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SICK'S ADVANCED IO-LINK ENCODERS STREAMLINE MACHINE CONTROLS

SICK has released advanced variants of its AHS36 and AHM36 IO-Link absolute encoders that can harness valuable diagnostic insights for better machine control and availability. With versatile programming options, they make it easy to integrate data from encoders into localised and 'edge computing' configurations to improve the efficiency of automated plant.

All SICK's AHS36 14-bit (singleturn) and AHM36 26-bit (multiturn) IO-Link absolute encoders achieve quick, easy and economical higher-level fieldbus integration via an IO-Link Master. Now, the AHS36 and AHM36 IO-Link Advanced variants enable machine designers and end users to use diagnostic information, such as temperature values, to streamline machine control and optimise maintenance regimes.

"SICK's IO-Link Advanced variants offer exciting new possibilities to access so much more than just the position and speed information that encoders are traditionally known for," explains Darren Pratt, SICK's UK product manager for encoders and industrial instrumentation. "They make it simple to generate real-time data to optimise service intervals, prompt alarms, as well as integrating with predictive maintenance systems.

"Using SICK's intuitive SOPAS configuration software, it's easy to set up the AHS/AHM36 IO-Link Advanced encoders and to set operating limits for a wide range of parameters. It's easy to integrate that data using standard PLC programs to directly control machine operations, while machine technicians can fine-tune the encoder settings on site without specialist know-how."

Two banks of eight programmable CAM switches enable the free programming, via SOPAS, of up to 16 individual position ranges on the encoders. Limit values can be defined to set alarms or switch processes, for example the position at which speed is limited, axes slowed down, or actuators triggered.

SICK's AHS36 and AHM36 IO-Link Advanced encoders' digital inputs and outputs also enable triggering using simple push-pull I/O, which can be used to create Smart Tasks such as an overspeed switch independent of the PLC.

A choice of two motion timers help govern service and replacement routines, especially useful for mechanical plant that is subject to wear, for example gear trains, chains or toothed belts. The absolute timer tracks the total motion time of the encoder over its whole life, while the relative timer can be reset after an inspection or maintenance routine has been completed.

With a wide operating range of between -40°C and +85°C, SICK's IO-Link Advanced absolute encoders monitor their temperature and can be used in environments close to these extremes. For example, the temperature sensor can be used to switch air cooling or heating only when necessary, saving energy.

With IP66 and IP67 ratings, SICK's AHS36/AHM36 IO-Link Advanced are suitable for tough ambient conditions, while the Inox variant provides a stainless-steel IP69K-rated housing for process environments with stringent chemical or high-temperature washdown regimes.

With an IO-Link Master performing connection to higher-level Ethernet interface, where required, the SICK AHS/AHM36 family of absolute encoders achieve an extremely compact 36mm diameter design. IO-Link eliminates the need to use a dedicated interface card on the PLC rack, so solutions using the SICK AHS/AHM36 IO-Link can save time, cost and complexity in connection to the control system.

Using IO-Link, the SICK AHS/AHM36 enables standard unshielded cabling to be used between the encoders and the IO-Link master, so wiring costs are dramatically reduced. With the ability to store and download the encoder parameters from the IO-Link Master, device replacement is simply 'plug and play'.

Compact and rugged, the magnetic AHS36 14-bit singleturn and AHM36 26-bit multiturn IO-Link encoders are everything customers expect from a SICK family of rotary motion sensors with class-leading robustness and operating resilience.

The SICK AHS/AHM36 IO-link encoders offer a versatile choice of mechanical connection options. The encoders feature a 270^{o} rotatable electrical connection for either M12 connector or cable termination. Replacing existing encoders in machines is ensured by a wide choice of hollow or solid shaft models, various mounting hole patterns, together with face and servo mount flanges.

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