



Standard Test Method for Air Content of Hydraulic Cement Mortar¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation C185; 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.

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

1. Scope*

1.1 This test method covers the determination of the air content of hydraulic cement mortar under the conditions hereinafter specified.

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 Values in SI shall be obtained by measurement in SI units or by appropriate conversion, using the Rules for Conversion and Rounding in [IEEE/ASTM SI 10](#), of measurements made in other units.

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, health, and environmental practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

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

1.6 *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

[C91/C91M](#) Specification for Masonry Cement

[C109/C109M](#) Test Method for Compressive Strength of Hydraulic Cement Mortars (Using 2-in. or [50-mm] Cube Specimens)

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

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

[C219](#) Terminology Relating to Hydraulic and Other Inorganic Cements

[C230/C230M](#) Specification for Flow Table for Use in Tests of Hydraulic Cement

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

[C511](#) Specification for Mixing Rooms, Moist Cabinets, Moist Rooms, and Water Storage Tanks Used in the Testing of Hydraulic Cements and Concretes

[C595/C595M](#) Specification for Blended Hydraulic Cements

[C778](#) Specification for Standard Sand

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

[C1157/C1157M](#) Performance Specification for Hydraulic Cement

[C1328/C1328M](#) Specification for Plastic (Stucco) Cement

[C1329/C1329M](#) Specification for Mortar Cement

[E438](#) Specification for Glasses in Laboratory Apparatus

[E694](#) Specification for Laboratory Glass Volumetric Apparatus

[IEEE/ASTM SI 10](#) American National Standard for Use of the International System of Units (SI): The Modern Metric System

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions:*

3.1.1 The terms in this test method are defined in Terminology [C219](#).

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 Prepare a mortar with standard sand and the cement to be tested, using a water content sufficient to give a required flow. Compact the mortar into a measure of known volume and determine mass. Calculate the air content from the measured

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² Refer to the section on Safety Precautions, “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

density of the mortar, the known densities of the constituents, and the mixture proportions.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 The purpose of this test method is to determine whether or not the hydraulic cement under test meets the air-entraining or non-air-entraining requirements of the applicable hydraulic cement specification for which the test is being made. The air content of concrete is influenced by many factors other than the potential of the cement for air entrainment.

6. Apparatus

6.1 *Flow Table, Flow Mold, and Caliper* shall conform to Specification **C230/C230M**.

6.2 *Measure*—A cylindrical measure having an inside diameter of 76 ± 2 mm and a depth (approximately 88 mm) adjusted by standardization with water to contain 400 ± 1 mL at 23.0 ± 2.0 °C. For the purposes of this test, the capacity of the measure in millilitres is the mass of the water content of the measure, in grams, divided by 0.9976, no correction in mass being made for the buoyant effect of air. The measure shall have a uniform wall thickness. The thickness of the wall and bottom shall not be less than 2.9 mm. The total mass of the empty measure shall not be more than 900 g. The measure shall be made of a metal not attacked by the cement mortar.

6.3 *Verification*—Verify the volume of the 400 mL measure by filling with distilled water at 23.0 ± 2.0 °C to a point where the meniscus extends appreciably above the top of the measure, placing a clean piece of plate glass on the top of the measure, and allowing the excess water to be squeezed out. The absence of air bubbles as seen through the glass ensures that the measure is completely full. Care shall be taken that the excess water is wiped from the sides of the container before weighing. Perform the verification at least every 2½ years.

6.4 *Mixer, Bowl, and Paddle*, shall conform to the apparatus section of Practice **C305**.

6.5 *Straightedge*—A steel straightedge not less than 200 mm long and not less than 1.5 mm nor more than 3.5 mm in thickness. Its edge shall not depart from a plane surface by more than 1 mm within any 150 mm segment of its length.

6.6 *Trowel*, having a steel blade 100 to 150 mm in length, with straight edges. Its edges shall not depart from a plane surface by more than 1 mm in the edge's entire length.

6.7 *Weights and Weighing Devices*, shall conform to Specification **C1005**. Evaluate the weighing device for precision and accuracy at a total load of 2 kg.

6.8 *Glass Graduates*—Glass graduates of 250 mL capacity, conforming to the requirements of Specifications **E438** and **E694**.

6.9 *Tamper*, conforming to the requirements of Test Method **C109/C109M**. The tamping face of the tamper shall be flat and at right angles to the length of the tamper.

6.10 *Tapping Stick*, a piece of hard wood having a diameter of approximately 16 mm and a length of approximately 152 mm.

6.11 *Spoon*—A metal restaurant-type serving spoon not less than 230 mm in length and with a bowl approximately 100 mm in length.

7. Temperature and Humidity

7.1 Maintain the temperature of the dry materials at 23.0 ± 4.0 °C. Maintain the temperature and the humidity of the mixing room and the temperature of the mixing water in accordance with Specification **C511** (Section Requirements for Cement Mixing Rooms).

8. Standard Sand

8.1 Use sand conforming to the requirements of Specification **C778** for 20–30 sand.

9. Sampling

9.1 Sample the cement in accordance with Practice **C183/C183M**.

NOTE 1—Polyvinyl chloride (PVC) sample containers, upon occasion, have been found to affect the air-entraining potential of a cement sample. The same problem might be experienced with containers made from other plastics.

10. Procedure

10.1 *Batch*—Proportion the standard mortar using 350 g cement to 1400 g 20–30 standard sand and sufficient water to give a flow of $87\frac{1}{2} \pm 7\frac{1}{2}$ % when determined in accordance with **10.3**.

NOTE 2—Test Method C185 refers to hydraulic cements that comply under Specifications **C150/C150M**, **C595/C595M**, and **C1157/C1157M**. Masonry cements (see Specification **C91/C91M**), mortar cements (see Specification **C1329/C1329M**), and plastic cements (see Specification **C1328/C1328M**) require different sand, mass, and flow. Refer to the applicable specification.

10.2 *Mixing of Mortar*—Mix the mortar in accordance with Practice **C305**.

10.3 *Flow Determination*—Carefully wipe dry the flow-table top and place the flow mold at the center of it. Using the spoon, place a layer of mortar about 25 mm in thickness in the mold and tamp 20 times with the tamper. The tamping pressure shall be just sufficient to ensure uniform filling of the mold. Overfill the top of the mold approximately 20 mm with mortar and tamp as specified for the first layer. Then cut off the mortar to a plane surface, flush with the top of the mold, by drawing the straightedge or the edge of the trowel with a sawing motion across the top of the mold. Wipe the flow table top clean and dry, being especially careful to remove any water from around the edge of the mold. Lift the mold away from the mortar 1 min after completing the mixing operation. Immediately drop the table ten times in accordance with Specification **C230/C230M**. The flow is the resulting increase in average diameter of the mortar mass, as determined with the calipers, measured on at least four diameters at approximately equispaced intervals, expressed as a percentage of the original diameter. Make trial mortars with varying percentages of water until the specified flow is obtained. Make each trial with fresh mortar.

10.4 *Mass per 400 mL of Mortar*—When the quantity of mixing water has been found that produces a flow of $87\frac{1}{2} \pm$