



Thermal Design Guide for the Nichia NCSU434C (U280) LEDs

Light Emitting Diode

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1. Overview

The light output of LEDs decreases due to the effect of heat generation. When LEDs are operated above the maximum LED junction temperature (T_{JMAX}), the reliability will drop significantly. In order to use the NCSU434C LED with high performance and high reliability, it is important to design the heat dissipation so that the junction temperature (T_J) does not exceed the T_{JMAX} of 110°C.

This application note covers the effect on the T_J when a board with one LED is driven with two different heat dissipation configurations. This information can be used as a reference for thermal design.

2. T_J Measurement Method

The following equation can be used to calculate the T_J .

$$T_J = T_S + R_{\theta JS} \times W$$

T_J : LED Junction Temperature (°C)

T_S : Soldering Temperature (°C)

$R_{\theta JS}$: Thermal Resistance from Junction to T_S Measurement Point (°C/W)

W : Input Power (W) = $I_F(A) \times V_F(V)$

The specifications of the NCSU434C are as follows:

Symbol	Condition	NCSU434C	
		U280	
		Typ	Max
$R_{\theta JS}$ (°C/W)	-	9.4	10.6
V_F (V)	$I_F=350mA$	5.8	-

Absolute Maximum Ratings ($T_S=25^\circ C$):

I_{FMAX} (mA)	500
I_{FPMAX} (mA)	600
T_{opr} (°C)	-40 ~ 100
T_{JMAX} (°C)	110

I_F : Forward Current (mA)

I_{FP} : Pulse Forward Current (mA)

I_{FP} conditions : pulse width $\leq 10ms$ and duty cycle $\leq 10\%$

T_{opr} : Operating Temperature (°C)

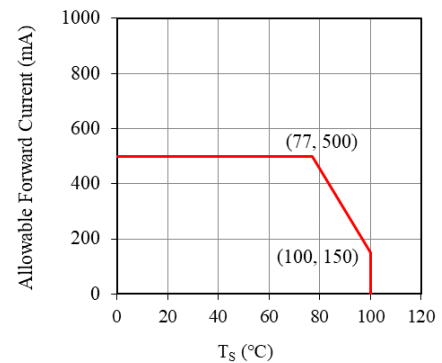


Figure 1. T_S vs Allowable Forward Current

3. T_S Measurement Point

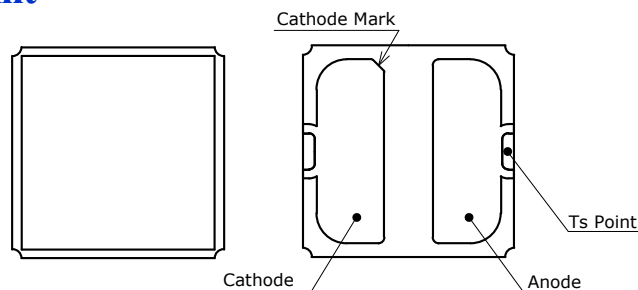


Figure 2. T_S Measurement point

4. Heat Dissipation Configuration and T_J Measurement Results

The T_J was confirmed when one LED was mounted on the board and it was driven with two different heat dissipation configurations.

Heat dissipation configuration 4-1, One LED on the board + Heatsink A

The specification of the board is as follows:

Thickness(mm)			Outline dimensions (mm)
Copper foil	Insulation layer	Copper base	
0.105	0.120	1.5	30 × 30

The thermal conductivity of the copper foil and copper base is 390W/m·K and that of the insulation layer is 4.5W/m·K.



Picture 1. Board appearance

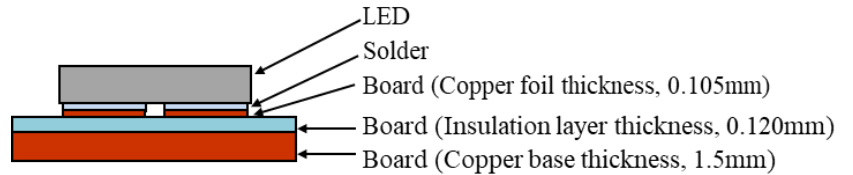


Figure 3. Structure of the board + LED

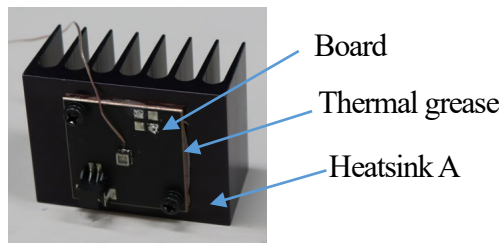
The specification of heatsink A is as follows:

Heatsink A			Fin			Thermal resistance (°C/W)
Material	Size (mm)	Thickness of the base Material (mm)	Number of fins	Size (mm)	Arrangement	
Al	50 × 38 × t25	5	8	1 × 38	8 × 1	5.70

Thermal conductivity of thermal grease is 5.3W/m·K.

The results of the evaluation with heatsink A are shown below:

T _A (°C)	Part number	Wavelength Rank	I _F (A)	V _F (V)	W (W)	T _S (°C)	T _J (°C)
25	NCSU434C	U280	0.35	5.5	1.9	41	61
			0.50	5.7	2.9	48	78



Picture 2. Evaluated light source 4-1

With heat dissipation configuration 4-1, there was enough margin to not exceed the T_{JMAX} even when 0.50A was applied.

Nichia performed another evaluation where the size of the heatsink was increased.

Heat dissipation configuration 4-2, One LED on the board + Heatsink B

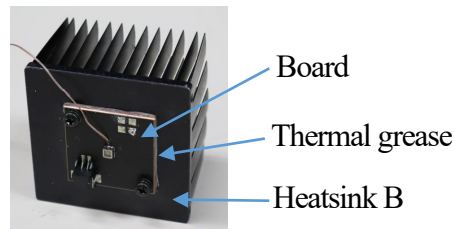
The specification of heatsink B is as follows:

Heatsink B			Fin			Thermal resistance (°C/W)
Material	Size (mm)	Thickness of the base Material (mm)	Number of fins	Size (mm)	Arrangement	
Al	53 × 53 × t35	4	64	0.8 × 9	13 × 5	4.25

Thermal conductivity of thermal grease is 5.3W/m·K.

The results of the evaluation with heatsink B are shown below:

T _A (°C)	Part number	Wavelength Rank	I _F (A)	V _F (V)	W (W)	T _S (°C)	T _J (°C)
25	NCSU434C	U280	0.35	5.6	2.0	39	60
			0.50	5.8	2.9	44	75



Picture 3. Evaluated light source 4-2

By increasing the size of the heatsink from A to B, the heat dissipation performance was improved and the T_J was further lowered.

5. Design Considerations

The performance of naturally air-cooled heatsinks varies depending on the orientation of the fins of the heatsink. Since the T_S will increase when warm air accumulates, it is important that the air movement is not obstructed. At Nichia, the fins are placed to face vertically to allow warm air to escape from the top (See Figure 4).

When designing the system, pay attention to the orientation of the fins when installing the heatsink.



Picture 4.
Fins facing vertical
(Nichia uses this orientation)



Picture 5.
Fins facing down
(This orientation obstructs the air flow)

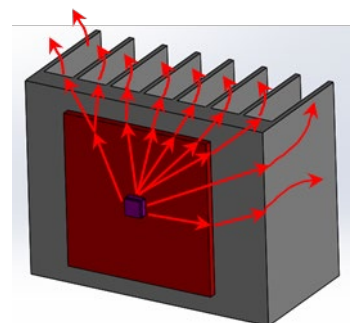


Figure 4.
Image of the heat path when fins are facing vertical

6. Summary

On a board with one LED, there was sufficient margin to stay under the T_{JMAX} , even with an air-cooling heat dissipation configuration using only a heatsink. Additionally, a larger heatsink size resulted in an even lower T_J .

For high-density mounting using multiple LEDs, heat interference occurs between adjacent LEDs, resulting in poor heat dissipation. Make sure that the pitch width is sufficient, increase the heatsink size, or attach a fan to the heatsink, etc. and check that it is sufficiently cooled before use.

The absolute maximum ratings for the NCSU434C LED per the Nichia specification:

$$I_F=0.50A, T_{JMAX}=110^{\circ}C$$

Nichia will not guarantee the LEDs if used above these ratings.

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