer Substrate Placed on the Field Plate of the FICDM Tester98

Figure 128: Data Flow Diagram of the Automated Peak Current Estimation Tool98

ESD ASSOCIATION TECHNICAL REPORT FOR ESD ELECTRONIC DESIGN AUTOMATION CHECKS**1.0 PURPOSE**

The purpose of this document is to provide a guideline for both EDA industry and ESD design community to establish a comprehensive ESD electronic design automation (EDA) verification flow satisfying the ESD design challenges of modern ICs. This includes the definition of a common terminology and the description of the required check types. The document is also aimed to convey the basic ESD concepts and their implementation during the IC design process to EDA industry.

The document is not limited to specific ESD concepts or EDA solutions of specific vendors, but covers in a generic way typical checks which require a certain EDA tool set and database. Once these tools are available it is the responsibility of an IC design company, integrated device manufacturer (IDM) or foundry to implement the specific rules as part of their particular design and verification flows.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The verification of ESD protection of a complex IC design with many supply domains and voltage levels, various functional parts (RF, digital, analog) and high voltage circuitry is extremely challenging. Consequently, manual verification of the ESD protection poses significant risks of missing design flaws. Therefore, an automated ESD check - partial or complete - is highly desired in today's design flow.

To address this need, many IC design companies have created in-house tools and flows to perform automated ESD checks. However, most of these tools focus on specific ESD checks and lack comprehensive ESD check functionality [1, 2, 3].

An ideal ESD verification flow should:

- Provide broad check coverage, allow components' verification along the progress of a design, and include ESD checks at all IC design phases (conceptual phase, main design phase and final IC verification) to avoid changes of circuit blocks (to ensure ESD compliance) at the later stages of the design.
- Limit the required manual checks to a minimum.
- Be transparent and seamlessly integrate into the adopted design flow and design rule checking environment.
- Be run directly by IC designers.
- Provide clear and informative descriptions of violations; do not report false positive violations.

This report will describe an ESD EDA verification flow meeting the aforementioned requirements. The structure of the report is as follows:

- Section 3.0 outlines how the different checks described throughout the report correspond to typical IC product and ESD IP development flows. It also highlights design data/information available for use by ESD EDA tools at each product stage.
- Section 4.0 introduces basic ESD concepts.
- Section 5.0 provides an overview of checks to verify that circuits in the design are properly protected from ESD. These checks verify circuits that cannot shunt ESD energy, circuits that are required to shunt all ESD energy, and the ones that are able to shunt a portion of the ESD energy.
- Section 6.0 describes the checks aimed at the verification of the ESD protection network integrations. These checks are performed at cell level, intra-power domain level, inter-power domain level and package level.