

**VALEPORT LIMITED**

**MIDAS SVP**  
**Sound Velocity Profiler**  
**Hardware Manual**

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## 1 **INTRODUCTION**

This manual covers the specification, wiring details and basic maintenance procedures for the Valeport MIDAS SVP Sound Velocity Profiler. Full details of how to operate the instrument with the DataLog Express software supplied are given in a separate manual.

As standard, the MIDAS SVP system consists of the following components:

- Titanium housed instrument
- Stainless steel deployment cage
- 3m Y lead (interface to PC)
- Switching Plug
- Basic maintenance tools and spare o-rings
- DataLog Express Software CD
- Operating Manual
- Transit case

In addition, the following components may be supplied as optional extras:

- RS485 communications adaptor
- RS422 communications adaptor
- FSK modem communications adaptor (includes pcb in instrument)
- Various lengths & types of signal cable are also available

Note that instruments are often supplied (on request) with minor adjustments to the above list, such as a 5m Y lead instead of a 3m Y lead for example. Such variations will be detailed on the instrument packing list, and not in this manual.

### 1.1 **CONTACT INFORMATION**

If you have any questions about the operation of the instrument, which are not answered by this manual, please contact your supplier if appropriate, or contact Valeport Ltd directly at the address given at the front of this manual.

## 2 SPECIFICATIONS

### 2.1 SENSOR SPECIFICATIONS

The unit is fitted with the following sensors:

#### Sound Velocity

- Type:** Valeport “time of flight” sound velocity sensor
- Range:** 1400 to 1600m/s standard. Factory fit option of 1600 to 1850m/s is available
- Accuracy:**  $\pm 0.03\text{m/s}$
- Resolution:** 0.001m/s

#### Pressure

- Type:** Temperature Compensated Piezo-Resistive Sensor
- Range:** 600Bar absolute (approx 6000m water depth) standard. Others available.
- Precision:**  $\pm 0.01\%$  Full scale ( $\pm 0.6\text{m}$  with a 600Bar sensor)
- Resolution:** 0.001% Full scale (0.06m with a 600 Bar sensor)

#### Temperature

- Type:** Fast response PRT
- Range:** -5 to +35 °C
- Accuracy:**  $\pm 0.01\text{ °C}$
- Resolution:** 0.002 °C

## 2.2 MECHANICAL SPECIFICATIONS

### Materials

- Housing:** Titanium
- Exceptions:** Sound velocity sensor uses carbon composite rods.
- Cage:** Stainless steel (316 grade) with polypropylene clamping brackets
- Dimensions:** Instrument - 88mm Ø, 665mm long (including connector)  
Cage – 750mm long x 140mm x 120mm
- Weight (in cage):** 11.5kg (air), 8.5kg (water).
- Depth Rating:** 6000m (unless smaller pressure sensor fitted)

### Connectors

- Instrument:** 10 pin female Subconn bulkhead type (MCBH10F) with lock ring.
- Comms Cable:** Valeport 3m Y lead. 10 pin male Subconn line type (MCIL10M) to instrument, 2 x 4mm bunch pins to external power, 9 pin female D type to PC.
- Switching Plug:** 10 pin male Subconn line type (MCIL10M), with lock ring. Note that the switch cap contains wiring links to activate the instrument  
*It is not a dummy plug.*

## 2.3 PERFORMANCE SPECIFICATIONS

- Memory:** 16Mb solid state memory (upgradeable in 16Mb steps to 64Mb)
- Internal Power:** 8 x 1.5v alkaline C cells. The unit will accept 8 x 3.6v Lithium C cells with no alterations required. Do not mix battery types.
- External Power:** Between 9 and 30v DC.
- Current Drain:** ~50mA at 12v when running, and 0.25mA when in sleep mode.
- Sampling Rate:** 1, 2, 4 or 8Hz (synchronised)
- Data Output:** RS232, RS485 or RS422, depending on pin selection. Baud rate is user selectable from 2400 to 460800

## 2.4 SAMPLE LIFETIME CALCULATIONS

### 2.4.1 BASED ON MEMORY

Lifetime based on memory is simple to calculate. Temperature and pressure values use 2 bytes of memory per sample, and sound velocity uses 4 bytes. Therefore total memory used per record is  $4 + (2 \times 2) = 8$  bytes. Note that in Profile mode, each record is also assigned a date/time stamp, which uses a further 7 bytes.

The 16 Mbyte memory actually contains 16,777,216 bytes. Allowing a small amount of memory usage for header files, the memory will store over 1.1 million records in Profiling mode, and over 2 million records in other modes.

The length of time that this memory will last for obviously depends on sampling scenario. Here are three examples:

#### **Continuous data sampling, 8Hz:**

Memory used per second is  $8 \times 8$  bytes = **64 bytes**.

Total memory fitted is **16,777,216 bytes**.

Seconds before memory full is  $16,777,216 / 64 =$  (approx) **262,000 seconds**.

This is equivalent to **72 hours**.

This period could be doubled by sampling at 4Hz.

#### **Burst sampling, 4Hz, sampling 1 minute in every 10, recording all data points:**

Memory used per burst is  $8 \text{ bytes} \times 4\text{Hz} \times 60 \text{ seconds} =$  **1920 bytes**.

The memory will therefore be full after  $16,777,216 / 1920$  bursts = **8737 bursts**.

At a 10 minute cycle time, this is **87370 minutes**, which is equivalent to **60 days**.

#### **Profiling, 6000m cast, measuring every 1 metre:**

In this example, the instrument will take 1 reading every metre of both descent and ascent. This means 6000 data points descending, and a further 6000 ascending. Each record consists of 8 bytes of data and 7 bytes of time stamp. Each record therefore uses **15 bytes**. A single cast will take 12,000 such records, and will therefore use **180,000 bytes**.

The 16Mbyte memory will therefore hold approximately **93 casts** of data.

---

## A NOTE ABOUT REMOVABLE MEMORY

We are sometimes asked whether we offer these devices with removable memory. The answer is no we don't, but there are sound reasons for this. It is natural to think that since removable memory cards are now the norm in consumer electronics, they must be "state of the art" and therefore desirable in all applications, but this is not necessarily the case.

- An essential feature of an underwater instrument is that it is water-tight; this is achieved by using various seals on the mechanical parts of the device. Every time that one of these seals is broken and remade, it introduces a small risk that the seal is not correctly made, and the instrument could leak. The fewer times that the device has to be opened, the better – you certainly wouldn't want to do it after every profile to get the memory card out.
- All memory cards are susceptible to ESD shock (static electricity) while being handled. We take the view that the value of your data means it shouldn't be exposed to the possibility of this risk, which could result in loss of all data on the card.
- Memory cards are not particularly efficient at storing data – they will only accept minimum sized lumps of data at a time. This may be perfect for a camera where you instantly generate a few Mbytes, not so for an application where you only want to store a few bytes of data at a time.
- From a practical point of view, the time taken to connect a cable and extract the data to PC is actually typically much less than the time to open the device, remove the memory, replace the memory, and close the device up again.
- The implementation of removable memory is not technically difficult, but we believe that the disadvantages currently outweigh any possible advantages in this product and its applications. However, should circumstances change it will of course be considered for future product enhancements.



## 2.4.2 BASED ON BATTERIES

The MIDAS SVP will function with a voltage supply of between 9 and 30vDC. The voltage output of the 8 x C cell battery pack will vary according to the type of cell fitted. The most likely cells to be used will be standard alkaline type (1.5v each) or Lithium cells (3.6v each), giving a 12v nominal output for alkaline cells, or 28.8v nominal for Lithium cells. The following calculations are based on the same sampling scenarios as the memory calculations, using figures for a 12v alkaline battery pack. Each example also gives a figure for a Lithium battery pack, calculated from a basic ratio of alkaline to Lithium performance.

In all examples, it is taken that an 8 C cell alkaline battery pack will have a nominal capacity of 7.8Ah, and will be 75% efficient (total available charge, 5.85Ah), and that an 8 C cell Lithium pack will have a nominal capacity of 7.2Ah, and will be 95% efficient (total available charge, 6.8Ah).

### **Continuous data sampling, 8Hz:**

At 12v, the instrument draws **50mA** when sampling.

Total charge available is **5850mAh**.

Number of hours available is therefore  $5850\text{mAh} / 50\text{mA} = \mathbf{117 \text{ hours}}$ .

This is equivalent to just less than **5 days**.

For Lithium cells, a similar calculation gives around **14 days**.

*Note that the instrument is effectively operating continuously when in Trip sampling mode, so similar calculations will apply.*

**Burst sampling, 4Hz, sampling for 1 minute every 10 minutes:**

At 12v, instrument draws **50mA** when sampling, plus 50mA for 5 seconds at the start of each burst. It draws **0.25mA** when in sleep mode between bursts.

In this scenario then, the instrument will draw 50mA for 65 seconds, and then 0.25mA for 535 seconds. On average, it will draw:

$$\frac{(50 \times 65) + (0.25 \times 535)}{(65 + 535)} = \mathbf{5.64mA}$$

Total charge available is **5850mAh**.

Number of hours available is therefore 5850mAh / 5.64mA = **1037 hours**.

This is equivalent to approx **43 days**.

For Lithium cells, a similar calculation gives approx **120 days**.

***The above examples are intended as guides only. Valeport accepts no responsibility for variation in actual performance. Note that performance of individual battery cells is not always consistent.***

**A NOTE ABOUT RECHARGEABLE CELLS**

We are often asked if rechargeable cells can be used. Yes, it is possible to use rechargeable cells, but we do not recommend it:

- Firstly, the cells cannot be recharged in-situ due to the possibility of the cells giving out gas inside a sealed instrument, effectively turning it into an explosive device. Whilst this risk is small, it does exist and therefore must be considered. The risk could be overcome by adding an air vent to the housing, but this could compromise the water-tight nature of the housing. Better to remove the risk altogether.
- Secondly, the most commonly used rechargeable cells are NiCad type. These only operate at around 1.2v maximum and have about 25% of the capacity of an alkaline cell; they therefore give greatly reduced operating times.
- Modern Li-ion or NiMH cells are more efficient than NiCad cells, but do not yet compare with alkaline cells. They are also considerably more expensive.

### 3 **INSTALLATION**

The standard system is supplied in an ABS transit case, together with any communications adaptors ordered. Any additional lengths of signal cable are packed separately.

#### 3.1 **COMMUNICATIONS WITH PC**

The MIDAS SVP can be set up and interrogated using the DataLog Express software supplied. Please refer to the separate manual for details of how to use the software.

To connect the instrument directly to a PC for RS232 communications, use the 3m Y lead supplied. This lead is fitted with a 10 pin Subconn type connector, which should be plugged directly into the connector on the top of the housing (or to a length of signal cable). The lead also features 2 x 4mm bunch pins for application of external power if required and a 9 way D type connector which should plug directly into a spare communications port on the back of the PC.

If non-RS232 communications are to be used, via the optional RS485, RS422 or FSK methods, then the appropriate adaptor should be used. Each adaptor is supplied with an alternative Y lead, which should be connected as follows:

| <b><u>Comms Method</u></b> | <b><u>Adaptor Part No.</u></b> | <b><u>Connections</u></b>   |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| RS485                      | 0400029                        | Connect 15 pin D type and 4mm plugs from Y lead into adaptor. Connect 9 pin D type from adaptor to PC, and 4mm plugs from adaptor to external power, as indicated on adaptor housing.   |
| RS422                      | 0400030                        | Connect 15 pin D type and 4mm plugs from Y lead into adaptor. Connect 9 pin D type from adaptor to PC, and 4mm plugs from adaptor to external power, as indicated on adaptor housing.   |
| FSK                        | 0400005                        | Connect 4mm plugs from Y lead into adaptor, leaving D types unconnected (FSK uses power and signal on just two wires). Connect 9 pin D type from adaptor to PC, and 4mm plugs from adaptor to external power, as indicated on adaptor |

## 3.2 DEPLOYING THE MIDAS SVP

All parts of the standard system (with the exception of the top part of the 3m Y lead) are designed for immersion. All communications adaptors (RS485, RS422, FSK) are splash proof, but should be sited in a dry place, as close to the PC as possible.

The MIDAS SVP is supplied with a stainless steel protective cage, but care should still be taken not to damage the instrument. For profiling work, the recommended deployment method is to suspend the instrument using the stainless steel wire strop fixed to the top of the cage. For fixed deployments, the user may wish to remove the cage, and use the grooves in the instrument housing as clamping points.

### 3.2.1 REAL TIME OPERATION

For real time data output, connect the signal cable to the 10 pin Subconn connector on the instrument. All Valeport signal cables include a suspension point for strain relief, and a similar arrangement is recommended for other cable types. Connect the top end of the cable to a PC using the appropriate method as described above.

### 3.2.2 SELF RECORDING OPERATION

For self recording only deployments, the instrument is switched on by insertion of the Subconn style switch plug. This plug must be inserted for the unit to operate.

Note that the switch plug is NOT just a dummy plug; it contains links between some of the pins as described in Section 5, which are used to turn the instrument on.

### 3.2.3 LED FLASHING SEQUENCE

The MIDAS SVP is fitted with an LED visible through a polycarbonate window in the battery pack. The LED will flash as detailed below to indicate various states.

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Continuous ON for 15 seconds</b> | Occurs when the Switch Plug or cable is connected, indicating that instrument is on and awaiting communication   |
| <b>1Hz Continual Flashing</b>       | Insufficient Power. Change internal batteries, or completely remove external power, and apply higher voltage   |
| <b>Continuous ON for 2 seconds</b>  | Indicates the start of Burst Sampling pattern  |
| <b>5 Rapid Flashes</b>              | Indicates the end of Burst Sampling pattern. The duration of the burst may be calculated as the time between the start and stop LED sequences, <u>less 5 seconds</u> . |

### 3.3 RECOVERY

On recovery, data can be extracted to PC via the 3m Y lead. This procedure is covered in the separate software manual for DataLog Express.

To prolong the lifetime of the instrument the following procedures should be carried out once the instrument has been recovered:

- Remove any significant growth from the instrument, taking care not to damage transducer face or reflector plate of the sound velocity sensor. A high pressure water jet or stiff (not metal) brush is suitable – a hard toothbrush is ideal.
- Remove any significant growth from the pressure sensor port. Take care not to introduce any sharp objects onto the sensor face – this may result in sensor damage.
- Check instrument for signs of damage.
- Rinse the instrument in fresh water
- Dry the instrument if possible, paying particular attention to the sensors and connector.
- Repack the instrument in the transit case provided.

## 4 MAINTENANCE

The MIDAS SVP is completely solid state, and therefore requires very little maintenance. Other than keeping the instrument relatively clean (as described in Section 3.3, Recovery), the only procedure that the customer will be required to carry out on a regular basis is to change the batteries. This Chapter also covers details of the o-rings that are fitted to the instrument, and which should be checked periodically for damage and replaced if necessary.

### 4.1 CHANGING BATTERIES

The MIDAS SVP accepts 8 x C cells, of either 1.5v alkaline or 3.6v Lithium type. These cells are arranged in series, so the output voltage is 12v (alkaline) or 28.8v (Lithium). Some example scenarios for lifetime of these batteries are given in Chapter 2.4.2

The batteries are located in a holder in the top of the instrument, and should be accessed by removing the connector bulkhead.

1. *(This step may be omitted)*

For easier access, remove the instrument from the protective cage by loosening the M10 nuts on the polypropylene clamps. Gently lever these clamps apart, using a screwdriver if necessary.

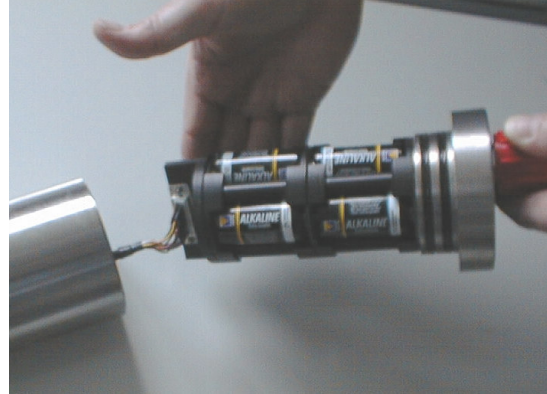


Slide the instrument out of the cage, in either direction.



2. Remove the 3 M5 x 20 socket cap screws in the connector bulkhead, using the Allen key provided. Note that these screws are titanium, and should be replaced with titanium screws if lost. Other materials may suffer galvanic corrosion and may be destroyed.

3. Without twisting or putting undue stress on the Subconn connector slide the bulkhead and attached battery pack out of the main housing. A slot between the tube and the bulkhead allows levering with a screwdriver if necessary. Take care not to scratch the bore of the tube.



4. A lead connects the battery pack to the electronics inside the tube. This may be disconnected at the battery pack if required, for ease.
5. Replace the batteries.
6. Check the condition of the bore seal o-rings, and apply a light coating of silicon grease. Ensure that both they and the anti-extrusion rings sit in the groove correctly, and are free from damage. Replace them if necessary (refer to Section 4.2).
7. Reattach the connector to the electronics if necessary, and gently slide the battery pack back into the tube, ensuring that the fixing holes are correctly aligned. Again, take care not to scratch the bore.
8. Replace the 3 x M5 titanium screws, using a small amount of copper grease (supplied). Do not force the screws, just tighten firmly.
9. Finally, slide the instrument back into the protective cage. Note that the clamping brackets are offset, and that the sensor end of the instrument should lie at the long end of the cage.

## 4.2 SEALS

The MIDAS SVP is kept watertight by using o-ring seals and anti-extrusion rings. Double o-ring seals are used at each end of the titanium housing, although the customer should have no reason to open any seal other than that at the battery end.

A set of spare o-rings and anti-extrusion rings is included with the equipment. If an o-ring needs replacing, be sure to use the correct size. If obtaining further spare o-rings from an alternative source, be sure to obtain the correct material (signified by the last 4 digits of the o-ring code number).

O-ring size: 200-143-4470

Anti-extrusion ring size: 143

### 4.2.1 O-RINGS

To help preserve the watertight nature of the equipment, please observe the following guidelines:

- Ensure that all o-rings are free from cuts, abrasions or perishing.
- Ensure that all-o-rings are free from dirt, grit, sand, hair and other foreign objects.
- Ensure that an anti-extrusion ring is fitted on the low pressure side of each o-ring (see Section 4.4.2)
- Whenever an o-ring seal is opened (e.g. when changing batteries), ensure that a light coating of silicon grease is applied to the o-ring before the seal is closed.
- Ensure that all o-ring protected seals are tightened.

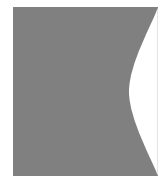


#### 4.2.2 ANTI-EXTRUSION RINGS

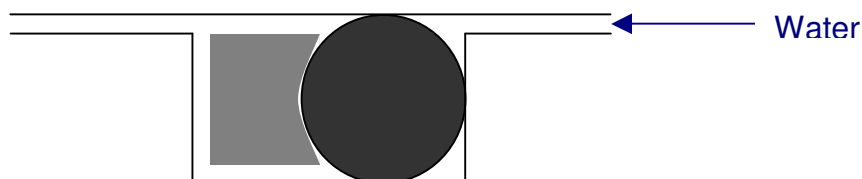
It is common Valeport practice to fit Anti-Extrusion Rings, also known as AE Rings or Backing Rings, to o-ring seals on deep water instrumentation.

The function of an AE Ring is to prevent the o-ring from being squeezed out of its groove under high pressure. Whilst this may not immediately cause a leak, it can damage the o-ring to the extent that it will not properly seal on subsequent deployments.

Where an AE ring is fitted, Valeport favour a single solid ring type made from nitrile rubber. These are black or dark grey in appearance, and are distinguishable from the o-ring itself by having a square cross-section, with a single concave surface, as illustrated:



These rings should be fitted into the o-ring groove on the “dry”, or low pressure side of the o-ring, with the concave surface adjacent to the o-ring itself:



It is particularly important to note that in order to fit these rings, they must be stretched slightly to pass over the instrument body. This stretch does not immediately recover, with the result that the AE ring may not sit snugly in the groove at first. Fitting the tube to the instrument at this point may result in the AE ring riding out of the groove, and preventing a proper seal. The instrument may then leak.

**Once an AE ring has been fitted, please leave a minimum of 30 minutes for it to recover its shape before fitting the tube.**

## 5 WIRING INFORMATION

### 5.1 SWITCH PLUG

| 10 Way Male Subconn | Function       |
|---------------------|----------------|
| 1                   | Link to Pin 10 |
| 2                   | NC             |
| 3                   | NC             |
| 4                   | NC             |
| 5                   | NC             |
| 6                   | NC             |
| 7                   | NC             |
| 8                   | NC             |
| 9                   | NC             |
| 10                  | Link to Pin 1  |

### 5.2 3M Y LEAD (RS232)

| 10 Way Male Subconn | 3m Cable | 1m Power Cable | 4mm Banana Plugs | 1m Data Cable | 9 Way D Type        | Function  |
|---------------------|----------|----------------|------------------|---------------|---------------------|---|
| 1                   | WHITE    | BLUE           | BLACK            |               |                     | Power Ground                                    |
| 2                   | PINK     | BROWN          | RED              |               |                     | Power +V  |
| 3                   | N/C      |                |                  |               |                     |   |
| 4                   | N/C      |                |                  |               |                     |   |
| 5                   | N/C      |                |                  |               |                     |   |
| 6                   | N/C      |                |                  |               |                     |   |
| 7                   | GREY     |                |                  | YELLOW        | 2                   | RS232 Tx (To PC)                                |
| 8                   | BLUE     |                |                  | BLUE          | 3                   | RS232 Rx (From PC)                              |
| 9                   | GREEN    |                |                  | GREEN         | 5 (link to 1,6,8,9) | RS232 Ground                                    |
|                     | SCREEN   |                |                  | SCREEN        |                     |   |
| 10                  | YELLOW   |                |                  |               |                     | Internal Battery Enable<br>Link to RS232 Ground |

### 5.3 3M SWITCHED Y LEAD (RS485 & RS422)

| 10 Way Male Subconn | 3m Blue Polyurethane Cable | SWITCH BOX | 1m White Cable | 4mm Banana Plugs | 1m Grey Cable | 15 Way D Type | 0.2m Grey Cable | 9 Way D Type        | Function                |                    |
|---------------------|----------------------------|------------|----------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 1                   | WHITE                      |            | BLUE           | BLACK            |               |               |                 |                     |                         | Power Ground       |
| 2                   | PINK                       |            | BROWN          | RED              |               |               |                 |                     |                         | Power +V           |
| 3                   | RED                        |            |                |                  | RED           | 9             |                 |                     |                         | RS422 TxA          |
| 4                   | BLACK                      |            |                |                  | BLACK         | 10            |                 |                     |                         | RS422 TxB          |
| 5                   | ORANGE                     |            |                |                  | VIOLET        | 11            |                 |                     |                         | RS422 RxA          |
| 6                   | BROWN                      |            |                |                  | BROWN         | 12            |                 |                     |                         | RS422 RxB          |
| 7                   | GREY                       |            |                |                  | YELLOW        |               | YELLOW          | 2                   |                         | RS232 Tx (To PC)   |
| 8                   | BLUE                       |            |                |                  | BLUE          |               | BLUE            | 3                   |                         | RS232 Rx (From PC) |
| 9                   | GREEN                      |            |                |                  | GREEN         | 5             | GREEN           | 5 (link to 1,6,8,9) |                         | RS232 Ground       |
|                     | SCREEN                     |            |                | SCREEN           | SHELL         | SCREEN        | SHELL           |                     |                         |                    |
| 10                  | YELLOW                     |            |                |                  |               |               |                 |                     | Internal Battery Enable |                    |

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## **APPENDIX 1: FAQ'S**

### **Why is the data different from my old CTD data?**

Quite simply, the Valeport SV sensor is more accurate than anything else that has previously been available. The CTD formulae (Chen & Millero, Del Grosso etc.) all have errors in them – they were after all based on observed data taken over 30 years ago using the best technology available at the time. The Valeport SV sensor simply highlights those errors. This does raise an interesting point – if it is more important to you that your data is consistent with old data, rather than accurate in its own right, then you are possibly better off using a CTD (we would suggest a Valeport CTD, naturally).

### **How is it so accurate?**

Several reasons. Primarily, we use an advanced digital signal processing technique that removes virtually all noise from the data, tells us the precise moment that the sound pulse is both transmitted and received, and allows us to measure the time of flight with a resolution of 1/100<sup>th</sup> of a nanosecond ( $10^{-11}$  seconds). Secondly, we have developed a carbon composite material that doesn't expand or contract with temperature, so our "known distance" is a constant. Technically, the material will expand and contract minutely, but over the operating temperatures of the probe, it is an almost immeasurably small amount, and any change is included in our overall error budget. Finally, our calibration method removes virtually all of the error sources associated with other techniques.

### **But don't you just calibrate it against Chen & Millero?**

No we don't – that would defeat the purpose. While the seawater formulae (Chen & Millero, Del Grosso etc.) have inherent errors that are accepted as being at best  $\pm 0.25\text{m/s}$ , we use a different formula to calibrate the sensor. Del Grosso also published a formula for speed of sound in pure water (with Mader, 1972), which is much more accurate. In pure water, the only variable that can affect sound velocity is temperature (assuming that you are at atmospheric pressure in a laboratory environment), rather than both temperature and Salinity with the seawater equations. The Del Grosso & Mader formula therefore has an error of just  $\pm 0.015\text{m/s}$ . By calibrating against this rather against the error-filled seawater equations, we can achieve significantly better performance.

**Is a pure water calibration valid?**

Absolutely – the purpose of a calibration is just to compare (and adjust) the sensor output against a known standard – it doesn't really matter what that standard is, as long as it is precisely defined. Our standard happens to be pure water because it is the most accurately defined standard available.

**How often does it need calibrating?**

The SV sensor itself is remarkably stable. Since the entire timing system is digital, it is not subject to the drift that analogue components often exhibit over time. The only part of the system that can drift with time is the timing crystal itself. This is typically less than  $\pm 0.005\text{m/s}$  in the first year, and less than  $\pm 0.002\text{m/s}$  in subsequent years. We quite confidently say that the SV sensor should remain within specification for several years. However, the temperature and pressure sensors that are also fitted to the profiler do exhibit greater drift with time. It is our experience that in the majority of cases, performance can be maintained by recalibrating at 2-yearly intervals. However, we are aware that many operators' own QA requirements state annual recalibration, and it is true that most instruments are returned to us on a yearly basis.

**How fast can I profile?**

The profiler runs at 8Hz, and in free fall will achieve a drop rate of perhaps 2m/s. Falling at this rate, it will cover 0.25m between readings, so provided the profile is set to take a reading at a greater increment than this, it will function correctly.

**The sensor outputs zero sometimes – why is that?**

The sensor outputs zero when it doesn't record the returning sound pulse within the expected time frame (a time frame that equates to 1400 – 1600m/s in terms of sound velocity). The most common occurrence of a zero value is when the sensor is in air, but it can also happen if the probe has been dropped into a soft bed and is covered in mud or sediment. This will normally wash off during the up-cast. It can also happen if the sensor has been deployed for some time without cleaning, and there is significant growth on the sensor.