

Being safe around collaborative and versatile robots in shared spaces

# **Protocol**

### **Test Robot Arm for Collision with Fixed Object (measurement of peak pressure)**

#### **ROB-LIE-4**

The specific purpose of this protocol is to validate the safety skill "limit interaction energy" by measurement. Its scope is limited to robot arms operating in the domain Manufacturing. In this context, the skill "limit inter-action energy" is often used to protect workers from injuries caused by robot collisions where the robot traps a part of the human body against a fixed obstacle. The validation of this protocol requires that the reader has a bio-fidel force and pressure measurement device available. The instrument must allow for measuring the highest pressure during the collision.



**COVR is a community effort and values any honest feedback to our services. Please feel free to express your opinion about this protocol[. The feedback form is only one click away.](https://webclient.moreapp.com/#/form/5e2918be6db54b1a2047fab6) Thanks for making COVR even better!** 

Disclaimer: This protocol reflects the current and collectively developed state of the art in the validation of a specific safety skill for a collaborative robot. However, you may have to adapt the described validation procedure to be feasible for your particular application, circumstances and applicable regulations. Neither the COVR project consortium as a whole nor any individual partner of the consortium takes, therefore, any responsibility for the correctness and completeness of the validation procedure described here.





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# **CONTENTS**





# <span id="page-2-0"></span>1 Introduction

The purpose of this protocol is to validate through measurement whether the contact force and pressure that the robot applies to the human operator during physical contact do not exceed the applicable biomechanical limit values (e.g., those of ISO/TS 15066). This protocol is specifically intended for validating crushing contact, in which the robot clamps one or more body parts of the human operator, since they are spatially constrained by an obstacle and cannot move freely. Depending on the robot velocity, the load curve can have a transient and quasi-static phase. For collisions at low robot velocities, the transient phase is likely to increase almost linear without a clear extrema. The testing procedure described below involves a bio-fidel instrument that the user must mount on a stiff frame.

**Example:** A lightweight robot executes a pick and place task next to a robot operator. A typical case of foreseeable misuse is when the operator spontaneously reaches into the robot workspace, for instance to correct the position of a slipped component. In such a situation, the robot may the hand of the human. The physical contact between robot and human will most likely last longer than 0.5 s, why it is classified as quasi-static.



*Figure 1: Exemplary situation of a crush (left) and the principle test setup to analyze such contacts (right)*

# <span id="page-2-1"></span>1.1 Scope and limitation

This protocol is specifically limited to the following profile:







#### **Warning**

This protocol supports users only to validate the effectiveness of the skill listed in the profile above. The skill should be a technical measure for the robot system to mitigate the risk of one potentially hazardous situation as identified in the mandatory risk assessment. Consequently, the risk assessment must be done before using this protocol.

# <span id="page-3-0"></span>1.2 Definitions and Terms

#### **Industrial robot (source: EN ISO 10218-1)**

Automatically controlled, reprogrammable, multipurpose manipulator, programmable in three or more axes, which can be either fixed in place or mobile for use in industrial automation applications

#### **Industrial robotic system (source: EN ISO 10218-1)**

System comprising:

- Industrial robot
- $\blacksquare$  End effector(s)
- any machinery, equipment, devices, external auxiliary axes or sensors supporting the robot performing its task

#### **Collaborative operation (source: EN ISO/TS 15066)**

State in which a purposely designed robot system and an operator work within a collaborative workspace.

#### **Collaborative robot (source: EN ISO 10218-2)**

A robot designed for direct interaction with a human within a defined collaborative workspace.

#### **Collaborative workspace (source: ISO/TS 15066)**

Space within the operating space where the robot system (including the workpiece) and a human can perform tasks concurrently during production operation.

#### **System integrator**

Company or person who created the collaborative robot and brought it into productive operation. The system integrator is responsible for doing the risk assessment and must ship the collaborative robot with an instruction manual, which refers to the residual risks of the robot system.

#### **Robot operator**

A person who is working with or beside the robot within the collaborative workspace.

#### **Unintended contact**

Contact refers to a state in which the robot and human are in touch and applying mechanical forces to each other. A contact is considered as unintended if the robot touches the human accidentally due to failure or misuse.



#### **Transient contact (source: ISO/TS 15066)**

Contact between an operator and part of a robot system, where the operator body part is not clamped and can recoil or retract from the moving part of the robot system. In the course of the contact force recorded over time, the transient contact phase is the part of the signal that ranges from initial contact to 500 ms thereafter.

#### **Quasi-static contact (source: ISO/TS 15066)**

Contact between an operator and part of a robot system, where the operator body part can be clamped between a moving part of a robot system and another fixed or moving part of the robot system. In the course of the contact force recorded over time, the quasi-static contact phase begins 500 ms after initial contact.

#### **Application (source: EN ISO 10218-2)**

Intended use of the robot system, for instance, the process, the task and the intended purpose of the robot system (for instance, spot welding, painting, assembly, palletizing).

#### **Measurement instrument**

Bio-fidel system to measure the contact forces and pressures on a collaborative robot system for identified cases of unintended and potentially hazardous contacts.

# <span id="page-4-0"></span>2 Concept and Objectives

The concept of the validation process is to provoke a crush with a real robot system and measurement instrument that emulates the biomechanical response of the human body. During the test, the robot must operate under the same conditions, as it will in its real application. The objective of the test is to prove whether the applied safety skill "limit physical interaction energy" prevents the robot from exceeding the applicable biomechanical limit values. Additional means to reduce the contact forces and pressure, which are not safety-rated, must be deactivated during the tests.

#### <span id="page-4-1"></span>2.1 Hazardous Situations

Here, the term *hazardous situation* refers to a *crushing contact* between the robot and one or more body parts of the human operator as introduced in Section [1.1.](#page-2-1) The protocol user must follow the procedure specified by this document for every crush identified in the risk assessment as a case of foreseeable and potentially hazardous misuse.

# **Suggestion**

The intended use and foreseeable misuse of the robot, as clarified in the risk assessment, can help to identify potentially hazardous crushing contacts to be tested. Typically, losing consciousness or malicious mischief/vandalism is no foreseeable misuse.

# <span id="page-4-2"></span>2.2 Target Behavior and Metrics of the Safety Skill

The target behavior of the skill "limit physical interaction energy" is to prevent the robot from exceeding the biomechanical limit values referenced in the risk assessment.

The target metrics for the test base on the following physical and measurable quantities, which represent a threshold that the output values of the test must not exceed to pass the test successfully. For validating the robot skill "limit physical interaction energy", the output values are:



- Maximum force  $F_{TR}$  for the transient contact phase
- **Maximum force**  $F_{OS}$  **for the quasi-static contact phase**
- Maximum pressure  $p_{TR}$  (normal stress) for the transient contact phase
- Maximum pressure  $p_{OS}$  (normal stress) for the quasi-static contact phase

The risk assessment should specify the target metrics (maximum allowable values). For this validation protocol, the target metrics are the following limits of the output values:

- **Force limit**  $\widehat{F}_{TR}$  **for transient contact (maximum allowable impact force)**
- $\blacksquare$  Force limit  $\widehat{F}_{QS}$  for quasi-static contact (maximum allowable clamping force)
- Pressure limit  $\hat{p}_{TR}$  for transient contact (maximum allowable normal impact stress)
- Pressure limit  $\hat{p}_{OS}$  for quasi-static contact (maximum allowable clamping pressure)

The target metric can vary for different parts of the human body, so it is essential to ensure which metric value applies to which body part. Please report the values of the target metric for each test using the form in Annex [B.](#page-17-1)



#### **Example: Endangered Body Part and Limit Values**

# <span id="page-5-0"></span>3 Conditions

# <span id="page-5-1"></span>3.1 System

The term *system* refers to the collaborative robot system consisting of:

- Type of arm
- Type of tool
- Type of workpiece

The protocol user must consider all changing parts of the system as different system-related conditions. For instance, if the robot picks up a workpiece, the system conditions change the moment the gripper is connected to the workpiece.

**Note:** For specific applications, it is possible that the robot works with different tools and workpieces, while the robot's movement and proximity to the human does not change. One specific hazardous situation can, therefore, apply to various conditions. Refer to the risk assessment to find out which task-related conditions can change. In case the robot works with more than one tools and / or workpiece, validate the capabilities of the safety skill for all existing system configurations per hazardous situation. Each configuration extends the number of tests since each test can only examine one system configuration in one hazardous situation.

Please report the system configuration for every single test using the form in Annex [B.](#page-17-1)





**Example: System Configuration**

When the safety skill responds to the contact, its configuration is likely to affect the robot behavior. Therefore, it is also necessary to record the configuration of the safety skill applied. Since the robot manufacturers implement their safety functions differently, it could be necessary to use a customized list to record the selected safety functions and their parameters applied. The following example shows how a customized recording can look like.



### **Example: Safety Skill Properties**

In the event the robot program under test switches between different sets of safety configurations, it is necessary to execute separate test for every safety configuration.

Except the safety configuration, the state, the robot has when the impact occurs, has also a significant influence on the output values of the test. The relevant states are:

- **Joint configuration (axes positions)**
- **Direction and magnitude of TCP velocity (depends on the axes velocities)**

For a proper validation test, it is necessary to establish the same robot state as the robot would have in case of a crushing contact. Therefore, the point of interest for the test is the point of the robot path at which a crush is most likely. The risk assessment should give details about the exact moment and position of this point. Therefore, the risk assessment is the primary source to determine the robot state for the test.

Every point along the robot path corresponds to a specific tool position. The robot's movement along the path implicates a tool velocity. The robot kinematics create a relation between the position of the



robot axes (joint space) and each point on the path (workspace), so that the axes' positions relate to a specific tool position. Over the teach-pendant of the robot, it is possible to determine the current axes position and the velocity of the tool or the TCP (tool center point) from the robot program. Please report both for every single test using the form in Annex [B.](#page-17-1)



#### **Example: System State**

The user must derive appropriate test points along the robot paths from their risk assessment.

This protocol does not consider a robot manipulator with a sub-system (mobile platform, etc.). If the system under test has a sub-system, please check the COVR toolkit for a protocol that deals with the sub-system in question.

#### <span id="page-7-0"></span>3.2 Environment

The protocol user must consider the following environmental conditions for the validation tests:

Obstacles (endangered part of the human body is spatially constrained and cannot move freely)

#### <span id="page-7-1"></span>3.3 Miscellaneous

Other relevant conditions are:

**Example: Misc. Conditions**

- **EXECT** Location of the contact area on the robot structure (incl. tool or workpiece; according to the risk assessment)
- Endangered body parts (parts of the human body the robot can affect; see Section [2.2\)](#page-4-2)

Use the form of Annex [B](#page-17-1) to record the location and shape of the contact area on the robot structure.



Report the endangered body parts next to their associated limit values. Add to each body part its stiffness parameter and the source of the limit values (see example in Section [2.2\)](#page-4-2). Annex [A](#page-17-0) summarizes some stiffness parameters of the human body.

# <span id="page-7-2"></span>4 Test Setup

#### <span id="page-7-3"></span>4.1 Equipment

The following sensors are required to perform the test:



- Load-cell for force measurement over time
- Foil sensor for peak pressure measurement

The load-cell must be part of an instrument that mimics the biomechanical characteristics of the human body or at least of the endangered body parts. [Figure 2](#page-8-0) depicts the general design of such a device. It consists of an impactor attached to a changeable spring. Linear guides ensure that the impactor can move only in the active direction of the spring. The spring is further attached to the loadcell which is rigidly connected to the instrument housing. A soft damping material covers the top side of the impactor. The combination of damping material and spring must realize the same biomechanical characteristics the considered part of the human body has. The foil sensor for pressure measurement is on the top of the damping material.



<span id="page-8-0"></span>*Figure 2. General design of the measurement instrument*

The load cell for force measurement must fulfill the following requirements:



*Table 1. Requirements for load cell (sensor for measuring the contact force)*

The foil sensor for measuring the contact pressure (normal stress within the contact area) must allow for peak measurement (highest pressure during contact). The material of the sensor must be flexible to withstand the deformations of the damping material lying below. Moreover, the foil sensor must fulfill the following requirements:





*Table 2. Requirements for foil sensor (sensor for measuring the pressure within the contact area)*

**Note 1:** Some foil sensors are available with different measurement sensitivities. Use always the highest possible sensitivity so that the result is still within the measurement range. The sensitivity is too high if the signal of at least one measurement cell of the foil remains at the upper range value.

**Note 2:** Use only foils with a sensitive area that covers at least 30% and less than 90% of the expected contact area.

Use the form in Anne[x B](#page-17-1) to report the capabilities of both sensors used for the validation.



#### **Example: Sensors**

### <span id="page-9-0"></span>4.2 Method

The following devices must be available for data acquisition:

- **EXECOMPUTER 12 Computer for controlling the measurement instruments**
- All devices and software (running on the computer) necessary to control the sensors and to record their signals (incl. data logger, charge amplifier, etc.)

**Note:** Manufacturers of commercially available measurement systems usually provide software to control their devices and to analyze the results. If such a system is used, ensure that you have access to the associated software. It can be the case that there are separate tools for force and pressure measurement, which must be run in parallel.

Acquisition the force signal must comply with the following requirements:



*Table 3. Requirements for data acquisition*

**Note:** Ensure that the force sensor has a sufficient bandwidth that allows for sampling the signal at the specified sampling frequency.

Please record the applied configuration using the form in Anne[x B.](#page-17-1)



#### **Example: Acquisition Configuration**



# <span id="page-10-0"></span>5 Procedure

# <span id="page-10-1"></span>5.1 Test Plan

The test plan summarizes all situations which the risk assessment has identified as hazardous contacts between robot and one or more body parts of the human operator, incl. all combinations of applicable conditions (system configurations, etc.). It, therefore, provides a detailed overview of which tests are necessary to validate the safety skill.

The protocol user must test each crushing contact as recorded in the risk assessment (see Sectio[n 2.1\)](#page-4-1), which means to provoke a crushing contact between the real robot and a proper measuring instrument (see Section **Fehler! Verweisquelle konnte nicht gefunden werden.** and **Fehler! Verweisquelle konnte nicht gefunden werden.**). The purpose of the test is to prove whether the robot exceeds the metrics or not (see Section [2.2\)](#page-4-2).

According to Chapter [3,](#page-5-0) the protocol must consider the following conditions:

- Robot system
	- o Type of arm
	- o Type of tool
	- o Type of workpiece
	- o Joint configuration
	- o Direction and magnitude of TCP velocity
- **Environment** 
	- o Obstacles
- **Miscellaneous** 
	- o Location and shape of the contact area on the robot structure
	- o Endangered body parts

For the validation of the safety skill, it is necessary to measure all possible combinations of conditions that apply to the considered hazardous situation. It is, therefore, recommended to prepare a list that organizes all hazardous situations and applicable conditions row-wise. Each row represents a particular test case that the protocol user must run and report using the form in Annex [B.](#page-17-1) The protocol user should repeat each test three times.

# <span id="page-10-2"></span>5.2 Preparation

#### <span id="page-10-3"></span>5.2.1 Test Arrangement

The preparation of the test arrangement includes to set up all devices that are required to validate the robot system. Please go through the following to prepare the tests properly:



#### **Measurement Equipment**

- Connect all sensors to their loggers and the loggers to the computer for controlling the measurement.
- Configure the parameter of the data acquisition within the range specified in Section **Fehler! Verweisquelle konnte nicht gefunden werden.**.
- Ensure that the acquisition of all signals works properly as configured.

#### **Measurement Instrument**

- **Install the spring and apply the damping material to the impactor (see test plan). Make sure that** the characteristics of the used combination match the stiffness of the endangered body part (see Section [3.3\)](#page-7-1).
- Attach the measurement instrument to a mechanically stiff support that holds it in place during the test. The contact forces applied to the measurement instrument should not significantly move or deform the support (e.g., use profiles made of aluminum).
- Orient the measurement instrument perpendicular to the moving direction of the contact point on the robot surface before initial contact with the measurement instrument [\(Figure 3\)](#page-12-1).

#### **Pressure Sensor**

- To avoid damage to the pressure foil, cover it with a PTFE foil (thickness below 50 μm; only for peak / passively measuring pressure foils).
- Rough surfaces can result in small regions of significant peak pressures. To avoid them, use a microfiber cloth (thickness below 500 μm; only for peak / passively measuring pressure foils).
- Make sure that the sensitive area of the foil covers the contact area completely.
- If necessary, use a rubber band to attach the foil to the impactor of the measurement instrument. Ensure that the rubber band does not run over the sensitive area of the pressure foil.



#### **Warning**

The applied combination of spring and damping material must emulate the response behavior of the body part to be tested. In order to select the right combination, it may also be necessary to consider the shape of the contact area on the robot surface.



#### **Warning**

The stiffness of the instrument support must be 20x higher than the stiffest spring used in the tests.





#### <span id="page-12-1"></span>*Figure 3. Schematic drawing of the setup*

Use the form in Anne[x B](#page-17-1) to record the applied spring and damping material:

#### **Example: Configuration of the Measurement Instrument**



\*) Shore Hardness

# <span id="page-12-0"></span>5.2.2 System Conditions

The protocol user must configure the robot in the exact way as it will run later in the application, which includes at least the following steps:

- Switch the robot on one hour before beginning the tests (warm-up phase).
- **Install all tools and provide all workpieces the robot will use or handle later in the application.**
- Install the final program that involves all movements and actions that the robot will perform later in the application.
- Configure all available safety-functions.
- Deactivate all additional safety measures that are not safety-rated.



The safety configuration, and therefore the safety skill, is often a part of the robot program. For this reason, the protocol user must not change the robot program after completing the validation. It is highly recommended to store a backup of the successfully validated program and to lock the robot control unit so that only authorized people can modify the program or the safety configuration. Any modification to the program requires a new validation of the safety skill.

**Note:** If the robot has no safety functions to limit the interaction energy, the protocol user must test the worst case scenario, which is the robot moves at maximum velocity, even if not required for the application.



# <span id="page-13-0"></span>5.2.3 Environmental Conditions

There are no environmental conditions that the protocol user must explicitly establish for the test. It is, however, highly recommended to run the tests in the same environment in which the robot system will operate later.

In some cases, the software for signal analysis requires environmental data (e.g., temperature and humidity) to compensate for measurement errors. Check the sensors' manuals for information about environmental data that must be noted. Especially foils for peak-pressure measurement are sensitive to humidity and temperature.

# <span id="page-13-1"></span>5.3 Test Execution

Apply the following steps for each test case:

- **Move the robot slowly to the point where the impact can occur (see test plan or risk assessment).**
- Install the measurement instrument at the contact point. Check if the instrument is in the right position and orientation. The position is correct when the robot almost touches it when reaching the contact point on the robot surface. The orientation is right when the contact point moves perpendicular to the impactor plate of the measurement instrument (see Section **Fehler! Verweisquelle konnte nicht gefunden werden.**) before initial contact.
- Move the robot backwards along the programmed path. Choose a proper starting position from which the robot has enough time to accelerate to its programmed velocity before reaching the contact point.
- Take a photo of the test situation (recommended). Place a reference number (e.g., written on a piece of paper) in the picture to ensure that the picture can clearly be assigned to the measurement data later.
- **Start the measurement systems.**
- Start the robot movement.
- **After the robot hit the measurement instrument and stopped, take another photo of the situation** (recommended).
- Save the recorded signals.
- If the robot is still in contact with the measurement instrument, release it by moving it slowly under manual control.
- Rearrange the position of the pressure foil and pad if both slipped because of the contact force.
- Repeat the tests twice (see Sectio[n 5.1\)](#page-10-1).

**Note:** In the event the area around the contact point is confined and does not allow installing the measurement instrument properly, try to find a different point along the path at which the robot has a comparable velocity and joint configuration. If the workaround is not possible, reduce the robot's velocity so that the human can easily avoid the contact.

# <span id="page-13-2"></span>5.4 Data Analysis

After finishing the last repeat, there should be three results from three tests available. It is necessary to filter each signal before processing them further. Since the result achquired by the pressure foil is technically a single image, it can be necessary to apply an additional image filter that reduces the noise across all pixels. The requirements for both filter types are:





#### *Table 4. Requirements for signal and image filtering*

For compensating image noise, it is highly recommended to use a software that has such filters included. The manufacturers of the pressure measurement system usually provide such tools for their sensors. Use the form in Anne[x B](#page-17-1) to record the applied filter configuration.

#### **Example: Signal Filter Configuration**



After filtering, the offset can be compensated by calculating the average signal value from 0.5 s to 1.5 s (0 s marks start of signal recording, not initial contact) and subtracting it from all signal values[. Figure](#page-14-0)  [4](#page-14-0) illustrates the procedure for the force signal. When using a measurement instrument that includes a software for data recording and analysis, make sure that the manufacturer has implemented offset compensation.



#### <span id="page-14-0"></span>*Figure 4. Procedure for offset compensation*

Right after all signals are processed, the protocol user must determine the maximum force and pressure values from both signals (force and pressure) and both contact phases (transient and quasi-static phase). Make sure that the maximum force and pressure value of the transient phase were extracted from 0 s to 0.5 s and the values of the quasi-static phase after 0.5 s, while 0 s corresponds to initial contact (see [Figure 5\)](#page-15-1). In case the force signal still oscillates from 0.5 s onwards, the maximum force



of the quasi-static phase corresponds to the highest peak that the signal has after 0.5 s. Record the maximum value in the form which is available in Anne[x B.](#page-17-1) Since a foil for peak-pressure measurement is used, the highest pressure measured by the foil must be considered as the maximum pressure of the transient and quasi-static phase.



<span id="page-15-1"></span>*Figure 5. Load curve showing contact with a transient and quasi-static phase*



To minimize the efforts for the pressure measurement, it is recommended to perform only a force measurement first. If the maximum contact force of this measurement is significantly below the applicable limit value, repeat the test three times including pressure measurement. If the maximum force already exceeds the force limit, the protocol user can forego pressure measurement.

#### **Example: Result from Data Analysis**



If the highest maximum of all measured force and pressure values exceeds the applicable limit value, the safety skill fails the test. Otherwise, it successfully passes the test. When the test fails, it is recommended to modify the robot program (e.g., reducing the velocity) and to start over the validation process. Other options could be a modification of the safety configuration or conditions.

# <span id="page-15-0"></span>5.5 Report

Use the form in Annex [B](#page-17-1) to report all conditions and results of the tests. After finishing the validation successfully (all tests passed), add the filled forms to the documentation of the risk assessment. They serve as proof that the applied safety skill works properly and provides the expected protection to the robot operator. Use the last section in the form to record the overall test result (passed/failed).



#### **Example: Summary**





# <span id="page-17-0"></span>A Stiffness Parameter of the Human Body

See [Table 5](#page-17-2) to pick the right combination of damping material and spring that emulates the biomechanical characteristics of the body region under test.

**Note 1:** You can neglec[t Table 5](#page-17-2) if you have other data for configuring the spring-damping characteristics of the measurement instrument. However, record the source of your data in the report forms.

**Note 2:** Data given in [Table 5](#page-17-2) are subject to modifications.

<span id="page-17-2"></span>*Table 5. Combinations of damping material and spring to mimic the biomechanical characteristics for various body regions (source: DGUV FBHM 080)*



# <span id="page-17-1"></span>B Report Form

Use the form on the next page to record the data for each test.





# Setup

#### **Sensors**



# **Acquisition Configuration**



### **System Configuration**





#### **Safety Skill Properties (can be test-specific)**



# Test Specifics

#### **System State**



### **Misc. Conditions**



#### **Endangered Body Part and Limit Values**



# **Configuration of the Measurement Instrument**





# Test Result

### **Signal Filter Configuration**



# **Result from Data Analysis**



#### **Summary**

