

Operating Instructions for Cobra and Lynx Duct Leakage Testers



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Introduction

These operating instructions are for ORIFLOW models COBRA and LYNX air leakage testers. Take pride in knowing that you have purchased the best air leakage tester on the market. It is no secret that Oriflow manufactures the highest quality testers, and has unparalleled customer service and technical support.

The orifice plates available for your duct leakage tester are constructed from laser-cut 0.125-inch stainless steel and do not require recalibration for 10 years. Note the authority having jurisdiction may override this requirement, and if so, Oriflow has very reasonable rates for calibrating orifice plates manufactured by Oriflow.

Safety Precautions

Before operating your tester, read the following safety precautions:

- ✓ DO NOT operate the tester in the rain,
 - ✓ DO NOT operate the tester while it is near or in water,
 - ✓ DO NOT operate the tester with a damaged electrical cord or plug,
 - ✓ DO NOT remove the inlet safety screen,
 - ✓ DO NOT touch the blower wheel when the unit is plugged in,
 - ✓ DO NOT look into the discharge end of the tester when the unit is plugged in,
 - ✓ DO NOT use the tester as a ladder or step stool,
 - ✓ DO NOT allow children near the tester,
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- ✓ DO use an extension cord of the proper gauge (see *Table 2*),
 - ✓ DO use the proper voltage and line frequency listed on the motor nameplate,
 - ✓ DO lock the caster when the tester is positioned horizontally,
 - ✓ DO use the tester on level ground,
 - ✓ DO secure the tester when transporting it,
 - ✓ DO wear proper hearing protection, safety glasses and work gloves,
 - ✓ DO seek assistance when lifting the tester (e.g., loading onto truck, going up or down stairs).

Prior to Testing

System Preparation

Cap off all ends of system using clear plastic and duct tape or sheetmetal duct end caps. Make sure you test the part of the duct system that leakage testing is required. Usually, this is from the system fan up to, but not including, the VAV boxes (terminal units). Refer to the engineer's specifications and all applicable codes and test standards.

Power Requirements

Do you have an adequate power supply for your tester (see *Table 1*)?

Table 1 – Tester Amp Draw

Tester Model	Voltage	Flow Control Option	Full Load Amps
Lynx	115	Slide Gate	12.7
Cobra	115	Slide Gate	12.8
Cobra	115	VFD	14.0
Cobra	230	Slide Gate	6.4
Cobra	230	VFD	8.0

Extension Cord Requirements

If you need an extension cord, is it the proper gauge? See *Table 2* below for extension cord requirements.

Table 2 – Required Extension Cord Wire Gauge

Tester Model	Flow Control Option	Voltage	Extension Cord Length (feet)	Wire Gauge
Lynx or Cobra	Slide Gate	115	10 to 50	14
			50 to 100	12
Cobra	Slide Gate	230	10 to 50	14
			50 to 100	14
Cobra	VFD	115	10 to 50	14
			50 to 100	12
Cobra	VFD	230	10 to 50	14
			50 to 100	14

Flex-Duct Length

Make sure you have enough flexible-duct with your tester for the job. Each tester includes 12.5 feet, which is enough for most applications. Extra lengths of flexible-duct are available at www.oriflow.com/Products.

Determining Maximum Allowable Leakage

To determine the maximum allowable leakage for the project, use ORIFLOW's **free online programs** to make these calculations (www.oriflow.com/Technical). Calculations are done for either of the two typical specifications: percentage of system flow, or leakage class. If the specification uses leakage class, you will need to calculate the total duct system surface area. Oriflow has a free Adobe form available to our customers that will calculate duct surface area given the duct shape, dimensions and length.

Determining Which Orifice Plate to Use

After determining the allowable leakage at the system test pressure, refer to the following tables for the capacities of each orifice plate available for the Cobra and Lynx model testers. Make sure you have an orifice plate that can measure the maximum allowable leakage. The proper plate is the one where the maximum allowable leakage falls between the minimum and maximum leakage at the system static pressure. For example, if you are testing a system at 4 in.wg. pressure and the maximum allowable leakage is 350 cfm, you will need a 3-inch orifice plate if using the Cobra tester or a 4-inch plate if using the Lynx tester.

It is a good idea to have the next larger orifice plate size since it is common for duct systems to leak more than the maximum allowable. Smaller diameter plates are use when leakage is relatively low.

Table 3 – Tester Capacities using the 1-inch Orifice Plate

System Static Pressure (in.wg.)	Minimum Leakage* (cfm)	COBRA Tester Maximum Leakage (cfm)	LYNX Tester Maximum Leakage (cfm)
1	9	38	32
2	9	36	30
3	9	33	27
4	9	30	23
5	9	26	17
6	9	21	10
8	9	9	--

Determining Which Orifice Plate to Use (continued)

Table 4 – Tester Capacities using the 2-inch Orifice Plate

System Static Pressure (in.wg.)	Minimum Leakage* (cfm)	COBRA Tester Maximum Leakage (cfm)	LYNX Tester Maximum Leakage (cfm)
1	34	155	130
2	34	150	125
3	34	145	120
4	34	135	105
5	34	125	85
6	34	100	50
8	34	35	--

Table 5 – Tester Capacities using the 3-inch Orifice Plate

System Static Pressure (in.wg.)	Minimum Leakage* (cfm)	COBRA Tester Maximum Leakage (cfm)	LYNX Tester Maximum Leakage (cfm)
1	82	415	350
2	82	410	340
3	82	390	320
4	82	375	285
5	82	340	230
6	82	290	140
8	82	115	--

Table 6 – Tester Capacities using the 4-inch Orifice Plate

System Static Pressure (in.wg.)	Minimum Leakage* (cfm)	COBRA Tester Maximum Leakage (cfm)	LYNX Tester Maximum Leakage (cfm)
1	175	655	550
2	175	645	540
3	175	630	510
4	175	600	455
5	175	545	365
6	175	465	230
8	175	200	--

Install Orifice Plate

The orifice plate that was determined from the previous section should now be installed. Install the orifice plate with the serial number facing upwards so the corresponding calibration certificate may be referenced after installation. Refer to *Figures 1 through 3.*



Figure 1 – Installing Orifice Plate



Figure 2 – Installing Top Tube Section



Figure 3 – Bolting Flange (hand tighten snugly)

Connect Flexible Duct to Orifice Tube

See the figures below for securing one end of the flexible duct to the orifice tube. Note that the worm-gear clamp should be slid over the flex-duct **before** connecting it to the orifice tube. Slide the flexible duct so that it overlaps the orifice tube 1 to 2 inches, and tighten clamp using a 5/16-inch nut driver.



Figure 4 – Installing Flex-Duct on Tube



Figure 5 – Tightening Clamp

Connect Flex-Duct to Duct System

Find a convenient location in the duct system where the tester has easy access. Make sure that the connection where you connect the flexible duct is a sturdy, sealed tight connection. You don't want to create a leaky connection where the tester is supplying air into the system.



Figure 6 – Connection to Duct System

System Test Pressure Connection

So that you can monitor the system static pressure, you need to drill a hole at least 3 feet away from the flex-duct connection. Drill a 5/16-inch diameter hole and insert the pressure tubing from the “DUCT SYSTEM” gauge so that 6 to 12 inches of tubing is inside the duct system. Using putty or duct tape, seal the connection. If your pressure tubing has a plastic static pressure tap at the end of the pressure tubing, insert the tap in the hole and seal it to the duct wall using duct tape. See *Figure 4* below.

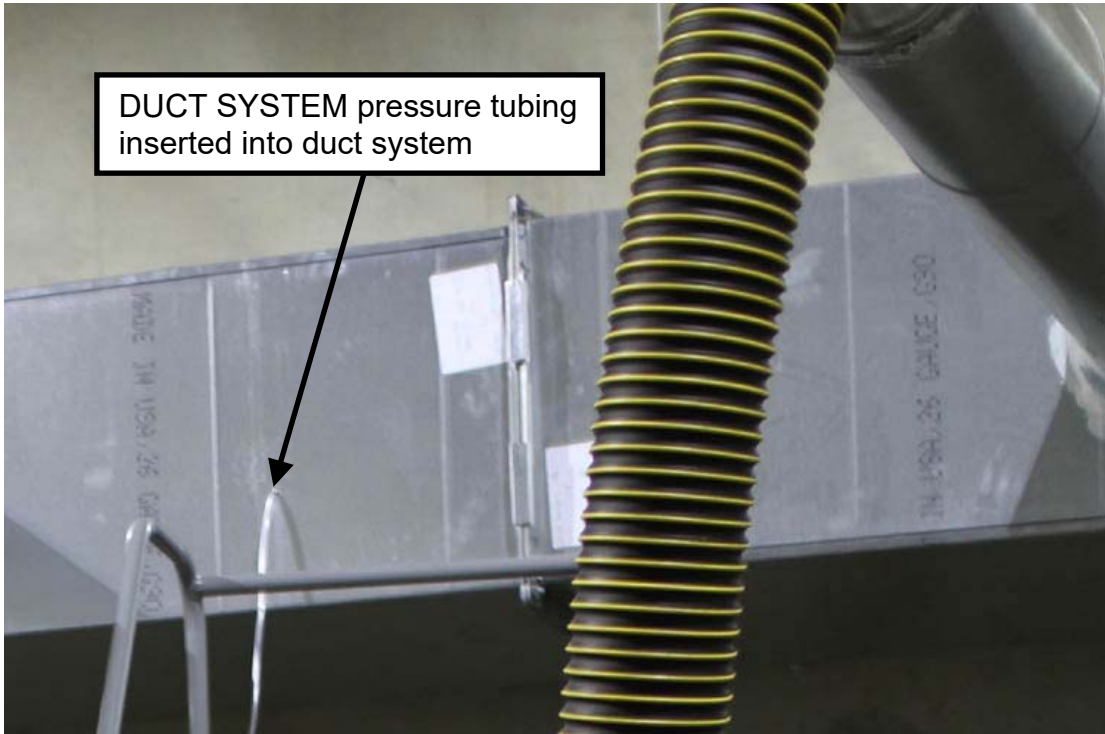


Figure 7 - Static Pressure Tubing Connection

See *Figure 8* showing the test setup for SUPPLY system testing. Refer to *Figure 9* for the test setup required to measure air leakage of a RETURN/EXHAUST system.

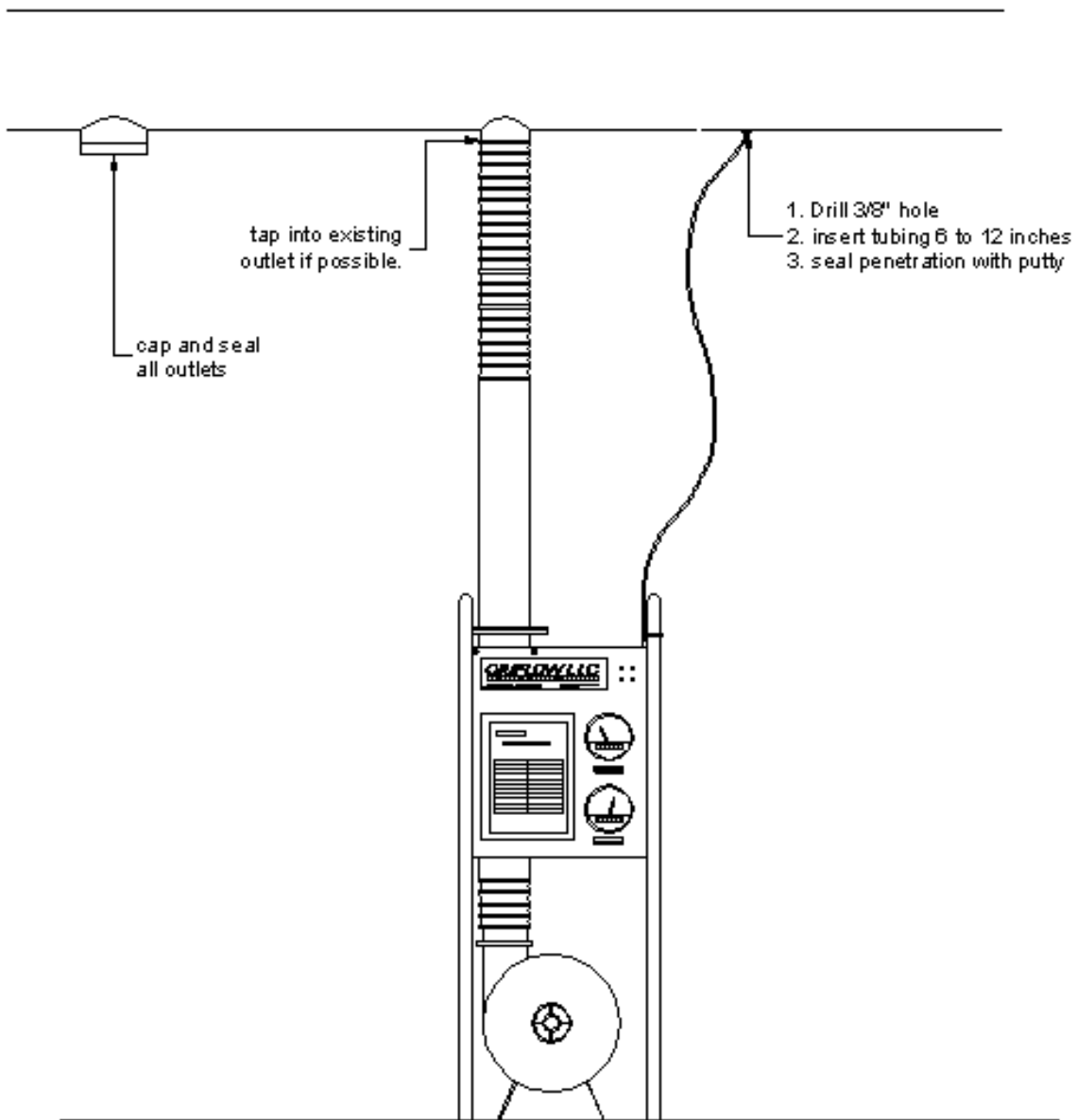


Figure 8 – Duct Leakage Test Setup for a SUPPLY System

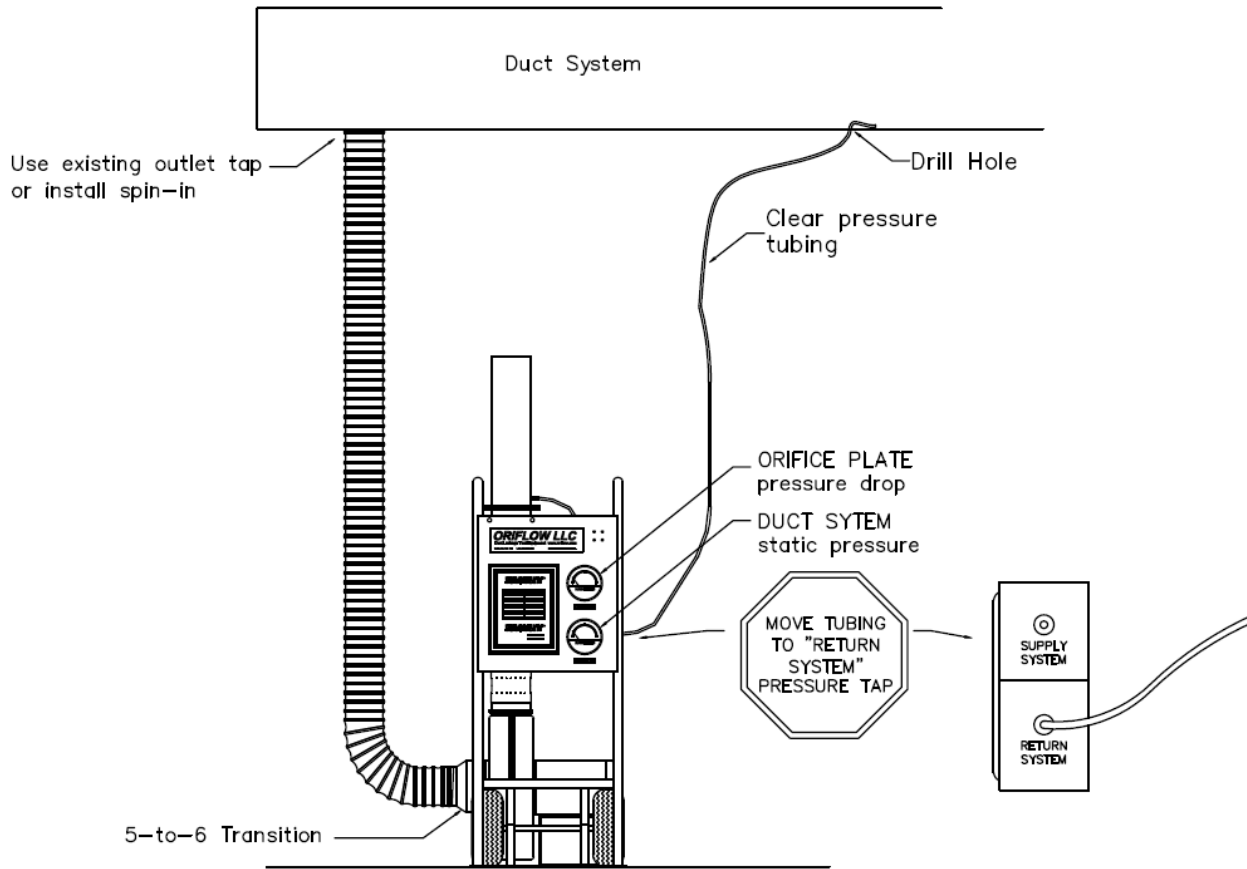


Figure 9 – Duct Leakage Test Setup for a RETURN/EXHAUST System

Zeroing Pressure Gauges

Before you run the tester, make sure both gauges have been zeroed.

Zeroing Analog Gauges

Using a very small screwdriver, turn the zero-adjustment screw on the gauge until the needle is aligned with the zero reading. Turning the screw clockwise increases the pressure reading; turning it counterclockwise, decreases the reading. See *Figure 10*.



Figure 10 – Zeroing Analog Gauges
(zero BOTH gauges before testing)

Zeroing Digital Gauges

Use the following steps to zero each digital gauge:

1. Press **MENU** button once.
2. Press **▼** arrow button until Adu shows on screen.
3. Press **E** button once to go into auto-zero mode
4. Press **E** button again and AUTO will be blinking on screen
5. Press **E** button a third time to complete the zeroing process.
6. Press **MENU** button two times to get back to the pressure reading.
7. Pressure should be reading zero or within +/- 0.02 in.wg. If not, repeat steps.



Avoid Over-Pressurization

Prior to starting the blower, shut the inlet slide gate on models without the speed controller option. For models with the VFD speed controller, rotate the speed control knob completely counter-clockwise.



Figure 12 – Avoid Over-Pressurizing by Minimizing Air Delivery upon Startup

Obtaining System Test Pressure

Turn the blower on and slowly open the inlet slide gate for models without the speed control option. If your tester has the VFD speed controller, rotate speed control knob slowly clockwise to obtain system test pressure.



Figure 13 – Obtaining System Test Pressure

Regardless of tester model used, pay attention to the “DUCT SYSTEM” gauge while increasing airflow. When you have reached the required system static pressure, tighten the set-screw on the inlet damper (or stop rotating the speed control knob).

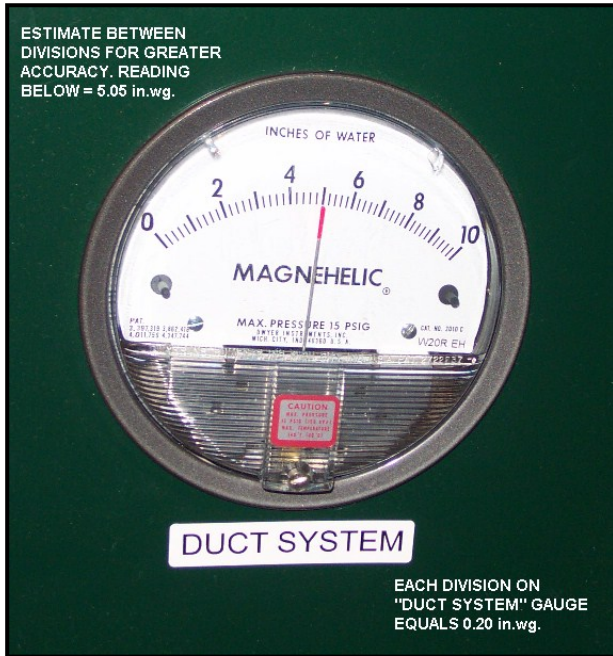


Figure 14 – Duct System Gauge Pressure Reading

Determining the Leakage Rate

Now that you have obtained the system test pressure and have the inlet damper locked in position, note the pressure reading of the ORIFICE TUBE gauge (*Figure 15*). Refer to your calibration certificate to determine the leakage rate that corresponds to the gauge reading. An example of a calibration certificate is shown in *Figure 16*; it is for informational purposes only and used in the example shown on the next page. **Always refer to the calibration certificate that came with your calibrated orifice plate.**



Figure 15 –ORIFICE TUBE reading

**SAMPLE CALIBRATION CERTIFICATE TABLE FOR EXAMPLE ONLY
USE YOUR CERTIFICATE**

"ORIFICE TUBE" Gauge Reading (in.wg.)	Leakage Rate (cfm)	"ORIFICE TUBE" Gauge Reading (in.wg.)	Leakage Rate (cfm)	"ORIFICE TUBE" Gauge Reading (in.wg.)	Leakage Rate (cfm)
0.0	0.0	1.7	174.2	3.4	246.3
0.1	42.2	1.8	179.2	3.5	249.9
0.2	59.7	1.9	184.1	3.6	253.4
0.3	73.2	2.0	188.9	3.7	256.9
0.4	84.5	2.1	193.6	3.8	260.4
0.5	94.4	2.2	198.1	3.9	263.8
0.6	103.5	2.3	202.6	4.0	267.1
0.7	111.8	2.4	206.9	4.1	270.5
0.8	119.5	2.5	211.2	4.2	273.7
0.9	126.7	2.6	215.4	4.3	277.0
1.0	133.6	2.7	219.5	4.4	280.2
1.1	140.1	2.8	223.5	4.5	283.3
1.2	146.3	2.9	227.5	4.6	286.5
1.3	152.3	3.0	231.4	4.7	289.6
1.4	158.0	3.1	235.2	4.8	292.6
1.5	163.6	3.2	238.9	4.9	295.7
1.6	169.0	3.3	242.6	5.0	298.7

Figure 16 – Tables from a Sample Calibration Certificate. Every calibration chart has an equation located below the table (not shown here)

Example (refer to Figure 16)

For an ORIFICE TUBE gauge reading of 1.15 in.wg., the leakage rate appears to be approximately 143 cfm.

For an exact value, use the equation that comes with every calibration certificate. For the example shown in Figure 16:

$$\text{Leakage} = 133.6 \times \sqrt{\text{ORIFICE TUBE Gauge Reading}}$$

where the value of "133.6" is a constant and will be specific to the orifice plate used (**every plate has its own value; yours will be different**).

Using a calculator, take the square root of the gauge reading first, and then multiply by the constant for your orifice plate (for this example, the constant is "133.6"). The exact leakage is 133.6 x (square root of 1.15) = 143.3 cfm. In most cases, reporting the leakage as 143 cfm is acceptable.

Troubleshooting

Zero reading on “DUCT SYSTEM” gauge

If the gauge reading is zero, refer to the table below to fix this problem. Perform troubleshooting steps in the order shown in the *Table 7* below.

Table 7 –Troubleshooting steps when “DUCT SYSTEM” gauge is zero

Step	Scenario	What to do
1	Inlet damper was left shut, cutting off air to the system.	Open inlet damper slowly.
2	Pressure tubing connected to gauge incorrectly	Look at the P1 and P2 stickers that are located on the orifice tube and gauges. Make sure tubing from P1 tap matches the P1 tap on the “ORIFICE TUBE” gauge.
3	Plugged fitting or malfunctioning gauge.	Gently blow through other end of pressure tubing from “DUCT SYSTEM” gauge, and watch needle increase pressure reading.
4	System is leaking too much air.	<p>Check for these other sources of leakage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rectangular duct joints (check and seal corners), • Fire or smoke dampers, • Duct joints (pay particular attention to flex-duct joints if they are part of the leak test), • VAV boxes (pay particular attention to parallel box back draft dampers), • Built-up air handlers, • Plenums, • Uncured duct sealant blow-thru (follow manufacturer instructions for cure time), • Improperly sealed or un-sealed joints, • Hot water coils and electric heaters, • Open duct end that was supposed to be sealed/capped-off for the leak test.

Zero reading on “ORIFICE TUBE” gauge

If the gauge reading is zero, refer to the table below to fix this problem. Perform troubleshooting steps in the order shown in *Table 8* below.

Table 8 –Troubleshooting steps when “ORIFICE TUBE” gauge is zero

Step	Scenario	What to do
1	Inlet damper was left shut, cutting off air to the system.	Open inlet damper slowly.
2	Plugged pressure taps.	Remove pressure tubing from “ORIFICE TUBE” gauge, and blow through each end to make sure the pressure taps on the orifice tube are clear.
3	Orifice plate too large for application.	If you are using a 4-inch ID orifice plate, and the system is leaking 40 cfm, you probably won’t even notice the gauge needle moving. This can happen to other orifice plates too. You need to purchase an orifice plate with a smaller bore diameter so that a small amount of airflow/leakage will result in a bigger pressure drop.
4	System is leaking very little air.	You’ll know if this is true if the fan inlet is almost shut. Not likely unless system is small. Fix is to use plate with smaller bore.
4	Pressure tubing connected incorrectly.	Look at the P1 and P2 stickers that are located on the orifice tube and gauges. Make sure they match.
5	Malfunctioning gauge.	Remove the clear pressure tubing from the lower pressure tap on the orifice tube and blow through the end of the tubing. The needle should move in response. If not, the gauge is faulty.
6	Not sure	The best way to make sure that your tester is working properly is to disconnect the flex duct from the system and turn the blower on, and slowly open the inlet damper. If you feel a lot of air coming out of the tube end, you should see a pressure reading on the gauge “ORIFICE TUBE”.

Can't obtain system test pressure

This happens when the system is leaking too much air. Make sure all outlets are sealed. Check corners of rectangular duct for excessive leakage. Inspect all duct and fitting joints for leakage. Make sure you seal all suspect joints and allow to cure 24 to 48 hours. Always refer to duct sealant manufacturer's instructions.

Check for these other sources of leakage:

- Rectangular duct joints (check and seal corners),
- Fire or smoke dampers,
- Duct joints (pay particular attention to flex-duct joints if they are part of the leak test),
- VAV boxes (pay particular attention to parallel box back draft dampers),
- Built-up air handlers,
- Plenums,
- Uncured duct sealant blow-thru (follow manufacturer instructions for cure time),
- Improperly sealed or un-sealed joints,
- Hot water coils and electric heaters,
- Open duct end that was supposed to be sealed/capped-off for the leak test.

A non-toxic smoke machine is an excellent tool for locating significant sources of leakage. Call ORIFLOW at 727-400-4881 or online at www.oriflow.com for more information.

"ORIFICE TUBE" gauge reading maxed out

- *Scenario 1:* The system is leaking too much air. Make sure all outlets are sealed. Check corners of rectangular duct for excessive leakage. Inspect all duct and fitting joints for leakage. Make sure you seal all suspect joints and allow curing time of 24 to 48 hours. Always refer to duct sealant manufacturer's instructions.
- *Scenario 2:* orifice plate bore could be too small, causing a high pressure drop at low to moderate flows. You need an orifice plate with a larger bore.

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