



Designation: **C451 – 13 C451 – 18**

Standard Test Method for Early Stiffening of Hydraulic Cement (Paste Method)¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation C451; 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 reapproval. A superscript epsilon (ϵ) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

1. Scope*

1.1 This test method covers the determination of early stiffening in hydraulic-cement paste.

1.2 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as standard. No other units of measurement are included in this standard.

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.*

Warning: Fresh hydraulic-cementitious mixtures are caustic and may cause chemical burns to skin and tissue upon prolonged exposure.²

1.4 The text of this standard references notes and footnotes which provide explanatory material. These notes and footnotes (excluding those in tables and figures) shall not be considered as requirements of the standard.

1.5 *This international standard was developed in accordance with internationally recognized principles on standardization established in the Decision on Principles for the Development of International Standards, Guides and Recommendations issued by the World Trade Organization Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Committee.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*³

[C150/C150M](#) Specification for Portland Cement

[C183/C183M](#) Practice for Sampling and the Amount of Testing of Hydraulic Cement

[C187](#) Test Method for Amount of Water Required for Normal Consistency of Hydraulic Cement Paste

[C219](#) Terminology Relating to Hydraulic Cement

[C305](#) Practice for Mechanical Mixing of Hydraulic Cement Pastes and Mortars of Plastic Consistency

[C670](#) Practice for Preparing Precision and Bias Statements for Test Methods for Construction Materials

[C1005](#) Specification for Reference Masses and Devices for Determining Mass and Volume for Use in the Physical Testing of Hydraulic Cements

[D1193](#) Specification for Reagent Water

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions:*

3.1.1 *early stiffening, n*—the early development of stiffness in the working characteristics of a hydraulic-cement paste, mortar, or concrete; varieties include false set and flash set.

3.1.2 *false set, n*—the early development of stiffness in the working characteristics of a hydraulic-cement paste, mortar, or concrete without the evolution of much heat, which stiffness can be dispelled and plasticity regained by further mixing without addition of water; also known as “grab set,” “premature stiffening,” “hesitation set,” and “rubber set.”

3.1.3 *flash set, n*—the early development of stiffness in the working characteristics of a hydraulic-cement paste, mortar, or concrete, usually with the evolution of considerable heat, which stiffness cannot be dispelled nor can the plasticity be regained by further mixing without addition of water; also known as “quick set.”

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee C01 on Cement and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee C01.30 on Time of Set. Current edition approved Dec. 1, 2013/Oct. 1, 2018. Published January 2014/October 2018. Originally approved in 1960. Last previous edition approved in 2008/2013 as C451 – 08; C451 – 13. DOI: 10.1520/C0451-13-10.1520/C0451-18.

² Section on Safety, Manual of Cement Testing, *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 04.01.

³ For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard’s Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

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

3.1.4 Refer to Terminology **C219** for definitions of other terms.

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 A paste is prepared with the cement to be tested, using sufficient water to give a required initial penetration as measured by the Vicat apparatus at a stipulated time after completion of mixing. A second penetration, termed the final penetration, is measured at a later stipulated time. The ratio of final penetration to initial penetration is calculated as a percentage.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 The purpose of this test method is to determine the degree to which a cement paste develops early stiffening or to establish whether or not a cement complies with a specification limit on early stiffening.

5.2 When used for establishing compliance with a specification limit, the specification requirement is customarily stated in terms of the minimum allowable final penetration, in percent, calculated in accordance with the Calculation Section. When used for estimating the relative tendency of a cement to manifest early stiffening, additional information of value may be obtained if the remix procedure described in the Procedure Section is employed. Under some conditions, a judgment may be made by comparing the behavior in the initial test and in the remix procedure to differentiate a relatively less serious and less persistent tendency to early stiffening (false set) from one that is more persistent and, consequently, more serious (flash set).

5.3 Severe false setting in a cement may cause difficulty from a placing and handling standpoint, but it is not likely to cause difficulties where concrete is mixed for a longer time than usual, as usually occurs in transit mixing, or where it is remixed prior to placing or transporting, as occurs in concrete pumping operations. It is most likely to be noticeable where concrete is mixed for a short period of time in stationary mixers and transported to the forms in non-agitating equipment, such as on some paving jobs, and when concrete is made in an on-site batch plant.

5.4 Cements with severe false setting usually require slightly more water to produce the same consistency, which may be expected to result in slightly lower strengths and increased drying shrinkage.

5.5 Early stiffening resulting from false set is not likely to cause a cement to fail the applicable time of setting requirement.

5.6 Early stiffening resulting from flash set, depending on severity, can cause a cement to fail the applicable time of setting requirement.

6. Apparatus

6.1 *Vicat Apparatus*, conforming to the requirements of Test Method **C187**.

6.2 *Flat Trowel*, having a sharpened straight-edged steel blade 100 to 150 mm in length. The edges when placed on a plane surface shall not depart from straightness by more than ~~± mm~~ 1 mm.

6.3 *Mixer, Bowl, Paddle, and Scraper*, conforming to the requirements of Practice **C305**.

6.4 *Glass Graduates*, 200 or 250 ml capacity, conforming to the requirements of Specification **C1005**.

6.5 *Masses and Mass Determining Devices*, conforming to the requirements of Specification **C1005**. The devices for determining mass shall be evaluated for ~~precision and accuracy at continuing precise performance utilizing the procedure in Specification C1005~~ a total load of 1000 g., Appendix X1 using a verification check mass of approximately 1000 g.

6.6 *Conical Ring*, made of a rigid, non-corroding, non-absorbernt material, having a height of 40 ± 1 mm, an inside diameter at the bottom of 70 ± 3 mm, and an inside diameter at the top of 60 ± 3 mm (see Test Method **C187**, Fig. 1 item G).

6.7 *Plane Non-Absorptive Plate*, 100 ± 5 mm square, of similar planeness, corrosivity, and absorptivity to that of glass (see Test Method **C187**, Fig. 1 item H).

6.8 Inspect and document Section 6 apparatus conformance to the requirements of this test method at least every 2½ years ~~½ years~~ (see [Note 1](#)).

NOTE 1—Specification **C1005** requires annual compliance checks for the reference masses and for the devices for determining mass.

7. Reagent

7.1 *Mixing Water*—Potable water is satisfactory for routine tests. For all referee and cooperative tests, use reagent water conforming to the requirements of Specification **D1193** for Type III or Type IV grades of reagent water.

8. Sampling

8.1 When the test is part of acceptance testing, sample the cement in accordance with Practice ~~**E183C183/C183M**~~.

9. Conditioning

9.1 Maintain the temperature of the room, dry materials, paddle, bowl, conical ring, and base plate at 23.0 ± 3.0 °C. 3.0°C. Maintain the temperature of the mixing water at 23.0 ± 2.0 °C. 2.0°C.