



## How to Calculate the Junction Temperature for the Nichia 321 Series LEDs

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The “Nichia 321” collectively refers to Nichia part numbers listed in the table in Section 2 Applicable Part Numbers. These Nichia part numbers within this document are merely Nichia’s part numbers for those Nichia products and are not related nor bear resemblance to any other company’s product that might bear a trademark.

### 1. Overview

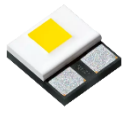
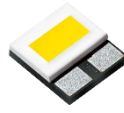
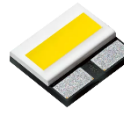
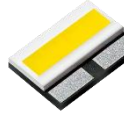
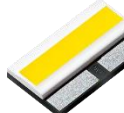
When designing applications using LEDs, it is necessary to consider the heat generated from the LEDs during operation. The junction temperature ( $T_J$ ) of the LED is an important aspect to be considered in selecting the operating conditions of the application. If the absolute maximum rating  $T_J$  is exceeded even for a short period of time, it may cause an adverse effect on the performance of the LED; in the worst case, it could cause the LED not to illuminate. Note that the LED must be operated to ensure that the absolute maximum rating  $T_J$  is not exceeded. To prevent the  $T_J$  from exceeding the absolute maximum rating  $T_J$ , it is necessary to know how high the  $T_J$  will be when the LED is operated in the conditions/environments in which the LED will actually be used.

This application note provides how to estimate the  $T_J$  by measuring the temperature at the measurement point Nichia specifies with a thermocouple.

### 2. Applicable Part Numbers

This application note applies to the LEDs listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Applicable Part Numbers

Series Name	Nichia 321 Series				
Part Number <sup>1</sup>	NCSW321x	NC2W321x	NC3W321x	NC4W321x	NC5W321x
Example Appearance					
Outline Dimensions (mm)	3.05×2.8×0.75	3.5×3.2×0.75	3.5×4.0×0.75	3.5×5.1×0.75	3.5×6.1×0.75

Note:

<sup>1</sup> The x represents a letter that follows the alphanumeric code of the same LED type. (e.g.: NC2W321x → NC2W321A, NC2W321B, NC2W321F, etc.)

### 3. $T_{MP}$ Measurement

The  $T_J$  estimation can be calculated by measuring the temperature of the LED ( $T_{MP}$ ) at the measurement point Nichia specifies once the LED has been attached to a PCB. The measuring current should be the maximum operating current ( $I_F$ ) that will be applied to the LED under the conditions in which the LED will actually be used. See Table 2 for the  $T_{MP}$  measurement point.

Table 2.  $T_{MP}$  Measurement Point

● :  $T_{MP}$  Measurement Point

Part Number	NCSW321x	NC2W321x	NC3W321x
$T_{MP}$ Measurement Point			
Part Number	NC4W321x	NC5W321x	
$T_{MP}$ Measurement Point			

To measure the  $T_{MP}$ , securely attach the temperature sensing part on the tip of the thermocouple to the side of the ceramic substrate of the LED with adhesive as shown in Figure 1.

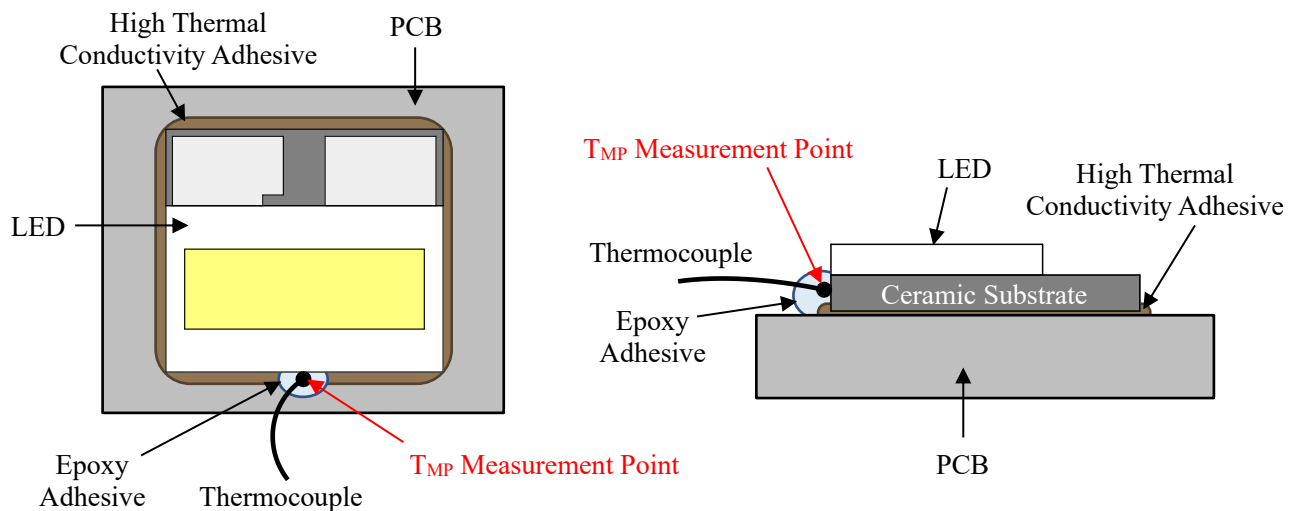


Figure 1. How to Measure the  $T_{MP}$

## 4. How to Calculate the Junction Temperature ( $T_J$ )

When the product using the LED is operated, the  $T_J$  can be calculated with Equation 1 below.

$$\text{Equation 1: } T_J = T_{MP} + R_{\theta JMP} \times W$$

$T_J$ : Junction Temperature ( $^{\circ}\text{C}$ )

$T_{MP}$ : Measurement Point Temperature ( $^{\circ}\text{C}$ )

$R_{\theta JMP}$ : Thermal Resistance from the Chip to the  $T_{MP}$  Measurement Point ( $^{\circ}\text{C}/\text{W}$ )

$W$ : Input Power ( $I_F \times V_F$ ) (W)

$I_F$ =Forward Current (A),  $V_F$ =Forward Voltage (V)

The  $R_{\theta JMP}$  value may be different depending on the part number. For the  $R_{\theta JMP}$  value of each part number, refer to the annex: Thermal Resistance Values of the Nichia 321 Series LEDs. For the LEDs whose  $R_{\theta JMP}$  values are not listed in this annex, contact a local Nichia sales representative.

## 5. Calculation Example of the Junction Temperature ( $T_J$ )

This section provides an example of the  $T_J$  calculation using the measured  $T_{MP}$ .

Example: The NC2W321F LED is operated at an input power of 6.5W.

The measured  $T_{MP}$  is  $70^{\circ}\text{C}$ .

The  $R_{\theta JMP}$  value of the NC2W321F LED is  $2.7^{\circ}\text{C}/\text{W}$  (refer to the annex: Thermal Resistance Values of the Nichia 321 Series LEDs).

Using Equation 1 ( $T_J = T_{MP} + R_{\theta JMP} \times W$ ), the following calculation is obtained:

$$T_J = 70(^{\circ}\text{C}) + 2.7(^{\circ}\text{C}/\text{W}) \times 6.5(\text{W}) = \underline{87.6(^{\circ}\text{C})}$$

## 6. Considerations and Suggestions when Using a Thermocouple

It is recommended to use a thermocouple with wires that are as thin as possible. If the wires are too thick, they may create thermal paths causing measurement errors.

If the temperature sensing part on the tip of the thermocouple is too large, the temperature sensing part may not be properly attached to the  $T_{MP}$  measurement point on the ceramic substrate of the LED as shown in Figure 2; if the temperature sensing part does not properly contact the ceramic substrate and/or is in contact with another component other than the ceramic substrate, it may affect the measurement accuracy.

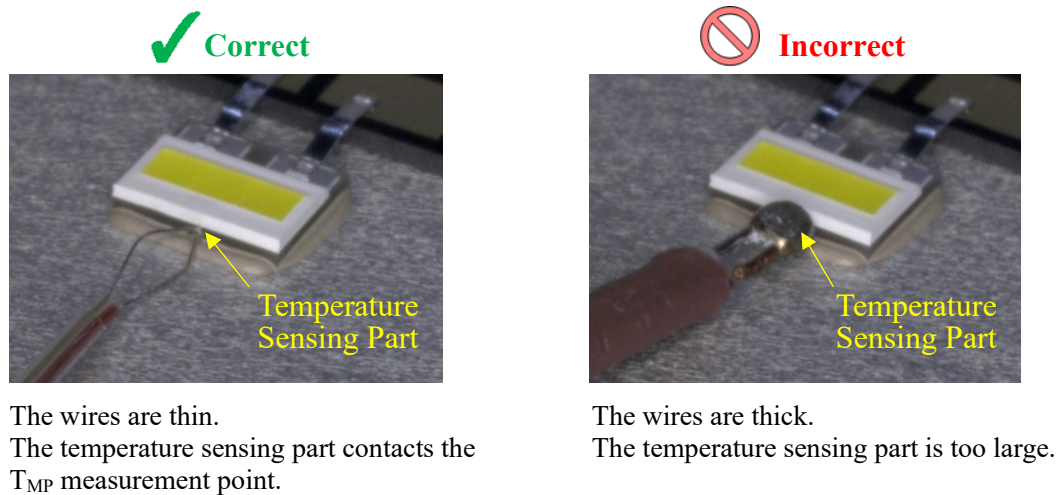


Figure 2. Examples of Correct/Incorrect Thermocouples  
(Before adhesive is applied)

The temperature sensing part of a thermocouple is at the base of the bonding/contacting area of the wires. Figure 3 (b) shows a thermocouple twisted near the base. With this type of thermocouple, perform the temperature measurement at the base of the twisted part, not at the tip of the thermocouple. With a thermocouple whose temperature sensing part is not at the tip, the  $T_{MP}$  measurement may be lower than the actual  $T_{MP}$  even when the tip is in contact with the  $T_{MP}$  measurement point; ensure that the temperature sensing part is attached to contact the  $T_{MP}$  measurement point.

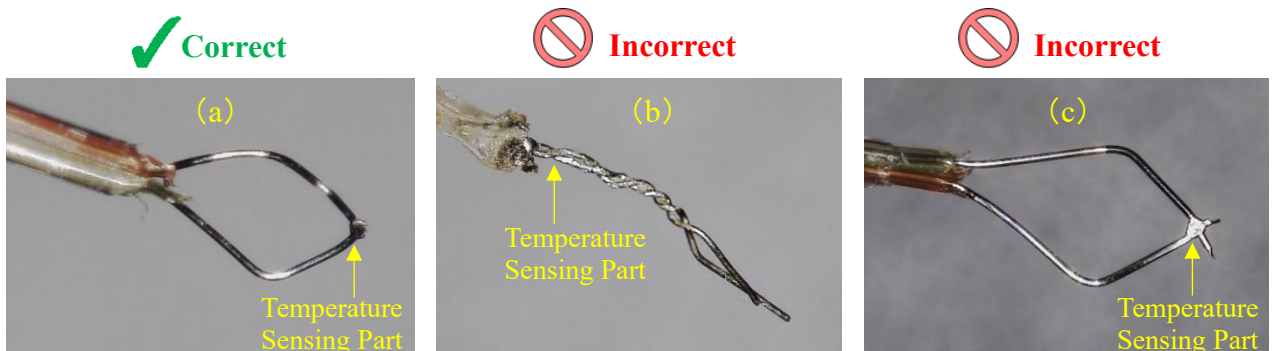


Figure 3. Temperature Sensing Part of Thermocouples

Do not apply an excess amount of adhesive when attaching the thermocouple to the LED; if adhesive adheres to the emitting surface of the LED, it may affect the measurement accuracy.

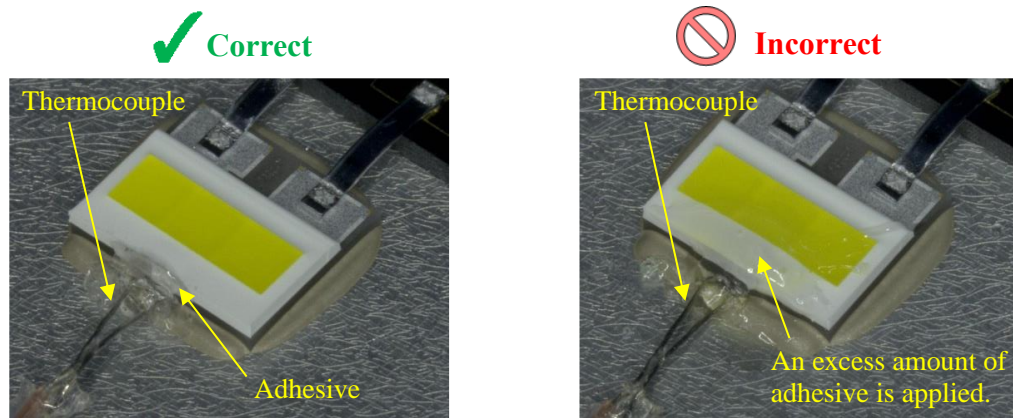


Figure 4. Correct/Incorrect Examples of Attaching the Thermocouple Using Adhesive

## 7. $T_{MP}$ Measurement Considerations

Even under the same operating conditions, the  $T_J$  of the LED may vary depending on the heat dissipation conditions around the LED. The  $T_{MP}$  should be measured once the saturation temperature at the junction has been reached while ensuring that the LED is incorporated in the chosen application at the finished product level and in a manner that takes into consideration the conditions/environments in which the LED will actually be used, oriented the way it will actually be used, and the LED is operated at the maximum possible ambient temperature after aging.

Taking into consideration the possibility of measurement variations it is recommended that the evaluation is performed with more than one LED. The more measurements that are used in the evaluation, the easier it will be to judge the accuracy of the  $T_{MP}$  measurement.

## 8. Summary

In this application note, Nichia has provided how to calculate the estimated value of the  $T_J$  for the LED mounted on a PCB using the thermal resistance  $R_{\theta JMP}$  and the measured  $T_{MP}$ . To estimate the  $T_J$  more accurately, perform the evaluation as per the precautions/suggestions provided herein regarding how to attach the thermocouple to the ceramic substrate of the LED and the  $T_{MP}$  measurement conditions/environments.

Additionally, ensure that the chosen design has a sufficient margin to not exceed the absolute maximum rating  $T_J$  by taking into consideration the heat dissipating conditions (i.e. the material, design, etc. of the components used with the LED, mounting conditions of the LED, etc.) and the variation of the heat dissipation performance of each individual component.

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