



Designation: D 559 – 96

Standard Test Methods for Wetting and Drying Compacted Soil-Cement Mixtures¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D 559; the number immediately following the designation indicates the year of original adoption or, in the case of revision, the year of last revision. A number in parentheses indicates the year of last reappraisal. A superscript epsilon (ϵ) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reappraisal.

This standard has been approved for use by agencies of the Department of Defense.

1. Scope *

1.1 These test methods cover procedures for determining the soil-cement losses, water content changes, and volume changes (swell and shrinkage) produced by repeated wetting and drying of hardened soil-cement specimens. The specimens are compacted in a mold, before cement hydration, to maximum density at optimum water content using the compaction procedure described in Test Methods D 558.

1.2 Two test methods, depending on soil gradation, are covered for preparation of material for molding specimens and for molding specimens as follows:

	Sections
Test Method A, using soil material passing a No. 4 (4.75-mm) sieve. This method shall be used when 100 % of the soil sample passes the No. 4 (4.75-mm) sieve	5
Test Method B, using soil material passing a 3/4-in. (19.0-mm) sieve. This method shall be used when part of the soil sample is retained on the No. 4 (4.75-mm) sieve. This test method may be used only on materials with 30 % or less retained on the 3/4-in. (19.0-mm) sieve.	6

1.3 The values stated in inch-pound units are to be regarded as the standard. The SI units given in parentheses are for information only.

1.4 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:

- C 150 Specification for Portland Cement²
- C 595 Specification for Blended Hydraulic Cements²
- D 558 Test Methods for Moisture-Density Relations of Soil-Cement Mixtures³
- D 560 Test Methods for Freezing-and-Thawing Tests of Compacted Soil-Cement Mixtures³

D 2168 Test Methods for Calibration of Laboratory Mechanical-Rammer Soil Compactors³

D 3740 Practice for the Minimum Requirements for Agencies Engaged in the Testing and/or Inspection of Soil and Rock Used in Engineering Design and Construction³

E 11 Specification for Wire-Cloth Sieves for Testing Purposes⁴

3. Significance and Use

3.1 These test methods are used to determine the resistance of compacted soil-cement specimens to repeated wetting and drying. These test methods were developed to be used in conjunction with Test Methods D 560 and criteria given in the *Soil-Cement Laboratory Handbook*⁵ to determine the minimum amount of cement required in soil-cement to achieve a degree of hardness adequate to resist field weathering.

NOTE 1—The agency performing these test methods can be evaluated in accordance with Practice D 3740. Notwithstanding statements on precision and bias contained in these test methods: the precision of these test methods is dependent on the competence of the personnel performing it and the suitability of the equipment and facilities used. Agencies that meet the criteria of Practice D 3740 are generally considered capable of competent and objective testing. Users of these test methods are cautioned that compliance with Practice D 3740 does not, in itself, ensure reliable testing. Reliable testing depends on many factors; Practice D 3740 provides a means of evaluating some of these factors.

4. Apparatus

4.1 *Mold*—A cylindrical metal mold having a capacity of $\frac{1}{30} \pm 0.0004 \text{ ft}^3$ ($944 \pm 11 \text{ cm}^3$) with an internal diameter of $4.0 \pm 0.016 \text{ in.}$ ($101.60 \pm 0.41 \text{ mm}$) and conforming to Fig. 1 to permit preparing compacted specimens of soil-cement mixtures of this size. The mold shall be provided with a detachable collar assembly approximately $2\frac{1}{2} \text{ in.}$ (63.5 mm) in height. The mold may be of the split type consisting of two half-round sections or a section of pipe with one side split perpendicular to the pipe circumference and that can be securely locked in place to form a closed cylinder having the dimensions described above. The mold and collar assembly shall be so constructed that it can be fastened firmly to a detachable base.

¹ These test methods are under the jurisdiction of the ASTM Committee D-18 on Soil and Rock and are the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D18.15 on Stabilization of Additives.

Current edition approved May 10, 1996. Published July 1996. Originally published as D 559 – 39. Last previous edition D 559 – 89.

² *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vols 04.01 and 04.02.

³ *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 04.08.

⁴ *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vols 04.01, 04.06, and 14.02.

⁵ *Soil-Cement Laboratory Handbook*, Portland Cement Assn., 1971.

*A Summary of Changes section appears at the end of this standard.

4.2.2 *Mechanical Rammer*—A mechanically operated metal rammer having a 2.0 ± 0.005 -in. (50.80 ± 0.13 -mm) diameter face and a manufactured weight of 5.5 ± 0.02 lb (2.49 ± 0.01 kg). The operating weight of the rammer shall be determined from a calibration in accordance with Methods D 2168. The rammer shall be equipped with a suitable arrangement to control the height of drop to a free-fall of $12.0 \pm \frac{1}{16}$ in. (304.8 ± 1.6 mm) above the elevation of the soil-cement.

4.2.3 *Rammer Face*—Strength and resistance to wetting-and-drying of specimens compacted with the sector face rammer may differ from that of specimens compacted with the circular face rammer. Therefore, the sector face rammer shall not be used unless previous tests on like soil-cement mixtures show that similar resistance to wetting and drying is obtained with the two types of rammers.

4.3 *Sample Extruder*—A jack, lever frame, or other device adapted for the purpose of extruding compacted specimens from the mold. Not required when a split-type mold is used.

4.4 *Balances*—A balance or scale of at least 25-lb (11.3-kg) capacity sensitive to 0.01 lb (0.005 kg) and a balance of at least 1000-g capacity sensitive to 0.1 g.

4.5 *Drying Ovens*—A thermostatically controlled drying oven capable of maintaining temperatures of $230 \pm 9^\circ\text{F}$ ($110 \pm 5^\circ\text{C}$) for drying water content samples, and a thermostatically controlled drying oven capable of maintaining temperatures of $160 \pm 5^\circ\text{F}$ ($71 \pm 3^\circ\text{C}$) for drying compacted soil-cement specimens.

4.6 *Moist Room*—A moist room or suitable covered container capable of maintaining a temperature of $70 \pm 3^\circ\text{F}$ ($21 \pm 1.7^\circ\text{C}$) and a relative humidity of 100 % for 7-day storage of compacted specimens.

4.7 *Water Bath*—Suitable tank for submerging compacted specimens in water at room temperature.

4.8 *Wire Scratch Brush*—A wire scratch brush made of 2 by $\frac{1}{16}$ -in. (50.8 by 1.588-mm) flat No. 26 gage (0.46-mm) wire bristles assembled in 50 groups of 10 bristles each and mounted to form 5 longitudinal rows and 10 transverse rows of bristles on a $7\frac{1}{2}$ by $2\frac{1}{2}$ -in. (190 by 63.5-mm) hardwood block.

4.9 *Straightedge*—A rigid steel straightedge 12 in. (305 mm) in length and having one beveled edge.

4.10 *Sieves*—3-in. (75-mm), $\frac{3}{4}$ -in. (19.0-mm), and No. 4 (4.75-mm) sieves conforming to the requirements of Specification E 11.

4.11 *Mixing Tools*—Miscellaneous tools such as mixing pan, and trowel, or a suitable mechanical device for thoroughly mixing the soil with cement and water.

4.12 *Butcher Knife*—A butcher knife approximately 10 in. (250 mm) in length for trimming the top of the specimens.

4.13 *Scarifier*—A six-pronged ice pick or similar apparatus to remove the smooth compaction plane at the top of the first and second layers of the specimen.

4.14 *Container*—A flat, round pan for moisture absorption by soil-cement mixtures, about 12 in. (305 mm) in diameter and 2 in. (50 mm) deep.

4.15 *Measuring Device*—A measuring device suitable for accurately measuring the heights and diameters of test specimens to the nearest 0.01 in. (0.2 mm).

4.16 *Pans and Carriers*—Suitable pans for handling materials and carriers or trays for handling test specimens.

4.17 *Graduate*—A graduated cylinder of 250-mL capacity for measuring water.

4.18 *Moisture Cans*—Suitable containers for moisture samples.

5. Test Method A—Using Soil Material Passing a No. 4 (4.75-mm) Sieve

5.1 Preparation of Material for Molding Specimens:

5.1.1 Prepare the soil sample in accordance with the procedure described in Test Method A of Test Methods D 558.

5.1.2 Select a sufficient quantity of the soil prepared as described in 5.1.1 to provide two (Note 2) compacted specimens and required moisture samples.

NOTE 2—(Optional) Usually only one specimen (identified as No. 2) is required for routine testing. The other specimen (identified as No. 1) is made for research work and for testing unusual soils.

5.1.3 Add to the soil the required amount of cement conforming to Specification C 150 or Specification C 595. Mix the cement and soil thoroughly to a uniform color.

5.1.4 Add sufficient potable water to raise the soil-cement mixture to optimum water content at the time of compaction and mix thoroughly. When the soil used is a heavy textured clayey material, compact the mixture of soil, cement, and water in the container to a depth of about 2 in. (50 mm) using the rammer described in 4.2 or a similar hand tamper, cover, and allow to stand for not less than 5 min but not more than 10 min to aid dispersion of the moisture and to permit more complete absorption by the soil-cement.

5.1.5 After the absorption period, thoroughly break up the mixture, without reducing the natural size of individual particles, until it will pass a No. 4 (4.75-mm) sieve, as judged by eye, and then remix.

5.2 Molding Specimens:

5.2.1 Form a specimen by immediately compacting the soil-cement mixture in the mold (with the collar attached) and later trimming the specimen in accordance with Test Method A of Test Methods D 558, and in addition scarify the tops of the first and second layers to remove smooth compaction planes before placing and compacting the succeeding layers. This scarification shall form grooves at right angles to each other, approximately $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (3.2 mm) in width and $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (3.2 mm) in depth and approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (6.4 mm) apart.

5.2.2 During compaction, take from the batch a representative sample of the soil-cement mixture, weighing not less than 100 g, weigh immediately, and dry in an oven at $230 \pm 9^\circ\text{F}$ ($110 \pm 5^\circ\text{C}$) for at least 12 h or to constant weight. Calculate the water content as prescribed in Test Methods D 558 to check against design water content.

5.2.3 Weigh the compacted specimen and mold, remove the specimen from the mold, and calculate the oven-dry weight of each specimen in lb/ft^3 (g/cm^3) to check against design density.

5.2.4 Identify the specimen on a metal tag (or other suitable device) as No. 1 (Note 2) together with other needed identification marks and use to obtain data on moisture and volume changes during the test.

5.2.5 Form a second specimen as rapidly as possible and determine the percentage of moisture and oven-dry weight as described in 5.2.1-5.2.3. Identify this specimen as No. 2, together with other needed identification marks and use to obtain data on soil-cement losses during the test.

5.2.6 Determine the average diameter and height of the No. 1 specimen and calculate its volume.

5.2.7 Place the specimens on suitable carriers in the moist room and protect them from free water for a period of 7 days.

5.2.8 Weigh and measure the No. 1 specimen at the end of the 7-day storage period to provide data for calculating its water content and volume.

NOTE 3—It is important that all height and diameter measurements be accurate to within 0.01 in. (0.2 mm) and be taken at the same points on the specimen at all times.

5.3 Procedure:

5.3.1 At the end of the storage in the moist room, submerge the specimens in potable water at room temperature for a period of 5 h and remove. Weigh and measure the No. 1 specimen (volume and moisture change specimen).

5.3.2 Place both specimens in an oven at 160°F (71°C) for 42 h and remove. Weigh and measure the No. 1 specimen.

5.3.3 Give specimen No. 2 (soil-cement loss specimen) two firm strokes on all areas with the wire scratch brush. The brush shall be held with the long axis of the brush parallel to the longitudinal axis of the specimen or parallel to the ends as required to cover all areas of the specimen. Apply these strokes to the full height and width of the specimen with a firm stroke corresponding to approximately 3-lbf (13.3-N) force (Note 4). Eighteen to twenty vertical brush strokes are required to cover the sides of the specimen twice and four strokes are required on each end.

NOTE 4—This pressure is measured as follows: clamp a specimen in a vertical position on the edge of a platform scale and zero the scale. Apply vertical brushing strokes to the specimen and note the force necessary to register approximately 3 lbf (13.3 N).

5.3.4 The procedures described in 5.3.1-5.3.3 constitute one cycle (48 h) of wetting and drying. Again submerge the specimens in water and continue the procedure for 12 cycles.

NOTE 5—Weight determinations of specimen No. 2 before and after brushing are usually made at the end of each cycle when conducting research and making special investigations.

5.3.5 The No. 1 specimen may be discontinued prior to 12 cycles should the measurements become inaccurate due to soil-cement loss of the specimen.

NOTE 6—If it is not possible to run the cycles continuously because of Sundays, holidays, or for any other reason, hold the specimens in the oven during the layover period if possible.

5.3.6 After 12 cycles of test, dry the specimens to constant weight at 230°F (110°C) and weigh to determine the oven-dry weight of the specimens.

5.3.7 The data collected will permit calculations of volume and water content changes of specimen No. 1 and the soil-cement losses of specimen No. 2 after the prescribed 12 cycles of test.

6. Test Method B—Using Soil Material Passing a ¾-in. (19.0-mm) Sieve

6.1 Preparation of Material for Molding Specimens:

6.1.1 Prepare the soil sample in accordance with Test Method B of Test Methods D 558.

6.1.2 Select and maintain separate representative samples of soil passing the No. 4 (4.75-mm) sieve and of saturated, surface-dry aggregate passing the ¾-in. (19.0-mm) sieve and retained on the No. 4 (4.75-mm) sieve so that the total sample will be enough to provide two (Note 1) compacted specimens and required moisture samples. The percentage, by oven-dry weight, of aggregate passing the ¾-in. (19.0-mm) sieve and retained on the No. 4 (4.75-mm) sieve shall be the same as the percentage passing the 3-in. (75-mm) sieve and retained on the No. 4 (4.75-mm) sieve in the original sample.

6.1.3 Add to the sample passing the No. 4 (4.75-mm) sieve, the amount of cement conforming to Specification C 150 or Specification C 595, required for the total sample specified in 6.1.2. Mix the cement and soil thoroughly to a uniform color.

6.1.4 Add to the sample passing the No. 4 (4.75-mm) sieve, sufficient water to raise the total soil-cement mixture prescribed in 6.1.2 to optimum moisture content at time of compaction and facilitate moisture dispersion as described for Test Method A in 5.1.4 to 5.1.6.

6.1.5 After preparation of the mixture as described in 6.1.1-6.1.4, add the saturated, surface-dry aggregate to the mixture and mix thoroughly.

6.2 Molding Specimens:

6.2.1 Form a specimen by immediately compacting the soil-cement mixture in the mold (with the collar attached) and later trimming the specimen in accordance with Test Method B of Test Methods D 558, and in addition as the mixture for each layer is placed in the mold, spade along the inside of the mold with a butcher knife before compaction to obtain uniform distribution of the material retained on the No. 4 (4.75-mm) sieve and scarify the tops of the first and second layers as described for Test Method A of this test method.

6.2.2 During compaction, take from the batch a representative sample of the soil-cement mixture weighing not less than 500 g, weigh immediately, and dry in an oven at 230 ± 9°F (110 ± 5°C) for at least 12 h or to constant weight to determine the water content to check against design moisture content.

6.2.3 Form a second specimen as rapidly as possible in the same manner.

6.2.4 Weigh each compacted specimen to check against design density, identify, measure the No. 1 specimen (Note 1), place in the moist room, and measure the No. 1 specimen again at the end of the 7-day storage period as described for Test Method A in 5.2.3-5.2.8 (Note 2).

6.3 Procedure:

6.3.1 Proceed as directed in Test Method A (see 5.3).

7. Calculation

7.1 Calculate the volume and water content changes and the soil-cement losses of the specimens as follows:

7.1.1 Calculate the difference between the volume of specimen No. 1 at the time of molding and subsequent volumes as a percentage of the original volume.

7.1.2 Calculate the water content of specimen No. 1 at the time of molding and subsequent water contents as a percentage of the original oven-dry weight of the specimen.

7.1.3 Correct the oven-dry weight of specimen No. 2 as obtained in 5.3.6 for water that has reacted with the cement and soil during the test and is retained in the specimen at 230°F (110°C), as follows:

$$\text{Corrected oven-dry weight} = (A/B) \times 100 \quad (1)$$

where:

A = oven-dry weight after drying at 230°F (100°C), and
B = percentage of water retained in specimen plus 100.

The percentage of water retained in specimen No. 2 after drying at 110°C for use in the above formula can be assumed to be equal to the water retained in specimen No. 1. When No. 1 specimens are not molded, the foregoing data are not available and the average values prescribed in Table 1 are used.

7.1.4 Calculate the soil-cement loss of specimen No. 2 as a percentage of the original oven-dry weight of the specimen as follows:

$$\text{Soil-cement loss, \%} = (A/B) \times 100 \quad (2)$$

where:

A = original calculated oven-dry weight minus final corrected oven-dry weight, and
B = original calculated oven-dry weight.

8. Report

8.1 The report shall include the following:

8.1.1 The designed optimum water content and maximum density of the molded specimens,

8.1.2 The water content and density obtained in molded specimens,

NOTE 7—Good laboratory practice permits the following tolerances between design factors and those obtained in the molded specimens:

Moisture content	± 1 percentage point
Density	± 3 lb/ft ³ (0.048 g/cm ³)

TABLE 1 Average Values

AASHTO Soil Classification	Average Water Retained After Drying at 230°F (110°C), %
A-1, A-3	1.5
A-2	2.5
A-4, A-5	3.0
A-6, A-7	3.5

8.1.3 The designed cement content, in percent, of the molded specimens,

8.1.4 The maximum volume change, in percent, and maximum water content during test of specimen No. 1, and

8.1.5 The soil-cement loss, in percent, of specimen No. 2.

9. Precision and Bias

9.1 *Precision*—Only limited data are available from which to judge the variability of results for these test methods. These data are shown in Table 2.

9.1.1 A larger amount of weight loss data is listed under Test Methods D 560. It is expected that variations of results of these tests, Test Methods D 559, would be similar since the same brushing operation is used in both test methods to achieve the weight loss.

9.1.2 Experience indicates that the variations in test results are greater for high weight losses and less for low weight losses. The degree of variation of most interest is that at the allowable weight loss criteria. Suggested allowable weight loss criteria are given in the literature.⁵

9.2 *Bias*—Since there is no accepted reference material suitable for determining the bias for the procedure for measuring weight loss, no statement on bias is being made.

10. Keywords

10.1 durability; soil-cement; soil-cement mixtures; soil stabilization; wet-dry

TABLE 2 Weight Loss of Duplicate Specimens in Wetting and Drying Test^A

Soil No.	AASHTO Soil Class	Cement Content, %	Weight Losses of Duplicate Specimens, %
8939	A-1-b (0)	2	17, 19
		3	6, 0
		5	5, 1
8295	A-4 (5)	3	9, 11
		5	6, 2
		7	0, 0
8942	A-6 (10)	10	0, 2
		3	20, 25
		5	6, 7
9069	A-4 (8)	7	1, 1
		10	0, 0
		4	12, 12
		6	7, 6
		8	3, 3
		10	2, 2

^A Molded from same batch by same operator. Data from Packard, R. G., "Alternate Methods for Measuring Freeze-Thaw and Wet-Dry Resistance of Soil-Cement Mixtures," *Highway Research Board Bulletin* No. 353, 1962.



SUMMARY OF CHANGES

This section identifies the principal changes to these test methods that have been incorporated since the last issue.

- (1) Added new sentence at the end of Section 1.2, Method 3, to clarify the applicable materials as required in Test Method D 698 when using 4-in. (101.60-mm) mold.
- (2) Added Practice D 3740 as a referenced document in Section 2 to conform to the recommended D-18 practice.
- (3) Added new Note 1 in Section 3 to reference Practice D 3740. Renumbered the remaining notes.

- (4) Added new Section 10 on Keywords.
- (5) Added Summary of Changes to reflect the changes made in this revision.
- (6) Changed “moisture content” to “water content” in Sections 1.1, 4.5, 5.1.4, 5.2.2, 5.2.5, 5.2.8, 5.3.7, 6.2.2, 7.1, 7.1.2, 8.1.1, 8.1.2, and 8.1.4 to conform to current D-18 Terminology.

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