



Standard Practice for Enclosed Carbon-Arc Exposures of Plastics¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This practice covers specific procedures and test conditions that are applicable for exposure of plastics in enclosed carbon-arc devices conducted in accordance with Practices G 151 and G 153. This practice also covers the preparation of test specimens, the test conditions suited for plastics, and the evaluation of test results.

NOTE 1—Enclosed carbon-arc exposures are described in Practice G 23, which described very specific equipment designs. Practice G 23 is being replaced by Practice G 151, which describes performance criteria for all exposure devices that use laboratory light sources, and by Practice G 153, which gives requirements for exposing nonmetallic materials in enclosed carbon-arc devices. Practice G 23 will be balloted for withdrawal before December 2000.

1.2 This practice does not cover filtered open-flame carbon-arc exposures of plastics, which are covered in Practice D 1499. Practice D 5031 describes enclosed carbon-arc exposures of paints and related coatings.

1.3 *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.*

NOTE 2—This practice is not equivalent to any ISO practice for laboratory accelerated exposures of plastics.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:

D 1499 Practice for Operating Light- and Water-Exposure Apparatus (Carbon-Arc Type) for Exposure of Plastics²

D 3980 Practice for Interlaboratory Testing of Paint and Related Materials³

D 5031 Practice for Conducting Tests on Paints and Related Coatings and Materials Using Enclosed Carbon-Arc Light- and Water-Exposure Apparatus³

D 5870 Practice for Calculating Property Retention Index of Plastics⁴

¹ This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D-20 on Plastics and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D20.50 on Permanence Properties. Current edition approved Jan. 10, 1999. Published April 1999.

² *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 08.01.

³ *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 06.01.

⁴ *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 08.03.

E 691 Practice for Conducting an Interlaboratory Study to Determine the Precision of a Test Method⁵

G 23 Practice for Operating Light-Exposure Apparatus (Carbon-Arc Type) With and Without Water for Exposure of Nonmetallic Materials⁵

G 113 Terminology Relating to Natural and Artificial Weathering Tests of Nonmetallic Materials⁵

G 141 Guide for Addressing Variability in Exposure Testing on Nonmetallic Materials⁵

G 147 Practice for Conditioning and Handling of Nonmetallic Materials for Natural and Artificial Weathering Tests⁵

G 151 Practice for Exposing Nonmetallic Materials in Accelerated Test Devices That Use Laboratory Light Sources⁵

G 152 Practice for Operating Open-Flame Carbon-Arc Light Apparatus for Exposure of Nonmetallic Materials⁵

G 153 Practice for Operating Enclosed Carbon-Arc Light Apparatus for Exposure of Nonmetallic Materials⁵

3. Terminology

3.1 The definitions in Terminology G 113 are applicable to this practice.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 The ability of a plastic material to resist deterioration of its electrical, mechanical, and optical properties caused by exposure to light, heat, and water can be very significant for many applications. This practice is intended to induce property changes associated with end-use conditions, including the effects of sunlight, moisture, and heat. The exposure used in this practice is not intended to simulate the deterioration caused by localized weather phenomena such as atmospheric pollution, biological attack, and saltwater exposure.

NOTE 3—**Caution:** Variation in results may be expected when operating conditions are varied within the accepted limits of this practice; therefore, no reference to the use of this practice shall be made unless accompanied by a report prepared in accordance with Section 9 that describes the specific operating conditions used. Refer to Practice G 151 for detailed information on the caveats applicable to use of results obtained in accordance with this practice.

NOTE 4—Additional information on sources of variability and on strategies for addressing variability in the design, execution, and data analysis of laboratory-accelerated exposure tests is found in Guide G 141.

⁵ *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 14.02.

4.2 Reproducibility of test results between laboratories has been shown to be good when the stability of materials is evaluated in terms of performance ranking compared to other materials or to a control; therefore, exposure of a similar material of known performance (a control) at the same time as the test materials is strongly recommended.^{6,7} It is recommended that at least three replicates of each material be exposed to allow for statistical evaluation of results.

4.3 Test results will depend upon the care that is taken to operate the equipment in accordance with Practice G 153. Significant factors include regulation of line voltage, freedom from salt or other deposits from water, temperature and humidity control, and conditions of the electrodes.

5. Apparatus

5.1 The enclosed carbon-arc apparatus used shall conform to the requirements defined in Practices G 151 and G 153.

5.2 Unless otherwise specified, the spectral power distribution of the enclosed carbon-arc shall conform to the requirements in Practice G 153 for enclosed carbon-arc with borosilicate glass globes.

6. Test Specimen

6.1 The size and shape of specimens to be exposed will be determined by the specifications of the particular test method used to evaluate the effects of the exposure on the specimens; therefore, the test method shall be determined by the parties concerned. Where practical, it is recommended that specimens be sized to fit specimen holders and racks supplied with the exposure apparatus. Unless supplied with a specific backing as an integral part of the test, specimens shall be mounted so that only the minimum specimen area required for support by the holder shall be covered. This unexposed surface must not be used as part of the test area.

6.2 Unless otherwise specified, exposure at least three replicate specimens of each test and control material.

6.3 Follow the procedures described in Practice G 147 for identification and conditioning and handling of specimens of test, control, and reference materials prior to, during, and after exposure.

6.4 Do not mask the face of a specimen for the purpose of showing on one panel the effects of various exposure times. Misleading results may be obtained by this method, since the masked portion of the specimen is still exposed to temperature and humidity cycles that in many cases will affect results.

6.5 Since the thickness of a specimen may markedly affect the results, thickness of test and control specimens shall be within $\pm 10\%$ of the nominal dimensions.

NOTE 5—This is especially important when mechanical properties are being investigated.

6.6 Incident energy at the extremes of the specimen exposure area in older equipment may be only 70 % of that at the

center. If the irradiance at any position within the exposure area is less than 90 % of the peak irradiance, follow one of the procedures outlined in Practice G 153 to ensure either equal radiant exposure or compensation for differences in radiant exposure.

6.7 Retain a supply of unexposed file specimens of all materials evaluated. When destructive tests are run, ensure that sufficient file specimens are retained so that the property of interest can be determined on unexposed file specimens each time exposed materials are evaluated.

6.8 Specimens should not be removed from the exposure apparatus for more than 24 h and then returned for additional tests, since this does not produce the same results on all materials as tests run without this type of interruption. When specimens are removed from the exposure apparatus for 24 h or more, and then returned for additional exposure, report the elapsed time in accordance with Section 9.

NOTE 6—Since the stability of the file specimen also may be time-dependent, users are cautioned that over prolonged exposure periods, or where small differences in the order of acceptable limits are anticipated, comparison of exposed specimens with the file specimen may not be valid. Instrumental measurements are recommended whenever possible.

7. Procedure

7.1 Practice G 153 lists several exposure cycles that are used for enclosed carbon-arc exposures of nonmetallic materials. Obtain mutual agreement between all concerned parties for the specific exposure cycle used. Additional intervals and methods of wetting, by spray or condensation, or both, may be substituted upon mutual agreement among the concerned parties.

7.1.1 By historical convention, the following exposure cycle has been commonly used for plastics:

7.1.2 Continuous light with equilibrium uninsulated black panel temperature controlled to $63 \pm 3^\circ\text{C}$ ($145 \pm 9^\circ\text{F}$), consisting of the following alternating intervals:

7.1.2.1 102 minutes light only followed by 18 minutes of light with water sprayed on the test specimens.

7.1.3 Unless otherwise specified, in devices which allow for control of relative humidity, maintain relative humidity at a $50 \pm 5\%$ equilibrium during the light-only interval.

NOTE 7—The equilibrium black panel temperature is obtained without a spray period. For light intervals less than 30 min the maximum black panel temperature may not reach equilibrium.

NOTE 8—The test cycle described in 7.1.1 (also referred to as the 102/18 cycle) may not provide adequate simulation of the effects of outdoor exposure.

7.2 It is recommended that all unused spaces in the specimen exposure area be filled with blank metal panels.

7.3 Water Purity:

7.3.1 The purity of water used for specimen spray is very important. Without proper treatment to remove cations, anions, organics, and particularly silica, exposed panels will develop spots or stains that may not occur in exterior exposures.

7.3.2 Follow the requirements for water purity described in Practice G 151.

7.3.3 If specimens are found to have deposits or stains after exposure in the apparatus, the water purity must be checked to determine if it meets the requirements of 7.3.2. On some

⁶ Fischer, R., "Results of Round Robin Studies of Light- and Water-Exposure Standard Practices," *Symposium on Accelerated and Outdoor Durability Testing of Organic Materials*, ASTM STP 1202, ASTM, 1993, p.

⁷ Ketola, W. and Fischer, B., "Characterization and Use of Reference Materials in Accelerated Durability Tests," *VAMAS Technical Report No. 30*, available from NIST, Gaithersburg, MD.

occasions, exposed specimens can be contaminated by deposits from bacteria that can grow in the purified water used for specimen spray. If bacterial contamination is detected, the entire system used for specimen water spray must be flushed with chlorine and thoroughly rinsed prior to resuming exposures.

7.3.4 The temperature of water used for specimen spray should be $16 \pm 5^\circ\text{C}$ ($60.8 \pm 9^\circ\text{F}$).

7.3.5 When the preceding water purity requirements are met and there is disagreement between parties on the extent of problems caused by stain or deposit, run referee tests in at least one other laboratory that can meet the water quality requirements described in 7.3.

7.4 Some tests for lightfastness are run without any specimen wetting. When this type of test is required, omit the period where water is sprayed on specimens.

7.5 It is recommended that a control material be exposed at the same time as the test specimens for comparison purposes if performance comparisons are not being made between the test materials themselves. All concerned parties must agree on the control material used.

7.6 Identification of any control specimen used shall accompany the report.

8. Periods of Exposure and Evaluation of Test Results

8.1 In most cases, periodic evaluation of test and control materials is necessary to determine the variation in magnitude and direction of property change as a function of exposure time or radiant exposure.

8.2 The time or radiant exposure necessary to produce a defined change in a material property can be used to evaluate or rank the stability of materials. The method is preferred over evaluating materials after an arbitrary exposure time or radiant exposure.

8.2.1 Exposure to an arbitrary time or radiant exposure may be used for the purpose of a specific test if agreed upon between the parties concerned or if required for conformance to a particular specification. When a single exposure period is used, select a time or radiant exposure that will produce the largest performance differences between the test materials or between the test material and the control material.

8.2.2 The minimum exposure time used shall be that necessary to produce a substantial change in the property of interest for the least stable material being evaluated. An exposure time that produces a significant change in one type of material cannot be assumed to be applicable to other types of materials.

8.2.3 The relation between time to failure in an exposure conducted in accordance with this practice and service life in an outdoor environment requires determination of a valid acceleration factor. Do not use arbitrary acceleration factors relating time in an exposure conducted in accordance with this practice and time in an outdoor environment because they can give erroneous information. The acceleration factor is material-dependent and is only valid if it is based on data from a sufficient number of separate exterior and laboratory-accelerated exposures so that results used to relate times to failure in each exposure can be analyzed using statistical methods.

NOTE 9—An example of a statistical analysis using multiple laboratory and exterior exposures to calculate an acceleration factor is described by J.A. Simms.⁸ See Practice G 151 for more information and additional cautions about the use of acceleration factors.

8.3 After each exposure increment, evaluate or rate changes in exposed test specimens in accordance with applicable ASTM test methods.

NOTE 10—For some materials, changes may continue after the specimen has been removed from the exposure apparatus. Measurements (visual or instrumental) should be made within a standardized time period or as agreed upon between interested parties. The standardized time period needs to consider conditioning prior to testing.

8.4 Use of results from exposures conducted in accordance with this practice in specifications:

8.4.1 If a standard or specification for general use requires a definite property level after a specific time or radiant exposure in an exposure test conducted in accordance with this practice, base the specified property level on results from round-robin experiments run to determine the test reproducibility from the exposure and property measurement procedures. Conduct these round robins in accordance with Practice E 691 or Practice D 3980 and include a statistically representative sample of all laboratories or organizations who would normally conduct the exposure and property measurement.

8.4.2 If a standard or specification for use between two or three parties requires a definite property level after a specific time or radiant exposure in an exposure test conducted in accordance with this practice, base the specified property level on two independent experiments run in each laboratory to determine the reproducibility for the exposure and property measurement process. The reproducibility of the exposure/property measurement process is then used to determine the minimum level of property after the exposure that is mutually agreeable to all parties.

8.4.3 When reproducibility in results from an exposure test conducted in accordance with this practice has not been established through round-robin testing, specify performance requirements for materials in terms of comparison (ranked) to a control material. All specimens shall be exposed simultaneously in the same device. All concerned parties must agree on the specific control material used.

8.5 Conduct analysis of variance to determine whether any differences between test materials and control materials is statistically significant. Expose replicates of the test specimen and the control specimen so that statistically significant performance differences can be determined.

NOTE 11—Fischer illustrates use of rank comparison between test and control materials in specifications.⁹

NOTE 12—ASTM Committee G-3 on Weathering and Durability is developing a Guide for Application of Basic Statistical Methods to Weathering Tests, which will include examples showing use of analysis of variance to compare materials.

⁸ Simms, J.A., *Journal of Coatings Technology*, Vol 50, 1987, pp. 45–53.

⁹ Fischer, R., Ketola, W., "Impact of Research on Development of ASTM Durability Testing Standards," *Symposium on Durability Testing of Non-Metallic Materials, ASTM STP 1294*, ASTM, 1995.

9. Report

9.1 Report the following information:

9.1.1 Type and model of exposure device;

9.1.2 Type of light source;

9.1.3 Average distance from specimens to light source;

9.1.4 Type and age of filters at the beginning of the exposure, and whether any of the filters were replaced during the period of exposure;

9.1.5 Type of black panel (uninsulated or insulated) used;

9.1.6 If required, irradiance in $\text{Wm}^{-2} \cdot \text{nm}^{-1}$, or radiant exposure in Jm^{-2} , at the sample location, and the wavelength region in which the measurements were made;

9.1.6.1 Do not report irradiance or radiant exposure unless direct measurement of irradiance was made during the exposure.

9.1.7 Elapsed exposure time;

9.1.8 Light- and dark-water humidity cycle employed;

9.1.9 Operating black panel temperature;

9.1.10 Operating relative humidity;

9.1.11 Type of spray water;

9.1.11.1 Total solids and silica level of water used for specimen spray (if above limits specified in 7.3);

9.1.12 Type of spray nozzle;

9.1.13 Specimen repositioning procedure; and,

9.1.14 Results of property tests. Where retention of characteristic property is reported, calculate results in accordance with Practice D 5870.

10. Precision and Bias

10.1 *Precision*—The repeatability and reproducibility of results obtained in exposures conducted in accordance with this practice will vary with the materials being tested, the material property being measured, and the specific test conditions and cycles that are used. It is essential to determine reproducibility of the exposure/property measurement process when using the results from exposures conducted in accordance with this practice in product specifications.

10.2 *Bias*—Bias cannot be determined because no acceptable standard weathering reference materials are available.

11. Keywords

11.1 carbon-arc; degradation; enclosed carbon-arc; exposure; light exposure; ultraviolet

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