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(54) **SINGLE PHASE MOTOR ENERGY ECONOMIZER FOR REGULATING THE USE OF ELECTRICITY**

continuation of application No. 13/041,686, filed on Mar. 7, 2011, now Pat. No. 8,362,735.

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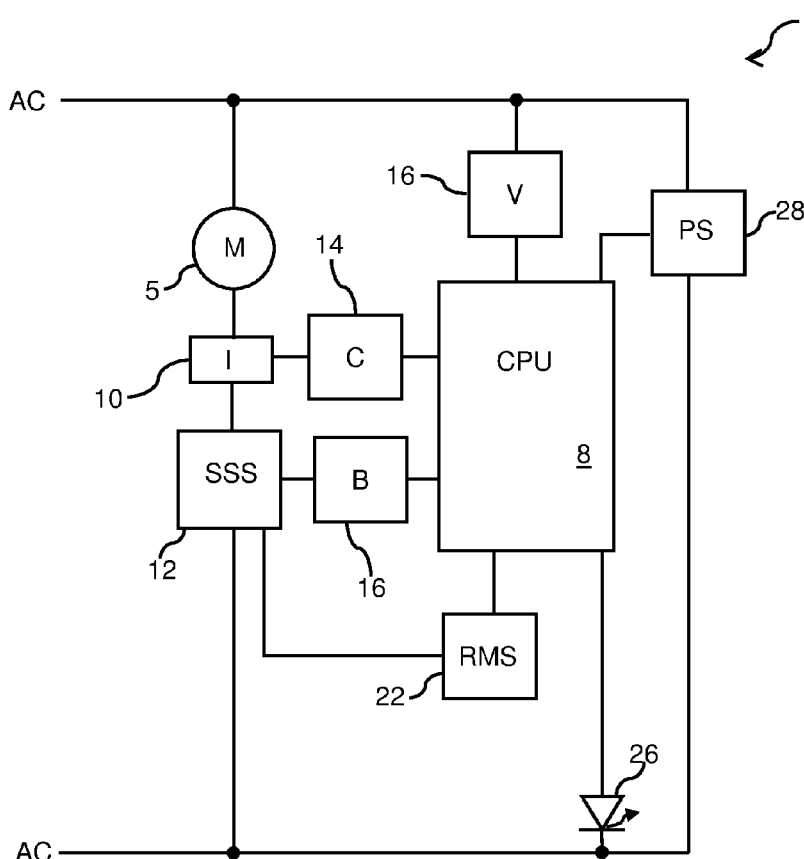
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 CPC *H02P 1/029* (2013.01); *H02H 11/006* (2013.01); *H02H 7/09* (2013.01); *G05B 19/042* (2013.01)

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(63) Continuation of application No. 14/159,108, filed on Jan. 20, 2014, now Pat. No. 9,425,714, which is a continuation of application No. 13/943,929, filed on Jul. 17, 2013, now Pat. No. 8,633,668, which is a continuation of application No. 13/676,196, filed on Nov. 14, 2012, now Pat. No. 8,502,492, which is a

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A system for reducing inrush loading when a source power is restored includes a device for switching power that selectively connects a load to the source of power and a circuit for measuring the AC voltage at the source and



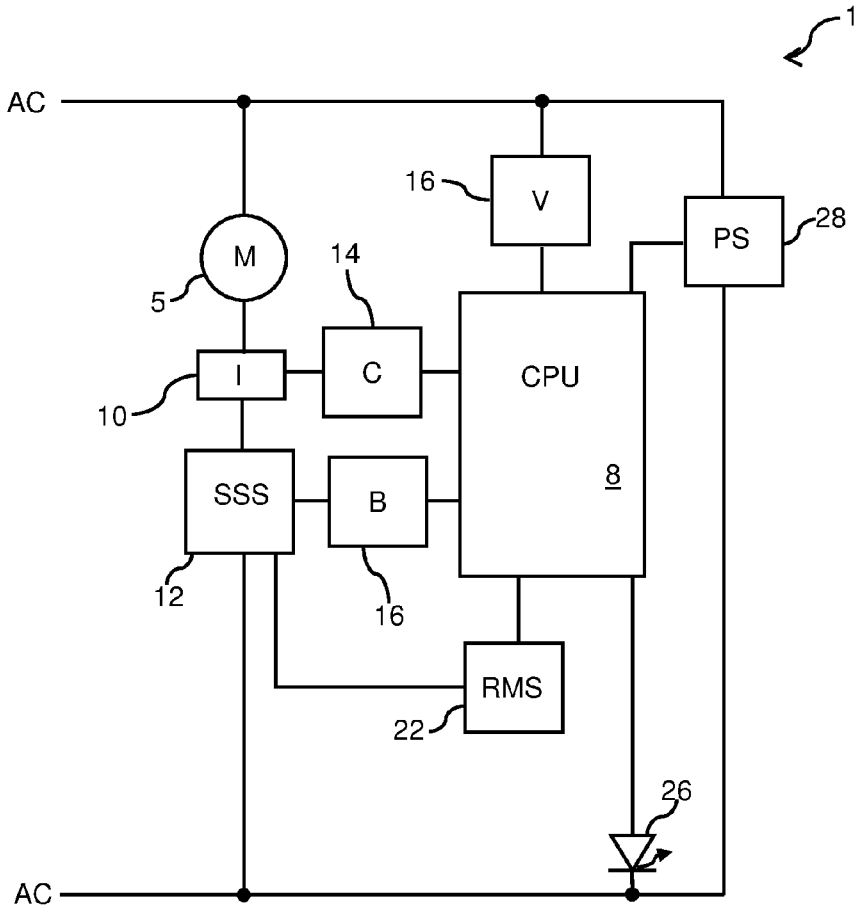


FIG. 1

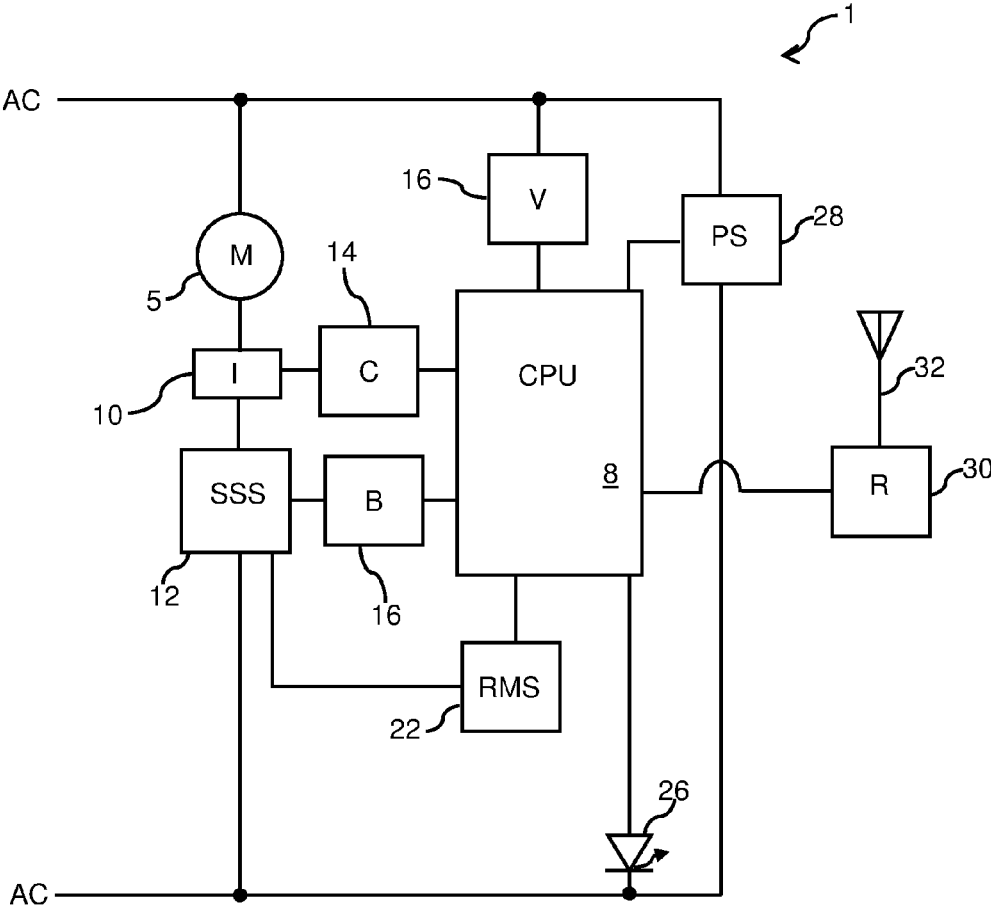


FIG. 2

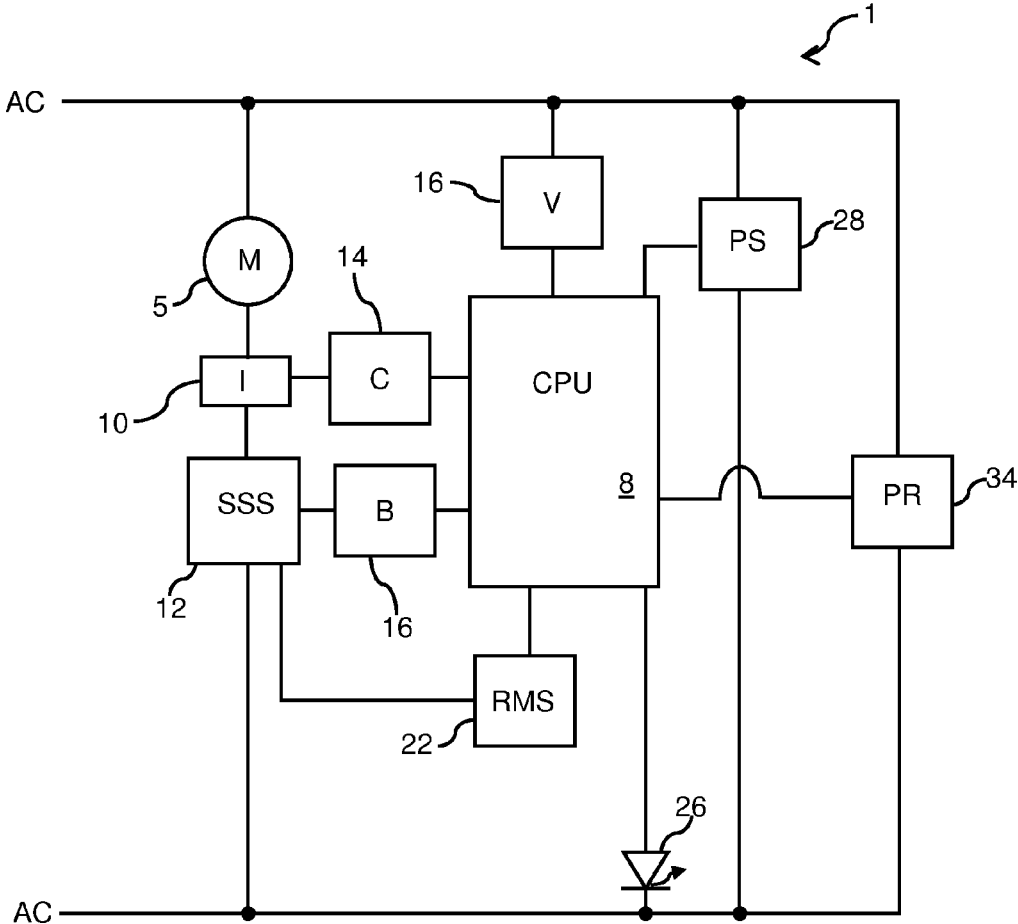


FIG. 3

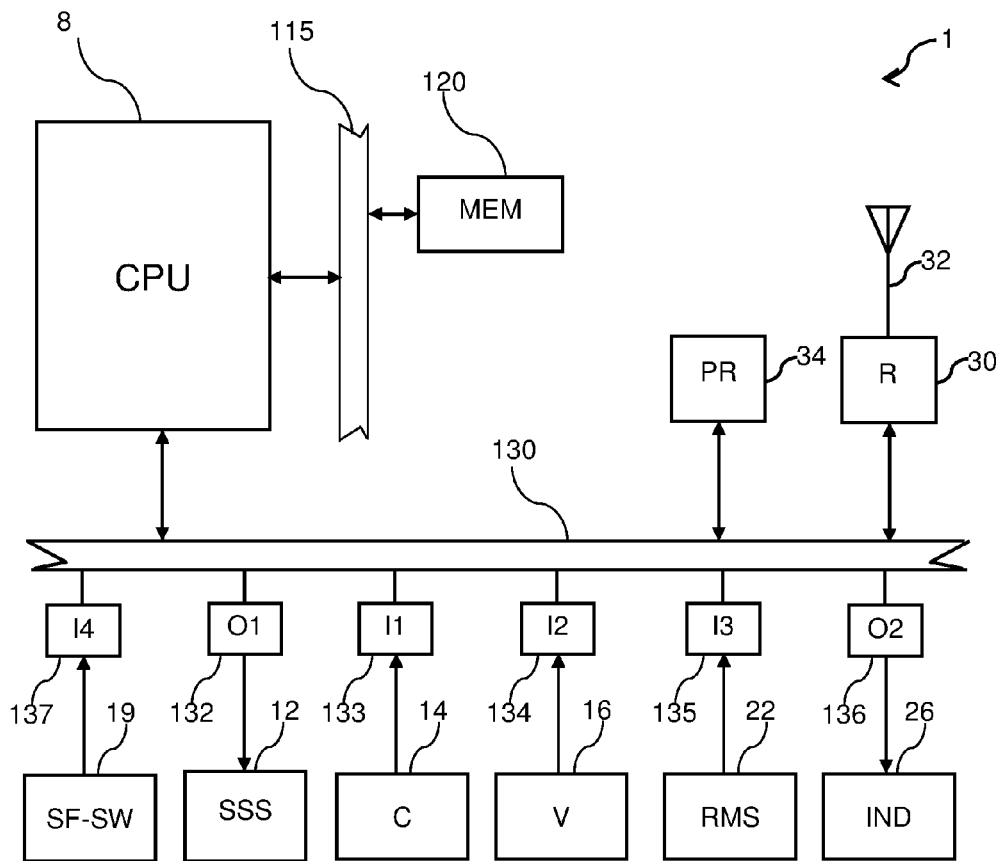


FIG. 4

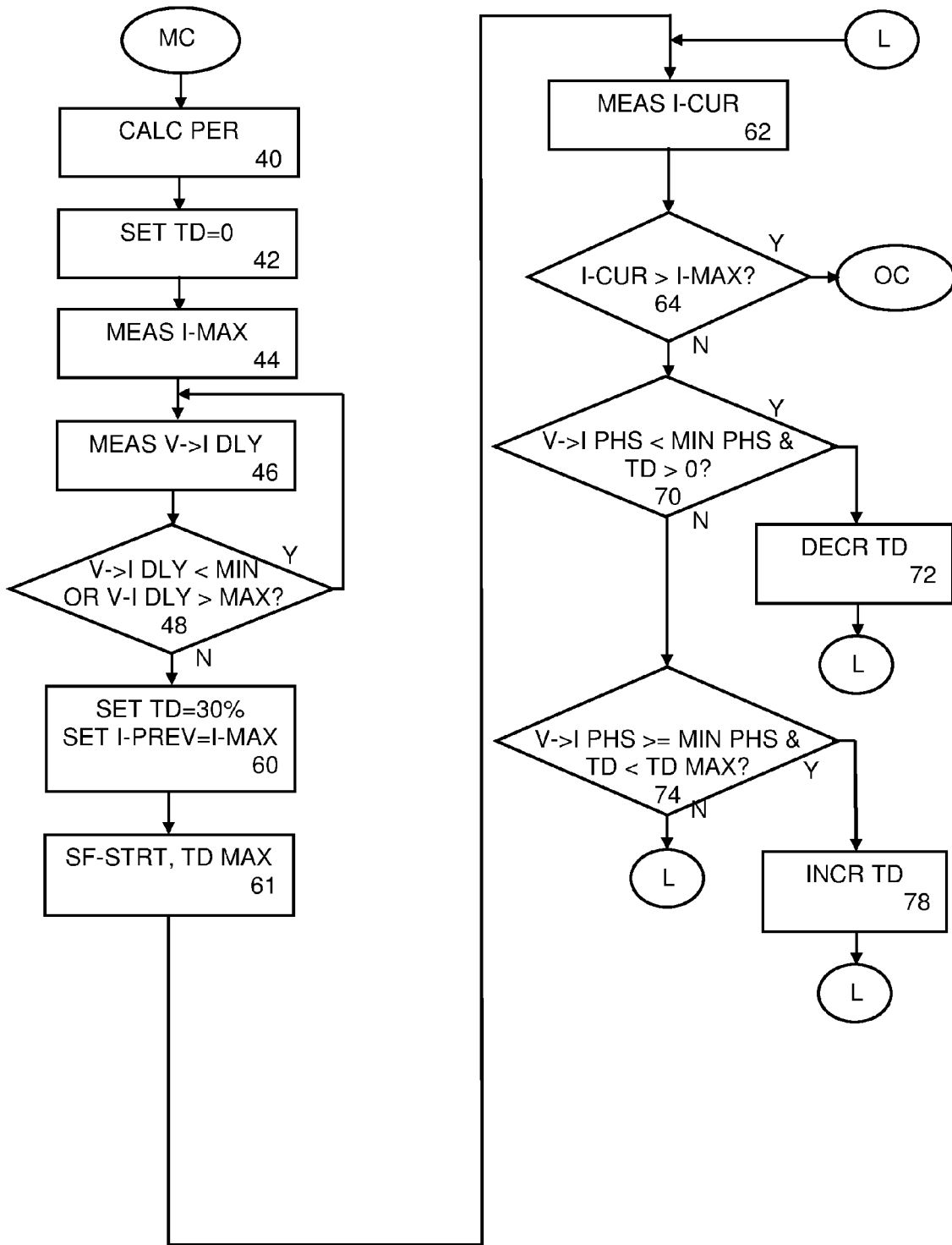


FIG. 5

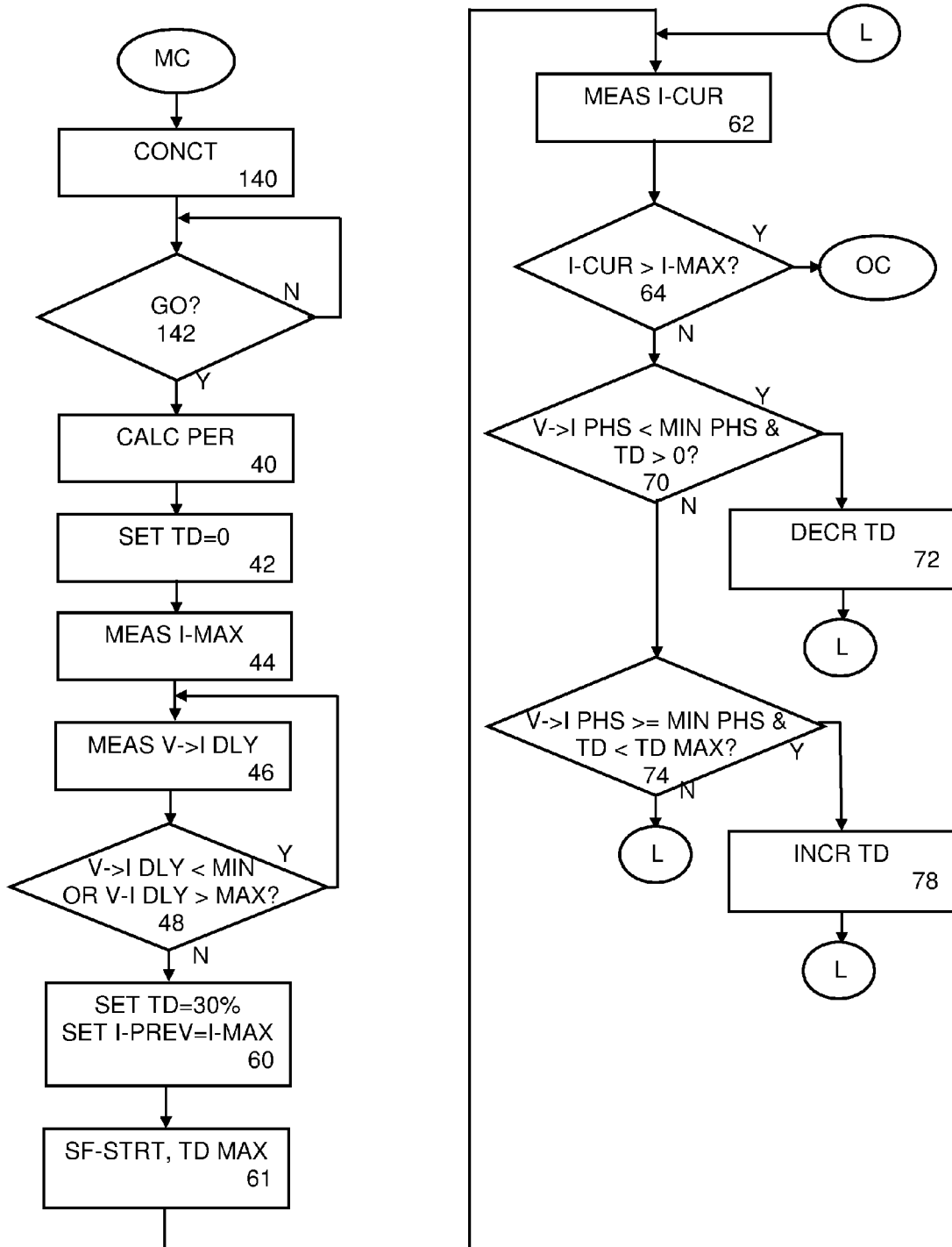


FIG. 6

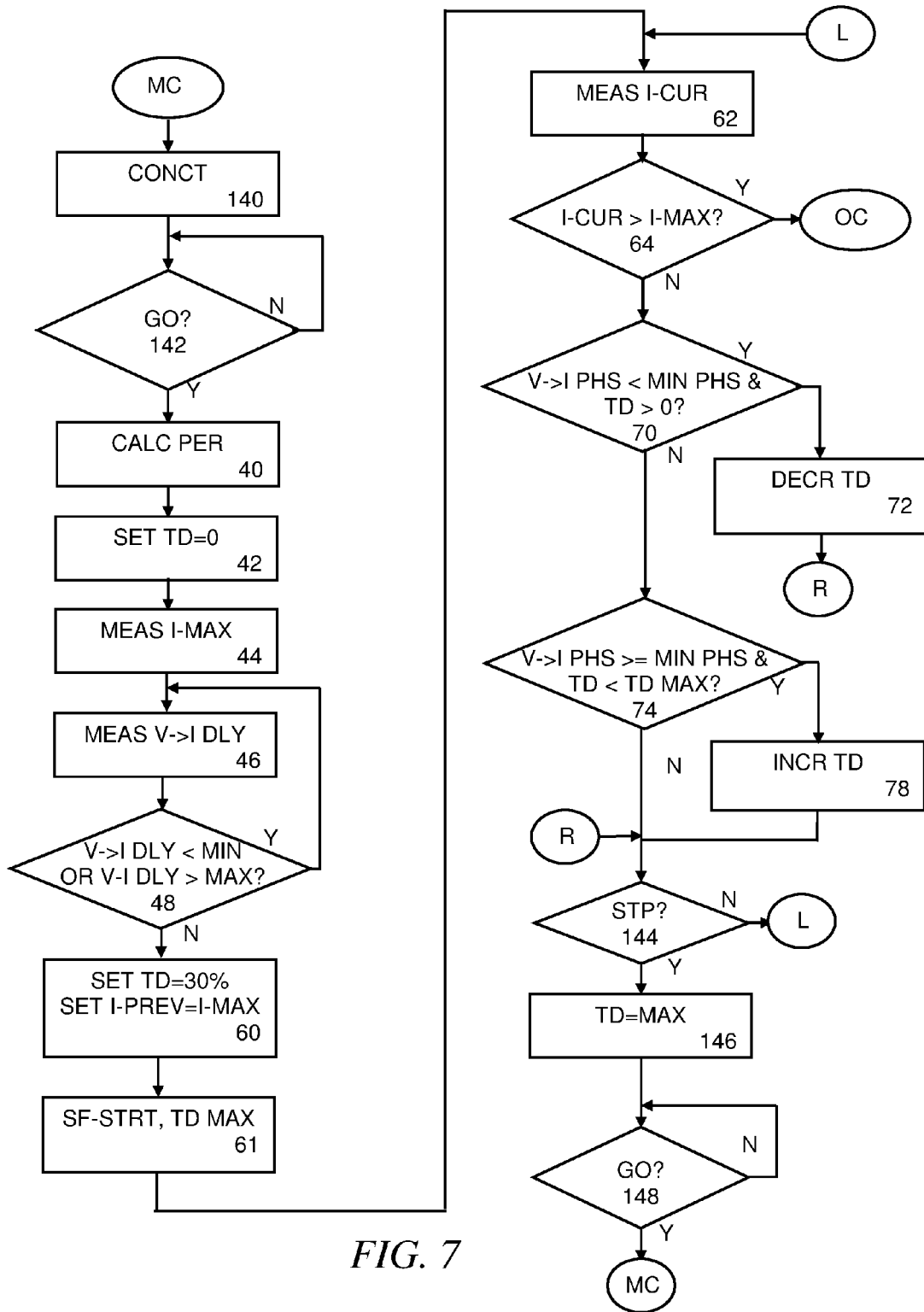


FIG. 7

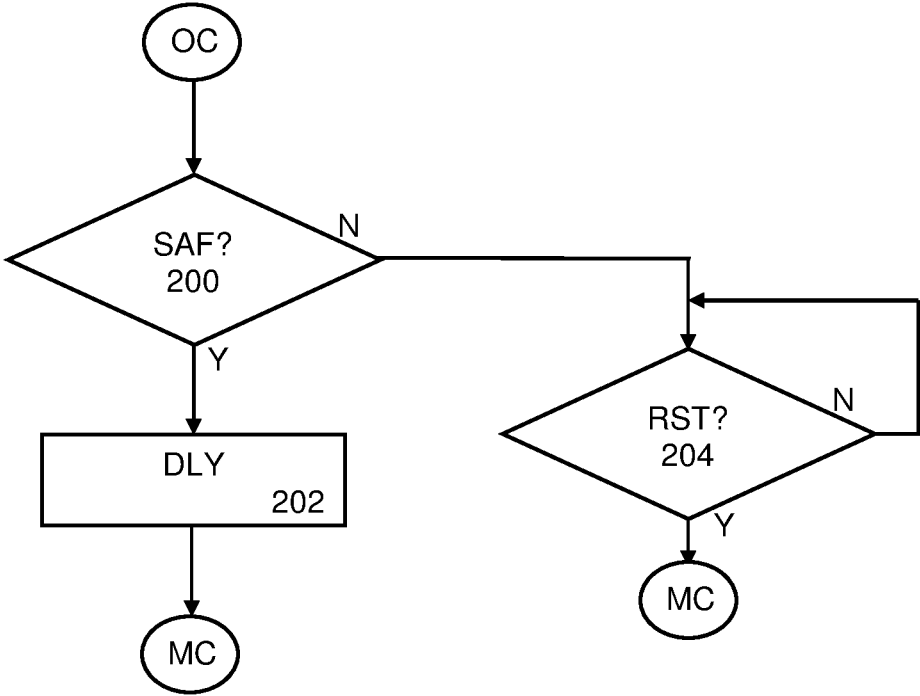


FIG. 8

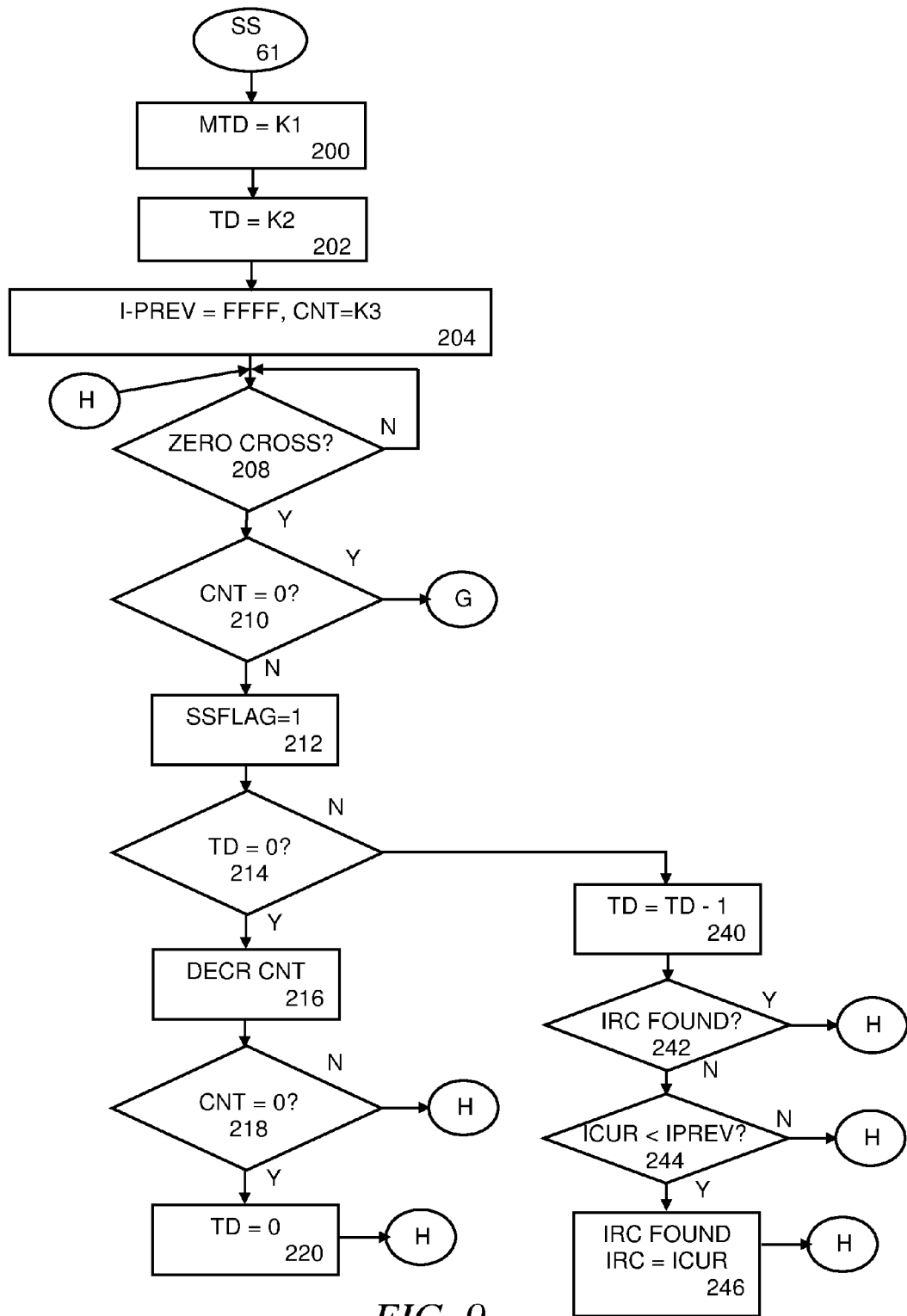


FIG. 9

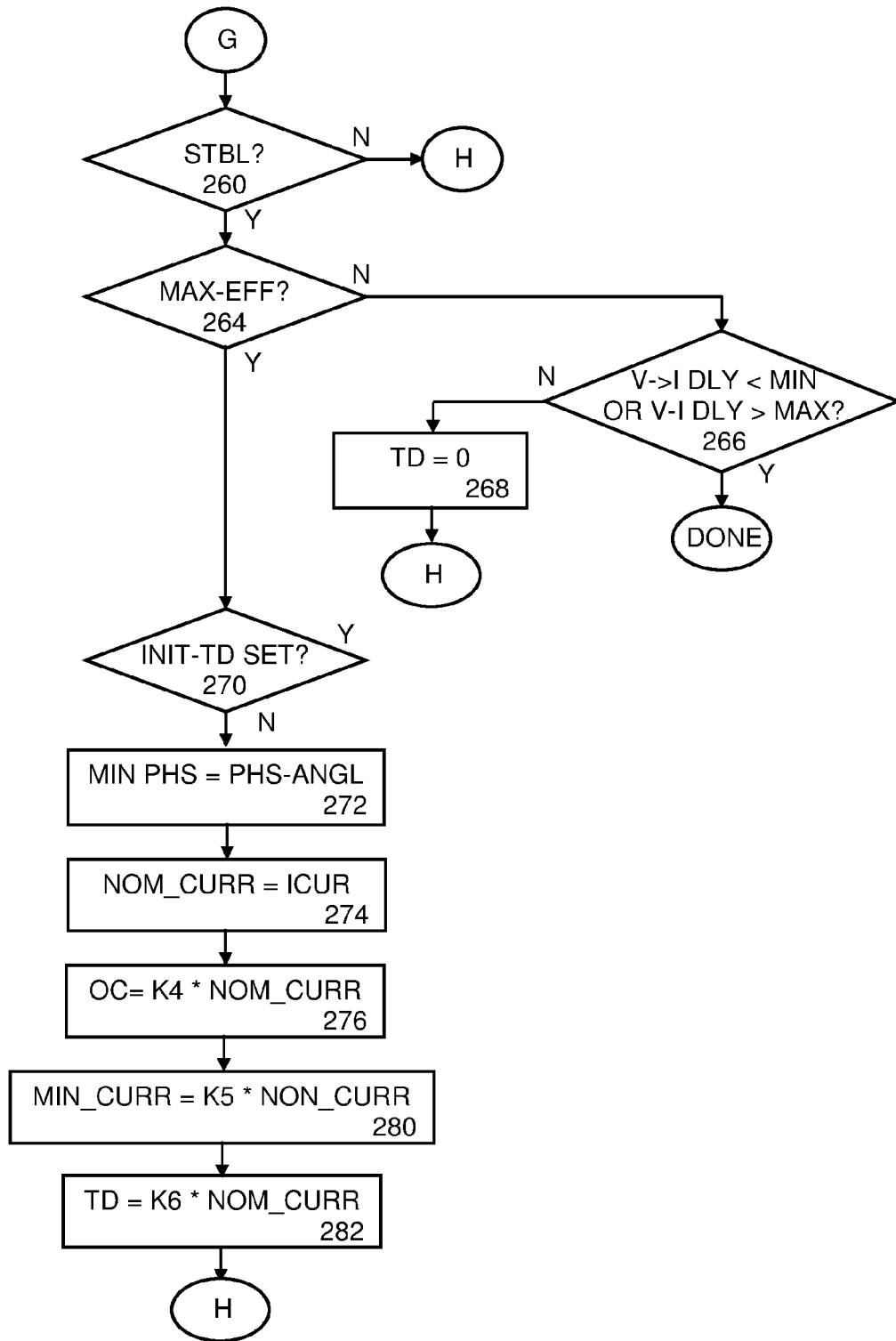


FIG. 10

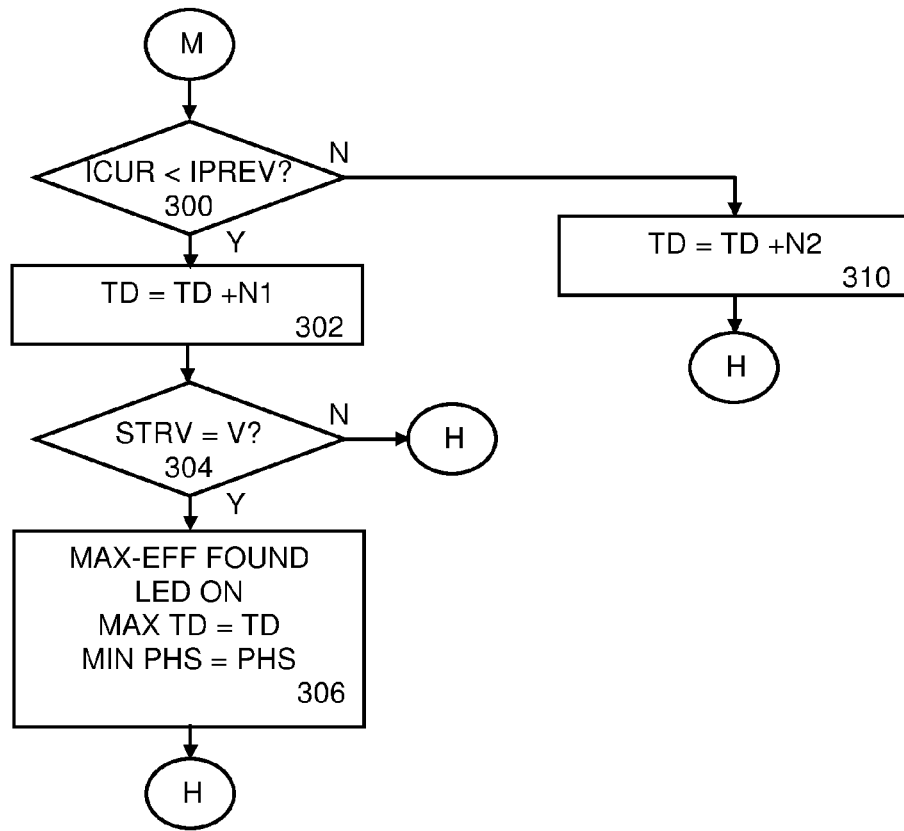


FIG. 11

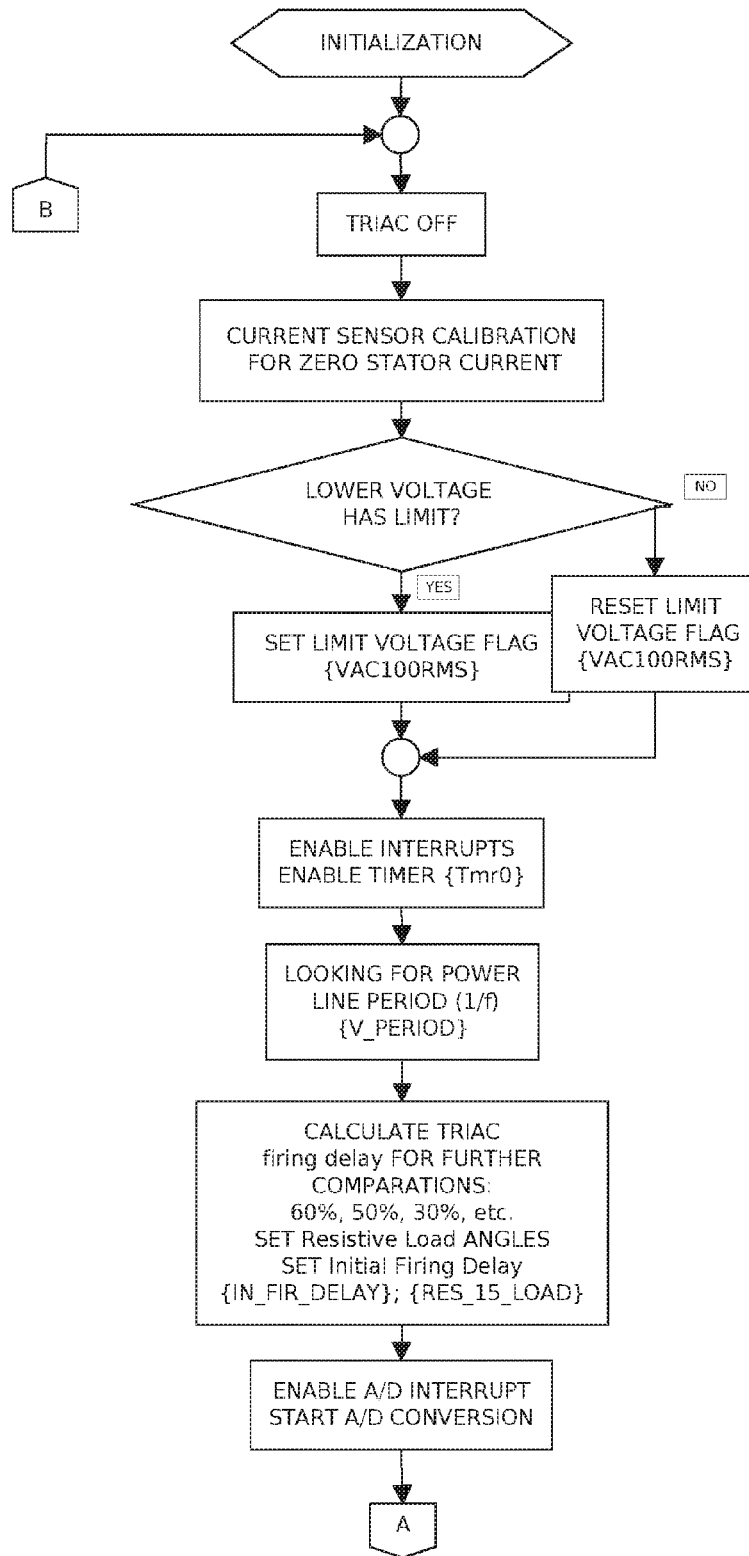


FIG. 12

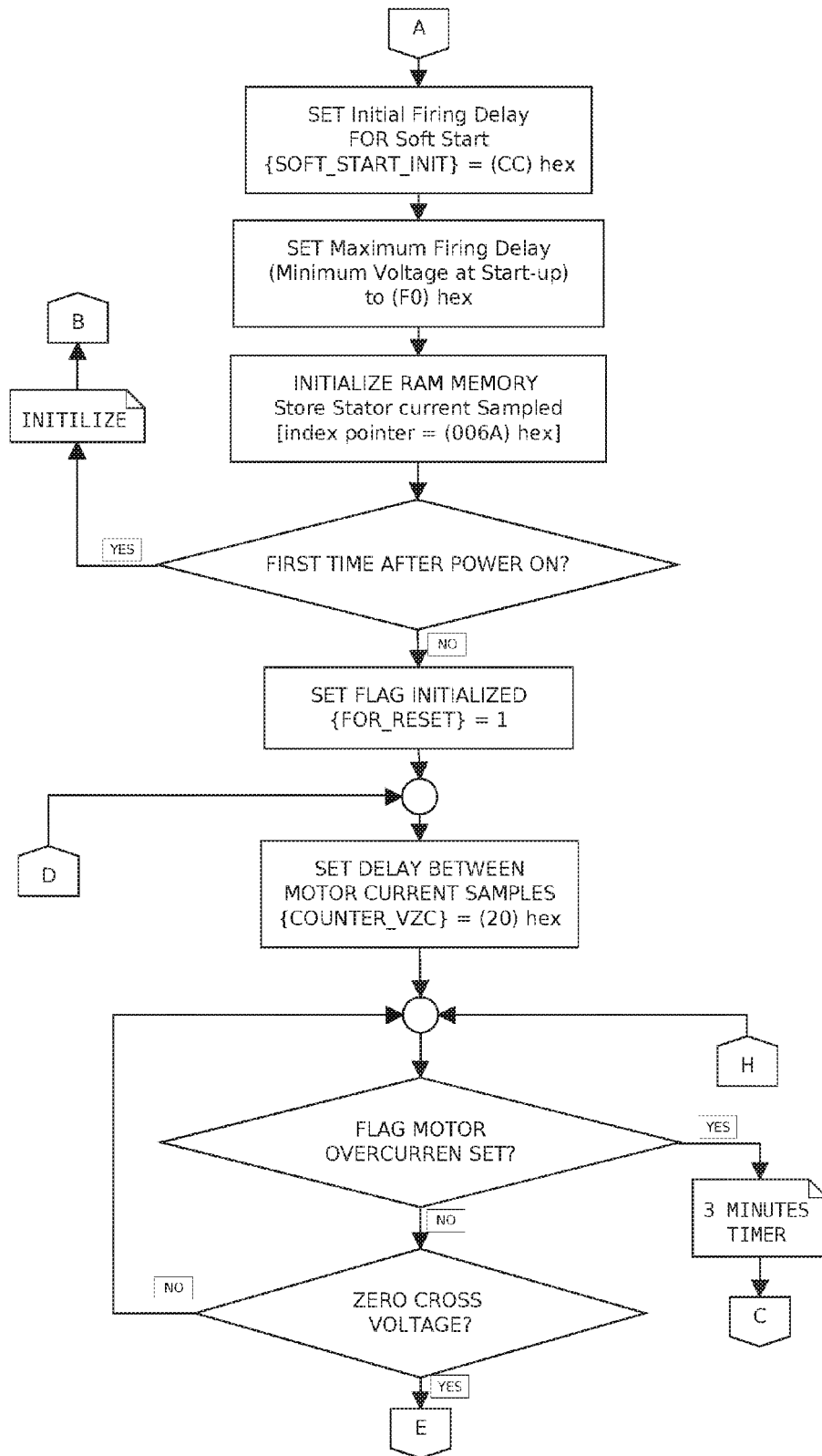


FIG. 13

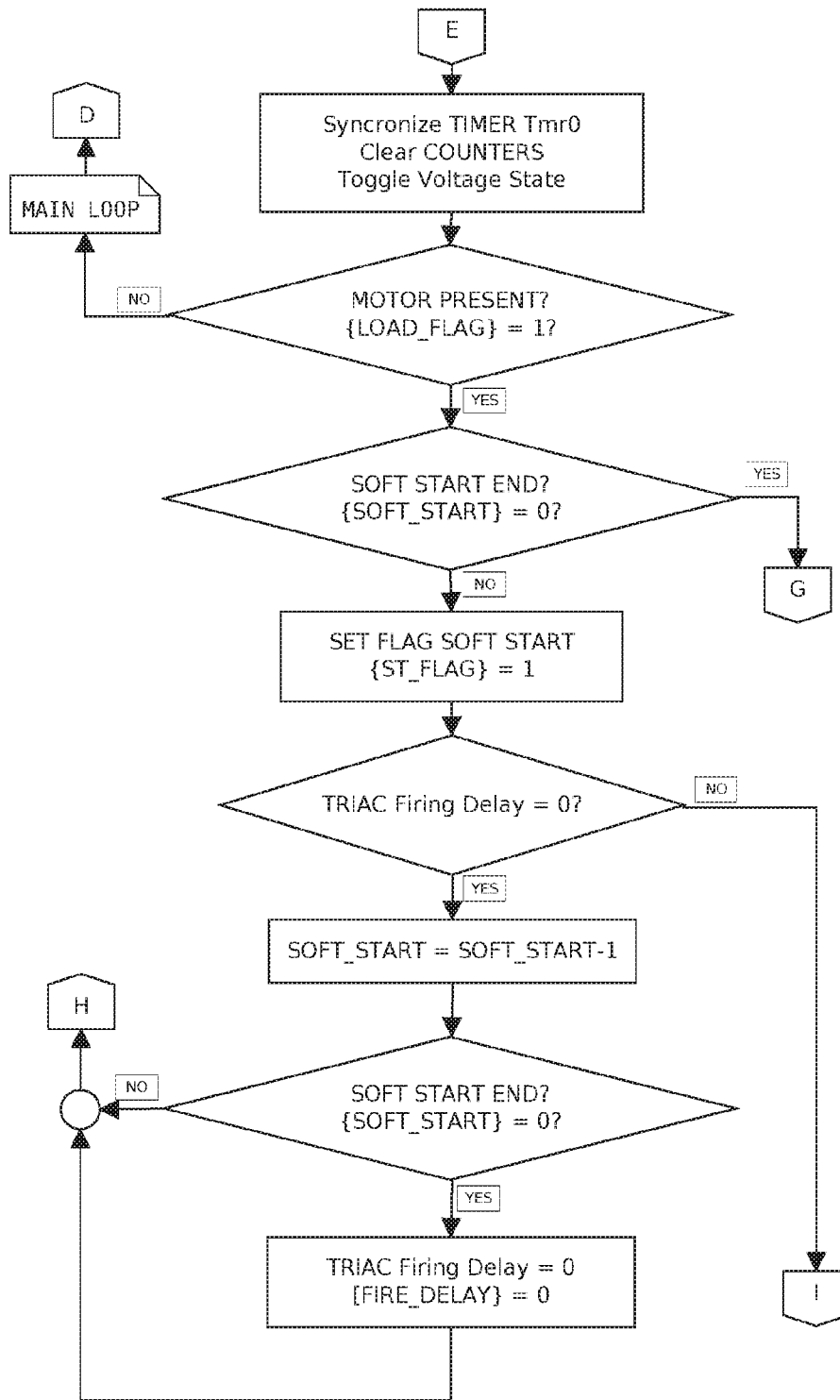


FIG. 14

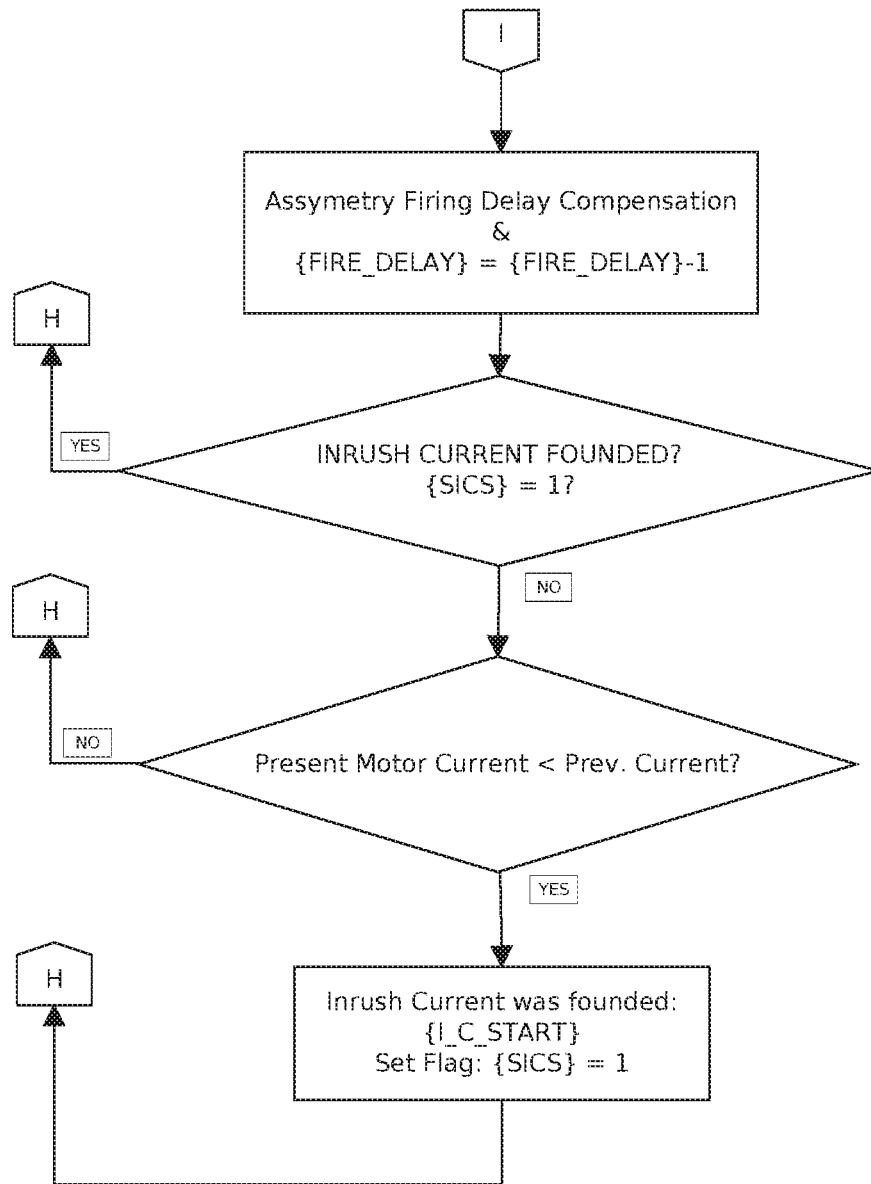


FIG. 15

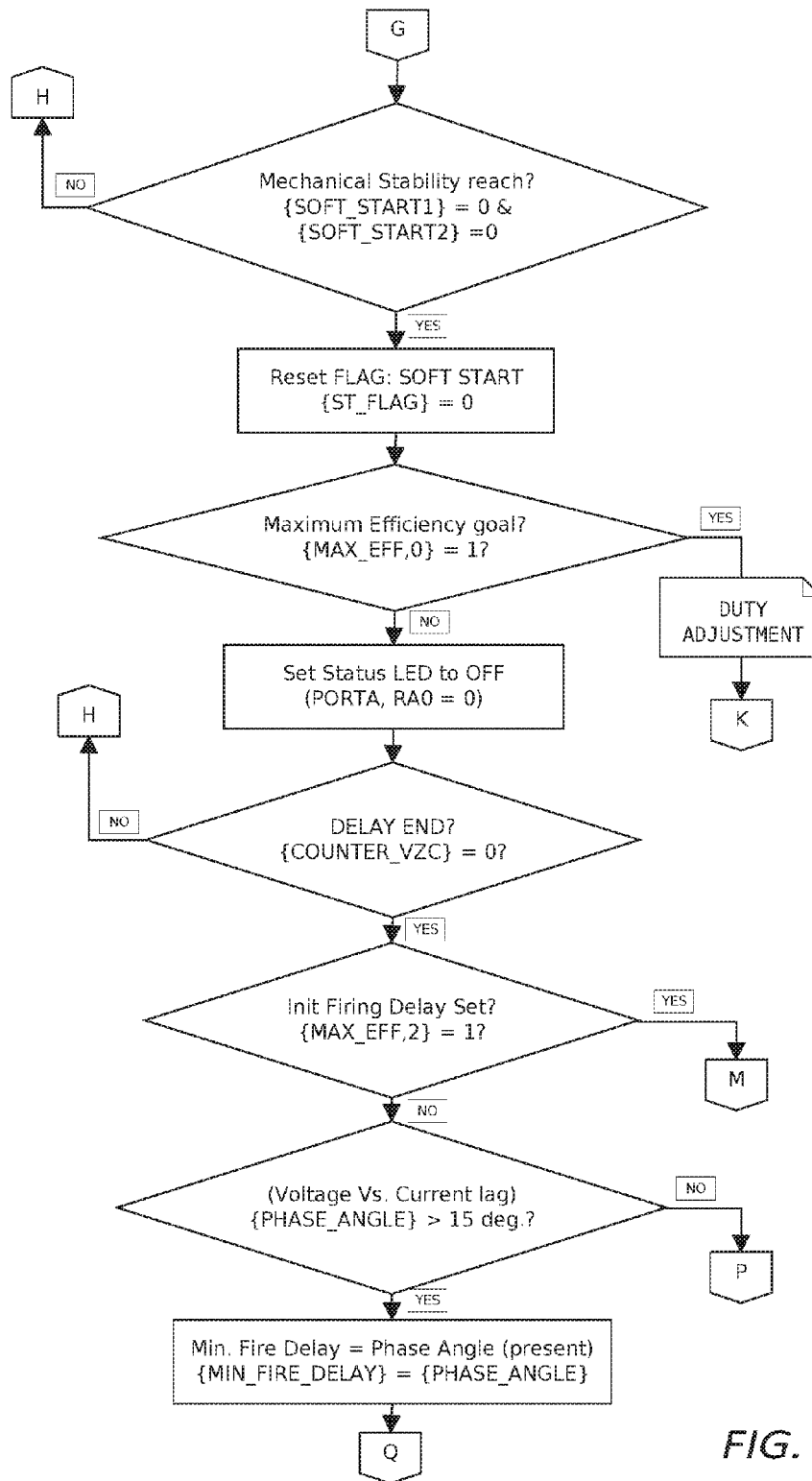


FIG. 16

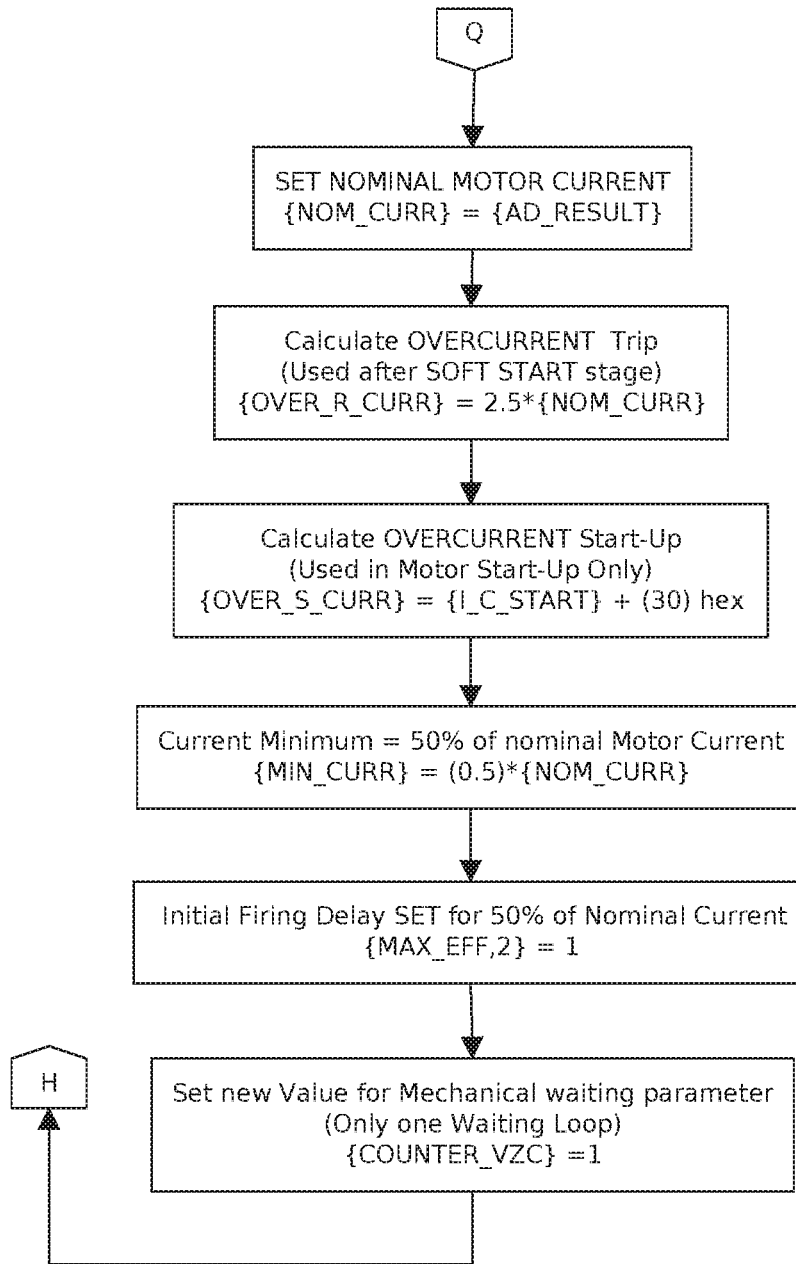


FIG. 17

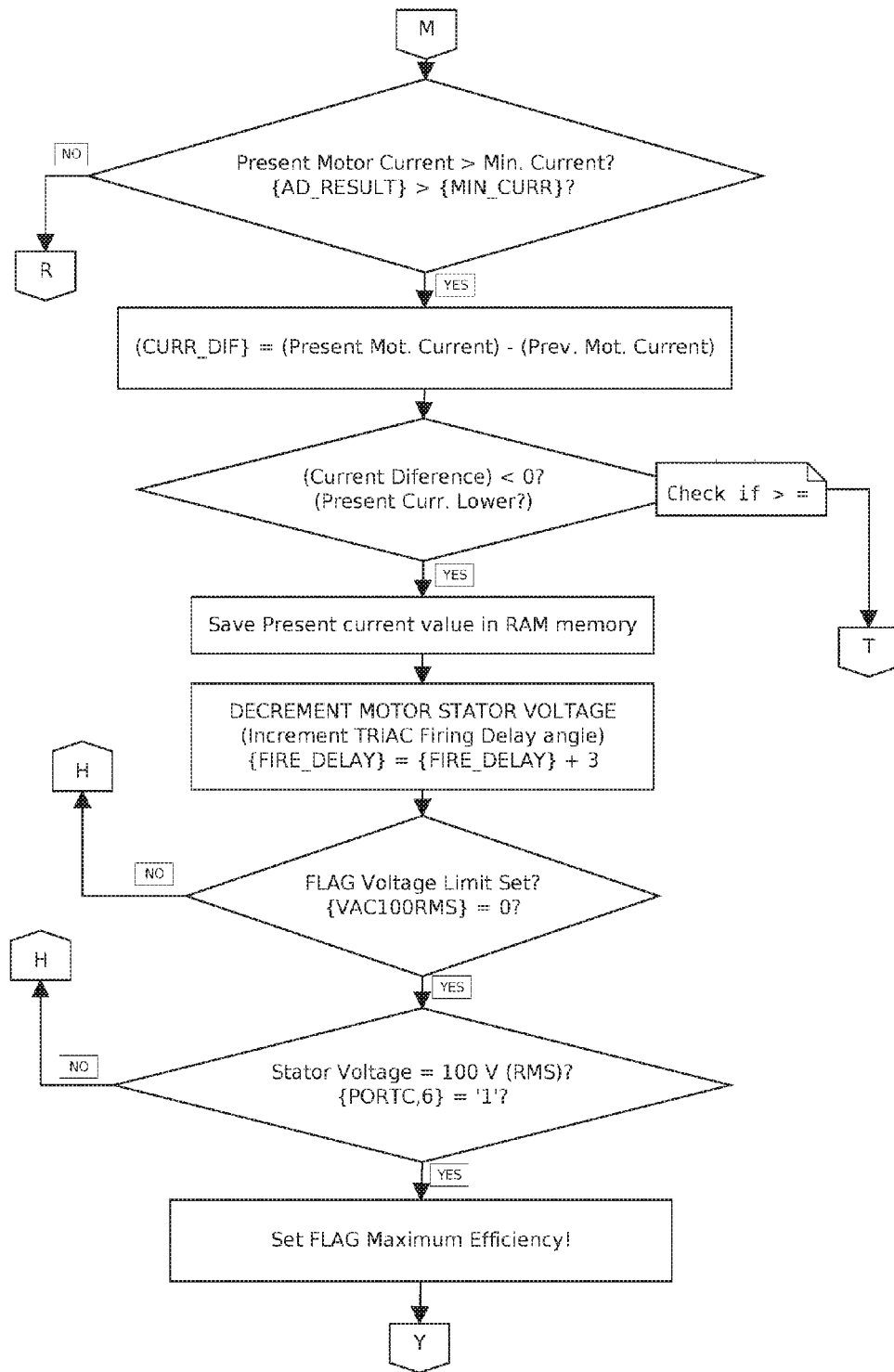


FIG. 18

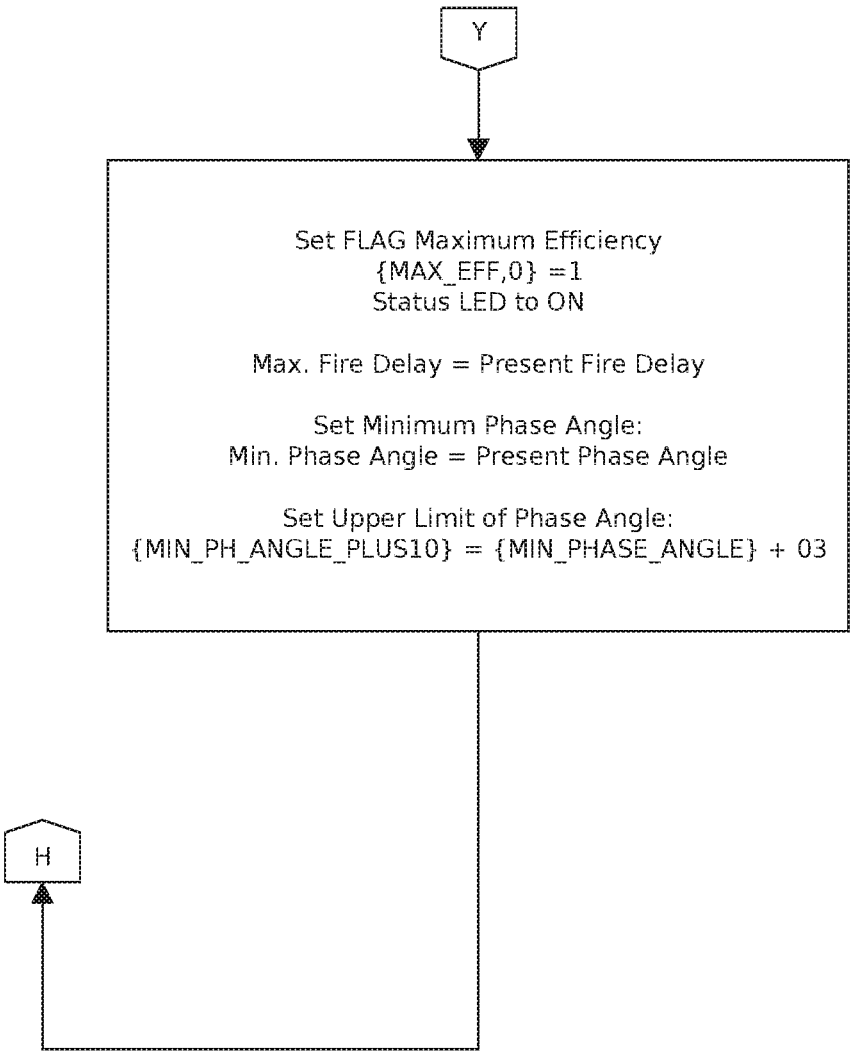


FIG. 20

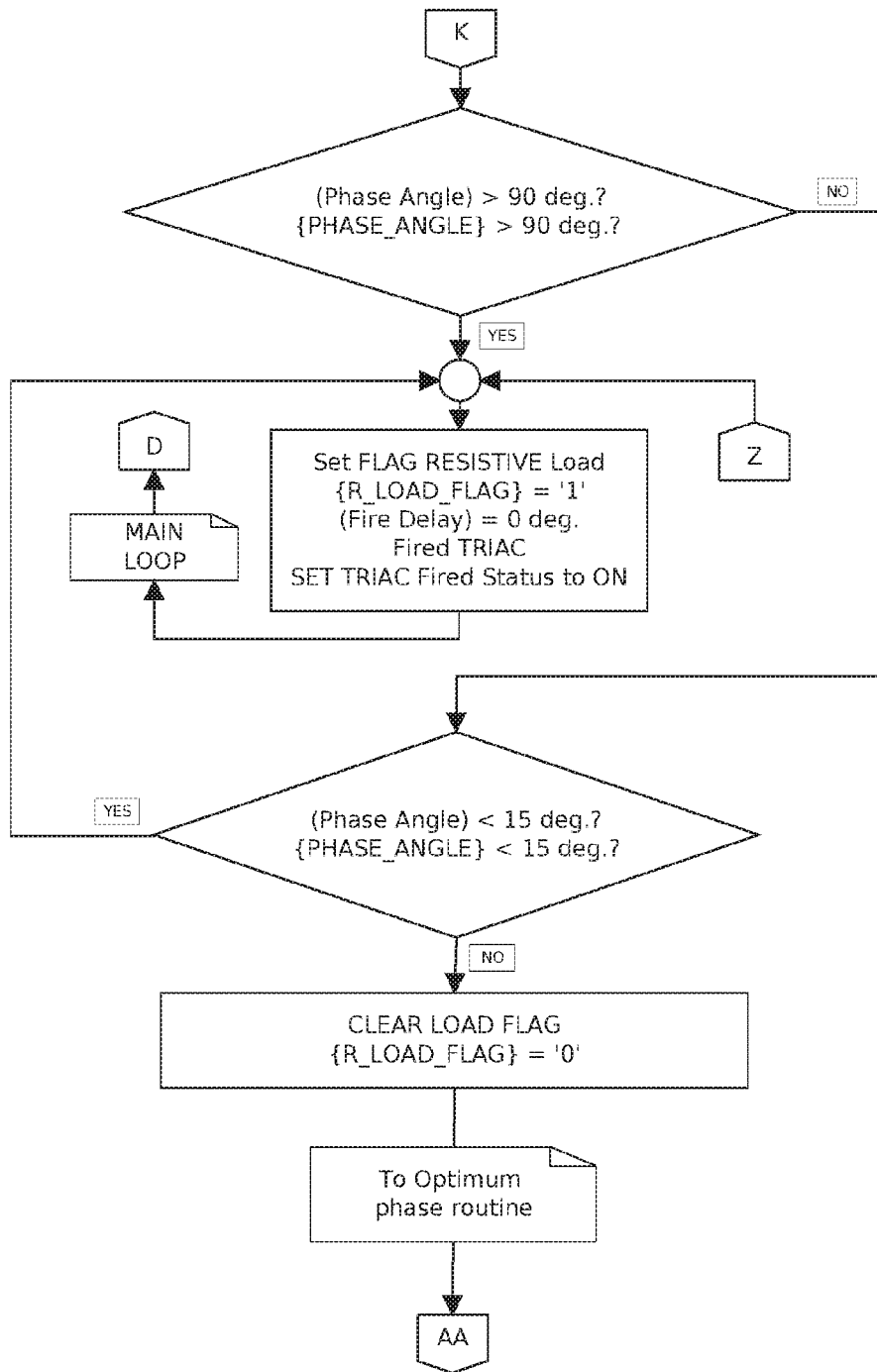


FIG. 21

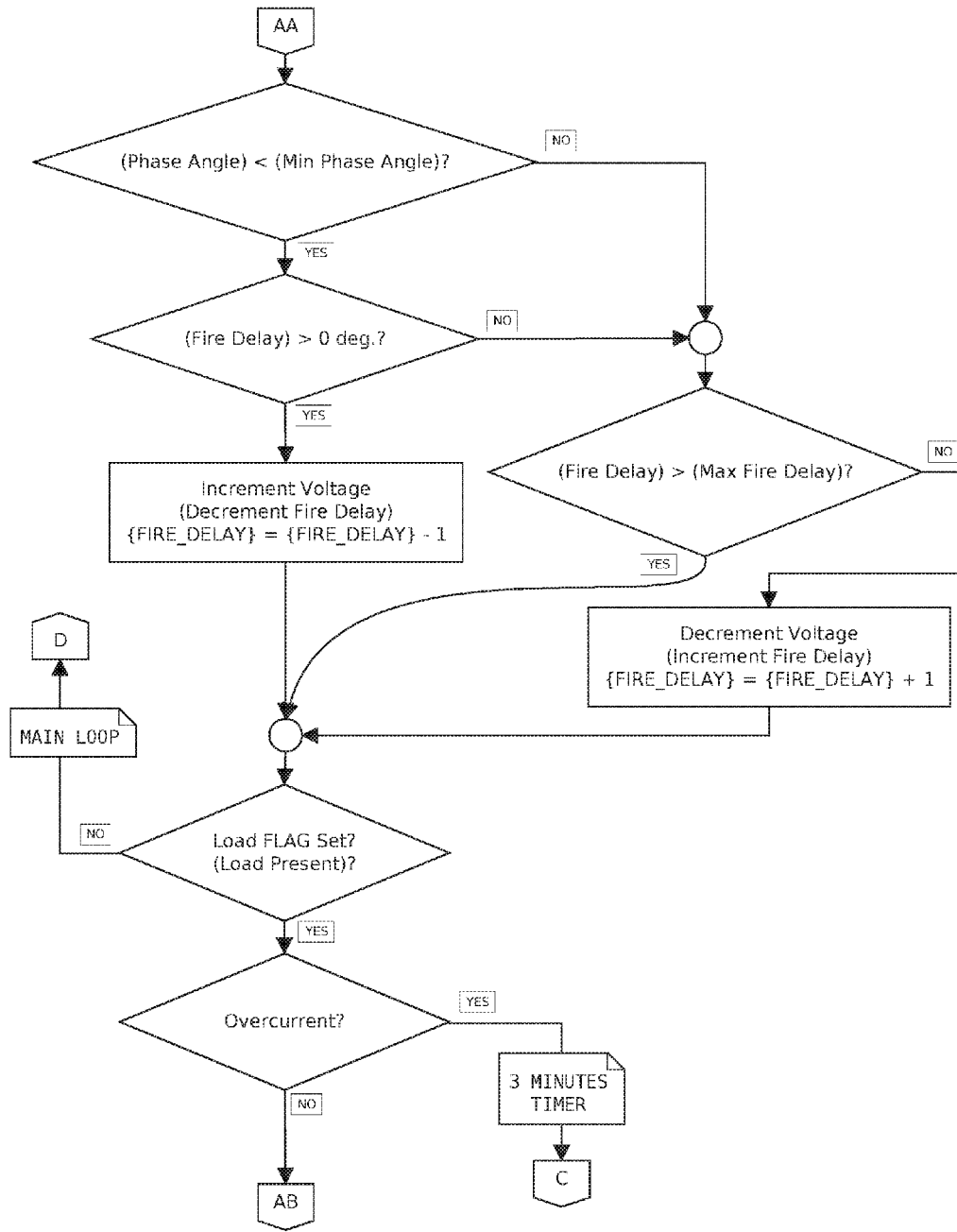


FIG. 22

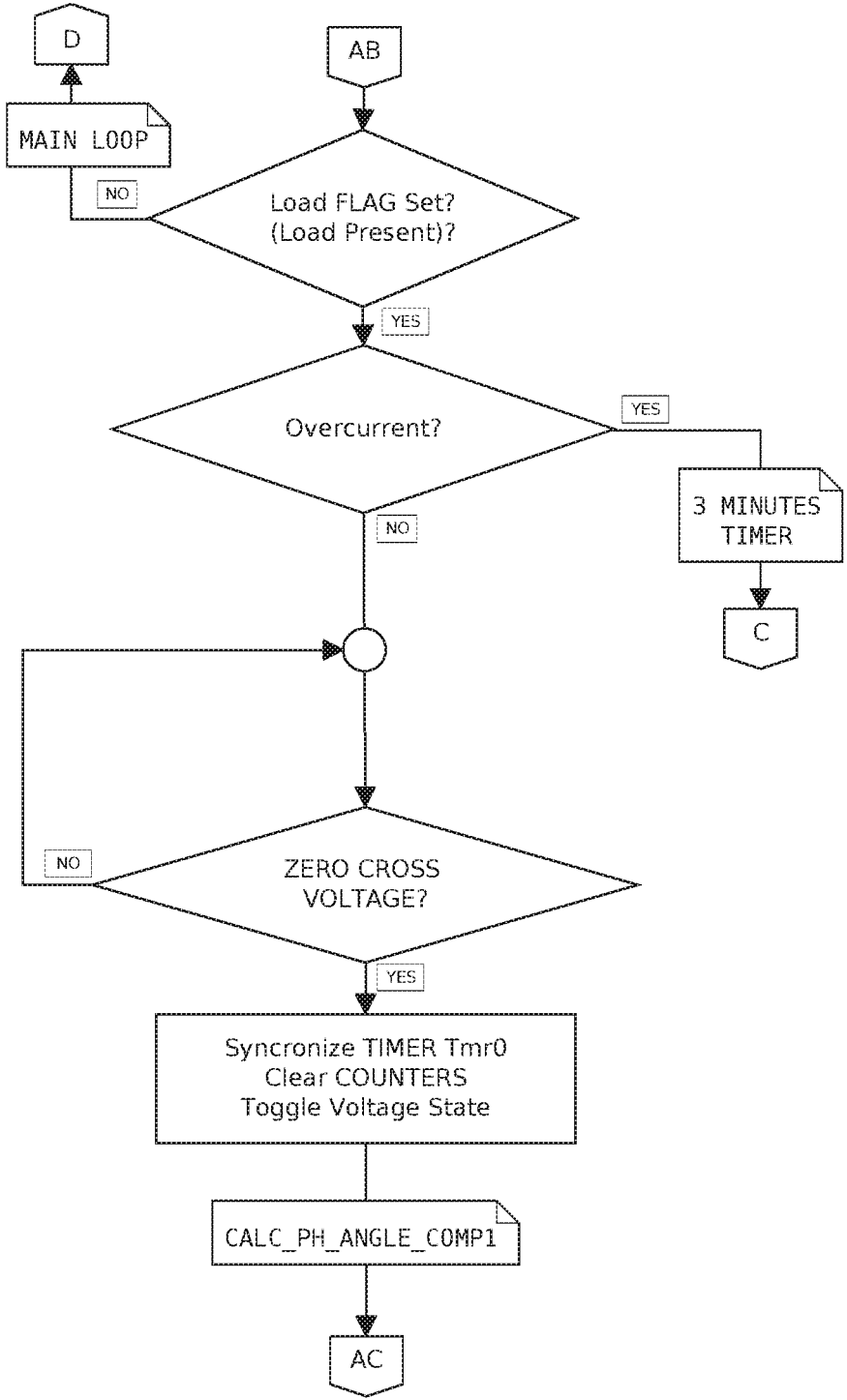


FIG. 23

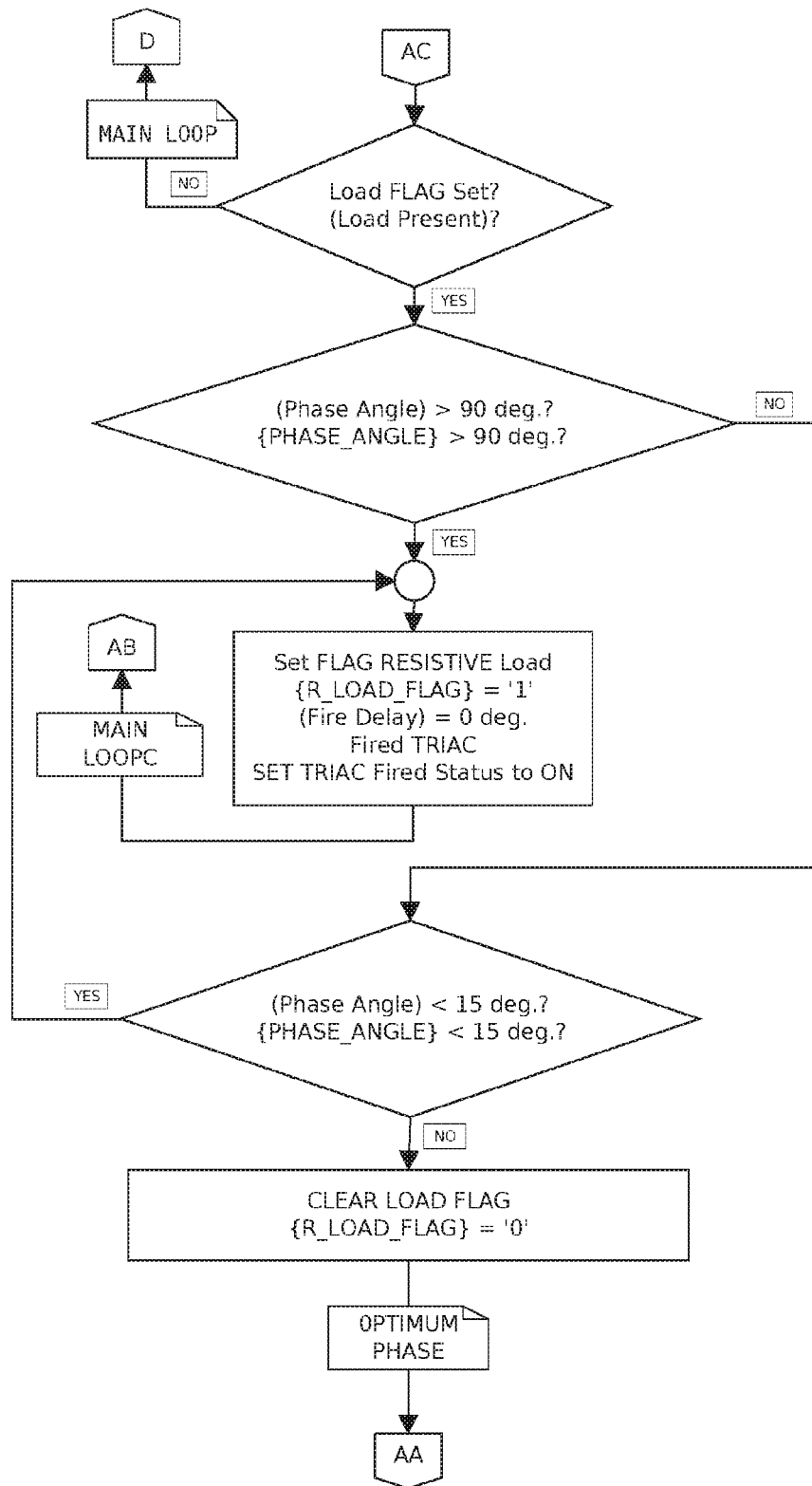


FIG. 24

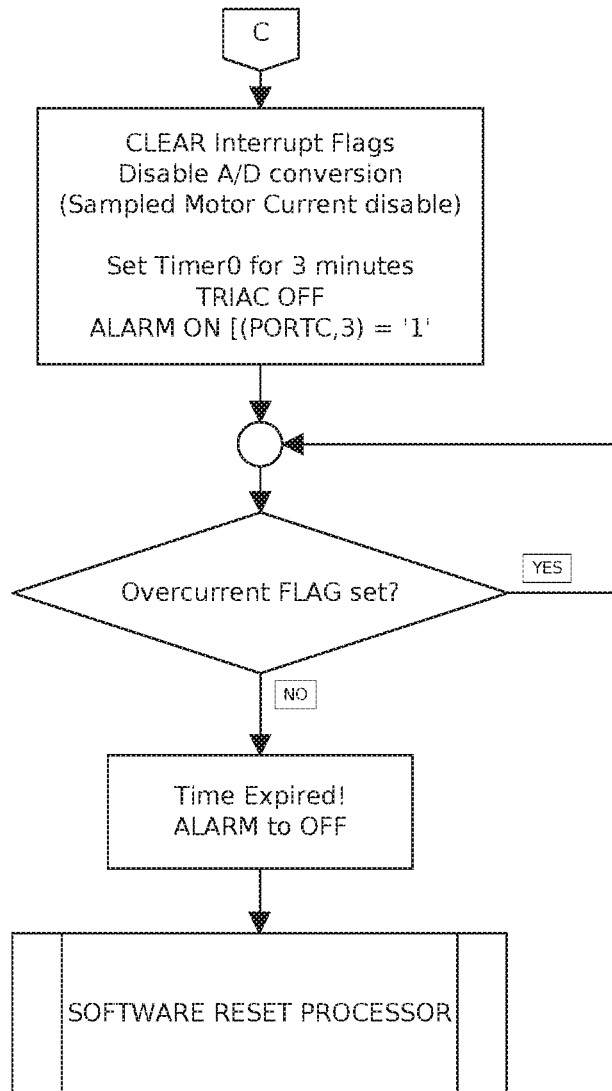


FIG. 25

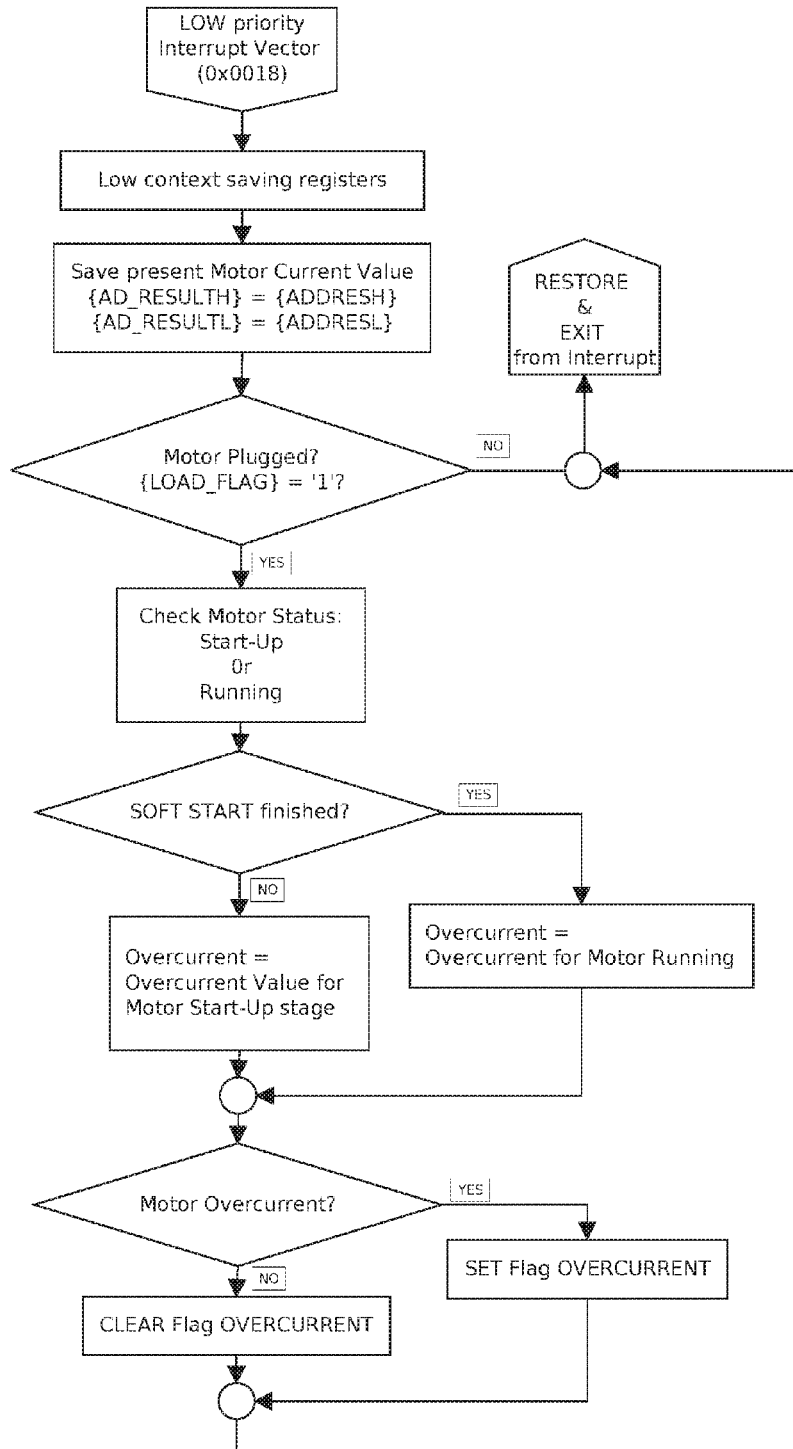


FIG. 26

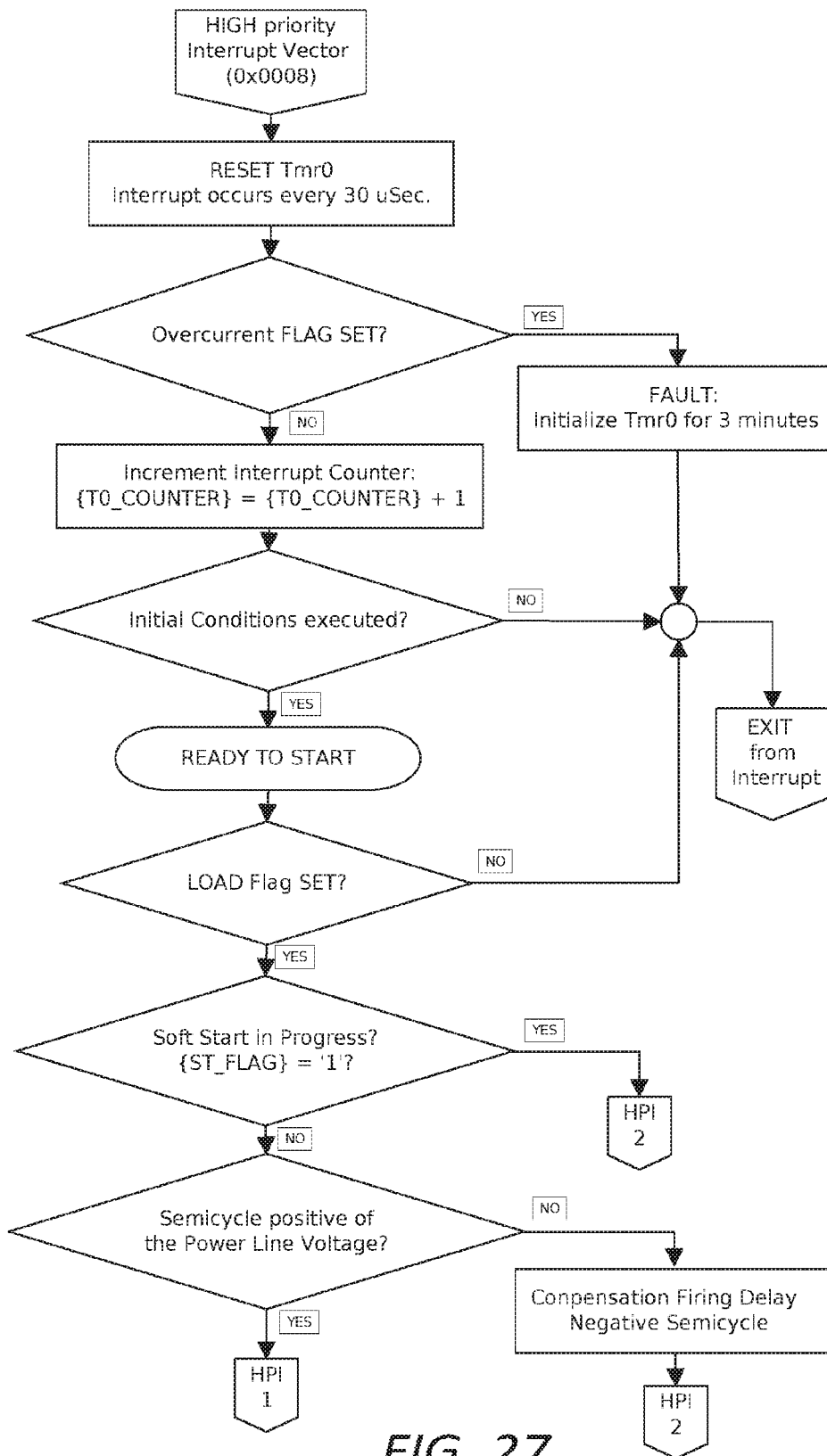


FIG. 27

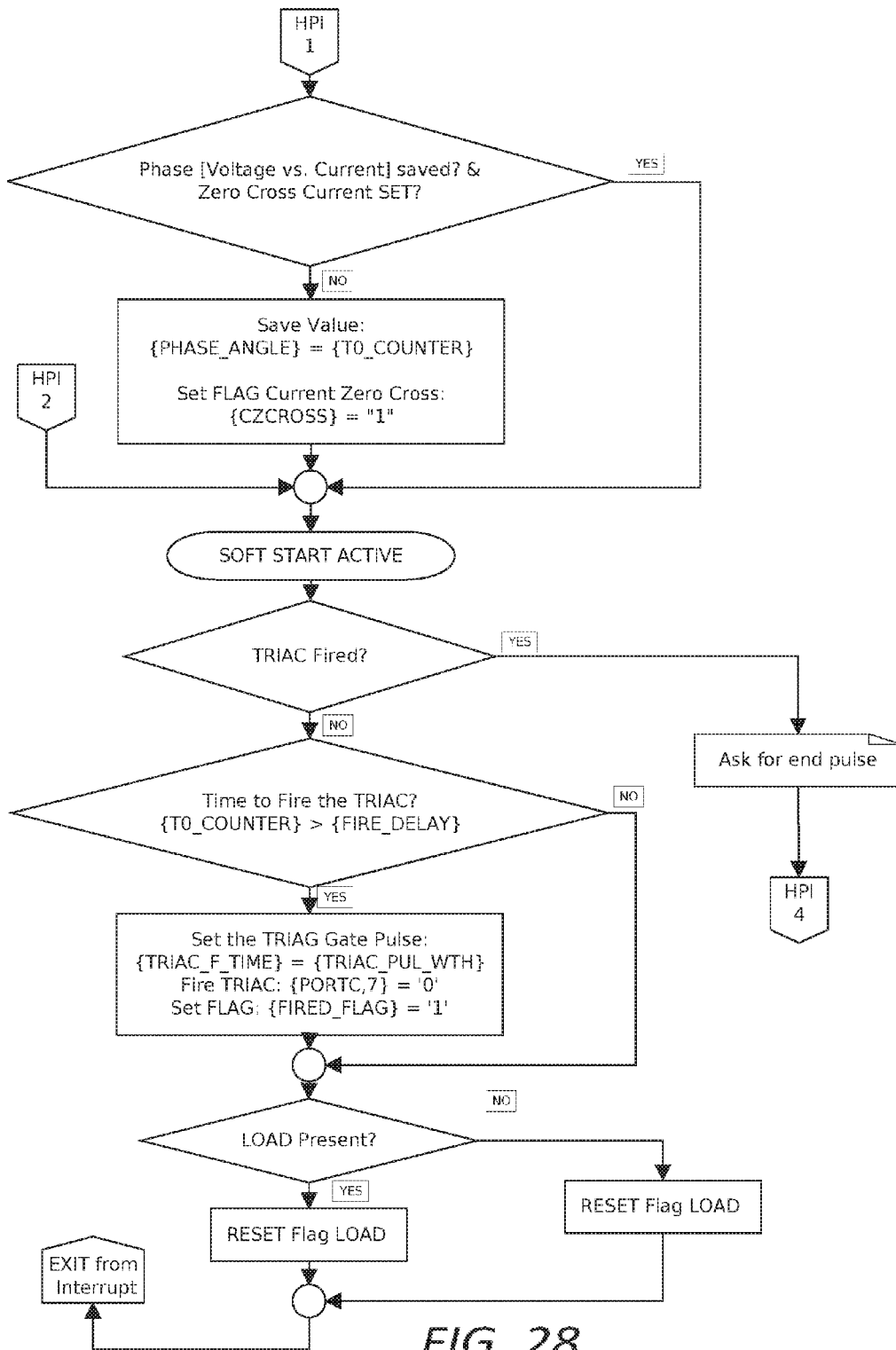


FIG. 28

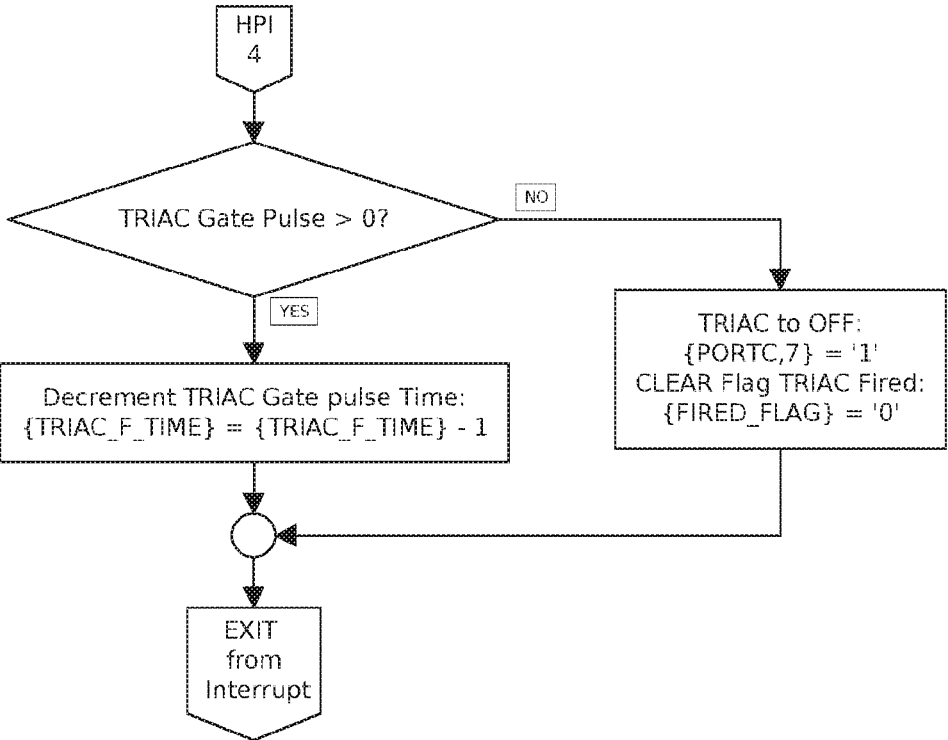


FIG. 29

**SINGLE PHASE MOTOR ENERGY
ECONOMIZER FOR REGULATING THE USE
OF ELECTRICITY**

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED
APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 14/159,108 filed Jan. 20, 2014; which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/943,929 filed Jul. 17, 2013; which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/676,196, filed on Nov. 14, 2012, now U.S. Pat. No. 8,502,492; which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/041,686, filed on Mar. 7, 2011, now U.S. Pat. No. 8,362,735. The entire disclosure and contents of the above applications are hereby incorporated by reference.

FIELD

[0002] This invention relates to the field of electric motors and more particularly to a system, device and apparatus for controlling power to AC induction motors for power conservation and other features.

BACKGROUND

[0003] Alternating current electric motors are typically engineered to provide a maximum power (horsepower) output under load at a particular constant operating voltage. Unfortunately, during most of the life of such a motor, the motor is grossly underutilized and wastes a considerable amount of electric power. When such motors operate at anything less than a full load, any extra power provided to the motor is converted into waste heat by the windings of the motor. Induction motors are used in many applications such as refrigerators and air-conditioners, elevators, pool systems, boat lifts, washing machines, clothes driers, air compressors, etc. This type of motor is more reliable because it does not have brushes, is relatively quiet when operating and has predictable design performance characteristics.

[0004] Induction motors are less efficient when not fully loaded. A typical 1/3-horsepower induction motor draws about 6.6 amperes and exhibits a power conversion factor of about 80% under full load. This same motor has poor efficiency under a light load because of internal losses. Although the power factor may drop to 30% or so, the current consumed still remains high. Under no load, the same motor draws around 4.9 amperes; even though little or no useful work is being performed because there is no load on the motor.

[0005] It is well known that eddy current contributes to efficiency loss, particularly when operating under less than full load. This power loss is converted to heat, making the motor structure operate at a higher temperature, thereby, lowering the life expectancy of motor components such as bearings. Additionally, the heat enters the environment, requiring cooling of the area around the motor and contributing to heat build-up in buildings; an undesirable consequence when the buildings are being air-conditioned.

[0006] In lightly loaded induction motors, the rotor turns slightly faster than when it is heavily loaded, resulting in an increase in the stator inductance, resulting in a low power factor. This increase in rotational speed was measured in the prior art with devices such as tachometers and fed back into a motor control circuit. The circuit would then reduce power

to the motor when the circuit detected that the motor was lightly loaded. By reducing the applied stator voltage the magnetic field is weakened and the rotor torque is lessened. If the voltage or power is decreased too much, slip, drag or stalling may occur. Therefore, reductions of the applied stator voltage or power must be controlled to provide sufficient voltage/power to prevent stalling and unsatisfactory operating characteristics such as vibration. These conditions can lead a reduction of the life of the motor.

[0007] High-permeability core materials also exhibit an abrupt “knee” where magnetic saturation occurs at a specific voltage. The operating point for the core material making up the motor’s stator structure is established with a high flux density under normal line voltage. An increase in line voltage can bring about a large decrease in efficiency as magnetic saturation of the core material is approached. The increased line voltage creates only increased losses in efficiency rather than additional torque. Such losses tend to produce more heating, which in turn increases the losses by, for example, increasing the resistance of the windings.

[0008] When electric utility companies reduce line voltage (“brown-out”) during peak-usage periods, typical induction motors can fail by stalling or overheating. In such conditions where insufficient voltage is available for proper motor operation, it is better to not provide any voltage to the motor.

[0009] U.S. Pat. No. 4,806,838 and U.S. Pat. No. 4,823,067 reduce motor losses through the use of two separate parallel-acting run windings, one that has a higher impedance to produce a sufficient portion of field strength flux to operate the motor under partial load and the other has a lower impedance and is controlled to increase the field strength flux when the motor load increases. This requires modifications to the motor, including rewiring the winding of the motor; something not feasible for existing installations. It is desirable to obtain power savings through improved efficiency for induction motors that have a single run winding without making modifications to the motor.

[0010] What is needed is a system, method and apparatus of controlling power to an induction motor that will reduce power-grid startup surge, without modifications to the induction motor itself.

SUMMARY

[0011] By implementing the design using a processor, an induction motor is “soft-started” by applying a voltage to the motor that is substantially less than the rated voltage and gradually increasing the motor voltage while monitoring changes in current drawn by the motor, the nominal motor current is found (full ac Voltage applied) and operating ranges are set. Now, the processor starts to decrease the motor voltage thereby detecting when maximum efficiency is found. Once maximum efficiency is found, the nominal motor current is found and operating ranges are set. Now, the processor varies the voltage to the motor by measuring the phase angle between the voltage and the current to the motor and increasing the voltage when the phase angle is less than a minimum phase angle (determined by the above step of searching for the maximum efficiency) and decreasing the voltage when the phase angle is greater than or equal to the minimum phase angle as long as the voltage does not fall below a minimum voltage determined during the start-up step of searching for the maximum efficiency.

[0012] In one embodiment, a system for reducing inrush loading when a source power is restored is disclosed. The

system has a device for switching power that selectively connects a load to the source of power and a circuit for measuring the AC voltage at the source and for determining when the AC voltage is within operating range. Responsive to the AC voltage being within operating range, the system delays for a time period then connects the load to the source of power by way of the device for switching power.

[0013] In another embodiment, a method for reducing inrush loading when a source power is restored is disclosed. The method steps include (in order) (a) disconnecting the load from the power source and (b) upon detecting operational power from the power source, delaying for a period of time then (c) after the delaying, connecting the load to the power source. (d) Upon detecting a loss of power from the power source, the method is repeated from step (b).

[0014] In another embodiment, a system for reducing inrush loading when a source power is restored is disclosed. The system includes a processor having interfaced thereto a tangible memory for storing instructions. A solid-state switch is connected in series between a load and the source of power. The solid-state switch has a trigger that is controlled by the processor to selectively connect the load with the source of the power. The system has a way to measure a voltage potential at the source of the power. Software instructions stored in the memory set the solid state switch to a high-impedance mode then determine when the voltage potential from the source of the power exceeds a pre-determined threshold. Responsive to the voltage potential from the source of the power exceeding the pre-determined threshold, the software instructions delay for a period of time and after the delay, set the solid state switch to a low-impedance mode, thereby connecting the load to the source of power.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0015] The invention can be best understood by those having ordinary skill in the art by reference to the following detailed description when considered in conjunction with the accompanying drawings in which:

[0016] FIG. 1 illustrates a schematic view of a system for controlling a single-phase motor.

[0017] FIG. 2 illustrates a schematic view of a system for controlling the single-phase motor with telemetry.

[0018] FIG. 3 illustrates a schematic view of a system for controlling the single-phase motor with power-line networking.

[0019] FIG. 4 illustrates a schematic view of a processor system for controlling the single-phase motor.

[0020] FIG. 5 illustrates a first flow chart of the system for controlling the single-phase motor.

[0021] FIG. 6 illustrates a second flow chart of the system for controlling the single-phase motor.

[0022] FIG. 7 illustrates a third flow chart of the system for controlling the single-phase motor.

[0023] FIG. 8 illustrates a fourth flow chart of the system for controlling the single-phase motor.

[0024] FIG. 9 illustrates a fifth flow chart of the system for controlling the single-phase motor.

[0025] FIG. 10 illustrates a sixth flow chart of the system for controlling the single-phase motor.

[0026] FIG. 11 illustrates a seventh flow chart of the system for controlling the single-phase motor.

[0027] FIGS. 12-29 illustrate a detailed flow chart of an exemplary working system.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0028] Reference will now be made in detail to the presently preferred embodiments of the invention, examples of which are illustrated in the accompanying drawings. Throughout the following detailed description, the same reference numerals refer to the same elements in all figures. The inventions disclosed are described in detail using an exemplary hardware and software system but are not limited in any way to a combined hardware and software system as many embodiments are envisioned including completely hardware solutions without an embedded processor, etc.

[0029] Although the description and examples describe a processor-based system, it is known in the industry to exchange a processor and software with fixed logic and visa-versa; hence, in some embodiments, the system described is implemented from logic, gates, transistors, and the like, without having a specific processing element.

[0030] Controlling of an alternating current (AC) load through the use of a solid state switch (e.g. Triac, SCR, etc) is well known in the industry. In general, once such a switch is triggered, it maintains conduction until current through the solid state switch abates, as it does at the AC current zero-voltage crossing. To control an AC load between zero and 100% power, the trigger to the solid state switch is delayed past the zero-crossing of the AC voltage. This time delay between zero degrees and 180 degrees will be referred to as the trigger delay. For example, if the AC power is a 60 Hz sine wave, there are approximately 8.33 milliseconds between zero-crossings (period of the half-wave). To apply approximately 50% power to a load, the trigger is delayed for half of this period (90 degrees) or 4.16 ms.

[0031] It should be noted that, for inductive loads, the current does not stop flowing when the input voltage crosses zero but, rather, when the motor current crosses zero (e.g. flow of current stops), which lags the voltage waveform. This is shown by:

For RESISTIVE load: ($0 < \alpha < \Pi$)

[0032] Where: α : Conduction angle; V_m : Voltage Peak of sin wave

$$V_{rms} = V_m / (2^{-1} * (1 / (\Pi [\Pi - \alpha + 1/2 \sin(2\alpha)]^{-1})))$$

[0033] For INDUCTIVE load: There is a limit according minimum conduction TRIAC angle. Limited for Argument of Load Impedance:

$$Z = (R + jX_L) = (R + j\omega L), \text{ then:}$$

$$|Z| = (R^2 + X_L^2)^{-1/2}; \text{ Then: } \Phi = \text{Arctg}(X_L/R_L)$$

[0034] Referring to FIG. 1, a schematic view of a system for controlling a single-phase motor 1 is shown. The heart of this motor control 1 is a processor 8 which is any known processor 8 but preferably a microprocessor 8 such as a single chip microcontroller 8, etc. The processor 8 has a program that executes and reads inputs from other components in the system, and produces outputs for controlling other components in the system.

[0035] It is anticipated that the program that executes within the processor 8 is capable of being pre-programmed with data specific to the motor 5, such as minimum voltage required, typical operating current, full-load operating current, impedance, etc. But in a preferred embodiment the program that executes within the processor 8 is unaware of

the characteristics of the motor 5 and learns the characteristics upon start-up, as will be later described.

[0036] The processor 8 and other circuitry are powered by a small power supply 28. Any known suitable power supply 28 is anticipated.

[0037] A solid state switch 12 is controlled by the processor 8 through a buffer/isolator 16. Solid state switches 12 are well known in the industry and are typically three-terminal devices having an input, output and trigger. Raising a voltage potential at the trigger above a threshold potential forces the solid state switch 12 into conduction. Since the solid state switch 12 is either in a high-impedance state (no power consumed) or conducting (only small amount of voltage is dropped between the input and output), very little power is lost (converted into heat) and only a small heat sink, or no heat sink at all, is needed. Solid state switches 12 typically consist of a power triac and possibly other circuitry related to the trigger such as buffers and isolation circuits.

[0038] Use of solid state switches 12 are well known in the industry. Such devices are often employed in lighting controls (e.g., dimmers) and other, often high-voltage systems. The solid state switches 12 (e.g. triac, silicon-controlled rectifiers, opposing-polarity silicon-controlled rectifiers, etc.), once triggered, continue to conduct until the current through them no longer flows. Once current stops flowing through the solid state switch 12, it resets back to a high-impedance state until it is triggered again. In many AC power controls (e.g. light dimmers), the trigger of the solid state switch 12 is phase controlled. For full brightness, the solid state switch 12 is triggered at the beginning of the AC cycle and since it latches until current abates, the solid state switch 12 continues to conduct for the remainder of the AC cycle. This is repeated at the beginning of the next cycle. For reduced brightness, triggering of the solid state switch 12 is delayed by a trigger delay until somewhere partially into the cycle. For example, if delayed until half way into the cycle, approximately one-half of the total power is delivered to the load. The system 1 controls the load (motor 5) using the same principle. To deliver 50% of the total power to the motor 5, the trigger of the solid state switch 12 is fired (triggered) half way into the cycle, etc.

[0039] In order to determine the optimal trigger point for the solid state switch 12 based upon the load on the motor 5, the current through the motor 5 and solid state switch 12 is measured by a current sensor 10 and buffered and/or converted to digital by a current measurement circuit 14 as known in the art. For example, the current sensor 10 is a very low ohm resistor or hall-effect sensor and the current measurement circuit 14 is an isolator, amplifier and analog-to-digital converter, providing a digital value of the current to the processor 8. Many other circuits are known in the industry for measuring current and delivering that measurement to a processor 8, all of which are anticipated and included here within. Although shown as a processor-based system, non-processor based systems are also anticipated.

[0040] In order to determine the optimal trigger point for the solid state switch 12 and, hence, power delivered to the motor 5, another datum is needed: voltage. In this exemplary circuit, the voltage is measured, isolated and converted to digital by a voltage sense circuit 16. Many circuits are known in the industry for measuring voltage and delivering that measurement to a processor 8, all of which are anticipated and included here within.

[0041] Because, in some scenarios, the motor 5 is part of a system such as a washing machine, dryer, refrigerator, etc., and some such devices cannot operate below a certain RMS (root-mean-square) line voltage, an RMS circuit 22 is included in the preferred embodiment to measure the effective RMS voltage at the load (motor 5) and to relay that measurement to the processor 8.

[0042] In some embodiments, one or more indicators 26 are provided to indicate operating states such as normal operation, start-up and overload, etc. Such indicators 26 are, for example, LEDs 26 or other display devices and are driven, either directly or through a buffer by the processor 8.

[0043] Referring to FIG. 2, a schematic view of a system 1 for controlling a single-phase motor with telemetry is shown. This motor control 1 is similar to that described in FIG. 1 with the addition of an optional radio 30 and antenna 32. The processor 8 has a program that executes to: read inputs from other components in the system, outputs for controlling other components in the system, and signaling status and/or accepting control from a remote site through the radio 30 and antenna 32. For example, if an overload condition is detected, the processor 8 signals a remote site of the situation through the radio 30 and antenna 32. In another example, the remote site signals the processor 8 to shut down the motor 5 or delay start-up of the motor. The radio 30 and antenna 32 are any known radio 30 and antenna 32 having transmit, receive or transceiver capabilities, for example a WiFi (802.11) transceiver, a Bluetooth transceiver, etc. By networking several control systems, a wide-area power system is envisioned in which a central authority determines when the various controls start their motors. In embodiments having only a radio receiver, the external site is capable of sending signals to initiate operations of the system for controlling a single-phase motor 5 but acknowledgements and/or status are not transmitted back to the external site. In embodiments having only a radio transmitter, the system for controlling a single-phase motor 1 transmits status to the external site but there is no provision for the external site to send signals to control operations of the system for controlling a single-phase motor 5.

[0044] As an example, in a large building without such controls, after return of power following a power failure, most motors start immediately when power is restored. In the same building with the disclosed control system, a central control system communicates with individual motor control systems to stagger starting of individual motors so as to not overload the power grid when it is restored. This is important because motors consume a greater amount of power on start as compared to normal run power consumption.

[0045] Referring to FIG. 3, a schematic view of a system for controlling a single-phase motor 1 with networking is shown. This motor control 1 is similar to that described in FIGS. 1 and 2 with the addition of an optional network interface 34. The processor 8 has a program which executes to read inputs from other components in the system and outputs for controlling other components in the system and signaling status and/or accepting control from a remote site through the network interface 34. For example, if an overload condition is detected, the processor 8 signals a remote site of the situation through the network interface 34. In another example, the remote site signals the processor 8 to shut down the motor 5 or delay start-up of the motor.

[0046] The network interface is any known network interface having transceiver capabilities, for example Ethernet, RS-232, Home Power Line Networking, etc. By networking several control systems, a wide-area power system is envisioned in which a central authority determines when the various controls start their motors. The external site is capable of sending signals to initiate operations of the system for controlling a single-phase motor **1** and for receiving status. As an example, in a large building without such controls, after return of power after a failure, most motors start immediately. In the same building with the disclosed network-based control system, a central control system communicates with individual motor control systems to stagger starting of individual motors so as to not overload the power grid when it is restored. An overload could occur because motors consume a greater amount of power on start as compared to normal run power consumption.

[0047] Referring to FIG. 4, a schematic view of an exemplary processor system for controlling the single-phase motor is shown. In this, the processor **8** interfaces to memory **120** through a memory bus **115**. Any type of memory **120** and/or interconnection with the processor **8** is anticipated. In some systems, the memory consists of persistent memory for instruction/program storage and read/write memory for storing data. There are many known processor/memory systems and the system described is but one example, many of which are anticipated for use in a motor controlling system **1**. In some exemplary processing systems, the processor has input/output ports, generally connected to the processor through a bus **130** or other means as known in the industry. In this example, the input and/or output ports **132/133/134/135/136/137** read the status of input switches **19** (e.g. an optional reset switch), control the solid state switch **12**, read the current **14**, read the voltage **16**, read the RMS voltage **22** and control the (optional) illumination device **26**. Likewise, in embodiments having a radio **30** and antenna **32**, the radio **30** interfaces with the processor as known in the industry, for example through the bus **130**. Some embodiments have a selector switch **19** composed of one or more "dip switches" used for configuring the system. For example, one such switch **19**, when present, enables or disables restarting the motor in a fixed amount of time after an over current situation was detected, and the motor was shut down.

[0048] Referring to FIG. 5, a flow chart of the operation of a typical program running in the processor **8** is described. An important aspect of power consumption in induction motors **5** is power factor. In the industry, the real power, P, is measured in watts and the apparent power, S, is measured in volt-amperes. Since induction motors **5** are inductive loads to a sinusoidal AC voltage, the current wave form lags the voltage waveform by a delay proportional to the frequency of the AC voltage and the inductance of the induction motor **5**. As an illustration, for a known AC voltage frequency (e.g. 60 Hz), the lag between the AC voltage sine wave and the AC current sine wave increases as inductance of the motor increases. It is well known that the inductance of an induction motor increases as load on the motor increases. The real power, P, is the power actually delivered to the motor **5**. The real power is equal to the apparent power, S, times the cosine of the phase angle. Therefore, the power factor is a number between zero and one. If the power factor is one, the real power is equal to the apparent power and optimal efficiency is achieved. This never occurs with induction motors **5**.

[0049] When power is first applied to the system **1**, the processor captures initial data from the current measurement circuit **14** and the voltage sense circuit **16**. Before applying power to the controlled device (e.g. triggering the solid state switch **12**), the power line frequency is measured **40** through the voltage sense circuit **16** by, for example, measuring the number of zero-crossings in a time period (e.g. 60 in one second would correlate to 60 Hz) or counting the number of internal clock ticks between zero crossings. For example, a timer that triggers every 30 microseconds will trigger approximately 277 times between zero crossings of a 60 Hz AC signal.

[0050] Power to the load is controlled by delaying firing of the solid state switch by a percentage of the period of the AC voltage. This controlled delay is called a trigger delay. The previously determined power line frequency is used to calibrate the trigger delay. For example, in the scenario above in which a 30 microsecond timer triggers approximately 277 times between zero crossings, to provide 50% power to the load (e.g. motor **5**), the trigger delay is set to 50% or approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ of the 277 timer intervals. Accordingly, the trigger is fired at approximately 138 timer intervals after the zero crossing of the voltage.

[0051] Another step in controlling the motor **5** is to make measurements to determine characteristics of the load (e.g. motor **5**). In the system for controlling a single-phase motor **1**, maximum voltage/power is applied to the load (e.g. motor **5**) by setting the trigger delay (TD) to zero **42**. This initiates triggering of the solid state switch at the zero crossing, thereby providing full power to the load (e.g. motor **5**). While full power is provided to the load, the maximum current (inrush current) is measured **44**. Since the motor **5** is not turning, the current is very similar to the current anticipated with a stalled motor. The inrush current is saved as an over-current threshold (I-MAX) **44** and used later to determine if the motor has been overloaded (e.g. stalled) during operation.

[0052] Next, it is determined if a resistive load or an inductive load is present. An induction motor **5** typically operates in a range of voltage-to-current phase angles, depending upon the construction of the motor **5** and the load on the motor **5**. If a resistive load is present, the voltage-to-current phase angle is approximately zero since there is no inductance in the load. This determination is complicated by the fact that typical non-induction motor loads do have some amount of inductance due to transformers and other circuitry, in addition to some capacitance load. To determine if an inductive load is present (e.g., the inductive load of an induction motor **5**), the voltage-to-current phase angle is measured **46** by measuring the delay between the zero crossing of the voltage and the zero crossing of the current (V→I delay).

[0053] To determine the type of load, two phase angle threshold values are used. If the zero-crossing of the current occurs within a minimum phase difference value (MIN) of the zero-crossing of the voltage **48** or if the zero-crossing of the current occurs after a maximum phase difference value (MAX) of the zero-crossing of the voltage **48** then it is determined that a non-inductive or resistive load is being controlled. In the preferred embodiment, the minimum phase difference value (MIN) is 15 degrees of the duty cycle (approximately 8.3% of the duty cycle) and the maximum phase difference value (MAX) is 90 degrees of the duty cycle (approximately 50% of the duty cycle). In this, it is

determined that an induction motor **5** is the load if the voltage-to-current lag is between 15 degrees and 90 degrees of the duty cycle. In alternate embodiments, other ranges are anticipated, such as the determination that an induction motor **5** is the load if the voltage-to-current lag is between 20 degrees and 85 degrees of the duty cycle.

[0054] If it is determined that the load is not an induction motor **5**, full power is maintained (e.g. TD remains at zero) throughout the operation **46/48** until a phase difference between the voltage and the current **48** falls between the MIN/MAX range. Such a shift in phase occurs, for example, in a device that has an intermittently operated motor such as a refrigerator in which the compressor motor only operates when the temperature within the refrigerator is above a preset value.

[0055] As discussed prior, power to the load is varied by delaying firing of the solid state switch by a percentage of the period of the AC voltage, called a trigger delay (TD). Once the type of load and over-current point is measured, the trigger delay is initialized **60** to a value that provides less-than full power, for example 30% less or, for a **120VAC** system, around 40 Volts RMS lower than nominal power. This nominal value of 30% is the preferred but, in other embodiments, the nominal value is of the range of 20% to 40%. In some embodiments, sampling is performed to determine if any load is connected by sending short voltage pulses while measuring the current. In this, the solid state switch is initially controlled to fire at approximately 30% of the period, thereby providing enough power to start an induction motor. For example, with 60 Hz AC power, the period is approximately 8.33 ms and the solid state switch is triggered at approximately 2.8 ms from the zero crossing. The measured current (I-MAX) is saved (I-PREV) **60** for later comparison. In other embodiments, the trigger delay is set to another value other than 30%. For example, in systems that don't provide a "soft start," the trigger delay is set **60** to 0%. In some embodiments, sampling is performed to determine if any load is connected by sending short voltage pulses while measuring the current.

[0056] Next, the motor is slowly started by gradually increasing the voltage/power to the motor **61**. The maximum allowable trigger delay is also determined **61**. This is detailed in FIGS. **9** and **10**. In this, the power to the motor **5** is gradually increased and, at each step, the current drawn by the motor **5** is measured and compared to the previous current drawn by the motor **5**. Once the current decreases, the system has found the inrush current of the motor **5**, which is used to set operating boundaries (see FIGS. **9** and **10**). After the boundaries are established, the phase difference between the phase of the voltage and the phase of the current to the motor **5** are used to control the power to the motor **5** (e.g. trigger delay) as will be described.

[0057] Now the system enters a loop, measuring absolute current of the load (I-CUR) **62** and, if the absolute current (I-CUR) is greater than the over-current value (I-MAX) **64** previously stored, an over-current condition is detected and future firing of the solid state switch is prevented until a reset signal is detected or a timer expires (See FIG. **8**). In some situations, it is not advised to use a reset timer such as in systems where the motor controls mechanics that are accessible to an operator since this provides the potential to harm the operator when the timer expires and the motor is restarted.

[0058] Next, within the loop, the present phase difference between the voltage and the current is measured and if the phase difference is less than the minimum phase difference and the trigger delay is greater than zero **70**, the trigger delay is decremented **72**, thereby increasing voltage/power to the motor **5**. If the present phase difference between the voltage and the current is greater or equal to the minimum phase difference and the trigger delay is less than the maximum trigger delay **74**, the trigger delay is incremented **78**, thereby decreasing voltage/power to the motor **5**.

[0059] An example of this operation is as follows. Once the over-current value is determined, the trigger delay is set to, for example, 30% and the motor is started. During start-up, the motor's internal centrifugal switch is closed, thereby engaging the motor's starting windings to start the motor from an idle, zero RPM state. The first current reading from the motor will be the highest, because the motor is stalled and the centrifugal switch is closed. The next few readings are most likely to be a similar current and, therefore, the trigger delay remains at 30%. Once the stator of the motor begins to turn, the current begins to decrease. Responsive to this, the trigger delay is incremented until an ideal trigger delay is detected in which further incrementing of the trigger delay no longer reduces current. When the motor reaches operational speed, the centrifugal switch opens and current to the motor decreases, at which time, the trigger delay is incremented until a new, optimal trigger delay is determined, providing maximum efficiency. Now, if additional load is placed on the motor (e.g. an object is pushed against a saw blade or a weight is placed on an escalator, etc.), the present current reading becomes higher than the previous current reading and the trigger delay is decreased until a new optimal trigger delay is determined. Then, when the load abates (e.g. the saw operation ends or the weight leaves the escalator), the present current becomes less than the previous current and the trigger delay is increased until a new optimal trigger delay is again determined.

[0060] To determine the power factor, the phase of the voltage is compared to the phase of the current. The phase the voltage is in sync with the zero-crossing of the voltage. Therefore, the processor **8** read the instantaneous voltage of the AC voltage from the voltage sense circuit **16** to determine when the voltage is zero, meaning a zero crossing has occurred. Similarly, the phase of the current is in sync with the zero-crossing of the current. The processor **8** read the instantaneous current from the current sense circuit **14** to determine when the current is zero, meaning a zero crossing has occurred. The phase difference between the voltage and the current is calculated, for example, as the time from the zero crossing of the voltage until the zero crossing of the current divided by the half-cycle period times 180 degrees. For example, if the half-cycle period is 8.33 ms (as in 60 Hz) and the time from the zero crossing of the voltage until the zero crossing of the current is 4.17 ms, then the phase difference is $(8.33/4.17)*180$ or 90 degrees.

[0061] Referring to FIG. **6**, a second flow chart of the operation of a typical program running in the processor **8** is described. In this example, the system is under control of a remote authority.

[0062] When power is first applied to the system **1**, the processor **8** initiates a connection to the remote authority (not shown) **140**. For example, in systems that include a radio receiver **30**, the processor **8** waits until, for example, a carrier signal is detected. Another example, in systems that

include a network adapter **34**, the processor **8** initiates a connection to the remote authority through the network adapter **34**, or waits for a connection initiated by the remote authority through the network adapter, as known in the industry. It is also anticipated that the signaling between the processor **8** and the remote authority be over a connection-less protocol or any other protocol known in the industry.

[0063] Although it is anticipated that having connectivity to a remote authority provides signaling to start motor operation, other signaling is also anticipated such as status reporting (e.g. power consumed by the motor) and programming or changing of operating parameters, etc.

[0064] Once the connection is established, the processor **8** waits for a signal from the remote authority before starting the motor **5**. For example, in systems that include a radio receiver **30**, the processor **8** waits **142** until, for example, a specific modulation of the carrier signal is detected. Another example, in systems that include a network adapter **34**, the processor **8** waits for a packet containing a start-up command sequence, received through the network adapter **34**, as known in the industry.

[0065] Once signaled to start **142** the motor **5**, the processor captures initial data from the current measurement circuit **14** and the voltage sense circuit **16**. Before applying power to the controlled device (e.g. triggering the solid state switch **12**), the power line frequency is measured **40** through the voltage sense circuit **16** by, for example, measuring the number of zero-crossings in a time period (e.g. 60 in one second would correlate to 60 Hz) or counting the number of internal clock ticks between zero crossings. For example, a timer that triggers every 30 microseconds will trigger approximately 277 times between zero crossings of a 60 Hz AC signal.

[0066] In this embodiment of the system for controlling a single-phase motor **1**, maximum voltage/power is applied to the load (e.g. motor **5**) by setting the trigger delay (TD) to zero **42**. This initiates triggering of the solid state switch at the zero crossing, thereby providing full power to the load (e.g. motor **5**). While full power is provided to the load, the maximum current (inrush current) is measured **44**. Since the motor **5** is not turning, the current is very similar to the current anticipated with a stalled motor. The inrush current is saved as an over-current threshold (I-MAX) **44** and used later to determine if the motor has been overloaded (e.g. stalled) during operation.

[0067] Next, it is determined if a resistive load or an inductive load is present. An induction motor **5** typically operates in a range of voltage-to-current phase angles, depending upon the construction of the motor **5** and the load on the motor **5**. If a resistive load is present, the voltage-to-current phase angle is approximately zero since there is no inductance in the load. Typical non-induction motor loads do have some amount of inductance due to transformers and other circuitry, as well as some capacitance load as well. To determine if an inductive load is present (e.g., the inductive load of an induction motor **5**), the voltage-to-current phase angle is measured **46** by measuring the delay between the zero crossing of the voltage and the zero crossing of the current **46** ($V \rightarrow I$ delay).

[0068] To determine the type of load, two phase angle threshold values are used. If the zero-crossing of the current occurs within a minimum phase difference value (MIN) of the zero-crossing of the voltage **48** or if the zero-crossing of the current occurs after a maximum phase difference value

(MAX) of the zero-crossing of the voltage **48** then it is determined that a non-inductive or resistive load is being controlled. In the preferred embodiment, the minimum phase difference value (MIN) is 15 degrees of the duty cycle (approximately 8.3% of the duty cycle) and the maximum phase difference value (MAX) is 90 degrees of the duty cycle (approximately 50% of the duty cycle). In this, it is determined that an induction motor **5** is the load if the voltage-to-current lag is between 15 degrees and 90 degrees of the duty cycle. In alternate embodiments, other ranges are anticipated such as determining that an induction motor **5** is the load if the voltage-to-current lag is between 20 degrees and 85 degrees of the duty cycle.

[0069] If it is determined that the load is not an induction motor **5**, full power is maintained (e.g. TD remains at zero) throughout the operation **46/48** until a phase difference between the voltage and the current **48** falls between the MIN/MAX range. Such a shift in phase occurs, for example, in a device that has an intermittently operated motor such as a refrigerator in which the compressor motor only operates when the temperature within the refrigerator is above a preset value.

[0070] As discussed prior, power to the load is varied by delaying firing of the solid state switch by a percentage of the period of the AC voltage, called a trigger delay (TD). Once the type of load and over-current point is measured, the trigger delay is initialized **60** to a value that provides less-than full power, for example 30% less or, for a 120 VAC system, around 40 Volts RMS lower than nominal power. This nominal value of 30% is the preferred but, in other embodiments, the nominal value is within the range of 20% to 40%. In this, the solid state switch is initially controlled to fire at approximately 30% of the period, thereby providing enough power to start an induction motor. For example, with a 60 Hz AC power, the period is approximately 8.33 ms and the solid state switch is triggered at approximately 2.8 ms from the zero crossing. The measured current (I-MAX) is saved (I-PREV) **60** for later comparison. In other embodiments, the trigger delay is set to another value other than 30%. For example, in systems that do not provide a "soft start," the trigger delay is set **60** to 0%.

[0071] Next, the motor is slowly started by gradually increasing the voltage/power to the motor **61**. The maximum allowable trigger delay is also determined **61**. This is detailed in FIGS. **9** and **10**. In this, the power to the motor **5** is gradually increased and, at each step, the current drawn by the motor **5** is measured and compared to the previous current drawn by the motor **5**. Once the current decreases, the system has found the inrush current of the motor **5**, which is used to set operating boundaries (see FIGS. **9** and **10**). After the boundaries are established, the phase difference between the phase of the voltage and the phase of the current to the motor **5** are used to control the power to the motor **5** (e.g. trigger delay) as will be described.

[0072] Now the system enters a loop, measuring absolute current of the load (I-CUR) **62** and, if the absolute current (I-CUR) is greater than the over-current value (I-MAX) **64** previously stored, an over-current condition is detected and future firing of the solid state switch is prevented until a reset signal is detected or a timer expires (See FIG. **8**). In some situations, it is not advised to use a reset timer such as in systems where the motor controls mechanics that are acces-

sible to an operator since this provides the potential to harm the operator when the timer expires and the motor is restarted.

[0073] Next, within the loop, the present phase difference between the voltage and the current is measured. If the phase difference is less than the minimum phase difference and the trigger delay is greater than zero 70, the trigger delay is decremented 72, thereby increasing voltage/power to the motor 5. If the present phase difference between the voltage and the current is greater or equal to the minimum phase difference and the trigger delay is less than the maximum trigger delay 74, the trigger delay is incremented 78, thereby decreasing voltage/power to the motor 5.

[0074] An example of this operation is as follows. Once the over-current value is determined, the trigger delay is set to, for example, 30% and the motor is started. During start-up, the motor's internal centrifugal switch is closed, thereby engaging the motor's starting windings to start the motor from an idle, zero RPM state. The first current reading from the motor will be the highest, because the motor is stalled and the centrifugal switch is closed. The next few readings are most likely to be a similar current and, therefore, the trigger delay remains at 30%. Once the stator of the motor begins to turn, the current begins to decrease. Responding to this, the trigger delay is incremented until an ideal trigger delay is detected at which point further incrementing of the trigger delay no longer reduces current. When the motor reaches operational speed, the centrifugal switch opens and current to the motor decreases, at which time, the trigger delay is incremented until a new, optimal trigger delay is determined, providing maximum efficiency. Now, if additional load is placed on the motor (e.g. an object is pushed against a saw blade or a weight is placed on an escalator, etc.), the present current reading is higher than the previous current reading and the trigger delay is decreased until a new optimal trigger delay is determined. Then, when the load abates (e.g. the saw operation ends or the weight leaves the escalator), the present current reading becomes less than the previous current reading and the trigger delay is increased until a new optimal trigger delay is again determined.

[0075] To determine the power factor, the phase of the voltage is compared to the phase of the current. The phase of the voltage is in sync with the zero-crossing of the voltage. Therefore, the processor 8 read the instantaneous voltage of the AC voltage from the voltage sense circuit 16 to determine when the voltage is zero, meaning a zero crossing has occurred. Similarly, the phase of the current is in sync with the zero-crossing of the current. The processor 8 reads the instantaneous current from the current sense circuit 14 to determine when the current is zero, meaning a zero crossing has occurred. The phase difference between the voltage and the current is calculated, for example, as the time from the zero crossing of the voltage until the zero crossing of the current divided by the half-cycle period times 180 degrees. For example, if the half-cycle period is 8.33 ms (as in 60 Hz) and the time from the zero crossing of the voltage until the zero crossing of the current is 4.17 ms, then the phase difference is $(8.33/4.17)*180$ or 90 degrees.

[0076] Referring to FIG. 7, a third flow chart of the operation of a typical program running in the processor 8 is described. In this example, the system is under the control of a remote authority.

[0077] When power is first applied to the system 1, the processor 8 initiates a connection to the remote authority (not shown) 140. For example, in systems that include a radio receiver 30, the processor 8 waits until, for example, a carrier signal is detected. In another example, in systems that include a network adapter 34, the processor 8 initiates a connection to the remote authority through the network adapter 34, as known in the industry. It is also anticipated that the signaling between the processor 8 and the remote authority be over a connectionless protocol or any other protocol known in the industry.

[0078] Although having connectivity to a remote authority that provides signaling to start motor operation is anticipated, other signaling is also anticipated such as status reporting (e.g. power consumed by the motor) and programming or changing of operating parameters, etc.

[0079] Once the connection is established, the processor captures initial data from the current measurement circuit 14 and the voltage sense circuit 16. Before applying power to the controlled device (e.g. triggering the solid state switch 12), the power line frequency is measured 40 through the voltage sense circuit 16 by, for example, measuring the number of zero-crossings in a time period (e.g. 60 in one second would correlate to 60 Hz) or counting the number of internal clock ticks between zero crossings. For example, a timer that triggers every 30 microseconds will trigger approximately 277 times between zero crossings of a 60 Hz AC signal.

[0080] Power to the load is controlled by delaying firing of the solid state switch by a percentage of the period of the AC voltage, called a trigger delay. For example, in the scenario above in which a 30 microsecond timer triggers approximately 277 times between zero crossings, to provide 50% power to the load (e.g. motor 5), the trigger delay is set to 50% or approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ of the 277 timer intervals so the trigger is fired at approximately 138 timer intervals after the zero crossing of the voltage.

[0081] Another step in controlling the motor 5 is to make measurements to determine characteristics of the load (e.g. motor 5). In the system for controlling a single-phase motor 1, maximum voltage/power is applied to the load (e.g. motor 5) by setting the trigger delay (TD) to zero 42. This initiates triggering of the solid state switch at the zero crossing, thereby providing full power to the load (e.g. motor 5). While full power is provided to the load, the maximum current (inrush current) is measured 44. Since the motor 5 is not turning, the current is very similar to the current anticipated with a stalled motor. The inrush current is saved as an over-current threshold (I-MAX) 44 and used later to determine if the motor has been overloaded (e.g. stalled) during operation.

[0082] Next, it is determined if a resistive load or an inductive load is present. An induction motor 5 typically operates in a range of voltage-to-current phase angles, depending upon the construction of the motor 5 and the load on the motor 5. If a resistive load is present, the voltage-to-current phase angle is approximately zero since there is no inductance in the load. Typical non-induction motor loads do have some amount of inductance due to transformers and other circuitry, as well as some capacitance load. To determine if an inductive load is present (e.g., the inductive load of an induction motor 5), the voltage-to-current phase angle

is measured **46** by measuring the delay between the zero crossing of the voltage and the zero crossing of the current **46** (V→I delay).

[0083] To determine the type of load, two phase angle threshold values are used. If the zero-crossing of the current occurs within a minimum phase difference value (MIN) of the zero-crossing of the voltage **48** or if the zero-crossing of the current occurs after a maximum phase difference value (MAX) of the zero-crossing of the voltage **48** then it is determined that a non-inductive or resistive load is being controlled. In the preferred embodiment, the minimum phase difference value (MIN) is 15 degrees of the duty cycle (approximately 8.3% of the duty cycle) and the maximum phase difference value (MAX) is 90 degrees of the duty cycle (approximately 50% of the duty cycle). In this, it is determined that an induction motor **5** is the load if the voltage-to-current lag is between 15 degrees and 90 degrees of the duty cycle. In alternate embodiments, other ranges are anticipated such as the determination that an induction motor **5** is the load if the voltage-to-current lag is between 20 degrees and 85 degrees of the duty cycle.

[0084] If it is determined that the load is not an induction motor **5**, full power is maintained (e.g. TD remains at zero) throughout the operation **46/48** until a phase difference between the voltage and the current **48** falls between the MIN/MAX range. Such a shift in phase occurs, for example, in a device that has an intermittently operated motor such as a refrigerator in which the compressor motor only operates when the temperature within the refrigerator is above a preset value.

[0085] As discussed prior, power to the load is varied by delaying firing of the solid state switch by a percentage of the period of the AC voltage, called a trigger delay (TD). Once the type of load and over-current point is measured, the trigger delay is initialized **60** to a value that provides less-than full power, for example 30% less or, for a 120 VAC system, around 40 Volts RMS lower than nominal power. This nominal value of 30% is the preferred but, in other embodiments, the nominal value is of the range of 20% to 40%. In this, the solid state switch is initially controlled to fire at approximately 30% of the period, thereby providing enough power to start an induction motor. For example, with a 60 Hz AC power, the period is approximately 8.33 ms and the solid state switch is triggered at approximately 2.8 ms from the zero crossing. The measured current (I-MAX) is saved (I-PREV) **60** for later comparison. In other embodiments, the trigger delay is set to another value other than 30%. For example, in systems that don't provide a "soft start," the trigger delay is set **60** to 0%.

[0086] Next, the motor is slowly started by gradually increasing the voltage/power to the motor **61**. The maximum allowable trigger delay is also determined **61**. This is detailed in FIGS. **9** and **10**. In this, the power to the motor **5** is gradually increased and, at each step, the current drawn by the motor **5** is measured and compared to the previous current drawn by the motor **5**. Once the current decreases, the system has found the inrush current of the motor **5**, which is used to set operating boundaries (see FIGS. **9** and **10**). After the boundaries are established, the phase difference between the phase of the voltage and the phase of the current to the motor **5** are used to control the power to the motor **5** (e.g. trigger delay) as will be described.

[0087] Now the system enters a loop, measuring absolute current of the load (I-CUR) **62** and, if the absolute current

(I-CUR) is greater than the over-current value (I-MAX) **64** previously stored, an over-current condition is detected and future firing of the solid state switch is prevented until a reset signal is detected or a timer expires (See FIG. **8**). In some situations, it is not advised to use a reset timer such as in systems where the motor controls mechanics that are accessible to an operator since this provides the potential to harm the operator when the timer expires and the motor is restarted.

[0088] Next, within the loop, the present phase difference between the voltage and the current is measured and if the phase difference is less than the minimum phase difference and the trigger delay is greater than zero **70**, the trigger delay is decremented **74**, thereby increasing voltage/power to the motor **5**. If the present phase difference between the voltage and the current is greater or equal to the minimum phase difference and the trigger delay is less than the maximum trigger delay **74**, the trigger delay is incremented **78**, thereby decreasing voltage/power to the motor **5**.

[0089] Before the loop is repeated, the remote authority is checked to see if a "stop motor" signal (or other command/control signal) is received **144**. If there is no signal **144**, the loop continues **62/64/70/72/76/78/144**. If a signal was received **144**, action is taken such as entering another loop **146** waiting for a signal to restart the motor. In this example, a stop command is detected and the trigger delay is set to a maximum value **146**, thereby disabling triggering of the solid state switch **12** and stopping the motor until another signal is received **148** from the remote authority signaling a restart, at which time the motor **5** is restarted **140-148**.

[0090] The decrement step **72** does not decrement the trigger delay below zero and the increment step **78** does not increment the trigger delay above the maximum trigger delay, for example, 60% trigger delay.

[0091] Referring to FIG. **8**, a fourth flow chart of the operation of a typical program running in the processor **8** is described. In this example, an over-current situation was detected. A determination is made **200** as to whether it is safe to automatically attempt to restart the motor **5**. In some embodiments, this determination is built-in as a flag within the system program while in other embodiments this determination is based upon an external indication such as a switch **19**, jumper or any other known input parameter used to control the flow of the program. In some systems, the determination **200** is made through signaling by a remote authority, etc. In systems with input switches **19**, this determination **200** is made by reading one or more switches **19**. If it is deemed safe **200** to automatically restart the motor **5**, a delay is performed **202**, for example, a three-minute delay or other suitable delay, and then the system is reset by a master reset such as a software reset that is similar to a power cycle of the system **1**. If it is not deemed safe **200** to automatically restart the motor **5**, the system **1** waits for an external stimulus **204** such as the closure of a reset switch **19**, and, after the switch is closed/pressed, the system is reset by a master reset such as a software reset that is similar to a power cycle of the system **1**.

[0092] The external stimulus is anticipated to be any known restart stimulus such as pressing of a switch **19** or a communications from the remote authority through the radio **30** or network interface **36**.

[0093] Referring to FIGS. **9**, **10** and **11**, a fifth, sixth and seventh flow chart of the operation of a typical program running in the processor **8** is described. This flow describes

the soft-start process **61**. In general, applying full power to a motor on start-up produces unwanted noise, torque, vibration and a waste of energy. Additionally, after a power failure, it has been found that the power to thousands of induction motors, all starting at the same time, creates a large demand on the power grid. This large demand must be factored into the engineering of the power grid such that the grid will not fail under the load of so many induction motors. To reduce this start-up load, several optional features of the system **1** are provided. One is a simple delay between power coming on and when the system **1** provides power to the motor. This delay is anticipated to be a fixed delay (e.g. 5 seconds) or a random delay (e.g. random between 10 seconds and 5 minutes).

[0094] The soft-start method gradually applies enough power to overcome inertia of the motor's **5** stator and load but not too much power as to over-drive the motor. In this, the power to the motor is gradually increased until it is detected that the motor has reached a steady state

[0095] An exemplary method of soft-start **61** includes initializing the minimum voltage that is applied to the motor **5** (maximum trigger delay, or MTD) to a first constant, **K1**. During the soft-start procedure, the trigger delay will not exceed the maximum trigger delay (MTD) and, therefore, the voltage to the motor **5** will not be decreased lower than a predetermined value. The maximum trigger delay (MTD) is initially set **200** to a constant value, **K1** such as **240** (0xF0). Next, the trigger delay is initialized to an initial trigger delay **202** of a second constant value, **K2**, such as **204** decimal (0xCC) providing a starting voltage to the motor **5**. The maximum trigger delay (MCD) and initial trigger delay (TD) are preferably set to these values and in other embodiments, other similar values are used.

[0096] Next, for embodiments that limit looping, a counter is initialized to **255** and the previous current reading is set to a very high value (FFFF) **204**. The soft-start routine uses the counter to make a fixed number of loops.

[0097] Next, the system waits for the zero crossing **208**. After the zero crossing, the counter, CNT, is checked to see if it has reached zero and, if so, program flow proceeds to G (see FIG. **10**). If the counter, CNT, has not reached zero, the SS start flag is set **212**. If it is determined that the maximum power is now applied **214** to the motor **5** (TD is zero), the counter, CNT, is decremented **216** and if the counter reaches zero **218**, the trigger delay, TD, is set to zero **220**, applying maximum power to the motor **5**. In either case, the process repeats at H above. If it was determined that less than maximum power was applied **214** to the motor **5**, the trigger delay is decremented by one **240**. Now, if the inrush current was not previously found **242** and the measured current (ICUR) is less than the previously measured current (IPREV) **244**, it is determined that the inrush current has been found and a flag is set to indicate this and the currently measured current is saved to indicate the inrush current **246**.

[0098] Until the count, CNT, reaches zero **210**, the voltage to the motor **5** is slowly increased by decreasing the trigger delay (TD) **240** by, for example, one, each time through the loop, then measuring the current through the motor **5**, I-CUR. If the current actually decreases **244** (I-PREV is less than I-CUR), then the inrush current has been detected and it is saved for future use **246**.

[0099] Once the count reaches zero **210**, flow proceeds with G in FIG. **10**. If motor stability has not been achieved **260**, the loop repeats from H until stability is achieved **260**.

If motor stability has been achieved **260**, a determination is made as to whether maximum efficiency has been found **264**. If maximum efficiency has been found then it is determined if the initial trigger delay has been set **270**. If it has not been set, then the minimum phase angle is set to the current phase angle **272**, the nominal current is set to the current reading of the current (ICUR) **274**, the over current is set to the nominal current multiplied by a constant **276**, **K4**, typically **2.5** times the nominal current **276**, the minimum current (MIN_CURR) is set to the nominal current multiplied by a constant **280**, **K5**, typically a value less than 1, preferably 0.5 and the trigger delay is set to the nominal current multiplied by a constant **282**, **K6**, typically also a value less than 1, preferably 0.5. The loop is then repeated from H.

[0100] If motor stability has not been achieved **260**, the loop repeats from H until stability is achieved **260**. If the maximum efficiency has not been found then the determination is made as to whether the voltage to current phase delay is between a minimum value and a maximum value **266**. If the voltage to current phase delay is not between a minimum value and a maximum value **266**, as is expected with resistive loads, the trigger delay is set to zero **268**, thereby providing full power to the load and the loop is repeated from H (i.e., until the load of an induction motor **5** is detected). If the voltage to current phase delay is between a minimum value and a maximum value **266**, then the soft start is complete and flow returns (see FIGS. **5**, **6** and **7**).

[0101] If motor stability has been achieved **260** and maximum efficiency has been found **264** and the initial trigger delay has been set **270**, flow proceeds with M in FIG. **11**. In this the current to the motor is measured (ICUR) and compared to the previous current to the motor (IPREV) **300**. If the current to the motor (ICUR) is less than the previous current to the motor (IPREV) **300**, the trigger delay is incremented **302** by a value, **N1**. **N1** is typically a value of 3 (**N1=3**) to decrease the power/voltage to the motor **5**. If the detected stator voltage reaches a predetermined voltage **304**, **V**, such as 100V RMS, the maximum efficiency has been found and, in embodiments with an indicator, the indicator is illuminated. Then the maximum trigger delay is set to the current trigger delay and the minimum phase difference is set to the current phase difference between the voltage and the current waveforms **306**. Finally the loop then repeats from H. If the current to the motor (ICUR) is greater than or equal to the previous current to the motor (IPREV) **300**, the trigger delay is incremented **310** by a value, **N2**. **N2** is typically a value of by 1 (**N2=1**) to decrease the power/voltage to the motor **5**. Finally the loop then repeats from H.

[0102] Referring to FIGS. **12-29**, a detailed flow chart of an exemplary working system is shown. This flow chart includes details of operation of an exemplary operating model and does not limit the disclosed invention.

[0103] Equivalent elements can be substituted for the ones set forth above such that they perform in substantially the same manner in substantially the same way for achieving substantially the same result.

[0104] It is believed that the system and method as described and many of its attendant advantages will be understood by the foregoing description. It is also believed that it will be apparent that various changes may be made in the form, construction and arrangement of the components thereof without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention or without sacrificing all of its material advan-

tages. The form herein before described being merely exemplary and explanatory embodiment thereof. It is the intention of the following claims to encompass and include such changes.

What is claimed is:

1. A system for reducing inrush loading when a source of electrical power is restored, the system comprising:

means for switching the electrical power, the means for switching the electrical power selectively connecting a load to the source of the electrical power;

means for measuring the AC voltage potential at the source of the electrical power;

means for determining when the AC voltage potential is within an operating range; and

responsive to the AC voltage potential being within the operating range, the system delays for a time period then connects the load to the source of the electrical power by way of the means for switching the electrical power.

2. The system for reducing inrush loading of claim **1**, wherein the time period is a fixed time period.

3. The system for reducing inrush loading of claim **1**, wherein the time period is a random time period.

4. The system for reducing inrush loading of claim **1**, further comprising a means for communicating with a remote system.

5. The system for reducing inrush loading of claim **4**, wherein the time period is controlled by the remote system.

6. The system for reducing inrush loading of claim **1**, wherein the load is an induction motor and the means for switching the electrical power further comprises means for soft-starting the induction motor, the means for soft-starting the induction motor gradually applying power from the source of the electrical power to the induction motor after determining that the AC voltage is within the operating range.

7. The system for reducing inrush loading of claim **1**, wherein the means for switching power is a solid-state switch.

8. A method for reducing inrush loading when a source of electric power is restored, the method steps comprising in order:

(a) disconnecting the load from the source of the electric power;

(b) upon detecting operational power from the source of the electric power, delaying for a period of time;

(c) after the delaying, connecting the load to the source of the electric power;

(d) upon detecting a loss of power from the source of the electric power, repeating from step (a).

9. The method of claim **8**, wherein the period of time is a fixed amount of time.

10. The method of claim **8**, wherein the period of time is a random amount of time.

11. The method of claim **8**, wherein the load is interfaced to the source of the electric power through a solid state switch and the step of disconnecting includes controlling the solid state switch to enter a high-impedance mode and the step of connecting includes controlling the solid state switch to enter a low-impedance mode.

12. A system for reducing inrush loading when a source of the electric power is restored, the system comprising:

a processor;

a tangible memory for storing instructions, the tangible memory interfaced to the processor;

a solid-state switch, the solid-state switch in series between a load and the source of the electric power, the solid-state switch having a trigger that is controlled by the processor to selectively connect the load with the source of the electric power;

means for measuring a voltage potential at the source of the electric power;

a set of software instructions stored in the memory, the set of software instructions set the solid state switch to a high-impedance mode then determine when the voltage potential from the source of the electric power exceeds a pre-determined threshold, responsive to the voltage potential from the source of the electric power exceeding the pre-determined threshold, the software instructions delay for a period of time and after the delay, the software instructions set the solid state switch to a low-impedance mode, thereby connecting the load to the source of the electric power.

13. The system for reducing inrush loading of claim **12**, wherein the period of time is a fixed period of time.

14. The system for reducing inrush loading of claim **12**, wherein the period of time is a random period of time.

15. The system for reducing inrush loading of claim **12**, wherein the load is an induction motor and the software instructions control the solid state switch to gradually reduce impedance until the solid state switch reaches the low-impedance mode, thereby providing a soft start to the induction motor.

16. The system for reducing inrush loading of claim **12**, further comprising a second set of software instructions stored in the memory, after the solid state switch is set to the high-impedance mode, the second set of software instructions determine when the voltage potential from the source of the electric power is lower than a second pre-determined threshold, responsive to the voltage potential from the source of the electric power falling below the second pre-determined threshold, the second set of software instructions set the solid state switch to a high-impedance mode, thereby disconnecting the load to the source of the electric power.

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