Capacitance and Dielectrics

CHAPTER

26

When a patient receives a shock from a defibrillator, the energy delivered to the patient is initially stored in a *capacitor.* We will study capacitors and capacitance in this chapter. *(Andrew Olney/Getty Images)*

In this chapter, we introduce the first of three simple circuit elements that can be connected with wires to form an electric circuit. Electric circuits are the basis for the vast majority of the devices used in our society. Here we shall discuss *capacitors,* devices that store electric charge. This discussion is followed by the study of *resistors* in Chapter 27 and *inductors* in Chapter 32. In later chapters, we will study more sophisticated circuit elements such as *diodes* and *transistors.*

Capacitors are commonly used in a variety of electric circuits. For instance, they are used to tune the frequency of radio receivers, as filters in power supplies, to eliminate sparking in automobile ignition systems, and as energy-storing devices in electronic flash units.

26.1 Definition of Capacitance

Consider two conductors as shown in Figure 26.1 (page 778). Such a combination of two conductors is called a **capacitor.** The conductors are called *plates.* If the conductors carry charges of equal magnitude and opposite sign, a potential difference ΔV exists between them.

Pitfall Prevention 26.1

Capacitance Is a Capacity To understand capacitance, think of similar notions that use a similar word. The *capacity* of a milk carton is the volume of milk it can store. The *heat capacity* of an object is the amount of energy an object can store per unit of temperature difference. The *capacitance* of a capacitor is the amount of charge the capacitor can store per unit of potential difference.

Pitfall Prevention 26.2

Potential Difference Is ΔV, Not V We use the symbol ΔV for the potential difference across a circuit element or a device because this notation is consistent with our definition of potential difference and with the meaning of the delta sign. It is a common but confusing practice to use the symbol V without the delta sign for both a potential and a potential difference! Keep that in mind if you consult other texts.

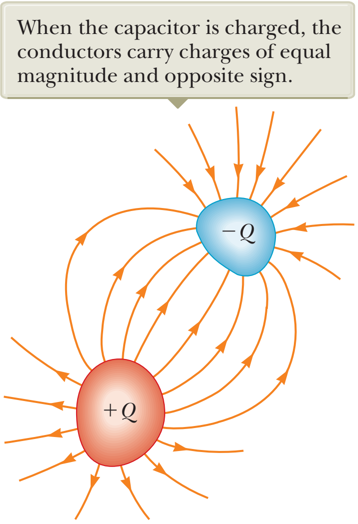

Figure 26.1 A capacitor consists of two conductors.

What determines how much charge is on the plates of a capacitor for a given voltage? Experiments show that the quantity of charge Q on a capacitor[1] is linearly proportional to the potential difference between the conductors; that is, $Q \propto \Delta V$. The proportionality constant depends on the shape and separation of the conductors.[2] This relationship can be written as $Q = C\,\Delta V$ if we define capacitance as follows:

Definition of capacitance ▶

The **capacitance** C of a capacitor is defined as the ratio of the magnitude of the charge on either conductor to the magnitude of the potential difference between the conductors:

$$C \equiv \frac{Q}{\Delta V} \tag{26.1}$$

By definition *capacitance is always a positive quantity*. Furthermore, the charge Q and the potential difference ΔV are always expressed in Equation 26.1 as positive quantities.

From Equation 26.1, we see that capacitance has SI units of coulombs per volt. Named in honor of Michael Faraday, the SI unit of capacitance is the **farad** (F):

$$1\text{ F} = 1\text{ C/V}$$

The farad is a very large unit of capacitance. In practice, typical devices have capacitances ranging from microfarads (10^{-6} F) to picofarads (10^{-12} F). We shall use the symbol μF to represent microfarads. In practice, to avoid the use of Greek letters, physical capacitors are often labeled "mF" for microfarads and "mmF" for micromicrofarads or, equivalently, "pF" for picofarads.

Let's consider a capacitor formed from a pair of parallel plates as shown in Figure 26.2. Each plate is connected to one terminal of a battery, which acts as a source of potential difference. If the capacitor is initially uncharged, the battery establishes an electric field in the connecting wires when the connections are made. Let's focus on the plate connected to the negative terminal of the battery. The electric field in the wire applies a force on electrons in the wire immediately outside this plate; this force causes the electrons to move onto the plate. The movement continues until the plate, the wire, and the terminal are all at the same electric potential. Once this equilibrium situation is attained, a potential difference no longer exists between the terminal and the plate; as a result, no electric field is present in the wire and

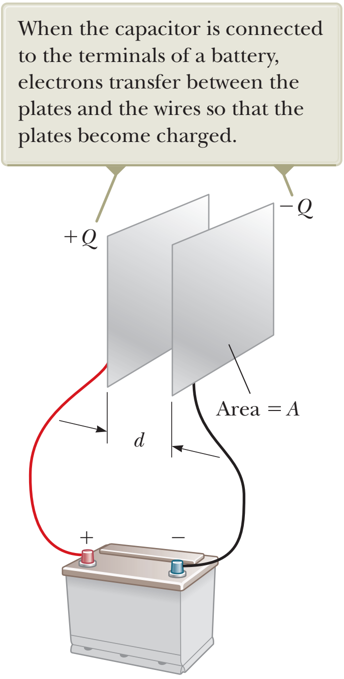

Figure 26.2 A parallel-plate capacitor consists of two parallel conducting plates, each of area A, separated by a distance d.

[1]Although the total charge on the capacitor is zero (because there is as much excess positive charge on one conductor as there is excess negative charge on the other), it is common practice to refer to the magnitude of the charge on either conductor as "the charge on the capacitor."

[2]The proportionality between Q and ΔV can be proven from Coulomb's law or by experiment.

the electrons stop moving. The plate now carries a negative charge. A similar process occurs at the other capacitor plate, where electrons move from the plate to the wire, leaving the plate positively charged. In this final configuration, the potential difference across the capacitor plates is the same as that between the terminals of the battery.

Quick Quiz 26.1 A capacitor stores charge Q at a potential difference ΔV. What happens if the voltage applied to the capacitor by a battery is doubled to $2\,\Delta V$? **(a)** The capacitance falls to half its initial value, and the charge remains the same. **(b)** The capacitance and the charge both fall to half their initial values. **(c)** The capacitance and the charge both double. **(d)** The capacitance remains the same, and the charge doubles.

26.2 Calculating Capacitance

We can derive an expression for the capacitance of a pair of oppositely charged conductors having a charge of magnitude Q in the following manner. First we calculate the potential difference using the techniques described in Chapter 25. We then use the expression $C = Q/\Delta V$ to evaluate the capacitance. The calculation is relatively easy if the geometry of the capacitor is simple.

Although the most common situation is that of two conductors, a single conductor also has a capacitance. For example, imagine a single spherical, charged conductor. The electric field lines around this conductor are exactly the same as if there were a conducting, spherical shell of infinite radius, concentric with the sphere and carrying a charge of the same magnitude but opposite sign. Therefore, we can identify the imaginary shell as the second conductor of a two-conductor capacitor. The electric potential of the sphere of radius a is simply k_eQ/a (see Section 25.6), and setting $V = 0$ for the infinitely large shell gives

$$C = \frac{Q}{\Delta V} = \frac{Q}{k_eQ/a} = \frac{a}{k_e} = 4\pi\epsilon_0 a \quad \textbf{(26.2)}$$

◀ **Capacitance of an isolated charged sphere**

Pitfall Prevention 26.3
Too Many Cs Do not confuse an italic C for capacitance with a nonitalic C for the unit coulomb.

This expression shows that the capacitance of an isolated, charged sphere is proportional to its radius and is independent of both the charge on the sphere and its potential, as is the case with all capacitors. Equation 26.1 is the general definition of capacitance in terms of electrical parameters, but the capacitance of a given capacitor will depend only on the geometry of the plates.

The capacitance of a pair of conductors is illustrated below with three familiar geometries, namely, parallel plates, concentric cylinders, and concentric spheres. In these calculations, we assume the charged conductors are separated by a vacuum.

Parallel-Plate Capacitors

Two parallel, metallic plates of equal area A are separated by a distance d as shown in Figure 26.2. One plate carries a charge $+Q$, and the other carries a charge $-Q$. The surface charge density on each plate is $\sigma = Q/A$. If the plates are very close together (in comparison with their length and width), we can assume the electric field is uniform between the plates and zero elsewhere. According to the What If? feature of Example 24.5, the value of the electric field between the plates is

$$E = \frac{\sigma}{\epsilon_0} = \frac{Q}{\epsilon_0 A}$$

Because the field between the plates is uniform, the magnitude of the potential difference between the plates equals Ed (see Eq. 25.6); therefore,

$$\Delta V = Ed = \frac{Qd}{\epsilon_0 A}$$

Substituting this result into Equation 26.1, we find that the capacitance is

$$C = \frac{Q}{\Delta V} = \frac{Q}{Qd/\epsilon_0 A}$$

Capacitance of parallel plates

$$C = \frac{\epsilon_0 A}{d} \tag{26.3}$$

That is, the capacitance of a parallel-plate capacitor is proportional to the area of its plates and inversely proportional to the plate separation.

Let's consider how the geometry of these conductors influences the capacity of the pair of plates to store charge. As a capacitor is being charged by a battery, electrons flow into the negative plate and out of the positive plate. If the capacitor plates are large, the accumulated charges are able to distribute themselves over a substantial area and the amount of charge that can be stored on a plate for a given potential difference increases as the plate area is increased. Therefore, it is reasonable that the capacitance is proportional to the plate area A as in Equation 26.3.

Now consider the region that separates the plates. Imagine moving the plates closer together. Consider the situation before any charges have had a chance to move in response to this change. Because no charges have moved, the electric field between the plates has the same value but extends over a shorter distance. Therefore, the magnitude of the potential difference between the plates $\Delta V = Ed$ (Eq. 25.6) is smaller. The difference between this new capacitor voltage and the terminal voltage of the battery appears as a potential difference across the wires connecting the battery to the capacitor, resulting in an electric field in the wires that drives more charge onto the plates and increases the potential difference between the plates. When the potential difference between the plates again matches that of the battery, the flow of charge stops. Therefore, moving the plates closer together causes the charge on the capacitor to increase. If d is increased, the charge decreases. As a result, the inverse relationship between C and d in Equation 26.3 is reasonable.

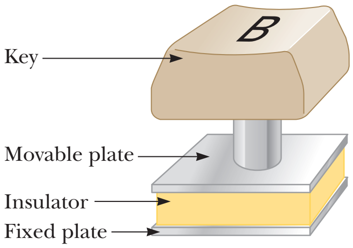

Figure 26.3 (Quick Quiz 26.2) One type of computer keyboard button.

Quick Quiz 26.2 Many computer keyboard buttons are constructed of capacitors as shown in Figure 26.3. When a key is pushed down, the soft insulator between the movable plate and the fixed plate is compressed. When the key is pressed, what happens to the capacitance? **(a)** It increases. **(b)** It decreases. **(c)** It changes in a way you cannot determine because the electric circuit connected to the keyboard button may cause a change in ΔV.

Example 26.1 The Cylindrical Capacitor

A solid cylindrical conductor of radius a and charge Q is coaxial with a cylindrical shell of negligible thickness, radius $b > a$, and charge $-Q$ (Fig. 26.4a). Find the capacitance of this cylindrical capacitor if its length is ℓ.

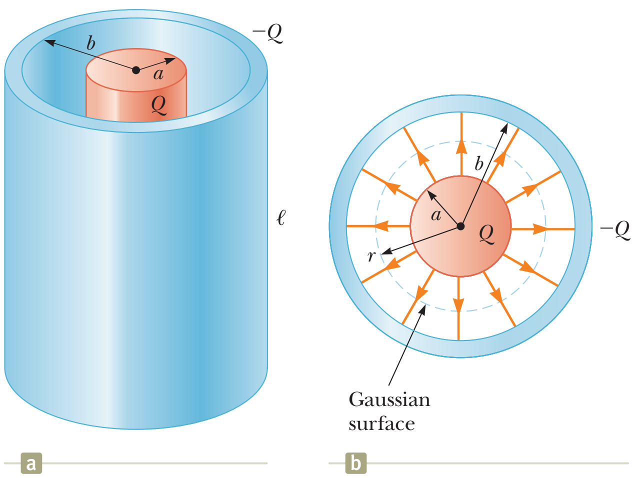

Figure 26.4 (Example 26.1) (a) A cylindrical capacitor consists of a solid cylindrical conductor of radius a and length ℓ surrounded by a coaxial cylindrical shell of radius b. (b) End view. The electric field lines are radial. The dashed line represents the end of a cylindrical gaussian surface of radius r and length ℓ.

SOLUTION

Conceptualize Recall that any pair of conductors qualifies as a capacitor, so the system described in this example therefore qualifies. Figure 26.4b helps visualize the electric field between the conductors. We expect the capacitance to depend only on geometric factors, which, in this case, are a, b, and ℓ.

Categorize Because of the cylindrical symmetry of the system, we can use results from previous studies of cylindrical systems to find the capacitance.

26.1 continued

Analyze Assuming ℓ is much greater than a and b, we can neglect end effects. In this case, the electric field is perpendicular to the long axis of the cylinders and is confined to the region between them (Fig. 26.4b).

Write an expression for the potential difference between the two cylinders from Equation 25.3:

$$V_b - V_a = -\int_a^b \vec{\mathbf{E}} \cdot d\vec{\mathbf{s}}$$

Apply Equation 24.7 for the electric field outside a cylindrically symmetric charge distribution and notice from Figure 26.4b that $\vec{\mathbf{E}}$ is parallel to $d\vec{\mathbf{s}}$ along a radial line:

$$V_b - V_a = -\int_a^b E_r\,dr = -2k_e\lambda \int_a^b \frac{dr}{r} = -2k_e\lambda \ln\left(\frac{b}{a}\right)$$

Substitute the absolute value of ΔV into Equation 26.1 and use $\lambda = Q/\ell$:

$$C = \frac{Q}{\Delta V} = \frac{Q}{(2k_e Q/\ell)\ln(b/a)} = \frac{\ell}{2k_e \ln(b/a)} \quad \textbf{(26.4)}$$

Finalize The capacitance depends on the radii a and b and is proportional to the length of the cylinders. Equation 26.4 shows that the capacitance per unit length of a combination of concentric cylindrical conductors is

$$\frac{C}{\ell} = \frac{1}{2k_e \ln(b/a)} \quad \textbf{(26.5)}$$

An example of this type of geometric arrangement is a *coaxial cable,* which consists of two concentric cylindrical conductors separated by an insulator. You probably have a coaxial cable attached to your television set if you are a subscriber to cable television. The coaxial cable is especially useful for shielding electrical signals from any possible external influences.

WHAT IF? Suppose $b = 2.00a$ for the cylindrical capacitor. You would like to increase the capacitance, and you can do so by choosing to increase either ℓ by 10% or a by 10%. Which choice is more effective at increasing the capacitance?

Answer According to Equation 26.4, C is proportional to ℓ, so increasing ℓ by 10% results in a 10% increase in C. For the result of the change in a, let's use Equation 26.4 to set up a ratio of the capacitance C' for the enlarged cylinder radius a' to the original capacitance:

$$\frac{C'}{C} = \frac{\ell/2k_e \ln(b/a')}{\ell/2k_e \ln(b/a)} = \frac{\ln(b/a)}{\ln(b/a')}$$

We now substitute $b = 2.00a$ and $a' = 1.10a$, representing a 10% increase in a:

$$\frac{C'}{C} = \frac{\ln(2.00a/a)}{\ln(2.00a/1.10a)} = \frac{\ln 2.00}{\ln 1.82} = 1.16$$

which corresponds to a 16% increase in capacitance. Therefore, it is more effective to increase a than to increase ℓ.

Note two more extensions of this problem. First, it is advantageous to increase a only for a range of relationships between a and b. If $b > 2.85a$, increasing ℓ by 10% is more effective than increasing a (see Problem 70). Second, if b decreases, the capacitance increases. Increasing a or decreasing b has the effect of bringing the plates closer together, which increases the capacitance.

Example 26.2 The Spherical Capacitor

A spherical capacitor consists of a spherical conducting shell of radius b and charge $-Q$ concentric with a smaller conducting sphere of radius a and charge Q (Fig. 26.5, page 782). Find the capacitance of this device.

SOLUTION

Conceptualize As with Example 26.1, this system involves a pair of conductors and qualifies as a capacitor. We expect the capacitance to depend on the spherical radii a and b.

continued

26.2 continued

Categorize Because of the spherical symmetry of the system, we can use results from previous studies of spherical systems to find the capacitance.

Analyze As shown in Chapter 24, the direction of the electric field outside a spherically symmetric charge distribution is radial and its magnitude is given by the expression $E = k_e Q/r^2$. In this case, this result applies to the field *between* the spheres ($a < r < b$).

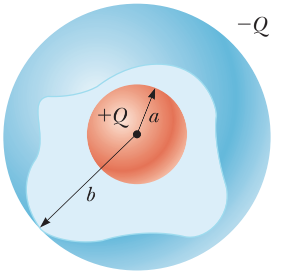

Figure 26.5 (Example 26.2) A spherical capacitor consists of an inner sphere of radius a surrounded by a concentric spherical shell of radius b. The electric field between the spheres is directed radially outward when the inner sphere is positively charged.

Write an expression for the potential difference between the two conductors from Equation 25.3:

$$V_b - V_a = -\int_a^b \vec{\mathbf{E}} \cdot d\vec{\mathbf{s}}$$

Apply the result of Example 24.3 for the electric field outside a spherically symmetric charge distribution and note that $\vec{\mathbf{E}}$ is parallel to $d\vec{\mathbf{s}}$ along a radial line:

$$V_b - V_a = -\int_a^b E_r\, dr = -k_e Q \int_a^b \frac{dr}{r^2} = k_e Q\left[\frac{1}{r}\right]_a^b$$

$$(1)\quad V_b - V_a = k_e Q\left(\frac{1}{b} - \frac{1}{a}\right) = k_e Q\frac{a-b}{ab}$$

Substitute the absolute value of ΔV into Equation 26.1:

$$C = \frac{Q}{\Delta V} = \frac{Q}{|V_b - V_a|} = \frac{ab}{k_e(b-a)} \qquad \textbf{(26.6)}$$

Finalize The capacitance depends on a and b as expected. The potential difference between the spheres in Equation (1) is negative because Q is positive and $b > a$. Therefore, in Equation 26.6, when we take the absolute value, we change $a - b$ to $b - a$. The result is a positive number.

WHAT IF? If the radius b of the outer sphere approaches infinity, what does the capacitance become?

Answer In Equation 26.6, we let $b \to \infty$:

$$C = \lim_{b\to\infty} \frac{ab}{k_e(b-a)} = \frac{ab}{k_e(b)} = \frac{a}{k_e} = 4\pi\epsilon_0 a$$

Notice that this expression is the same as Equation 26.2, the capacitance of an isolated spherical conductor.

26.3 Combinations of Capacitors

Two or more capacitors often are combined in electric circuits. We can calculate the equivalent capacitance of certain combinations using methods described in this section. Throughout this section, we assume the capacitors to be combined are initially uncharged.

In studying electric circuits, we use a simplified pictorial representation called a **circuit diagram.** Such a diagram uses **circuit symbols** to represent various circuit elements. The circuit symbols are connected by straight lines that represent the wires between the circuit elements. The circuit symbols for capacitors, batteries, and switches as well as the color codes used for them in this text are given in Figure 26.6. The symbol for the capacitor reflects the geometry of the most common model for a capacitor, a pair of parallel plates. The positive terminal of the battery is at the higher potential and is represented in the circuit symbol by the longer line.

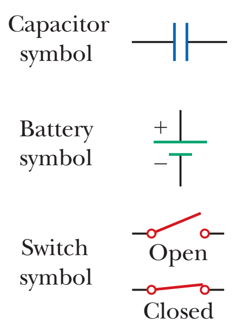

Figure 26.6 Circuit symbols for capacitors, batteries, and switches. Notice that capacitors are in blue, batteries are in green, and switches are in red. The closed switch can carry current, whereas the open one cannot.

Parallel Combination

Two capacitors connected as shown in Figure 26.7a are known as a **parallel combination** of capacitors. Figure 26.7b shows a circuit diagram for this combination of capacitors. The left plates of the capacitors are connected to the positive terminal of the battery by a conducting wire and are therefore both at the same electric potential

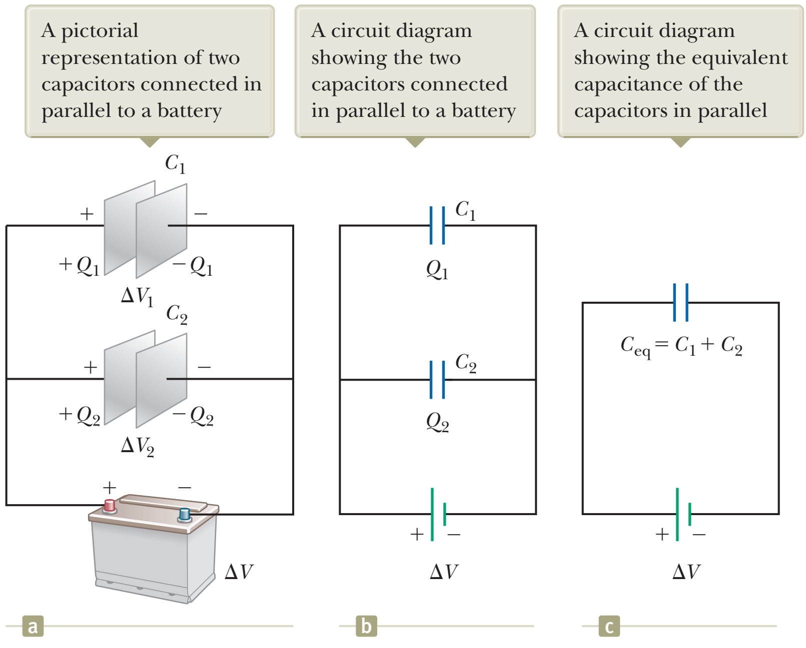

Figure 26.7 Two capacitors connected in parallel. All three diagrams are equivalent.

as the positive terminal. Likewise, the right plates are connected to the negative terminal and so are both at the same potential as the negative terminal. Therefore, the individual potential differences across capacitors connected in parallel are the same and are equal to the potential difference applied across the combination. That is,

$$\Delta V_1 = \Delta V_2 = \Delta V$$

where ΔV is the battery terminal voltage.

After the battery is attached to the circuit, the capacitors quickly reach their maximum charge. Let's call the maximum charges on the two capacitors Q_1 and Q_2, where $Q_1 = C_1\Delta V_1$ and $Q_2 = C_2\Delta V_2$. The *total charge* Q_{tot} stored by the two capacitors is the sum of the charges on the individual capacitors:

$$Q_{tot} = Q_1 + Q_2 = C_1\Delta V_1 + C_2\Delta V_2 \quad \textbf{(26.7)}$$

Suppose you wish to replace these two capacitors by one *equivalent capacitor* having a capacitance C_{eq} as in Figure 26.7c. The effect this equivalent capacitor has on the circuit must be exactly the same as the effect of the combination of the two individual capacitors. That is, the equivalent capacitor must store charge Q_{tot} when connected to the battery. Figure 26.7c shows that the voltage across the equivalent capacitor is ΔV because the equivalent capacitor is connected directly across the battery terminals. Therefore, for the equivalent capacitor,

$$Q_{tot} = C_{eq}\,\Delta V$$

Substituting this result into Equation 26.7 gives

$$C_{eq}\,\Delta V = C_1\,\Delta V_1 + C_2\,\Delta V_2$$

$$C_{eq} = C_1 + C_2 \quad \text{(parallel combination)}$$

where we have canceled the voltages because they are all the same. If this treatment is extended to three or more capacitors connected in parallel, the **equivalent capacitance** is found to be

$$C_{eq} = C_1 + C_2 + C_3 + \cdots \quad \text{(parallel combination)} \quad \textbf{(26.8)}$$

◀ **Equivalent capacitance for capacitors in parallel**

Therefore, the equivalent capacitance of a parallel combination of capacitors is (1) the algebraic sum of the individual capacitances and (2) greater than any of

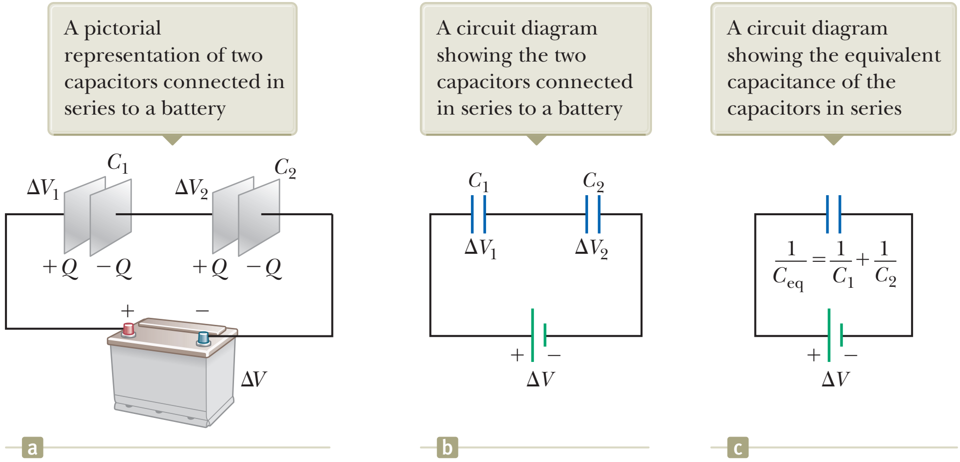

Figure 26.8 Two capacitors connected in series. All three diagrams are equivalent.

the individual capacitances. Statement (2) makes sense because we are essentially combining the areas of all the capacitor plates when they are connected with conducting wire, and capacitance of parallel plates is proportional to area (Eq. 26.3).

Series Combination

Two capacitors connected as shown in Figure 26.8a and the equivalent circuit diagram in Figure 26.8b are known as a **series combination** of capacitors. The left plate of capacitor 1 and the right plate of capacitor 2 are connected to the terminals of a battery. The other two plates are connected to each other and to nothing else; hence, they form an isolated system that is initially uncharged and must continue to have zero net charge. To analyze this combination, let's first consider the uncharged capacitors and then follow what happens immediately after a battery is connected to the circuit. When the battery is connected, electrons are transferred out of the left plate of C_1 and into the right plate of C_2. As this negative charge accumulates on the right plate of C_2, an equivalent amount of negative charge is forced off the left plate of C_2, and this left plate therefore has an excess positive charge. The negative charge leaving the left plate of C_2 causes negative charges to accumulate on the right plate of C_1. As a result, both right plates end up with a charge $-Q$ and both left plates end up with a charge $+Q$. Therefore, the charges on capacitors connected in series are the same:

$$Q_1 = Q_2 = Q$$

where Q is the charge that moved between a wire and the connected outside plate of one of the capacitors.

Figure 26.8a shows the individual voltages ΔV_1 and ΔV_2 across the capacitors. These voltages add to give the total voltage ΔV_{tot} across the combination:

$$\Delta V_{tot} = \Delta V_1 + \Delta V_2 = \frac{Q_1}{C_1} + \frac{Q_2}{C_2} \qquad \textbf{(26.9)}$$

In general, the total potential difference across any number of capacitors connected in series is the sum of the potential differences across the individual capacitors.

Suppose the equivalent single capacitor in Figure 26.8c has the same effect on the circuit as the series combination when it is connected to the battery. After it is fully charged, the equivalent capacitor must have a charge of $-Q$ on its right plate and a charge of $+Q$ on its left plate. Applying the definition of capacitance to the circuit in Figure 26.8c gives

$$\Delta V_{tot} = \frac{Q}{C_{eq}}$$

Substituting this result into Equation 26.9, we have

$$\frac{Q}{C_{eq}} = \frac{Q_1}{C_1} + \frac{Q_2}{C_2}$$

Canceling the charges because they are all the same gives

$$\frac{1}{C_{eq}} = \frac{1}{C_1} + \frac{1}{C_2} \quad \text{(series combination)}$$

When this analysis is applied to three or more capacitors connected in series, the relationship for the **equivalent capacitance** is

$$\frac{1}{C_{eq}} = \frac{1}{C_1} + \frac{1}{C_2} + \frac{1}{C_3} + \cdots \quad \text{(series combination)} \qquad \textbf{(26.10)}$$

◀ **Equivalent capacitance for capacitors in series**

This expression shows that (1) the inverse of the equivalent capacitance is the algebraic sum of the inverses of the individual capacitances and (2) the equivalent capacitance of a series combination is always less than any individual capacitance in the combination.

Quick Quiz 26.3 Two capacitors are identical. They can be connected in series or in parallel. If you want the *smallest* equivalent capacitance for the combination, how should you connect them? **(a)** in series **(b)** in parallel **(c)** either way because both combinations have the same capacitance

Example 26.3 Equivalent Capacitance

Find the equivalent capacitance between *a* and *b* for the combination of capacitors shown in Figure 26.9a. All capacitances are in microfarads.

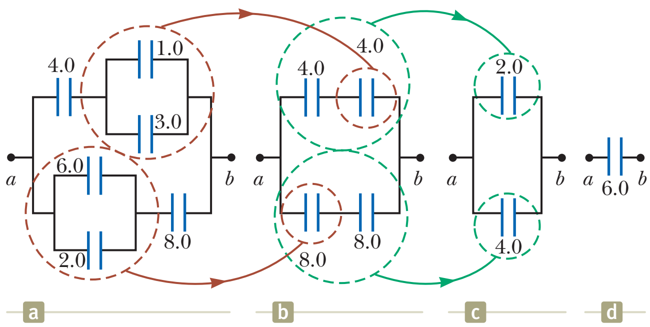

Figure 26.9 (Example 26.3) To find the equivalent capacitance of the capacitors in (a), we reduce the various combinations in steps as indicated in (b), (c), and (d), using the series and parallel rules described in the text. All capacitances are in microfarads.

SOLUTION

Conceptualize Study Figure 26.9a carefully and make sure you understand how the capacitors are connected. Verify that there are only series and parallel connections between capacitors.

Categorize Figure 26.9a shows that the circuit contains both series and parallel connections, so we use the rules for series and parallel combinations discussed in this section.

Analyze Using Equations 26.8 and 26.10, we reduce the combination step by step as indicated in the figure. As you follow along below, notice that in each step we replace the combination of two capacitors in the circuit diagram with a single capacitor having the equivalent capacitance.

The 1.0-μF and 3.0-μF capacitors (upper red-brown circle in Fig. 26.9a) are in parallel. Find the equivalent capacitance from Equation 26.8:

$$C_{eq} = C_1 + C_2 = 4.0\ \mu\text{F}$$

The 2.0-μF and 6.0-μF capacitors (lower red-brown circle in Fig. 26.9a) are also in parallel:

$$C_{eq} = C_1 + C_2 = 8.0\ \mu\text{F}$$

The circuit now looks like Figure 26.9b. The two 4.0-μF capacitors (upper green circle in Fig. 26.9b) are in series. Find the equivalent capacitance from Equation 26.10:

$$\frac{1}{C_{eq}} = \frac{1}{C_1} + \frac{1}{C_2} = \frac{1}{4.0\ \mu\text{F}} + \frac{1}{4.0\ \mu\text{F}} = \frac{1}{2.0\ \mu\text{F}}$$

$$C_{eq} = 2.0\ \mu\text{F}$$

continued

26.3 continued

The two 8.0-μF capacitors (lower green circle in Fig. 26.9b) are also in series. Find the equivalent capacitance from Equation 26.10:

$$\frac{1}{C_{eq}} = \frac{1}{C_1} + \frac{1}{C_2} = \frac{1}{8.0\ \mu F} + \frac{1}{8.0\ \mu F} = \frac{1}{4.0\ \mu F}$$

$$C_{eq} = 4.0\ \mu F$$

The circuit now looks like Figure 26.9c. The 2.0-μF and 4.0-μF capacitors are in parallel:

$$C_{eq} = C_1 + C_2 = 6.0\ \mu F$$

Finalize This final value is that of the single equivalent capacitor shown in Figure 26.9d. For further practice in treating circuits with combinations of capacitors, imagine a battery is connected between points *a* and *b* in Figure 26.9a so that a potential difference ΔV is established across the combination. Can you find the voltage across and the charge on each capacitor?

26.4 Energy Stored in a Charged Capacitor

Because positive and negative charges are separated in the system of two conductors in a capacitor, electric potential energy is stored in the system. Many of those who work with electronic equipment have at some time verified that a capacitor can store energy. If the plates of a charged capacitor are connected by a conductor such as a wire, charge moves between each plate and its connecting wire until the capacitor is uncharged. The discharge can often be observed as a visible spark. If you accidentally touch the opposite plates of a charged capacitor, your fingers act as a pathway for discharge and the result is an electric shock. The degree of shock you receive depends on the capacitance and the voltage applied to the capacitor. Such a shock could be dangerous if high voltages are present as in the power supply of a home theater system. Because the charges can be stored in a capacitor even when the system is turned off, unplugging the system does not make it safe to open the case and touch the components inside.

Figure 26.10a shows a battery connected to a single parallel-plate capacitor with a switch in the circuit. Let us identify the circuit as a system. When the switch is closed (Fig. 26.10b), the battery establishes an electric field in the wires and charges

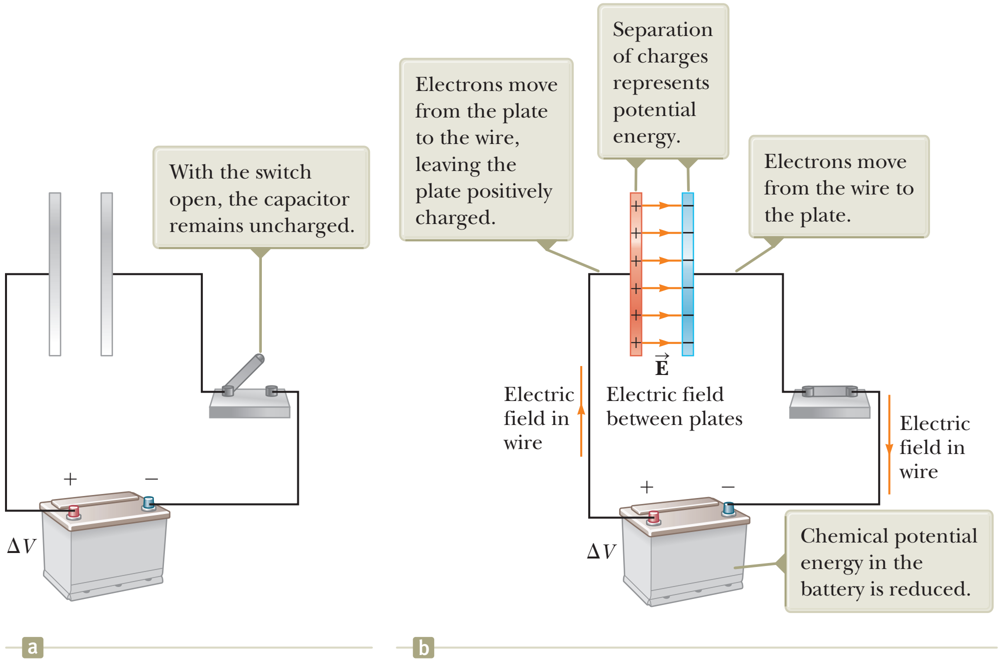

Figure 26.10 (a) A circuit consisting of a capacitor, a battery, and a switch. (b) When the switch is closed, the battery establishes an electric field in the wire and the capacitor becomes charged.

flow between the wires and the capacitor. As that occurs, there is a transformation of energy within the system. Before the switch is closed, energy is stored as chemical potential energy in the battery. This energy is transformed during the chemical reaction that occurs within the battery when it is operating in an electric circuit. When the switch is closed, some of the chemical potential energy in the battery is transformed to electric potential energy associated with the separation of positive and negative charges on the plates.

To calculate the energy stored in the capacitor, we shall assume a charging process that is different from the actual process described in Section 26.1 but that gives the same final result. This assumption is justified because the energy in the final configuration does not depend on the actual charge-transfer process.[3] Imagine the plates are disconnected from the battery and you transfer the charge mechanically through the space between the plates as follows. You grab a small amount of positive charge on one plate and apply a force that causes this positive charge to move over to the other plate. Therefore, you do work on the charge as it is transferred from one plate to the other. At first, no work is required to transfer a small amount of charge dq from one plate to the other,[4] but once this charge has been transferred, a small potential difference exists between the plates. Therefore, work must be done to move additional charge through this potential difference. As more and more charge is transferred from one plate to the other, the potential difference increases in proportion and more work is required. The overall process is described by the nonisolated system model for energy. Equation 8.2 reduces to $W = \Delta U_E$; the work done on the system by the external agent appears as an increase in electric potential energy in the system.

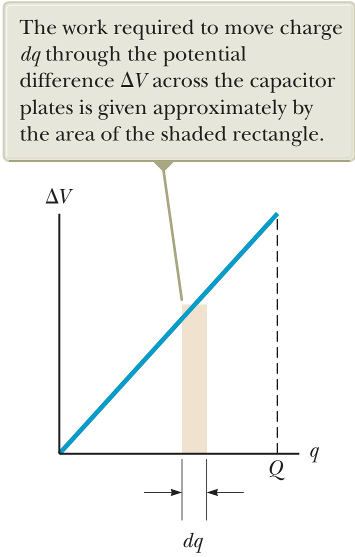

Figure 26.11 A plot of potential difference versus charge for a capacitor is a straight line having slope $1/C$.

Suppose q is the charge on the capacitor at some instant during the charging process. At the same instant, the potential difference across the capacitor is $\Delta V = q/C$. This relationship is graphed in Figure 26.11. From Section 25.1, we know that the work necessary to transfer an increment of charge dq from the plate carrying charge $-q$ to the plate carrying charge q (which is at the higher electric potential) is

$$dW = \Delta V\, dq = \frac{q}{C}\, dq$$

The work required to transfer the charge dq is the area of the tan rectangle in Figure 26.11. Because 1 V = 1 J/C, the unit for the area is the joule. The total work required to charge the capacitor from $q = 0$ to some final charge $q = Q$ is

$$W = \int_0^Q \frac{q}{C}\, dq = \frac{1}{C}\int_0^Q q\, dq = \frac{Q^2}{2C}$$

The work done in charging the capacitor appears as electric potential energy U_E stored in the capacitor. Using Equation 26.1, we can express the potential energy stored in a charged capacitor as

$$U_E = \frac{Q^2}{2C} = \tfrac{1}{2}Q\,\Delta V = \tfrac{1}{2}C(\Delta V)^2 \qquad \textbf{(26.11)}$$

◀ **Energy stored in a charged capacitor**

Because the curve in Figure 26.11 is a straight line, the total area under the curve is that of a triangle of base Q and height ΔV.

Equation 26.11 applies to any capacitor, regardless of its geometry. For a given capacitance, the stored energy increases as the charge and the potential difference increase. In practice, there is a limit to the maximum energy (or charge) that can be stored because, at a sufficiently large value of ΔV, discharge ultimately occurs

[3]This discussion is similar to that of state variables in thermodynamics. The change in a state variable such as temperature is independent of the path followed between the initial and final states. The potential energy of a capacitor (or any system) is also a state variable, so its change does not depend on the process followed to charge the capacitor.

[4]We shall use lowercase q for the time-varying charge on the capacitor while it is charging to distinguish it from uppercase Q, which is the total charge on the capacitor after it is completely charged.

Pitfall Prevention 26.4

Not a New Kind of Energy
The energy given by Equation 26.12 is not a new kind of energy. The equation describes familiar electric potential energy associated with a system of separated source charges. Equation 26.12 provides a new *interpretation,* or a new way of *modeling* the energy. Furthermore, Equation 26.13 correctly describes the energy density associated with *any* electric field, regardless of the source.

between the plates. For this reason, capacitors are usually labeled with a maximum operating voltage.

We can consider the energy in a capacitor to be stored in the electric field created between the plates as the capacitor is charged. This description is reasonable because the electric field is proportional to the charge on the capacitor. For a parallel-plate capacitor, the potential difference is related to the electric field through the relationship $\Delta V = Ed$. Furthermore, its capacitance is $C = \epsilon_0 A/d$ (Eq. 26.3). Substituting these expressions into Equation 26.11 gives

$$U_E = \frac{1}{2}\left(\frac{\epsilon_0 A}{d}\right)(Ed)^2 = \frac{1}{2}(\epsilon_0 Ad)E^2 \quad \textbf{(26.12)}$$

Because the volume occupied by the electric field is Ad, the *energy per unit volume* $u_E = U_E/Ad$, known as the *energy density,* is

Energy density in an electric field

$$u_E = \frac{1}{2}\epsilon_0 E^2 \quad \textbf{(26.13)}$$

Although Equation 26.13 was derived for a parallel-plate capacitor, the expression is generally valid regardless of the source of the electric field. That is, the energy density in any electric field is proportional to the square of the magnitude of the electric field at a given point.

Quick Quiz 26.4 You have three capacitors and a battery. In which of the following combinations of the three capacitors is the maximum possible energy stored when the combination is attached to the battery? **(a)** series **(b)** parallel **(c)** no difference because both combinations store the same amount of energy

Example 26.4 Rewiring Two Charged Capacitors

Two capacitors C_1 and C_2 (where $C_1 > C_2$) are charged to the same initial potential difference ΔV_i. The charged capacitors are removed from the battery, and their plates are connected with opposite polarity as in Figure 26.12a. The switches S_1 and S_2 are then closed as in Figure 26.12b.

(A) Find the final potential difference ΔV_f between a and b after the switches are closed.

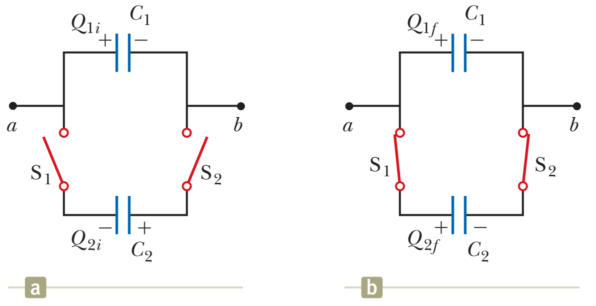

Figure 26.12 (Example 26.4) (a) Two capacitors are charged to the same initial potential difference and connected together with plates of opposite sign to be in contact when the switches are closed. (b) When the switches are closed, the charges redistribute.

SOLUTION

Conceptualize Figure 26.12 helps us understand the initial and final configurations of the system. When the switches are closed, the charge on the system will redistribute between the capacitors until both capacitors have the same potential difference. Because $C_1 > C_2$, more charge exists on C_1 than on C_2, so the final configuration will have positive charge on the left plates as shown in Figure 26.12b.

Categorize In Figure 26.12b, it might appear as if the capacitors are connected in parallel, but there is no battery in this circuit to apply a voltage across the combination. Therefore, we *cannot* categorize this problem as one in which capacitors are connected in parallel. We *can* categorize it as a problem involving an isolated system for electric charge. The left-hand plates of the capacitors form an isolated system because they are not connected to the right-hand plates by conductors.

Analyze Write an expression for the total charge on the left-hand plates of the system before the switches are closed, noting that a negative sign for Q_{2i} is necessary because the charge on the left plate of capacitor C_2 is negative:

$$(1)\quad Q_i = Q_{1i} + Q_{2i} = C_1\,\Delta V_i - C_2\,\Delta V_i = (C_1 - C_2)\Delta V_i$$

26.4 continued

After the switches are closed, the charges on the individual capacitors change to new values Q_{1f} and Q_{2f} such that the potential difference is again the same across both capacitors, with a value of ΔV_f. Write an expression for the total charge on the left-hand plates of the system after the switches are closed:

$$(2)\quad Q_f = Q_{1f} + Q_{2f} = C_1\,\Delta V_f + C_2\,\Delta V_f = (C_1 + C_2)\Delta V_f$$

Because the system is isolated, the initial and final charges on the system must be the same. Use this condition and Equations (1) and (2) to solve for ΔV_f:

$$Q_f = Q_i \rightarrow (C_1 + C_2)\,\Delta V_f = (C_1 - C_2)\,\Delta V_i$$

$$(3)\quad \Delta V_f = \left(\frac{C_1 - C_2}{C_1 + C_2}\right)\Delta V_i$$

(B) Find the total energy stored in the capacitors before and after the switches are closed and determine the ratio of the final energy to the initial energy.

SOLUTION

Use Equation 26.11 to find an expression for the total energy stored in the capacitors before the switches are closed:

$$(4)\quad U_i = \tfrac{1}{2}C_1(\Delta V_i)^2 + \tfrac{1}{2}C_2(\Delta V_i)^2 = \tfrac{1}{2}(C_1 + C_2)(\Delta V_i)^2$$

Write an expression for the total energy stored in the capacitors after the switches are closed:

$$U_f = \tfrac{1}{2}C_1(\Delta V_f)^2 + \tfrac{1}{2}C_2(\Delta V_f)^2 = \tfrac{1}{2}(C_1 + C_2)(\Delta V_f)^2$$

Use the results of part (A) to rewrite this expression in terms of ΔV_i:

$$(5)\quad U_f = \tfrac{1}{2}(C_1 + C_2)\left[\left(\frac{C_1 - C_2}{C_1 + C_2}\right)\Delta V_i\right]^2 = \tfrac{1}{2}\frac{(C_1 - C_2)^2(\Delta V_i)^2}{C_1 + C_2}$$

Divide Equation (5) by Equation (4) to obtain the ratio of the energies stored in the system:

$$\frac{U_f}{U_i} = \frac{\tfrac{1}{2}(C_1 - C_2)^2(\Delta V_i)^2/(C_1 + C_2)}{\tfrac{1}{2}(C_1 + C_2)(\Delta V_i)^2}$$

$$(6)\quad \frac{U_f}{U_i} = \left(\frac{C_1 - C_2}{C_1 + C_2}\right)^2$$

Finalize The ratio of energies is *less* than unity, indicating that the final energy is *less* than the initial energy. At first, you might think the law of energy conservation has been violated, but that is not the case. The "missing" energy is transferred out of the system by the mechanism of electromagnetic waves (T_{ER} in Eq. 8.2), as we shall see in Chapter 34. Therefore, this system is isolated for electric charge, but nonisolated for energy.

WHAT IF? What if the two capacitors have the same capacitance? What would you expect to happen when the switches are closed?

Answer Because both capacitors have the same initial potential difference applied to them, the charges on the identical capacitors have the same magnitude. When the capacitors with opposite polarities are connected together, the equal-magnitude charges should cancel each other, leaving the capacitors uncharged.

Let's test our results to see if that is the case mathematically. In Equation (1), because the capacitances are equal, the initial charge Q_i on the system of left-hand plates is zero. Equation (3) shows that $\Delta V_f = 0$, which is consistent with uncharged capacitors. Finally, Equation (5) shows that $U_f = 0$, which is also consistent with uncharged capacitors.

One device in which capacitors have an important role is the portable *defibrillator* (see the chapter-opening photo on page 777). When cardiac fibrillation (random contractions) occurs, the heart produces a rapid, irregular pattern of beats. A fast discharge of energy through the heart can return the organ to its normal beat pattern. Emergency medical teams use portable defibrillators that contain batteries capable of charging a capacitor to a high voltage. (The circuitry actually permits the capacitor to be charged to a much higher voltage than that of the battery.) Up to 360 J is stored in the electric field of a large capacitor in a defibrillator when it is fully charged. The stored energy is released through the heart by conducting electrodes, called paddles, which are placed on both sides of the victim's chest. The defibrillator can deliver the energy to a patient in about 2 ms (roughly equivalent to 3 000 times the power delivered to a 60-W lightbulb!). The paramedics must wait between applications of the energy because of the time interval necessary for the capacitors to become fully charged. In this application and others (e.g., camera flash units and lasers used for fusion experiments), capacitors serve as energy reservoirs that can be slowly charged and then quickly discharged to provide large amounts of energy in a short pulse.

26.5 Capacitors with Dielectrics

Pitfall Prevention 26.5

Is the Capacitor Connected to a Battery? For problems in which a capacitor is modified (by insertion of a dielectric, for example), you must note whether modifications to the capacitor are being made while the capacitor is connected to a battery or after it is disconnected. If the capacitor remains connected to the battery, the voltage across the capacitor necessarily remains the same. If you disconnect the capacitor from the battery before making any modifications to the capacitor, the capacitor is an isolated system for electric charge and its charge remains the same.

A **dielectric** is a nonconducting material such as rubber, glass, or waxed paper. We can perform the following experiment to illustrate the effect of a dielectric in a capacitor. Consider a parallel-plate capacitor that without a dielectric has a charge Q_0 and a capacitance C_0. The potential difference across the capacitor is $\Delta V_0 = Q_0/C_0$. Figure 26.13a illustrates this situation. The potential difference is measured by a device called a *voltmeter.* Notice that no battery is shown in the figure; also, we must assume no charge can flow through an ideal voltmeter. Hence, there is no path by which charge can flow and alter the charge on the capacitor. If a dielectric is now inserted between the plates as in Figure 26.13b, the voltmeter indicates that the voltage between the plates decreases to a value ΔV. The voltages with and without the dielectric are related by a factor κ as follows:

$$\Delta V = \frac{\Delta V_0}{\kappa}$$

Because $\Delta V < \Delta V_0$, we see that $\kappa > 1$. The dimensionless factor κ is called the **dielectric constant** of the material. The dielectric constant varies from one material to another. In this section, we analyze this change in capacitance in terms of electrical parameters such as electric charge, electric field, and potential difference; Section 26.7 describes the microscopic origin of these changes.

Because the charge Q_0 on the capacitor does not change, the capacitance must change to the value

$$C = \frac{Q_0}{\Delta V} = \frac{Q_0}{\Delta V_0/\kappa} = \kappa \frac{Q_0}{\Delta V_0}$$

Capacitance of a capacitor filled with a material of dielectric constant κ ▶

$$C = \kappa C_0 \tag{26.14}$$

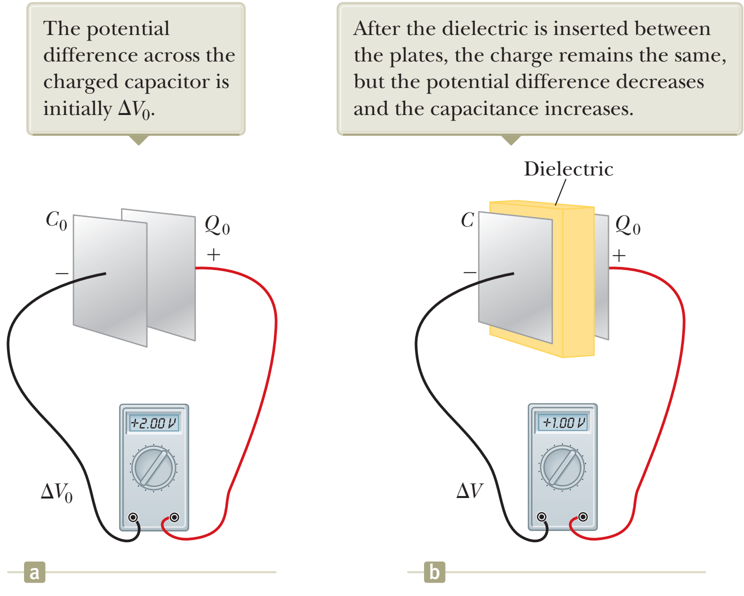

Figure 26.13 A charged capacitor (a) before and (b) after insertion of a dielectric between the plates.

That is, the capacitance *increases* by the factor κ when the dielectric completely fills the region between the plates.[5] Because $C_0 = \epsilon_0 A/d$ (Eq. 26.3) for a parallel-plate capacitor, we can express the capacitance of a parallel-plate capacitor filled with a dielectric as

$$C = \kappa \frac{\epsilon_0 A}{d} \tag{26.15}$$

From Equation 26.15, it would appear that the capacitance could be made very large by inserting a dielectric between the plates and decreasing d. In practice, the lowest value of d is limited by the electric discharge that could occur through the dielectric medium separating the plates. For any given separation d, the maximum voltage that can be applied to a capacitor without causing a discharge depends on the **dielectric strength** (maximum electric field) of the dielectric. If the magnitude of the electric field in the dielectric exceeds the dielectric strength, the insulating properties break down and the dielectric begins to conduct.

Physical capacitors have a specification called by a variety of names, including *working voltage, breakdown voltage,* and *rated voltage.* This parameter represents the largest voltage that can be applied to the capacitor without exceeding the dielectric strength of the dielectric material in the capacitor. Consequently, when selecting a capacitor for a given application, you must consider its capacitance as well as the expected voltage across the capacitor in the circuit, making sure the expected voltage is smaller than the rated voltage of the capacitor.

Insulating materials have values of κ greater than unity and dielectric strengths greater than that of air as Table 26.1 indicates. Therefore, a dielectric provides the following advantages:

- An increase in capacitance
- An increase in maximum operating voltage
- Possible mechanical support between the plates, which allows the plates to be close together without touching, thereby decreasing d and increasing C

Table 26.1 Approximate Dielectric Constants and Dielectric Strengths of Various Materials at Room Temperature

Material	Dielectric Constant κ	Dielectric Strength[a] (10^6 V/m)
Air (dry)	1.000 59	3
Bakelite	4.9	24
Fused quartz	3.78	8
Mylar	3.2	7
Neoprene rubber	6.7	12
Nylon	3.4	14
Paper	3.7	16
Paraffin-impregnated paper	3.5	11
Polystyrene	2.56	24
Polyvinyl chloride	3.4	40
Porcelain	6	12
Pyrex glass	5.6	14
Silicone oil	2.5	15
Strontium titanate	233	8
Teflon	2.1	60
Vacuum	1.000 00	—
Water	80	—

[a]The dielectric strength equals the maximum electric field that can exist in a dielectric without electrical breakdown. These values depend strongly on the presence of impurities and flaws in the materials.

[5] If the dielectric is introduced while the potential difference is held constant by a battery, the charge increases to a value $Q = \kappa Q_0$. The additional charge comes from the wires attached to the capacitor, and the capacitance again increases by the factor κ.

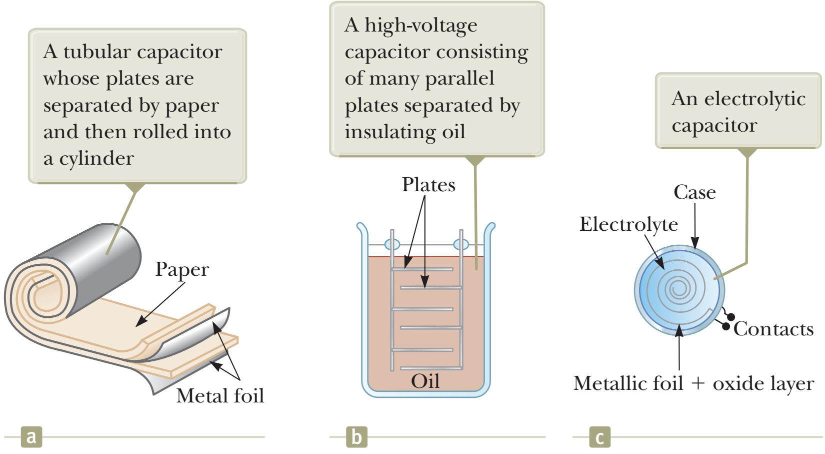

Figure 26.14 Three commercial capacitor designs.

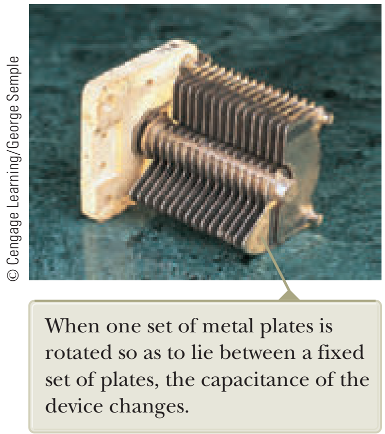

Figure 26.15 A variable capacitor.

Types of Capacitors

Many capacitors are built into integrated circuit chips, but some electrical devices still use stand-alone capacitors. Commercial capacitors are often made from metallic foil interlaced with thin sheets of either paraffin-impregnated paper or Mylar as the dielectric material. These alternate layers of metallic foil and dielectric are rolled into a cylinder to form a small package (Fig. 26.14a). High-voltage capacitors commonly consist of a number of interwoven metallic plates immersed in silicone oil (Fig. 26.14b). Small capacitors are often constructed from ceramic materials.

Often, an *electrolytic capacitor* is used to store large amounts of charge at relatively low voltages. This device, shown in Figure 26.14c, consists of a metallic foil in contact with an *electrolyte,* a solution that conducts electricity by virtue of the motion of ions contained in the solution. When a voltage is applied between the foil and the electrolyte, a thin layer of metal oxide (an insulator) is formed on the foil, and this layer serves as the dielectric. Very large values of capacitance can be obtained in an electrolytic capacitor because the dielectric layer is very thin and therefore the plate separation is very small.

Electrolytic capacitors are not reversible as are many other capacitors. They have a polarity, which is indicated by positive and negative signs marked on the device. When electrolytic capacitors are used in circuits, the polarity must be correct. If the polarity of the applied voltage is the opposite of what is intended, the oxide layer is removed and the capacitor conducts electricity instead of storing charge.

Variable capacitors (typically 10 to 500 pF) usually consist of two interwoven sets of metallic plates, one fixed and the other movable, and contain air as the dielectric (Fig. 26.15). These types of capacitors are often used in radio tuning circuits.

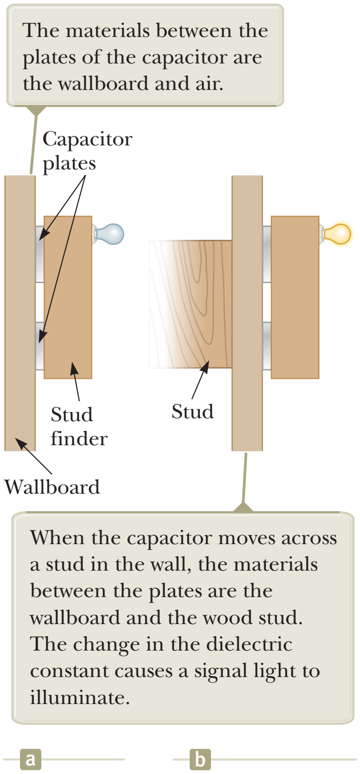

Figure 26.16 (Quick Quiz 26.5) A stud finder.

Quick Quiz 26.5 If you have ever tried to hang a picture or a mirror, you know it can be difficult to locate a wooden stud in which to anchor your nail or screw. A carpenter's stud finder is a capacitor with its plates arranged side by side instead of facing each other as shown in Figure 26.16. When the device is moved over a stud, does the capacitance **(a)** increase or **(b)** decrease?

Example 26.5 Energy Stored Before and After AM

A parallel-plate capacitor is charged with a battery to a charge Q_0. The battery is then removed, and a slab of material that has a dielectric constant κ is inserted between the plates. Identify the system as the capacitor and the dielectric. Find the energy stored in the system before and after the dielectric is inserted.

▶ 26.5 continued

SOLUTION

Conceptualize Think about what happens when the dielectric is inserted between the plates. Because the battery has been removed, the charge on the capacitor must remain the same. We know from our earlier discussion, however, that the capacitance must change. Therefore, we expect a change in the energy of the system.

Categorize Because we expect the energy of the system to change, we model it as a *nonisolated system* for *energy* involving a capacitor and a dielectric.

Analyze From Equation 26.11, find the energy stored in the absence of the dielectric:

$$U_0 = \frac{{Q_0}^2}{2C_0}$$

Find the energy stored in the capacitor after the dielectric is inserted between the plates:

$$U = \frac{{Q_0}^2}{2C}$$

Use Equation 26.14 to replace the capacitance C:

$$U = \frac{{Q_0}^2}{2\kappa C_0} = \frac{U_0}{\kappa}$$

Finalize Because $\kappa > 1$, the final energy is less than the initial energy. We can account for the decrease in energy of the system by performing an experiment and noting that the dielectric, when inserted, is pulled into the device. To keep the dielectric from accelerating, an external agent must do negative work on the dielectric. Equation 8.2 becomes $\Delta U = W$, where both sides of the equation are negative.

26.6 Electric Dipole in an Electric Field

We have discussed the effect on the capacitance of placing a dielectric between the plates of a capacitor. In Section 26.7, we shall describe the microscopic origin of this effect. Before we can do so, however, let's expand the discussion of the electric dipole introduced in Section 23.4 (see Example 23.6). The electric dipole consists of two charges of equal magnitude and opposite sign separated by a distance $2a$ as shown in Figure 26.17. The **electric dipole moment** of this configuration is defined as the vector $\vec{\mathbf{p}}$ directed from $-q$ toward $+q$ along the line joining the charges and having magnitude

$$p \equiv 2aq \tag{26.16}$$

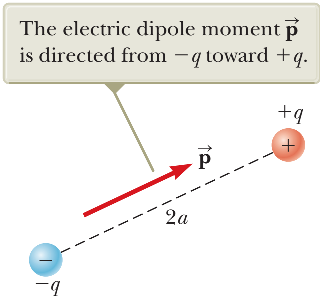

Figure 26.17 An electric dipole consists of two charges of equal magnitude and opposite sign separated by a distance of $2a$.

Now suppose an electric dipole is placed in a uniform electric field $\vec{\mathbf{E}}$ and makes an angle θ with the field as shown in Figure 26.18. We identify $\vec{\mathbf{E}}$ as the field *external* to the dipole, established by some other charge distribution, to distinguish it from the field *due to* the dipole, which we discussed in Section 23.4.

Each of the charges is modeled as a particle in an electric field. The electric forces acting on the two charges are equal in magnitude ($F = qE$) and opposite in direction as shown in Figure 26.18. Therefore, the net force on the dipole is zero. The two forces produce a net torque on the dipole, however; the dipole is therefore described by the rigid object under a net torque model. As a result, the dipole rotates in the direction that brings the dipole moment vector into greater alignment with the field. The torque due to the force on the positive charge about an axis through O in Figure 26.18 has magnitude $Fa \sin \theta$, where $a \sin \theta$ is the moment arm of F about O. This force tends to produce a clockwise rotation. The torque about O on the negative charge is also of magnitude $Fa \sin \theta$; here again, the force tends to produce a clockwise rotation. Therefore, the magnitude of the net torque about O is

$$\tau = 2Fa \sin \theta$$

Because $F = qE$ and $p = 2aq$, we can express τ as

$$\tau = 2aqE \sin \theta = pE \sin \theta \tag{26.17}$$

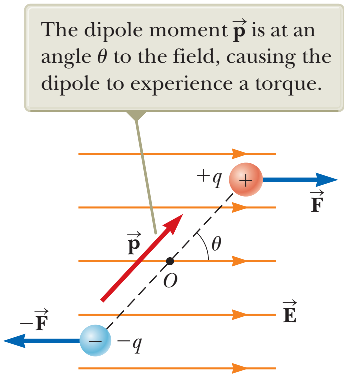

Figure 26.18 An electric dipole in a uniform external electric field.

Based on this expression, it is convenient to express the torque in vector form as the cross product of the vectors $\vec{\mathbf{p}}$ and $\vec{\mathbf{E}}$:

Torque on an electric dipole in an external electric field

$$\vec{\boldsymbol{\tau}} = \vec{\mathbf{p}} \times \vec{\mathbf{E}} \quad \textbf{(26.18)}$$

We can also model the system of the dipole and the external electric field as an isolated system for energy. Let's determine the potential energy of the system as a function of the dipole's orientation with respect to the field. To do so, recognize that work must be done by an external agent to rotate the dipole through an angle so as to cause the dipole moment vector to become less aligned with the field. The work done is then stored as electric potential energy in the system. Notice that this potential energy is associated with a *rotational* configuration of the system. Previously, we have seen potential energies associated with *translational* configurations: an object with mass was moved in a gravitational field, a charge was moved in an electric field, or a spring was extended. The work dW required to rotate the dipole through an angle $d\theta$ is $dW = \tau\, d\theta$ (see Eq. 10.25). Because $\tau = pE \sin \theta$ and the work results in an increase in the electric potential energy U, we find that for a rotation from θ_i to θ_f, the change in potential energy of the system is

$$U_f - U_i = \int_{\theta_i}^{\theta_f} \tau\, d\theta = \int_{\theta_i}^{\theta_f} pE \sin \theta\, d\theta = pE \int_{\theta_i}^{\theta_f} \sin \theta\, d\theta$$

$$= pE[-\cos \theta]_{\theta_i}^{\theta_f} = pE(\cos \theta_i - \cos \theta_f)$$

The term that contains $\cos \theta_i$ is a constant that depends on the initial orientation of the dipole. It is convenient to choose a reference angle of $\theta_i = 90°$ so that $\cos \theta_i = \cos 90° = 0$. Furthermore, let's choose $U_i = 0$ at $\theta_i = 90°$ as our reference value of potential energy. Hence, we can express a general value of $U_E = U_f$ as

$$U_E = -pE \cos \theta \quad \textbf{(26.19)}$$

We can write this expression for the potential energy of a dipole in an electric field as the dot product of the vectors $\vec{\mathbf{p}}$ and $\vec{\mathbf{E}}$:

Potential energy of the system of an electric dipole in an external electric field

$$U_E = -\vec{\mathbf{p}} \cdot \vec{\mathbf{E}} \quad \textbf{(26.20)}$$

To develop a conceptual understanding of Equation 26.19, compare it with the expression for the potential energy of the system of an object in the Earth's gravitational field, $U_g = mgy$ (Eq. 7.19). First, both expressions contain a parameter of the entity placed in the field: mass for the object, dipole moment for the dipole. Second, both expressions contain the field, g for the object, E for the dipole. Finally, both expressions contain a configuration description: translational position y for the object, rotational position θ for the dipole. In both cases, once the configuration is changed, the system tends to return to the original configuration when the object is released: the object of mass m falls toward the ground, and the dipole begins to rotate back toward the configuration in which it is aligned with the field.

Molecules are said to be *polarized* when a separation exists between the average position of the negative charges and the average position of the positive charges in the molecule. In some molecules such as water, this condition is always present; such molecules are called **polar molecules.** Molecules that do not possess a permanent polarization are called **nonpolar molecules.**

We can understand the permanent polarization of water by inspecting the geometry of the water molecule. The oxygen atom in the water molecule is bonded to the hydrogen atoms such that an angle of 105° is formed between the two bonds (Fig. 26.19). The center of the negative charge distribution is near the oxygen atom, and the center of the positive charge distribution lies at a point midway along the line joining the hydrogen atoms (the point labeled × in Fig. 26.19). We can model the water molecule and other polar molecules as dipoles because the average positions of the positive and negative charges act as point charges. As a result, we can apply our discussion of dipoles to the behavior of polar molecules.

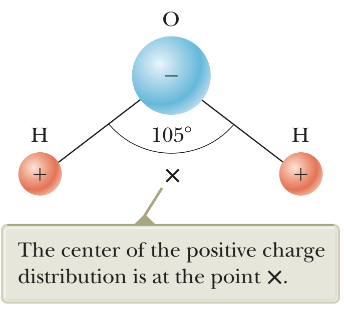

Figure 26.19 The water molecule, H_2O, has a permanent polarization resulting from its nonlinear geometry.

Washing with soap and water is a household scenario in which the dipole structure of water is exploited. Grease and oil are made up of nonpolar molecules, which are generally not attracted to water. Plain water is not very useful for removing this type of grime. Soap contains long molecules called *surfactants.* In a long molecule, the polarity characteristics of one end of the molecule can be different from those at the other end. In a surfactant molecule, one end acts like a nonpolar molecule and the other acts like a polar molecule. The nonpolar end can attach to a grease or oil molecule, and the polar end can attach to a water molecule. Therefore, the soap serves as a chain, linking the dirt and water molecules together. When the water is rinsed away, the grease and oil go with it.

A symmetric molecule (Fig. 26.20a) has no permanent polarization, but polarization can be induced by placing the molecule in an electric field. A field directed to the left as in Figure 26.20b causes the center of the negative charge distribution to shift to the right relative to the positive charges. This *induced polarization* is the effect that predominates in most materials used as dielectrics in capacitors.

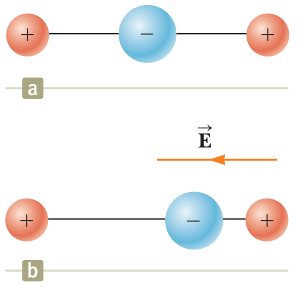

Figure 26.20 (a) A linear symmetric molecule has no permanent polarization. (b) An external electric field induces a polarization in the molecule.

Example 26.6 The H_2O Molecule AM

The water (H_2O) molecule has an electric dipole moment of 6.3×10^{-30} C · m. A sample contains 10^{21} water molecules, with the dipole moments all oriented in the direction of an electric field of magnitude 2.5×10^5 N/C. How much work is required to rotate the dipoles from this orientation ($\theta = 0°$) to one in which all the moments are perpendicular to the field ($\theta = 90°$)?

SOLUTION

Conceptualize When all the dipoles are aligned with the electric field, the dipoles–electric field system has the minimum potential energy. This energy has a negative value given by the product of the right side of Equation 26.19, evaluated at 0°, and the number N of dipoles.

Categorize The combination of the dipoles and the electric field is identified as a system. We use the *nonisolated system* model because an external agent performs work on the system to change its potential energy.

Analyze Write the appropriate reduction of the conservation of energy equation, Equation 8.2, for this situation:

$$(1) \quad \Delta U_E = W$$

Use Equation 26.19 to evaluate the initial and final potential energies of the system and Equation (1) to calculate the work required to rotate the dipoles:

$$W = U_{90°} - U_{0°} = (-NpE\cos 90°) - (-NpE\cos 0°)$$
$$= NpE = (10^{21})(6.3 \times 10^{-30}\ \text{C}\cdot\text{m})(2.5 \times 10^5\ \text{N/C})$$
$$= \boxed{1.6 \times 10^{-3}\ \text{J}}$$

Finalize Notice that the work done on the system is positive because the potential energy of the system has been raised from a negative value to a value of zero.

26.7 An Atomic Description of Dielectrics

In Section 26.5, we found that the potential difference ΔV_0 between the plates of a capacitor is reduced to $\Delta V_0/\kappa$ when a dielectric is introduced. The potential difference is reduced because the magnitude of the electric field decreases between the plates. In particular, if $\vec{E}_0$ is the electric field without the dielectric, the field in the presence of a dielectric is

$$\vec{E} = \frac{\vec{E}_0}{\kappa} \qquad \textbf{(26.21)}$$

First consider a dielectric made up of polar molecules placed in the electric field between the plates of a capacitor. The dipoles (that is, the polar molecules making

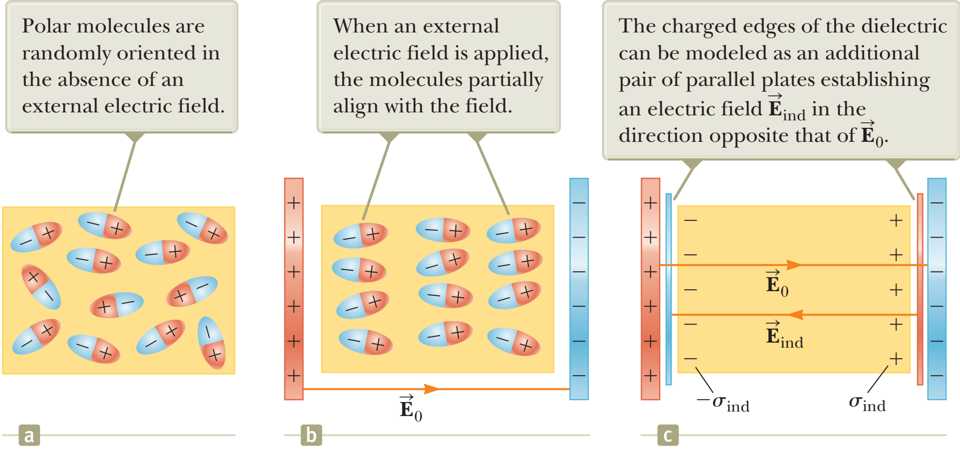

Figure 26.21 (a) Polar molecules in a dielectric. (b) An electric field is applied to the dielectric. (c) Details of the electric field inside the dielectric.

up the dielectric) are randomly oriented in the absence of an electric field as shown in Figure 26.21a. When an external field $\vec{\mathbf{E}}_0$ due to charges on the capacitor plates is applied, a torque is exerted on the dipoles, causing them to partially align with the field as shown in Figure 26.21b. The dielectric is now polarized. The degree of alignment of the molecules with the electric field depends on temperature and the magnitude of the field. In general, the alignment increases with decreasing temperature and with increasing electric field.

If the molecules of the dielectric are nonpolar, the electric field due to the plates produces an induced polarization in the molecule. These induced dipole moments tend to align with the external field, and the dielectric is polarized. Therefore, a dielectric can be polarized by an external field regardless of whether the molecules in the dielectric are polar or nonpolar.

With these ideas in mind, consider a slab of dielectric material placed between the plates of a capacitor so that it is in a uniform electric field $\vec{\mathbf{E}}_0$ as shown in Figure 26.21b. The electric field due to the plates is directed to the right and polarizes the dielectric. The net effect on the dielectric is the formation of an *induced* positive surface charge density σ_{ind} on the right face and an equal-magnitude negative surface charge density $-\sigma_{ind}$ on the left face as shown in Figure 26.21c. Because we can model these surface charge distributions as being due to charged parallel plates, the induced surface charges on the dielectric give rise to an induced electric field $\vec{\mathbf{E}}_{ind}$ in the direction opposite the external field $\vec{\mathbf{E}}_0$. Therefore, the net electric field $\vec{\mathbf{E}}$ in the dielectric has a magnitude

$$E = E_0 - E_{ind} \tag{26.22}$$

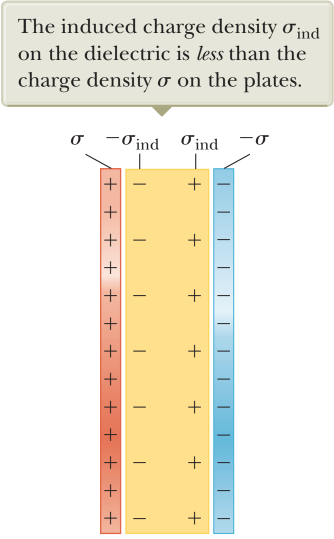

Figure 26.22 Induced charge on a dielectric placed between the plates of a charged capacitor.

In the parallel-plate capacitor shown in Figure 26.22, the external field E_0 is related to the charge density σ on the plates through the relationship $E_0 = \sigma/\epsilon_0$. The induced electric field in the dielectric is related to the induced charge density σ_{ind} through the relationship $E_{ind} = \sigma_{ind}/\epsilon_0$. Because $E = E_0/\kappa = \sigma/\kappa\epsilon_0$, substitution into Equation 26.22 gives

$$\frac{\sigma}{\kappa\epsilon_0} = \frac{\sigma}{\epsilon_0} - \frac{\sigma_{ind}}{\epsilon_0}$$

$$\sigma_{ind} = \left(\frac{\kappa - 1}{\kappa}\right)\sigma \tag{26.23}$$

Because $\kappa > 1$, this expression shows that the charge density σ_{ind} induced on the dielectric is less than the charge density σ on the plates. For instance, if $\kappa = 3$, the induced charge density is two-thirds the charge density on the plates. If no dielectric is present, then $\kappa = 1$ and $\sigma_{ind} = 0$ as expected. If the dielectric is replaced by an electrical conductor for which $E = 0$, however, Equation 26.22 indicates that $E_0 = E_{ind}$, which corresponds to $\sigma_{ind} = \sigma$. That is, the surface charge induced on the conductor is equal in magnitude but opposite in sign to that on the plates, resulting in a net electric field of zero in the conductor (see Fig. 24.16).

Example 26.7 Effect of a Metallic Slab

A parallel-plate capacitor has a plate separation d and plate area A. An uncharged metallic slab of thickness a is inserted midway between the plates.

(A) Find the capacitance of the device.

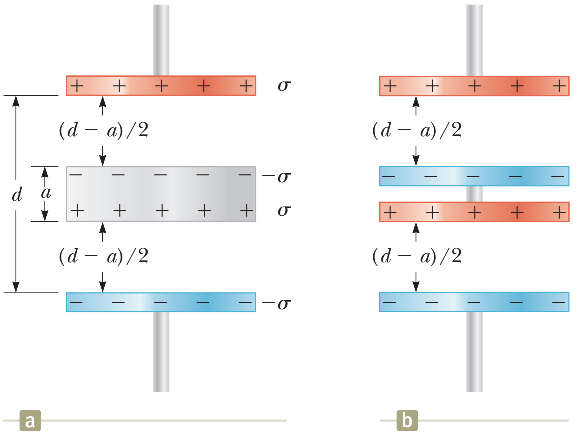

Figure 26.23 (Example 26.7) (a) A parallel-plate capacitor of plate separation d partially filled with a metallic slab of thickness a. (b) The equivalent circuit of the device in (a) consists of two capacitors in series, each having a plate separation $(d - a)/2$.

SOLUTION

Conceptualize Figure 26.23a shows the metallic slab between the plates of the capacitor. Any charge that appears on one plate of the capacitor must induce a charge of equal magnitude and opposite sign on the near side of the slab as shown in Figure 26.23a. Consequently, the net charge on the slab remains zero and the electric field inside the slab is zero.

Categorize The planes of charge on the metallic slab's upper and lower edges are identical to the distribution of charges on the plates of a capacitor. The metal between the slab's edges serves only to make an electrical connection between the edges. Therefore, we can model the edges of the slab as conducting planes and the bulk of the slab as a wire. As a result, the capacitor in Figure 26.23a is equivalent to two capacitors in series, each having a plate separation $(d - a)/2$ as shown in Figure 26.23b.

Analyze Use Equation 26.3 and the rule for adding two capacitors in series (Eq. 26.10) to find the equivalent capacitance in Figure 26.23b:

$$\frac{1}{C} = \frac{1}{C_1} + \frac{1}{C_2} = \frac{1}{\frac{\epsilon_0 A}{(d-a)/2}} + \frac{1}{\frac{\epsilon_0 A}{(d-a)/2}}$$

$$C = \boxed{\frac{\epsilon_0 A}{d - a}}$$

(B) Show that the capacitance of the original capacitor is unaffected by the insertion of the metallic slab if the slab is infinitesimally thin.

SOLUTION

In the result for part (A), let $a \to 0$:

$$C = \lim_{a \to 0} \left(\frac{\epsilon_0 A}{d - a} \right) = \frac{\epsilon_0 A}{d}$$

Finalize The result of part (B) is the original capacitance before the slab is inserted, which tells us that we can insert an infinitesimally thin metallic sheet between the plates of a capacitor without affecting the capacitance. We use this fact in the next example.

WHAT IF? What if the metallic slab in part (A) is not midway between the plates? How would that affect the capacitance?

Answer Let's imagine moving the slab in Figure 26.23a upward so that the distance between the upper edge of the slab and the upper plate is b. Then, the distance between the lower edge of the slab and the lower plate is $d - b - a$. As in part (A), we find the total capacitance of the series combination:

$$\frac{1}{C} = \frac{1}{C_1} + \frac{1}{C_2} = \frac{1}{\epsilon_0 A/b} + \frac{1}{\epsilon_0 A/(d - b - a)}$$

$$= \frac{b}{\epsilon_0 A} + \frac{d - b - a}{\epsilon_0 A} = \frac{d - a}{\epsilon_0 A} \rightarrow C = \frac{\epsilon_0 A}{d - a}$$

which is the same result as found in part (A). The capacitance is independent of the value of b, so it does not matter where the slab is located. In Figure 26.23b, when the central structure is moved up or down, the decrease in plate separation of one capacitor is compensated by the increase in plate separation for the other.

Example 26.8 A Partially Filled Capacitor

A parallel-plate capacitor with a plate separation d has a capacitance C_0 in the absence of a dielectric. What is the capacitance when a slab of dielectric material of dielectric constant κ and thickness fd is inserted between the plates (Fig. 26.24a), where f is a fraction between 0 and 1?

SOLUTION

Conceptualize In our previous discussions of dielectrics between the plates of a capacitor, the dielectric filled the volume between the plates. In this example, only part of the volume between the plates contains the dielectric material.

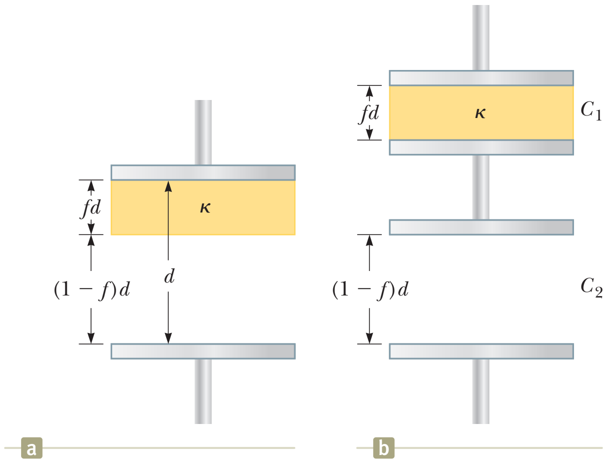

Figure 26.24 (Example 26.8) (a) A parallel-plate capacitor of plate separation d partially filled with a dielectric of thickness fd. (b) The equivalent circuit of the capacitor consists of two capacitors connected in series.

Categorize In Example 26.7, we found that an infinitesimally thin metallic sheet inserted between the plates of a capacitor does not affect the capacitance. Imagine sliding an infinitesimally thin metallic slab along the bottom face of the dielectric shown in Figure 26.24a. We can model this system as a series combination of two capacitors as shown in Figure 26.24b. One capacitor has a plate separation fd and is filled with a dielectric; the other has a plate separation $(1 - f)d$ and has air between its plates.

Analyze Evaluate the two capacitances in Figure 26.24b from Equation 26.15:

$$C_1 = \frac{\kappa\epsilon_0 A}{fd} \quad \text{and} \quad C_2 = \frac{\epsilon_0 A}{(1-f)d}$$

Find the equivalent capacitance C from Equation 26.10 for two capacitors combined in series:

$$\frac{1}{C} = \frac{1}{C_1} + \frac{1}{C_2} = \frac{fd}{\kappa\epsilon_0 A} + \frac{(1-f)d}{\epsilon_0 A}$$

$$\frac{1}{C} = \frac{fd}{\kappa\epsilon_0 A} + \frac{\kappa(1-f)d}{\kappa\epsilon_0 A} = \frac{f + \kappa(1-f)}{\kappa}\frac{d}{\epsilon_0 A}$$

Invert and substitute for the capacitance without the dielectric, $C_0 = \epsilon_0 A/d$:

$$C = \frac{\kappa}{f + \kappa(1-f)}\frac{\epsilon_0 A}{d} = \frac{\kappa}{f + \kappa(1-f)}C_0$$

Finalize Let's test this result for some known limits. If $f \to 0$, the dielectric should disappear. In this limit, $C \to C_0$, which is consistent with a capacitor with air between the plates. If $f \to 1$, the dielectric fills the volume between the plates. In this limit, $C \to \kappa C_0$, which is consistent with Equation 26.14.

Summary

Definitions

A **capacitor** consists of two conductors carrying charges of equal magnitude and opposite sign. The **capacitance** C of any capacitor is the ratio of the charge Q on either conductor to the potential difference ΔV between them:

$$C \equiv \frac{Q}{\Delta V} \quad \textbf{(26.1)}$$

The capacitance depends only on the geometry of the conductors and not on an external source of charge or potential difference. The SI unit of capacitance is coulombs per volt, or the **farad** (F): 1 F = 1 C/V.

The **electric dipole moment** $\vec{\mathbf{p}}$ of an electric dipole has a magnitude

$$p \equiv 2aq \quad \textbf{(26.16)}$$

where $2a$ is the distance between the charges q and $-q$. The direction of the electric dipole moment vector is from the negative charge toward the positive charge.

Concepts and Principles

If two or more capacitors are connected in parallel, the potential difference is the same across all capacitors. The equivalent capacitance of a **parallel combination** of capacitors is

$$C_{\text{eq}} = C_1 + C_2 + C_3 + \cdots \quad \textbf{(26.8)}$$

If two or more capacitors are connected in series, the charge is the same on all capacitors, and the equivalent capacitance of the **series combination** is given by

$$\frac{1}{C_{\text{eq}}} = \frac{1}{C_1} + \frac{1}{C_2} + \frac{1}{C_3} + \cdots \quad \textbf{(26.10)}$$

These two equations enable you to simplify many electric circuits by replacing multiple capacitors with a single equivalent capacitance.

Energy is stored in a charged capacitor because the charging process is equivalent to the transfer of charges from one conductor at a lower electric potential to another conductor at a higher potential. The energy stored in a capacitor of capacitance C with charge Q and potential difference ΔV is

$$U_E = \frac{Q^2}{2C} = \tfrac{1}{2}Q\,\Delta V = \tfrac{1}{2}C\,(\Delta V)^2 \quad \textbf{(26.11)}$$

When a dielectric material is inserted between the plates of a capacitor, the capacitance increases by a dimensionless factor κ, called the **dielectric constant:**

$$C = \kappa C_0 \quad \textbf{(26.14)}$$

where C_0 is the capacitance in the absence of the dielectric.

The torque acting on an electric dipole in a uniform electric field $\vec{\mathbf{E}}$ is

$$\vec{\boldsymbol{\tau}} = \vec{\mathbf{p}} \times \vec{\mathbf{E}} \quad \textbf{(26.18)}$$

The potential energy of the system of an electric dipole in a uniform external electric field $\vec{\mathbf{E}}$ is

$$U_E = -\vec{\mathbf{p}} \cdot \vec{\mathbf{E}} \quad \textbf{(26.20)}$$

Objective Questions

1. denotes answer available in *Student Solutions Manual/Study Guide*

1. A fully charged parallel-plate capacitor remains connected to a battery while you slide a dielectric between the plates. Do the following quantities (a) increase, (b) decrease, or (c) stay the same? **(i)** C **(ii)** Q **(iii)** ΔV **(iv)** the energy stored in the capacitor

2. By what factor is the capacitance of a metal sphere multiplied if its volume is tripled? (a) 3 (b) $3^{1/3}$ (c) 1 (d) $3^{-1/3}$ (e) $\frac{1}{3}$

3. An electronics technician wishes to construct a parallel-plate capacitor using rutile ($\kappa = 100$) as the dielectric. The area of the plates is 1.00 cm^2. What is the capacitance if the rutile thickness is 1.00 mm? (a) 88.5 pF (b) 177 pF (c) 8.85 μF (d) 100 μF (e) 35.4 μF

4. A parallel-plate capacitor is connected to a battery. What happens to the stored energy if the plate separation is doubled while the capacitor remains connected to the battery? (a) It remains the same. (b) It is doubled. (c) It decreases by a factor of 2. (d) It decreases by a factor of 4. (e) It increases by a factor of 4.

5. If three unequal capacitors, initially uncharged, are connected in series across a battery, which of the following statements is true? (a) The equivalent capacitance is greater than any of the individual capacitances. (b) The largest voltage appears across the smallest capacitance. (c) The largest voltage appears across the largest capacitance. (d) The capacitor with the largest capacitance has the greatest charge. (e) The capacitor with the smallest capacitance has the smallest charge.

6. Assume a device is designed to obtain a large potential difference by first charging a bank of capacitors connected in parallel and then activating a switch arrangement that in effect disconnects the capacitors from the charging source and from each other and reconnects them all in a series arrangement. The group of charged capacitors is then discharged in series. What is the maximum potential difference that can be obtained in this manner by using ten 500-μF capacitors and an 800-V charging source? (a) 500 V (b) 8.00 kV (c) 400 kV (d) 800 V (e) 0

7. **(i)** What happens to the magnitude of the charge on each plate of a capacitor if the potential difference between the conductors is doubled? (a) It becomes four times larger. (b) It becomes two times larger. (c) It is unchanged. (d) It becomes one-half as large. (e) It becomes one-fourth as large. **(ii)** If the potential difference across a capacitor is doubled, what happens to the energy stored? Choose from the same possibilities as in part (i).

8. A capacitor with very large capacitance is in series with another capacitor with very small capacitance. What is the equivalent capacitance of the combination? (a) slightly greater than the capacitance of the large capacitor (b) slightly less than the capacitance of the large capacitor (c) slightly greater than the capacitance of the small capacitor (d) slightly less than the capacitance of the small capacitor

9. A parallel-plate capacitor filled with air carries a charge Q. The battery is disconnected, and a slab of material with dielectric constant $\kappa = 2$ is inserted between the plates. Which of the following statements is true? (a) The voltage across the capacitor decreases by a factor of 2. (b) The voltage across the capacitor is doubled. (c) The charge on the plates is doubled. (d) The charge on the plates decreases by a factor of 2. (e) The electric field is doubled.

10. **(i)** A battery is attached to several different capacitors connected in parallel. Which of the following statements is true? (a) All capacitors have the same charge, and the equivalent capacitance is greater than the capacitance of any of the capacitors in the group. (b) The capacitor with the largest capacitance carries the smallest charge. (c) The potential difference across each capacitor is the same, and the equivalent capacitance is greater than any of the capacitors in the group. (d) The capacitor with the smallest capacitance carries the largest charge. (e) The potential differences across the capacitors are the same only if the capacitances are the same. **(ii)** The capacitors are reconnected in series, and the combination is again connected to the battery. From the same choices, choose the one that is true.

11. A parallel-plate capacitor is charged and then is disconnected from the battery. By what factor does the stored energy change when the plate separation is then doubled? (a) It becomes four times larger. (b) It becomes two times larger. (c) It stays the same. (d) It becomes one-half as large. (e) It becomes one-fourth as large.

12. **(i)** Rank the following five capacitors from greatest to smallest capacitance, noting any cases of equality. (a) a 20-μF capacitor with a 4-V potential difference between its plates (b) a 30-μF capacitor with charges of magnitude 90 μC on each plate (c) a capacitor with charges of magnitude 80 μC on its plates, differing by 2 V in potential, (d) a 10-μF capacitor storing energy 125 μJ (e) a capacitor storing energy 250 μJ with a 10-V potential difference **(ii)** Rank the same capacitors in part (i) from largest to smallest according to the potential difference between the plates. **(iii)** Rank the capacitors in part (i) in the order of the magnitudes of the charges on their plates. **(iv)** Rank the capacitors in part (i) in the order of the energy they store.

13. True or False? (a) From the definition of capacitance $C = Q/\Delta V$, it follows that an uncharged capacitor has a capacitance of zero. (b) As described by the definition of capacitance, the potential difference across an uncharged capacitor is zero.

14. You charge a parallel-plate capacitor, remove it from the battery, and prevent the wires connected to the plates from touching each other. When you increase the plate separation, do the following quantities (a) increase, (b) decrease, or (c) stay the same? **(i)** C **(ii)** Q **(iii)** E between the plates **(iv)** ΔV

Conceptual Questions

[1.] denotes answer available in *Student Solutions Manual/Study Guide*

1. (a) Why is it dangerous to touch the terminals of a high-voltage capacitor even after the voltage source that charged the capacitor is disconnected from the capacitor? (b) What can be done to make the capacitor safe to handle after the voltage source has been removed?

2. Assume you want to increase the maximum operating voltage of a parallel-plate capacitor. Describe how you can do that with a fixed plate separation.

[3.] If you were asked to design a capacitor in which small size and large capacitance were required, what would be the two most important factors in your design?

4. Explain why a dielectric increases the maximum operating voltage of a capacitor even though the physical size of the capacitor doesn't change.

5. Explain why the work needed to move a particle with charge Q through a potential difference ΔV is $W = Q\,\Delta V$, whereas the energy stored in a charged capacitor is $U_E = \frac{1}{2}Q\,\Delta V$. Where does the factor $\frac{1}{2}$ come from?

6. An air-filled capacitor is charged, then disconnected from the power supply, and finally connected to a voltmeter. Explain how and why the potential difference changes when a dielectric is inserted between the plates of the capacitor.

7. The sum of the charges on both plates of a capacitor is zero. What does a capacitor store?

8. Because the charges on the plates of a parallel-plate capacitor are opposite in sign, they attract each other. Hence, it would take positive work to increase the plate separation. What type of energy in the system changes due to the external work done in this process?

Problems

ENHANCED WebAssign The problems found in this chapter may be assigned online in Enhanced WebAssign

1. straightforward; **2.** intermediate; **3.** challenging

[1.] full solution available in the *Student Solutions Manual/Study Guide*

AMT Analysis Model tutorial available in Enhanced WebAssign

GP Guided Problem

M Master It tutorial available in Enhanced WebAssign

W Watch It video solution available in Enhanced WebAssign

Section 26.1 Definition of Capacitance

1. (a) When a battery is connected to the plates of a 3.00-μF capacitor, it stores a charge of 27.0 μC. What is the voltage of the battery? (b) If the same capacitor is connected to another battery and 36.0 μC of charge is stored on the capacitor, what is the voltage of the battery?

2. W Two conductors having net charges of +10.0 μC and −10.0 μC have a potential difference of 10.0 V between them. (a) Determine the capacitance of the system. (b) What is the potential difference between the two conductors if the charges on each are increased to +100 μC and −100 μC?

3. W (a) How much charge is on each plate of a 4.00-μF capacitor when it is connected to a 12.0-V battery? (b) If this same capacitor is connected to a 1.50-V battery, what charge is stored?

Section 26.2 Calculating Capacitance

4. M An air-filled spherical capacitor is constructed with inner- and outer-shell radii of 7.00 cm and 14.0 cm, respectively. (a) Calculate the capacitance of the device. (b) What potential difference between the spheres results in a 4.00-μC charge on the capacitor?

5. M A 50.0-m length of coaxial cable has an inner conductor that has a diameter of 2.58 mm and carries a charge of 8.10 μC. The surrounding conductor has an inner diameter of 7.27 mm and a charge of −8.10 μC. Assume the region between the conductors is air. (a) What is the capacitance of this cable? (b) What is the potential difference between the two conductors?

6. W (a) Regarding the Earth and a cloud layer 800 m above the Earth as the "plates" of a capacitor, calculate the capacitance of the Earth–cloud layer system. Assume the cloud layer has an area of 1.00 km^2 and the air between the cloud and the ground is pure and dry. Assume charge builds up on the cloud and on the ground until a uniform electric field of 3.00×10^6 N/C throughout the space between them makes the air break down and conduct electricity as a lightning bolt. (b) What is the maximum charge the cloud can hold?

7. When a potential difference of 150 V is applied to the plates of a parallel-plate capacitor, the plates carry a surface charge density of 30.0 nC/cm^2. What is the spacing between the plates?

8. An air-filled parallel-plate capacitor has plates of area 2.30 cm^2 separated by 1.50 mm. (a) Find the value of its capacitance. The capacitor is connected to a 12.0-V battery. (b) What is the charge on the capacitor? (c) What is the magnitude of the uniform electric field between the plates?

9. M An air-filled capacitor consists of two parallel plates, each with an area of 7.60 cm^2, separated by a distance of 1.80 mm. A 20.0-V potential difference is applied to these plates. Calculate (a) the electric field between the plates, (b) the surface charge density, (c) the capacitance, and (d) the charge on each plate.

10. A variable air capacitor used in a radio tuning circuit is made of N semicircular plates, each of radius R and positioned a distance d from its neighbors, to which it is electrically connected. As shown in Figure P26.10, a second identical set of plates is enmeshed with the first set. Each plate in the second set is halfway between two plates of the first set. The second set can rotate as a unit. Determine the capacitance as a function of the angle of rotation θ, where $\theta = 0$ corresponds to the maximum capacitance.

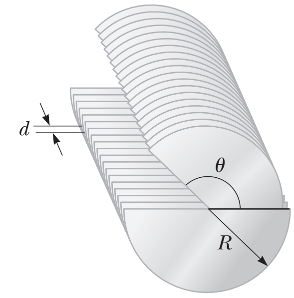

Figure P26.10

11. An isolated, charged conducting sphere of radius 12.0 cm creates an electric field of 4.90×10^4 N/C at a distance 21.0 cm from its center. (a) What is its surface charge density? (b) What is its capacitance?

12. **Review.** A small object of mass m carries a charge q and is suspended by a thread between the vertical plates of a parallel-plate capacitor. The plate separation is d. If the thread makes an angle θ with the vertical, what is the potential difference between the plates?

Section 26.3 Combinations of Capacitors

13. W Two capacitors, $C_1 = 5.00$ μF and $C_2 = 12.0$ μF, are connected in parallel, and the resulting combination is connected to a 9.00-V battery. Find (a) the equivalent capacitance of the combination, (b) the potential difference across each capacitor, and (c) the charge stored on each capacitor.

14. W **What If?** The two capacitors of Problem 13 ($C_1 = 5.00$ μF and $C_2 = 12.0$ μF) are now connected in series and to a 9.00-V battery. Find (a) the equivalent capacitance of the combination, (b) the potential difference across each capacitor, and (c) the charge on each capacitor.

15. Find the equivalent capacitance of a 4.20-μF capacitor and an 8.50-μF capacitor when they are connected (a) in series and (b) in parallel.

16. Given a 2.50-μF capacitor, a 6.25-μF capacitor, and a 6.00-V battery, find the charge on each capacitor if you connect them (a) in series across the battery and (b) in parallel across the battery.

17. According to its design specification, the timer circuit delaying the closing of an elevator door is to have a capacitance of 32.0 μF between two points A and B. When one circuit is being constructed, the inexpensive but durable capacitor installed between these two points is found to have capacitance 34.8 μF. To meet the specification, one additional capacitor can be placed between the two points. (a) Should it be in series or in parallel with the 34.8-μF capacitor? (b) What should be its capacitance? (c) **What If?** The next circuit comes down the assembly line with capacitance 29.8 μF between A and B. To meet the specification, what additional capacitor should be installed in series or in parallel in that circuit?

18. *Why is the following situation impossible?* A technician is testing a circuit that contains a capacitance C. He realizes that a better design for the circuit would include a capacitance $\frac{7}{3}C$ rather than C. He has three additional capacitors, each with capacitance C. By combining these additional capacitors in a certain combination that is then placed in parallel with the original capacitor, he achieves the desired capacitance.

19. For the system of four capacitors shown in Figure P26.19, find (a) the equivalent capacitance of the system, (b) the charge on each capacitor, and (c) the potential difference across each capacitor.

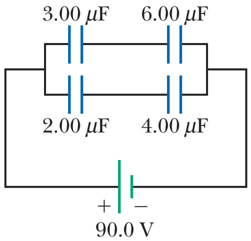

Figure P26.19 Problems 19 and 56.

20. Three capacitors are connected to a battery as shown in Figure P26.20. Their capacitances are $C_1 = 3C$, $C_2 = C$, and $C_3 = 5C$. (a) What is the equivalent capacitance of this set of capacitors? (b) State the ranking of the capacitors according to the charge they store from largest to smallest. (c) Rank the capacitors according to the potential differences across them from largest to smallest. (d) **What If?** Assume C_3 is increased. Explain what happens to the charge stored by each capacitor.

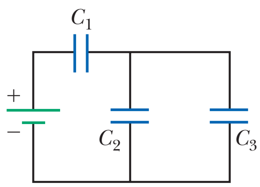

Figure P26.20

21. M A group of identical capacitors is connected first in series and then in parallel. The combined capacitance in parallel is 100 times larger than for the series connection. How many capacitors are in the group?

22. W (a) Find the equivalent capacitance between points a and b for the group of capacitors connected as shown in Figure P26.22. Take $C_1 = 5.00\ \mu$F, $C_2 = 10.0\ \mu$F, and $C_3 = 2.00\ \mu$F. (b) What charge is stored on C_3 if the potential difference between points a and b is 60.0 V?

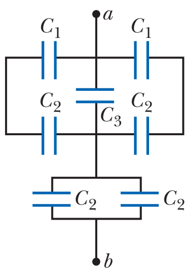

Figure P26.22

23. M Four capacitors are connected as shown in Figure P26.23. (a) Find the equivalent capacitance between points a and b. (b) Calculate the charge on each capacitor, taking $\Delta V_{ab} = 15.0$ V.

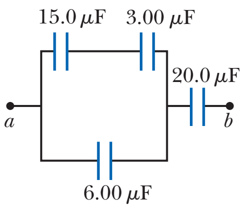

Figure P26.23

24. M Consider the circuit shown in Figure P26.24, where $C_1 = 6.00\ \mu$F, $C_2 = 3.00\ \mu$F, and $\Delta V = 20.0$ V. Capacitor C_1 is first charged by closing switch S_1. Switch S_1 is then opened, and the charged capacitor is connected to the uncharged capacitor by closing S_2. Calculate (a) the initial charge acquired by C_1 and (b) the final charge on each capacitor.

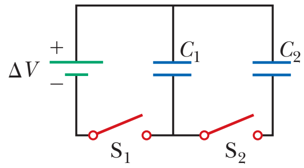

Figure P26.24

25. Find the equivalent capacitance between points a and b in the combination of capacitors shown in Figure P26.25.

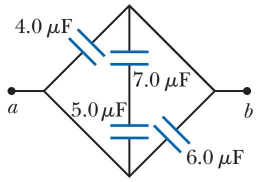

Figure P26.25

26. Find (a) the equivalent capacitance of the capacitors in Figure P26.26, (b) the charge on each capacitor, and (c) the potential difference across each capacitor.

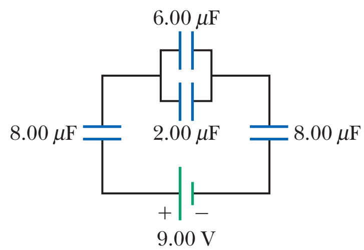

Figure P26.26

27. Two capacitors give an equivalent capacitance of 9.00 pF when connected in parallel and an equivalent capacitance of 2.00 pF when connected in series. What is the capacitance of each capacitor?

28. Two capacitors give an equivalent capacitance of C_p when connected in parallel and an equivalent capacitance of C_s when connected in series. What is the capacitance of each capacitor?

29. Consider three capacitors C_1, C_2, and C_3 and a battery. If only C_1 is connected to the battery, the charge on C_1 is 30.8 μC. Now C_1 is disconnected, discharged, and connected in series with C_2. When the series combination of C_2 and C_1 is connected across the battery, the charge on C_1 is 23.1 μC. The circuit is disconnected, and both capacitors are discharged. Next, C_3, C_1, and the battery are connected in series, resulting in a charge on C_1 of 25.2 μC. If, after being disconnected and discharged, C_1, C_2, and C_3 are connected in series with one another and with the battery, what is the charge on C_1?

Section 26.4 Energy Stored in a Charged Capacitor

30. The immediate cause of many deaths is ventricular fibrillation, which is an uncoordinated quivering of the heart. An electric shock to the chest can cause momentary paralysis of the heart muscle, after which the heart sometimes resumes its proper beating. One type of *defibrillator* (chapter-opening photo, page 777) applies a strong electric shock to the chest over a time interval of a few milliseconds. This device contains a capacitor of several microfarads, charged to several thousand volts. Electrodes called paddles are held against the chest on both sides of the heart, and the capacitor is discharged through the patient's chest. Assume an energy of 300 J is to be delivered from a 30.0-μF capacitor. To what potential difference must it be charged?

31. A 12.0-V battery is connected to a capacitor, resulting in 54.0 μC of charge stored on the capacitor. How much energy is stored in the capacitor?

32. W (a) A 3.00-μF capacitor is connected to a 12.0-V battery. How much energy is stored in the capacitor? (b) Had the capacitor been connected to a 6.00-V battery, how much energy would have been stored?

33. As a person moves about in a dry environment, electric charge accumulates on the person's body. Once it is at high voltage, either positive or negative, the body can discharge via sparks and shocks. Consider a human body isolated from ground, with the typical capacitance 150 pF. (a) What charge on the body will produce a potential of 10.0 kV? (b) Sensitive electronic devices can be destroyed by electrostatic discharge from a person. A particular device can be destroyed by a discharge releasing an energy of 250 μJ. To what voltage on the body does this situation correspond?

34. Two capacitors, $C_1 = 18.0\ \mu$F and $C_2 = 36.0\ \mu$F, are connected in series, and a 12.0-V battery is connected across the two capacitors. Find (a) the equivalent capacitance and (b) the energy stored in this equivalent capacitance. (c) Find the energy stored in each individual capacitor. (d) Show that the sum of these two energies is the same as the energy found in part (b). (e) Will this equality always be true, or does it depend on the number of capacitors and their capacitances? (f) If the same capacitors were connected in parallel, what potential difference would be required across them so that the combination stores the same energy as in part (a)? (g) Which capacitor stores more energy in this situation, C_1 or C_2?

35. Two identical parallel-plate capacitors, each with capacitance 10.0 μF, are charged to potential difference 50.0 V and then disconnected from the battery. They are then connected to each other in parallel with plates of like sign connected. Finally, the plate separation in one of the capacitors is doubled. (a) Find the total energy of the system of two capacitors *before* the plate separation is doubled. (b) Find the potential difference across each capacitor *after* the plate separation is doubled. (c) Find the total energy of the system *after* the plate separation is doubled. (d) Reconcile the difference in the answers to parts (a) and (c) with the law of conservation of energy.

36. Two identical parallel-plate capacitors, each with capacitance C, are charged to potential difference ΔV and then disconnected from the battery. They are then connected to each other in parallel with plates of like sign connected. Finally, the plate separation in one of the capacitors is doubled. (a) Find the total energy of the system of two capacitors *before* the plate separation is doubled. (b) Find the potential difference across each capacitor *after* the plate separation is doubled. (c) Find the total energy of the system *after* the plate separation is doubled. (d) Reconcile the difference in the answers to parts (a) and (c) with the law of conservation of energy.

37. Two capacitors, $C_1 = 25.0\ \mu$F and $C_2 = 5.00\ \mu$F, are connected in parallel and charged with a 100-V power supply. (a) Draw a circuit diagram and (b) calculate the total energy stored in the two capacitors. (c) **What If?** What potential difference would be required across the same two capacitors connected in series for the combination to store the same amount of energy as in part (b)? (d) Draw a circuit diagram of the circuit described in part (c).

38. A parallel-plate capacitor has a charge Q and plates of area A. What force acts on one plate to attract it toward the other plate? Because the electric field between the plates is $E = Q/A\epsilon_0$, you might think the force is $F = QE = Q^2/A\epsilon_0$. This conclusion is wrong because the field E includes contributions from both plates, and the field created by the positive plate cannot exert any force on the positive plate. Show that the force exerted on each plate is actually $F = Q^2/2A\epsilon_0$. *Suggestion:* Let $C = \epsilon_0 A/x$ for an arbitrary plate separation x and note that the work done in separating the two charged plates is $W = \int F\,dx$.

39. AMT **Review.** A storm cloud and the ground represent the plates of a capacitor. During a storm, the capacitor has a potential difference of 1.00×10^8 V between its plates and a charge of 50.0 C. A lightning strike delivers 1.00% of the energy of the capacitor to a tree on the ground. How much sap in the tree can be boiled away? Model the sap as water initially at 30.0°C. Water has a specific heat of 4 186 J/kg · °C, a boiling point of 100°C, and a latent heat of vaporization of 2.26×10^6 J/kg.

40. GP Consider two conducting spheres with radii R_1 and R_2 separated by a distance much greater than either radius. A total charge Q is shared between the spheres. We wish to show that when the electric potential energy of the system has a minimum value, the potential difference between the spheres is zero. The total charge Q is equal to $q_1 + q_2$, where q_1 represents the charge on the first sphere and q_2 the charge on the second. Because the spheres are very far apart, you can assume the charge of each is uniformly distributed over its surface. (a) Show that the energy associated with a single conducting sphere of radius R and charge q surrounded by a vacuum is $U = k_e q^2/2R$. (b) Find the total energy of the system of two spheres in terms of q_1, the total charge Q, and the radii R_1 and R_2. (c) To minimize the energy, differentiate the result to part (b) with respect to q_1 and set the derivative equal to zero. Solve for q_1 in terms of Q and the radii. (d) From the result to part (c), find the charge q_2. (e) Find the potential of each sphere. (f) What is the potential difference between the spheres?

41. AMT **Review.** The circuit in Figure P26.41 (page 804) consists of two identical, parallel metal plates connected to identical metal springs, a switch, and a 100-V battery.

With the switch open, the plates are uncharged, are separated by a distance d = 8.00 mm, and have a capacitance C = 2.00 μF. When the switch is closed, the distance between the plates decreases by a factor of 0.500. (a) How much charge collects on each plate? (b) What is the spring constant for each spring?

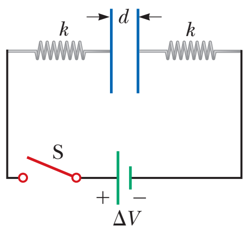

Figure P26.41

Section 26.5 Capacitors with Dielectrics

42. A supermarket sells rolls of aluminum foil, plastic wrap, and waxed paper. (a) Describe a capacitor made from such materials. Compute order-of-magnitude estimates for (b) its capacitance and (c) its breakdown voltage.

43. W (a) How much charge can be placed on a capacitor with air between the plates before it breaks down if the area of each plate is 5.00 cm^2? (b) **What If?** Find the maximum charge if polystyrene is used between the plates instead of air.

44. The voltage across an air-filled parallel-plate capacitor is measured to be 85.0 V. When a dielectric is inserted and completely fills the space between the plates as in Figure P26.44, the voltage drops to 25.0 V. (a) What is the dielectric constant of the inserted material? (b) Can you identify the dielectric? If so, what is it? (c) If the dielectric does not completely fill the space between the plates, what could you conclude about the voltage across the plates?

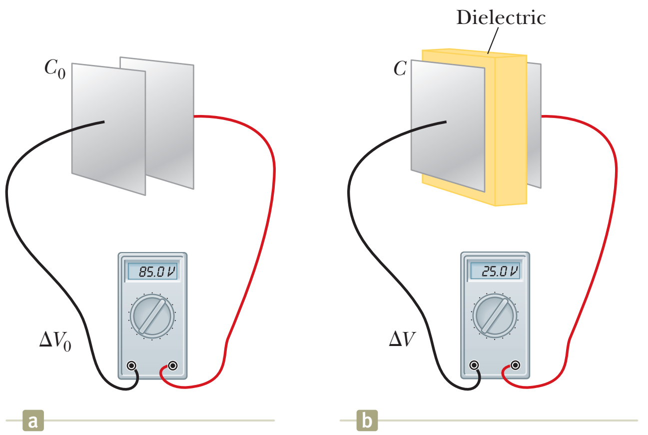

Figure P26.44

45. W Determine (a) the capacitance and (b) the maximum potential difference that can be applied to a Teflon-filled parallel-plate capacitor having a plate area of 1.75 cm^2 and a plate separation of 0.040 0 mm.

46. A commercial capacitor is to be constructed as shown in Figure P26.46. This particular capacitor is made from two strips of aluminum foil separated by a strip of paraffin-coated paper. Each strip of foil and paper is 7.00 cm wide. The foil is 0.004 00 mm thick, and the paper is 0.025 0 mm thick and has a dielectric constant of 3.70. What length should the strips have if a capacitance of 9.50×10^{-8} F is desired before the capacitor is rolled up? (Adding a second strip of paper and rolling the capacitor would effectively double its capacitance by allowing charge storage on both sides of each strip of foil.)

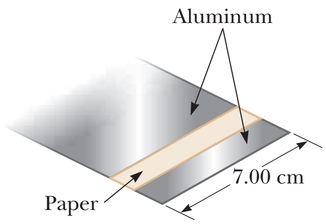

Figure P26.46

47. A parallel-plate capacitor in air has a plate separation of 1.50 cm and a plate area of 25.0 cm^2. The plates are charged to a potential difference of 250 V and disconnected from the source. The capacitor is then immersed in distilled water. Assume the liquid is an insulator. Determine (a) the charge on the plates before and after immersion, (b) the capacitance and potential difference after immersion, and (c) the change in energy of the capacitor.

48. Each capacitor in the combination shown in Figure P26.48 has a breakdown voltage of 15.0 V. What is the breakdown voltage of the combination?

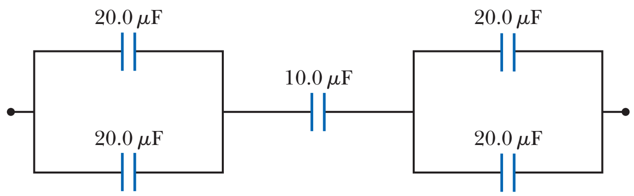

Figure P26.48

49. AMT A 2.00-nF parallel-plate capacitor is charged to an initial potential difference ΔV_i = 100 V and is then isolated. The dielectric material between the plates is mica, with a dielectric constant of 5.00. (a) How much work is required to withdraw the mica sheet? (b) What is the potential difference across the capacitor after the mica is withdrawn?

Section 26.6 Electric Dipole in an Electric Field

50. M A small, rigid object carries positive and negative 3.50-nC charges. It is oriented so that the positive charge has coordinates (−1.20 mm, 1.10 mm) and the negative charge is at the point (1.40 mm, −1.30 mm). (a) Find the electric dipole moment of the object. The object is placed in an electric field $\vec{\mathbf{E}} = (7.80 \times 10^3\,\hat{\mathbf{i}} - 4.90 \times 10^3\,\hat{\mathbf{j}})$ N/C. (b) Find the torque acting on the object. (c) Find the potential energy of the object–field system when the object is in this orientation. (d) Assuming the orientation of the object can change, find the difference between the maximum and minimum potential energies of the system.

51. AMT An infinite line of positive charge lies along the y axis, with charge density λ = 2.00 μC/m. A dipole is placed with its center along the x axis at $x = 25.0$ cm. The dipole consists of two charges $\pm 10.0\ \mu C$ separated by 2.00 cm. The axis of the dipole makes an angle of 35.0° with the x axis, and the positive charge is farther from the line of charge than the negative charge. Find the net force exerted on the dipole.

52. A small object with electric dipole moment $\vec{\mathbf{p}}$ is placed in a nonuniform electric field $\vec{\mathbf{E}} = E(x)\hat{\mathbf{i}}$. That is, the field is in the x direction, and its magnitude depends only on the coordinate x. Let θ represent the angle between the dipole moment and the x direction. Prove that the net force on the dipole is

$$F = p\left(\frac{dE}{dx}\right)\cos\theta$$

acting in the direction of increasing field.

Section 26.7 An Atomic Description of Dielectrics

53. The general form of Gauss's law describes how a charge creates an electric field in a material, as well as in vacuum:

$$\int \vec{\mathbf{E}} \cdot d\vec{\mathbf{A}} = \frac{q_{\text{in}}}{\epsilon}$$

where $\epsilon = \kappa\epsilon_0$ is the permittivity of the material. (a) A sheet with charge Q uniformly distributed over its area A is surrounded by a dielectric. Show that the sheet creates a uniform electric field at nearby points with magnitude $E = Q/2A\epsilon$. (b) Two large sheets of area A, carrying opposite charges of equal magnitude Q, are a small distance d apart. Show that they create uniform electric field in the space between them with magnitude $E = Q/A\epsilon$. (c) Assume the negative plate is at zero potential. Show that the positive plate is at potential $Qd/A\epsilon$. (d) Show that the capacitance of the pair of plates is given by $C = A\epsilon/d = \kappa A\epsilon_0/d$.

Additional Problems

54. Find the equivalent capacitance of the group of capacitors shown in Figure P26.54.

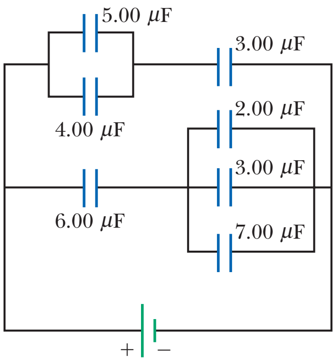

Figure P26.54

55. Four parallel metal plates P_1, P_2, P_3, and P_4, each of area 7.50 cm², are separated successively by a distance $d = 1.19$ mm as shown in Figure P26.55. Plate P_1 is connected to the negative terminal of a battery, and P_2 is connected to the positive terminal. The battery maintains a potential difference of 12.0 V. (a) If P_3 is connected to the negative terminal, what is the capacitance of the three-plate system $P_1P_2P_3$? (b) What is the charge on P_2? (c) If P_4 is now connected to the positive terminal, what is the capacitance of the four-plate system $P_1P_2P_3P_4$? (d) What is the charge on P_4?

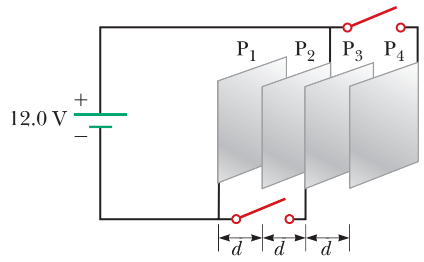

Figure P26.55

56. For the system of four capacitors shown in Figure P26.19, find (a) the total energy stored in the system and (b) the energy stored by each capacitor. (c) Compare the sum of the answers in part (b) with your result to part (a) and explain your observation.

57. A uniform electric field $E = 3\ 000$ V/m exists within a certain region. What volume of space contains an energy equal to 1.00×10^{-7} J? Express your answer in cubic meters and in liters.

58. Two large, parallel metal plates, each of area A, are oriented horizontally and separated by a distance $3d$. A grounded conducting wire joins them, and initially each plate carries no charge. Now a third identical plate carrying charge Q is inserted between the two plates, parallel to them and located a distance d from the upper plate as shown in Figure P26.58. (a) What induced charge appears on each of the two original plates? (b) What potential difference appears between the middle plate and each of the other plates?

Figure P26.58

59. M A parallel-plate capacitor is constructed using a dielectric material whose dielectric constant is 3.00 and whose dielectric strength is 2.00×10^8 V/m. The desired capacitance is 0.250 μF, and the capacitor must withstand a maximum potential difference of 4.00 kV. Find the minimum area of the capacitor plates.

60. *Why is the following situation impossible?* A 10.0-μF capacitor has plates with vacuum between them. The capacitor is charged so that it stores 0.050 0 J of energy. A particle with charge −3.00 μC is fired from the positive plate toward the negative plate with an initial kinetic energy equal to 1.00×10^{-4} J. The particle arrives at the negative plate with a reduced kinetic energy.

61. A model of a red blood cell portrays the cell as a capacitor with two spherical plates. It is a positively charged conducting liquid sphere of area A, separated by an insulating membrane of thickness t from the surrounding negatively charged conducting fluid. Tiny electrodes introduced into the cell show a potential difference of 100 mV across the membrane. Take the membrane's thickness as 100 nm and its dielectric constant as 5.00. (a) Assume that a typical red blood cell has a mass of 1.00×10^{-12} kg and density 1 100 kg/m^3. Calculate its volume and its surface area. (b) Find the capacitance of the cell. (c) Calculate the charge on the surfaces of the membrane. How many electronic charges does this charge represent?

62. A parallel-plate capacitor with vacuum between its horizontal plates has a capacitance of 25.0 μF. A nonconducting liquid with dielectric constant 6.50 is poured into the space between the plates, filling up a fraction f of its volume. (a) Find the new capacitance as a function of f. (b) What should you expect the capacitance to be when $f = 0$? Does your expression from part (a) agree with your answer? (c) What capacitance should you expect when $f = 1$? Does the expression from part (a) agree with your answer?

63. A 10.0-μF capacitor is charged to 15.0 V. It is next connected in series with an uncharged 5.00-μF capacitor. The series combination is finally connected across a 50.0-V battery as diagrammed in Figure P26.63. Find the new potential differences across the 5.00-μF and 10.0-μF capacitors after the switch is thrown closed.

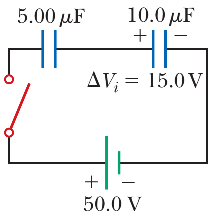

Figure P26.63

64. Assume that the internal diameter of the Geiger–Mueller tube described in Problem 68 in Chapter 25 is 2.50 cm and that the wire along the axis has a diameter of 0.200 mm. The dielectric strength of the gas between the central wire and the cylinder is 1.20×10^6 V/m. Use the result of that problem to calculate the maximum potential difference that can be applied between the wire and the cylinder before breakdown occurs in the gas.

65. Two square plates of sides ℓ are placed parallel to each other with separation d as suggested in Figure P26.65. You may assume d is much less than ℓ. The plates carry uniformly distributed static charges $+Q_0$ and $-Q_0$. A block of metal has width ℓ, length ℓ, and thickness slightly less than d. It is inserted a distance x into the space between the plates. The charges on the plates remain uniformly distributed as the block slides in. In a static situation, a metal prevents an electric field from penetrating inside it. The metal can be thought of as a perfect dielectric, with $\kappa \to \infty$. (a) Calculate the stored energy in the system as a function of x. (b) Find the direction and magnitude of the force that acts on the metallic block. (c) The area of the advancing front face of the block is essentially equal to ℓd. Considering the force on the block as acting on this face, find the stress (force per area) on it. (d) Express the energy density in the electric field between the charged plates in terms of Q_0, ℓ, d, and ϵ_0. (e) Explain how the answers to parts (c) and (d) compare with each other.

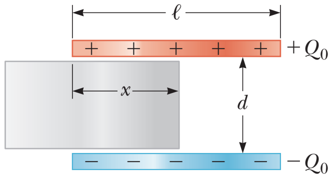

Figure P26.65

66. (a) Two spheres have radii a and b, and their centers are a distance d apart. Show that the capacitance of this system is

$$C = \frac{4\pi\epsilon_0}{\dfrac{1}{a} + \dfrac{1}{b} - \dfrac{2}{d}}$$

provided d is large compared with a and b. *Suggestion:* Because the spheres are far apart, assume the potential of each equals the sum of the potentials due to each sphere. (b) Show that as d approaches infinity, the above result reduces to that of two spherical capacitors in series.

67. A capacitor of unknown capacitance has been charged to a potential difference of 100 V and then disconnected from the battery. When the charged capacitor is then connected in parallel to an uncharged 10.0-μF capacitor, the potential difference across the combination is 30.0 V. Calculate the unknown capacitance.

68. A parallel-plate capacitor of plate separation d is charged to a potential difference ΔV_0. A dielectric slab of thickness d and dielectric constant κ is introduced between the plates while the battery remains connected to the plates. (a) Show that the ratio of energy stored after the dielectric is introduced to the energy stored in the empty capacitor is $U/U_0 = \kappa$. (b) Give a physical explanation for this increase in stored energy. (c) What happens to the charge on the capacitor? *Note:* This situation is not the same as in Example 26.5, in which the battery was removed from the circuit before the dielectric was introduced.

69. Capacitors $C_1 = 6.00$ μF and $C_2 = 2.00$ μF are charged as a parallel combination across a 250-V battery. The capacitors are disconnected from the battery and from each other. They are then connected positive plate to negative plate and negative plate to positive plate. Calculate the resulting charge on each capacitor.

70. Example 26.1 explored a cylindrical capacitor of length ℓ with radii a and b for the two conductors. In the What If? section of that example, it was claimed that increasing ℓ by 10% is more effective in terms of increasing the capacitance than increasing a by 10% if $b > 2.85a$. Verify this claim mathematically.

71. To repair a power supply for a stereo amplifier, an electronics technician needs a 100-μF capacitor capable of withstanding a potential difference of 90 V between the plates. The immediately available supply is a box of five 100-μF capacitors, each having a maximum voltage capability of 50 V. (a) What combination of these capacitors has the proper electrical characteristics? Will the technician use all the capacitors in the box? Explain your answers. (b) In the combination of capacitors obtained in part (a), what will be the maximum voltage across each of the capacitors used?

Challenge Problems

72. The inner conductor of a coaxial cable has a radius of 0.800 mm, and the outer conductor's inside radius is 3.00 mm. The space between the conductors is filled with polyethylene, which has a dielectric constant of 2.30 and a dielectric strength of 18.0×10^6 V/m. What is the maximum potential difference this cable can withstand?

73. Some physical systems possessing capacitance continuously distributed over space can be modeled as an infinite array of discrete circuit elements. Examples are a microwave waveguide and the axon of a nerve cell. To practice analysis of an infinite array, determine the equivalent capacitance C between terminals X and Y of the infinite set of capacitors represented in Figure P26.73. Each capacitor has capacitance C_0. *Suggestions:* Imagine that the ladder is cut at the line AB and note that the equivalent capacitance of the infinite section to the right of AB is also C.

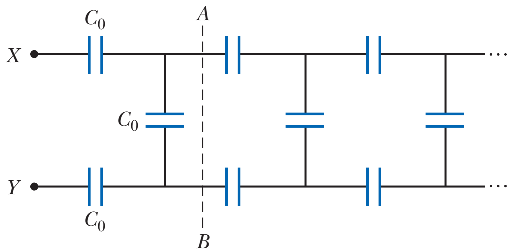

Figure P26.73

74. Consider two long, parallel, and oppositely charged wires of radius r with their centers separated by a distance D that is much larger than r. Assuming the charge is distributed uniformly on the surface of each wire, show that the capacitance per unit length of this pair of wires is

$$\frac{C}{\ell} = \frac{\pi \epsilon_0}{\ln (D/r)}$$

75. Determine the equivalent capacitance of the combination shown in Figure P26.75. *Suggestion:* Consider the symmetry involved.

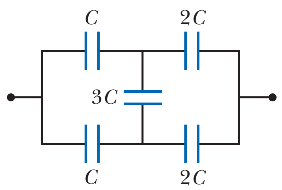

Figure P26.75

76. A parallel-plate capacitor with plates of area LW and plate separation t has the region between its plates filled with wedges of two dielectric materials as shown in Figure P26.76. Assume t is much less than both L and W. (a) Determine its capacitance. (b) Should the capacitance be the same if the labels κ_1 and κ_2 are interchanged? Demonstrate that your expression does or does not have this property. (c) Show that if κ_1 and κ_2 approach equality to a common value κ, your result becomes the same as the capacitance of a capacitor containing a single dielectric: $C = \kappa \epsilon_0 LW/t$.

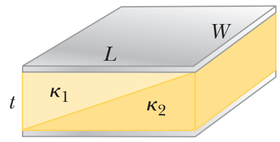

Figure P26.76

77. Calculate the equivalent capacitance between points a and b in Figure P26.77. Notice that this system is not a simple series or parallel combination. *Suggestion:* Assume a potential difference ΔV between points a and b. Write expressions for ΔV_{ab} in terms of the charges and capacitances for the various possible pathways from a to b and require conservation of charge for those capacitor plates that are connected to each other.

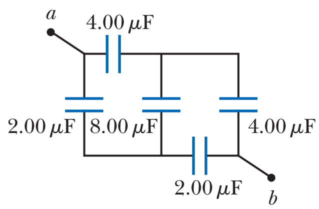

Figure P26.77

78. A capacitor is constructed from two square, metallic plates of sides ℓ and separation d. Charges $+Q$ and $-Q$ are placed on the plates, and the power supply is then removed. A material of dielectric constant κ is inserted a distance x into the capacitor as shown in Figure P26.78. Assume d is much smaller than x. (a) Find the equivalent capacitance of the device. (b) Calculate the energy stored in the capacitor. (c) Find the direction and magnitude of the force exerted by the plates on the dielectric. (d) Obtain a numerical value for the force when $x = \ell/2$, assuming $\ell = 5.00$ cm, $d = 2.00$ mm, the dielectric is glass ($\kappa = 4.50$), and the capacitor was charged to 2.00×10^3 V before the dielectric was inserted. *Suggestion:* The system can be considered as two capacitors connected in parallel.

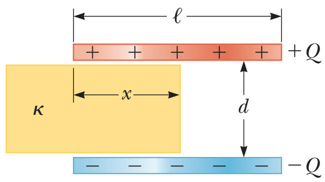

Figure P26.78