Attemperators (aka desuperheaters), which reduce steam temperature using a water spray, are one of the most problematic components in combined cycle plants. There are a number of attemperator designs and configurations but all of them are potentially vulnerable to damage. If the causes of damage are not addressed early, then cracking and steam leaks can occur leading to costly repairs and replacements. The main challenge is that damage often goes undetected until it is too late because the damaging temperature transients are not detected by standard plant control instrumentation until it is too late.

Possible causes and damaging effects of malfunctioning attemperators:

- Poor configuration/Design
- Leaking block valve
- Poor atomization/spray pattern
- Inappropriate spraywater timing
- Cracked/damaged spray nozzle
- Spray water impingement
- Water flooding/Ponding
- Cracked or warped thermal liner
- Cracked or bowed attemperator piping
- Cracked or bowed HRSG tubes due to water ingress

Typical Attemperator Arrangement

Damaged Nozzle
Cracked Liner
Failed downstream Weld/Elbow
THE SOLUTION
Tracking of damaging temperature differentials with strategically placed thermocouples provides direct feedback on the magnitude of damage incurred from each water impingement or flooding/ponding event. The signals from the thermocouples are analyzed by Structural Integrity’s attemperator damage tracking app to count the number and severity of impingement and flooding events, providing a trend of damage accumulation. Our software can be configured to provide email alerts when certain magnitude events occur, or based on trends in damage accumulation. This allows early detection of potentially damaging events so that appropriate mitigations (maintenance, logic updates, etc.) can be performed before costly repairs are required.

PlantTrack Online
Online provides a suite of real-time damage tracking applications for common plant components: piping, headers, tubing, attemperators, etc. These applications interface to common DCS / Historian systems allowing for easy implementation, including analysis of historical data where that exists.

PlantTrack Offline
Offline provides web-based graphical data management of design, configuration, inspections, failures, repairs, etc.