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SDI-12 Interface Cable

December 15, 2021

Solinst[®]

Built for:

Levellogger[®]
Model 3001

1 Introduction	5
1.1 Compatibility	5
1.2 SDI-12 Interface Cable	5
1.3 LED Status	6
2 Levellogger Independent Recording Option	7
2.1 Data Downloading and Programming in Field	7
3 Installation	8
4 Operation	9
4.1 Setting the SDI-12 Address	9
4.2 Activation and Verification	9
4.3 Changing Levelloggers	9
5 SDI-12 Supported Commands	10
5.1 Acknowledge Active Command (a!)	10
5.2 Address Query Command (?!)	10
5.3 Send Identification Command (aI!)	10
5.4 Change Address Command (aAb!)	10
5.5 Start Measurement Command (aM!)	11
5.6 Start Measurement Command with Checksum (aMC!)	11
5.7 Send Data Command (aD0!)	11
5.8 Start Concurrent Measurement Command (aC!)	11
5.9 Start Concurrent Measurement Command with Checksum	12
5.10 Start Verification Command (aV!)	12
6 Trouble Shooting	13
Compatibility	13
Levellogger Does Not Reply	13
SDI-12 Recorder Receives Erroneous Replies	13
Recorder Receives Invalid Response to D command	13
7 References	13

NOTE

SDI-12 Cables sold after **August 25, 2009** are compatible with the LTC Levelogger Junior, as well as previous Solinst datalogger models.

SDI-12 Cables sold after **September 28, 2011** are compatible with the LTC Levelogger Junior, Levelogger Edge and the Levelogger Junior Edge, as well as previous Solinst datalogger models.

SDI-12 Cables sold after **November 1, 2013** are compatible with Rainlogger Edge and Rainlogger using Firmware V2.000, as well as previous Solinst datalogger models.

SDI-12 Cables sold after **March 20, 2019** are fully compatible with the LTC Levelogger Edge, as well as previous Solinst datalogger models.

SDI-12 Cables with **firmware version 2.005 and up** are compatible with Levelogger 5 Series dataloggers and all other Levelogger and Rainlogger models with latest firmware.

1 Introduction

SDI-12 (Serial Data Interface at 1200 Baud) is a communications protocol designed to allow the interfacing of a number of low power analog sensors with a common SDI-12 reader or datalogger. The Solinst Levelogger 5, Barologger 5, Levelogger 5 Junior, Levelogger 5 LTC, Rainlogger 5, and Levelogger Edge and Gold Series dataloggers are able to act as SDI-12 Sensors in an SDI-12 Network simply by using the Solinst SDI-12 Interface Cable.

The SDI-12 Interface Cable converts SDI-12 commands to the Solinst communications protocol for Solinst Leveloggers. The SDI-12 Interface Cable provides a hardware and protocol conversion interface between a Solinst Levelogger and an SDI-12 network.

1.1 Compatibility

The SDI-12 Interface Cable (V2.005 and up) is compatible with latest Levelogger Firmware:

- Levelogger 5: V1.004 and up
- Barologger 5: V1.004 and up
- Levelogger 5 Junior: V1.004 and up
- Levelogger 5 LTC: V1.004 and up
- Rainlogger 5: V1.004 and up
- Levelogger Edge: V3.004 and up
- Barologger Edge: V3.004 and up
- Levelogger Junior Edge: V3.004 and up
- LTC Levelogger Edge: V1.003 and up
- Rainlogger Edge: V3.001 and up
- Levelogger Gold: V2.007 and up
- Barologger Gold: V2.007 and up
- Levelogger Junior: V2.007 and up
- LTC Levelogger Junior: V2.005 and up
- Rainlogger: V2.000 and up

1.2 SDI-12 Interface Cable

Solinst 2-wire signals are converted to SDI-12 signals by the Solinst SDI-12 Interface Cable. One end of this cable has three wires which connect to an SDI-12 datalogger. These wires are colour-coded according to Table 1-1. The other end of the cable terminates in a Direct Read connection. This connects to the top of a Direct Read Cable for connection to a Solinst Levelogger. The Solinst Levelogger has a self-contained battery and does not use +12V DC power. The SDI-12 Interface Cable circuitry requires the 12V connection. The current draw is nominally around 15 – 25 mA at 12V DC. Idle current draw is ~0.1 mA.

Wire Colour	SDI-12 Function	Connection
Red	12 Volt Line	+12V DC at SDI-12 Datalogger
Black	Ground Line	Ground at SDI-12 Datalogger
White	Serial Data Line	SDI-12 Data at SDI-12 Datalogger

Table 1-1 SDI-12 Interface Cable Wire Definitions

The communication settings for the Solinst SDI-12 Interface Cable hardware comply with the SDI-12 standard at 1200 baud, 1 start bit, 7 data bits, 1 parity bit (even parity), and 1 stop bit.

Technical Specifications	
Standard Compliance	SDI-12 Standard, Version 1.3, July 18, 2005
+12V Input	9.6V–16.0V
Average Current Draw While Taking Readings	15-25 mA
Idle Current Draw	~0.1 mA
Direct Read Cable – Max Length	1500 ft
SDI-12 Cable Length – Max Length	200 ft
Environmental	IP65

Table 1-2 SDI-12 Technical Specifications

1.3 LED Status

There are two LEDs on the SDI-12 Interface Cable, one Yellow LED, and one Red LED.

- The Yellow LED flashes whenever the Levelogger replies to a data logger command on the SDI-12 network. The Yellow LED does not flash when it receives a command, only when it replies to a command.
- The Red LED flashes whenever there is a failure to read from the attached Levelogger. It also flashes if any part of the Built-In Test (BIT) fails. The BIT is executed when the SDI-12 Interface Cable is powered up, or after the user executes the BIT with the Start Verification Command (aV!). See Table 5-1 for a description of the BIT.
- When the SDI-12 Interface Cable is powered up, both the Red and Yellow LEDs flash once together at the same time, to indicate that unit has received power and the firmware is starting up (this process only takes 1-2 seconds).
- If communication with the Levelogger has failed or the Levelogger has been disconnected from the SDI-12 Interface Cable, and commands are being sent to the SDI-12 Interface Cable by the SDI-12 datalogger, the Red LED will flash indicating an error.

If the Red LED flashes, check the following:

- 1) The Levelogger is properly connected to the Direct Read Cable and that the Direct Read Cable is properly attached to the SDI-12 Interface Cable, at the surface.
- 2) The three wires from the SDI-12 Interface Cable are properly connected to the SDI-12 datalogger/network (see Table 1-1).
- 3) The voltage being supplied to the SDI-12 Interface Cable is correct (should be 12V DC).
- 4) The BIT may have failed. If this is not corrected by doing any of the above, the user should contact Solinst directly.
- 5) If the red LED flashes during a measurement being taken from the Levelogger, retry the measurement first, then check all connections and the voltage.

! NOTE

To check if the Built-In Test (BIT) has failed, see Section 5.10 for details.

! NOTE

See Levelogger Series User Guide for detailed Levelogger Operating Instructions.

! NOTE

The Levelogger uses its internal battery each time the SDI-12 datalogger requests a reading. The internal battery will drain more quickly if the Levelogger is also set to record independently.

2 Levelogger Independent Recording Option

Solinst Leveloggers have the ability to record and store readings in their internal memory, independent from the SDI-12 network, while connected to an SDI-12 datalogger. Before connecting the Levelogger to the SDI-12 Interface Cable and datalogger, it can be programmed and started using Solinst Levelogger Software.

All standard sampling options provided by Solinst Levelogger Software are available while the Levelogger is operating as an SDI-12 sensor. The Levelogger can be set to record at a user-defined sampling rate; event, linear, and scheduled sampling modes are available using the Levelogger Settings Window. This allows the Levelogger to provide back-up data if the SDI-12 network fails. The Levelogger stores the data in its internal memory, until it is downloaded.

Each time the SDI-12 datalogger asks the Levelogger for a current reading, the internal Levelogger battery is used to transmit the information to the SDI-12 datalogger. The Levelogger will also be using its internal battery if programmed to record independently - draining the battery more quickly. If the Levelogger independent recording option is not used, the internal battery will only be used for communication with the SDI-12 datalogger.

2.1 Data Downloading and Programming in Field

If the Levelogger has been programmed to record on its own independent schedule, data can be downloaded from the Levelogger using a laptop PC and PC Interface Cable, Levelogger 5 App Interface, or DataGrabber 5 in the field (see separate operating instructions). Temporarily disconnect the Levelogger from the SDI-12 Interface Cable, preferably in between recordings by the SDI-12 datalogger. Connect a laptop, Levelogger 5 App Interface or DataGrabber 5 to download the independently recorded data.

If the Levelogger is disconnected from the SDI-12 network, and the SDI-12 datalogger tries to communicate with the Levelogger, the Red LED will flash as described in Section 1.3. This does not disrupt the SDI-12 datalogger or the rest of the sensors in the network. The Red LED will stop flashing once the Levelogger is reconnected.

After the data download is complete, the Levelogger is easily connected back into the SDI-12 network without disruption. The Levelogger is automatically verified when reconnected. See Section 4.2.

NOTE

See Levellogger Series User Guide for detailed Levellogger installation Instructions.

NOTE

Levellogger 5 Series dataloggers can connect to an older style Direct Read Cable (used by Edge and Gold Series dataloggers) using an Edge-L5 Adaptor.

Levellogger Edge or Gold Series dataloggers can connect to an L5 Direct Read Cable using an Edge-DRC5 Adaptor.



3 Installation

- 1) Turn off power to the SDI-12 datalogger and/or the SDI-12 network.
- 2) From the SDI-12 Interface Cable, take the black ground wire and connect it to the datalogger ground terminal. Take the white signal wire and connect it to the SDI-12 data signal terminal of the datalogger. From the SDI-12 Interface Cable take the red wire and connect it to the 12V DC power supply of the datalogger or the SDI-12 network.
- 3) Turn on power to the datalogger and/or the SDI-12 network such that power is applied to the SDI-12 Interface Cable. Both the SDI-12 Interface Cable LEDs should flash to indicate the SDI-12 Interface Cable firmware has started up successfully.

Figure 3-1 SDI-12 Interface Cable Installation



- 4) Connect the other end of the SDI-12 Interface Cable to the top of the Direct Read Cable.
- 5) Thread a Solinst Levellogger onto the other end of the Direct Read Cable.
- 6) The SDI-12 Interface Cable, the Direct Read Cable, and the Levellogger will then be physically and properly hooked up to the datalogger and SDI-12 network.

! NOTE

Each SDI-12 Interface Cable and connected Levellogger must have a unique device address on an SDI-12 network. In order to ensure that no devices have the same address, all other devices on the SDI-12 datalogger/SDI-12 network may have to be disconnected and re-addressed, then reconnected.

! NOTE

For explanations of the SDI-12 Supported Commands used to communicate with the Solinst Levellogger, see Section 5.

4 Operation

Once the SDI-12 Interface Cable, Direct Read Cable, and Levellogger have been installed and powered up, one can start issuing SDI-12 commands. It is good practice to do the following:

4.1 Setting the SDI-12 Address

The Solinst SDI-12 Interface Cable and connected Levellogger have an SDI-12 device address which can be set to any value from “0” to “9”, “A” to “Z”, or “a” to “z”, giving a total of 62 unique addresses. The default address for Solinst Levelloggers is “0”. This address identifies the Levellogger on an SDI-12 network. Any SDI-12 equipment capable of changing SDI-12 addresses may be used to change a Levellogger’s SDI-12 address.

- 1) The SDI-12 Interface Cable and Levellogger default address is set to ASCII “0”. If you have more than one Levellogger connected to your datalogger or SDI-12 network, or if there is already a connected device with the address “0”, use the Change Address Command (aAb!) to change the device address.

4.2 Activation and Verification

- 2) Make sure other SDI-12 devices are not being addressed and communicating at the same time on the SDI-12 network.
- 3) Using your SDI-12 datalogger and its SDI-12 software, issue an Acknowledge Active Command (a!), to test if the device address is correct and you can communicate with the newly installed SDI-12 Interface Cable and Levellogger.
- 4) Issue the Start Verification Command (aV!) and later read it with the Send Data Command (aD0!) to verify the Levellogger and the SDI-12 Interface Cable are operating without errors.
- 5) Use the Send Identification Command (aI!) to verify the name and model of the Levellogger matches that of the Levellogger you have just installed. Execute this command 2-3 times to ensure the Levellogger identification information gets read and registered with the SDI-12 Interface Cable.
- 6) Execute the Start Concurrent Measurement Command (aC!) and later retrieve the measurement with the Send Data Command (aD0!), to ensure the Levellogger is connected and properly taking measurements.
- 7) If the above steps are successful, you may program the datalogger to automatically issue commands to the SDI-12 Interface Cable and Levellogger, to take measurements and record them.

4.3 Changing Levelloggers

If a new Levellogger is attached to the SDI-12 Interface Cable, use the Start Verification Command (aV!) to initialize the new Levellogger on the SDI-12 network.

Alternatively, a new Levellogger initialization will be automatically performed after the first few SDI-12 commands are received by the SDI-12 Interface Cable and the newly attached Levellogger.

5 SDI-12 Supported Commands

Please refer to the document: *SDI-12: A Serial Digital Interface Standard for Microprocessor-Based Sensors, Version 1.3, July 18, 2005*, prepared by the SDI-12 Support Group (Technical Committee), for a complete description of the SDI-12 protocol.

The following commands are supported by the Solinst SDI-12 Interface Cable.

5.1 Acknowledge Active Command (a!)

This command is used to ensure that a Levelogger is responding to the SDI-12 datalogger. A typical command/reply would be: **0!0**<CR><LF> where the “0”s represent the Levelogger address and <CR> represents a carriage return (Hex 0D) and <LF> represents a line feed (Hex 0A). All replies from SDI-12 Leveloggers are terminated with <CR><LF>. All datalogger commands are terminated with an exclamation mark “!” character.

5.2 Address Query Command (?!)

Using a question mark (?) as the address character, causes the Levelogger to respond with the acknowledge active command (a!) where “a” represents the Levelogger address. A typical command/reply would be: **?!0**<CR><LF>. The bold-faced characters are sent to the Levelogger; the normal type-face is the Levelogger’s reply. In this case the Levelogger address is “0”. You can only use (?!), the address query command to find out what the Levelogger’s address is, if there are no other Leveloggers connected on the SDI-12 network.

5.3 Send Identification Command (a!)

This command is used to query Leveloggers for their SDI-12 compatibility level, model number, and firmware version number. A typical command/reply would be: **0! 013SOLINST M20 10 1.000 1017687**<CR><LF> where the first “0” is the Levelogger address, “13” represents SDI-12 V1.3 protocol support, “SOLINST” identifies the Levelogger manufacturer, “M20” defines the Levelogger range, “10” is the hardware identifier, “1.000” specifies the current firmware version, and “1017687” represents the Levelogger’s serial number.

5.4 Change Address Command (aAb!)

This command changes the Levelogger’s address. A typical command/reply would be: **0A9!9**<CR><LF> where the first “0” is the current Levelogger address and the “9” is the address to be changed to. The Levelogger replies with a “9” to indicate that its address was successfully changed.

5.5 Start Measurement Command (aM!)

This command tells the Levelogger to take a measurement. However, the measurement is not returned after this command. Instead, the time and number of measurements that can be expected will be replied. For example: **0M!00102<CR><LF>** where the first “0” is the Levelogger address, the next three digits “010” represent the time in seconds it will take the Levelogger to take the readings, and the final “2” indicates how many readings will be returned. When the measurement is ready, a Service Request “0<CR><LF>” is issued back to the datalogger. The Solinst Levelogger will return a temperature and level measurement, which are always able to be read after the specified time. After that, the datalogger can issue the send data command “ODO!” to retrieve the measurement data. Other start measurement commands such as aM1 to aM9 are reserved for future use.

! NOTE

Checksum is a form of redundant test, which is used to check for any errors in the data.

! NOTE

The actual units in use are not reported to the SDI-12 datalogger while the Levelogger is in SDI-12 mode, but it is possible to change level units using the Solinst Levelogger PC software.

5.6 Start Measurement Command with Checksum (aMC!)

This command is identical to the aM! command with the exception that a three-character checksum is returned before the <CR><LF> as part of the Send Data Command reply. The aMC1 to aMC9 commands are reserved for future use.

5.7 Send Data Command (aD0!)

This command is used to get groups of data from the Levelogger. An aD0! command is issued by the datalogger after a M, MC, C, CC, or V command. The Levelogger responds by sending the data. For a Solinst Levelogger, this is currently two data items: temperature and level measurements, and possibly a third measurement depending on the type of Levelogger. A typical command/reply is:

0D0!0+24.2981+0.35212<CR><LF> where the temperature is “+24.2981” in Degrees Celsius and the level is “+0.35212” in meters.

In response to a checksum request i.e. MC, CC; a typical command/reply is: **0D0!0+24.2981+0.35212MQ_<CR><LF>** where the temperature and level are as before, and the final “MQ_” is the checksum. The aD1 to aD9 commands are reserved for future use.

5.8 Start Concurrent Measurement Command (aC!)

This command is similar to the start measurement command, except a concurrent measurement is taken. Like the start measurement command, a send data command is required to retrieve the data. For example: **0C!000302<CR><LF>**. The reply indicates that two readings (temperature and pressure) are available after 3 seconds. A 0D0! command is then issued to read these Levelogger values. The aC1 to aC9 commands are reserved for future use.

5.9 Start Concurrent Measurement Command with Checksum (aCC!)

This command is similar to the Start Concurrent Measurement with the addition of a checksum. For example: **0CC!000302<CR><LF>** would then, after 3 seconds, reply to the aD0! command as follows:

0D0!0+24.6038+0.34513Lj<CR><LF>. Where “Lj” is the checksum for the two measurement values “+24.6038 + 0.34513. The aCC1 to aCC9 commands are reserved for future use.

5.10 Start Verification Command (aV!)

This command tells the Levelogger to return a verification (self-test) code in response to a subsequent aD0! command. In this case, the Solinst Levelogger returns a non-zero time because the self-test execution verifies all internal memory checksums and these operations take about 3 seconds. A typical session would appear as follows:

0V!00031<CR><LF> indicates that one status reading will be ready within 3 seconds.

0<CR><LF> is a service request from the Levelogger within 3 seconds to indicate that the BIT operations are complete and the verification code is available.

0D0!0+000 is the send data command from the SDI-12 master device to obtain the BIT verification code of “+000” which indicates that no faults were found. The possible fault codes are shown in Table 2. All the decimal representations of the individual faults are summed to arrive at the resultant BIT verification code. An included bit in a certain bit position means the corresponding test has failed.

Code Bit Position	Decimal Representation	Test Meaning
0	1	Read Write Solinst Levelogger
1	2	Solinst SDI-12 Interface Cable FRAM Memory Test
2	4	Solinst SDI-12 Interface Cable Memory Checksum Test
3	8	Solinst SDI-12 Interface Cable Voltage Test
4	16	N/A
5	32	N/A
6	64	N/A
7	128	N/A

Table 5-1 BIT Verification Fault Codes

6 Trouble Shooting

Compatibility

SDI-12 Cables sold before August 25, 2009 are not compatible with the LTC Levellogger Junior. SDI-12 Cables sold before September 27, 2011 are not compatible with the Levellogger Edge. SDI-12 Cables sold before November 1, 2013 are not compatible with Rainlogger Edge and Rainlogger using Firmware V2.000. Cables sold before August 1, 2017 are not compatible with the LTC Levellogger Edge. Cables sold before March 20, 2019 will not allow higher conductivity readings (i.e. >10,000 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$) to display for the LTC Levellogger Edge. Cables sold after March 20, 2019 are fully compatible with all Levellogger Edge and Gold Series dataloggers (SDI-12 Cable Firmware V2.003).

SDI-12 Interface Cables with firmware version 2.005 and up are compatible with Levellogger 5 Series dataloggers, and all previous Levellogger and Rainlogger models using the most current firmware.

Levellogger Does Not Reply

The most common cause is an SDI-12 command sent with a device address that does not correspond with the Levellogger you are trying to communicate with. In this case, the Levellogger will not reply.

Change the address of the SDI-12 command being sent to match the proper device address.

SDI-12 Recorder Receives Erroneous Replies

Check to ensure all Levelloggers on the network have unique device addresses. Otherwise, there will be bus collisions, and erroneous data will be returned from the Levelloggers to the SDI-12 recorder. This will be indicated if two or more Yellow LEDs on separate SDI-12 Interface Cables flash at the same time, when only one SDI-12 command was sent.

Change the device address of the Levellogger with the duplicate address.

Recorder Receives Invalid Response to D command e.g. 0000<CR><LF>

Retry the Command. The Levellogger may have been busy or the Levellogger is not connected to the SDI-12 Interface Cable.

If your recorder supports automatic retries, consider enabling that function. If necessary, check all connections in the field.

7 References

SDI-12 Support Group (Technical Committee). *SDI-12: A Serial-Digital Interface Standard for Microprocessor-Based Sensors, Version 1.3, July 18, 2005*. Available [online]: <http://www.sdi-12.org/>