



Standard Specification for Polyethylene (PE) Plastic Tubing¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D2737; 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 specification covers polyethylene (PE) plastic tubing in outside diameters and SDR's that are pressure rated for water. Included are requirements for PE compounds, and requirements and test methods for PE plastic tubing workmanship, dimensions, elevated temperature sustained pressure, burst pressure and marking.

1.2 The text of this specification references notes, footnotes, and appendixes which provide explanatory material. These notes and footnotes shall not be considered as requirements of the specification. Notes and footnotes in tables and figures, and Supplementary Requirements are requirements of the specification.

1.3 The values stated in inch-pound units are to be regarded as standard. The values given in parentheses are mathematical conversions to SI units that are provided for information only and are not considered standard.

NOTE 1—Joining PE plastic tubing with fittings that require flaring the tubing is not recommended because Practice D3140, the technique used to make the flare has been withdrawn (discontinued).

NOTE 2—References and PE compound descriptions for PE2305, PE2406, PE3306, PE3406, and PE3408 have been removed due to changes in Specification D3350 and PPI TR-3. For removed designations, refer to previous editions of Specification D2737, Specification D3350, PPI TR-3 and PPI TR-4. The removal of these PE compounds does not affect pipelines that are in service. PE compounds and material designations resulting from changes in Specification D3350 and PPI TR-3 are addressed in Section 5.

1.4 The following safety hazards caveat pertains only to the test methods portion, Section 7, of this specification: *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 *This international standard was developed in accordance with internationally recognized principles on standard-*

ization 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:²

- D618 Practice for Conditioning Plastics for Testing
- D638 Test Method for Tensile Properties of Plastics
- D1238 Test Method for Melt Flow Rates of Thermoplastics by Extrusion Plastometer
- D1598 Test Method for Time-to-Failure of Plastic Pipe Under Constant Internal Pressure
- D1599 Test Method for Resistance to Short-Time Hydraulic Pressure of Plastic Pipe, Tubing, and Fittings
- D1600 Terminology for Abbreviated Terms Relating to Plastics
- D1603 Test Method for Carbon Black Content in Olefin Plastics
- D2122 Test Method for Determining Dimensions of Thermoplastic Pipe and Fittings
- D2565 Practice for Xenon-Arc Exposure of Plastics Intended for Outdoor Applications
- D2837 Test Method for Obtaining Hydrostatic Design Basis for Thermoplastic Pipe Materials or Pressure Design Basis for Thermoplastic Pipe Products
- D3350 Specification for Polyethylene Plastics Pipe and Fittings Materials
- D3140 Practice for Flaring Polyolefin Pipe and Tubing (Withdrawn 1999)³
- D4218 Test Method for Determination of Carbon Black Content in Polyethylene Compounds by the Muffle-Furnace Technique
- F412 Terminology Relating to Plastic Piping Systems
- G154 Practice for Operating Fluorescent Ultraviolet (UV) Lamp Apparatus for Exposure of Nonmetallic Materials

¹ This specification is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee F17 on Plastic Piping Systems and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee F17.26 on Olefin Based Pipe.

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² 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.

³ The last approved version of this historical standard is referenced on www.astm.org.

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

G155 Practice for Operating Xenon Arc Light Apparatus for Exposure of Non-Metallic Materials

2.2 *APWA Standard*.⁴

APWA Uniform Color Code

2.3 *NSF Standards*.⁵

NSF/ANSI Standard No. 14 for Plastic Piping Components and Related Materials

NSF/ANSI Standard No. 61 for Drinking Water Systems Components—Health Effects

2.4 *PPI Standards*.⁶

PPI TR-3 Policies and Procedures for Developing Hydrostatic Design Basis (HDB), Pressure Design Basis (PDB), Strength Design Basis (SDB), and Minimum Required Strength (MRS) Ratings for Thermoplastic Piping Materials or Pipe

PPI TR-4 HDB/SDB/PDB/MRS Listed Materials, PPI Listing of Hydrostatic Design Basis (HDB), Strength Design Basis (SDB), Pressure Design Basis (PDB), and Minimum Required Strength (MRS) Ratings for Thermoplastic Piping Materials or Pipe

4. Tubing Classification

4.1 *General*—This specification covers PE plastic tubing made from PE compounds in three standard dimension ratios and pressure rated for water. Pressure ratings for water are dependent on the PE compound in accordance with the following relationship:

$$PR = \frac{2 \times HDS}{(SDR+1)} \quad (1)$$

where:

PR = pressure rating for water, 73 °F (23 °C), psi (kPa)
HDS = hydrostatic design stress for water at 73 °F (23 °C), psi (kPa)

SDR = standard dimension ratio

NOTE 3—PR and HDS must have the same units. See **Appendix X1** for maximum pressure ratings for water.

4.2 This specification covers PE tubing in standard dimension ratios SDR 7.3, SDR 9, and SDR 11.

5. Materials

5.1 *Polyethylene Compound*—Polyethylene compounds suitable for use in the manufacture of tubing under this specification shall meet thermoplastic materials designation codes PE2708 or PE3608 or PE4608 or PE4710, and shall meet **Table 1** requirements for PE2708 or PE3608 or PE4608 or PE4710, and shall meet thermal stability, brittleness temperature and elongation at break requirements in accordance with **Specification D3350**.

5.1.1 *Color and Ultraviolet (UV) Stabilization*—Polyethylene compounds shall meet **Specification D3350** code C, D or E. In addition, Code C polyethylene compounds shall

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—Unless otherwise specified, definitions are in accordance with Terminology **F412** and abbreviations are in accordance with Terminology **D1600**.

⁴ Available from APWA, 1200 Main Street, Suite 1400 Kansas City, MO 64105-2100, <https://www.apwa.net/>

⁵ Available from NSF International, P.O. Box 130140, 789 N. Dixboro Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48113-0140, <http://www.nsf.org>.

⁶ Available from Plastics Pipe Institute (PPI), 105 Decker Court, Suite 825, Irving, TX 75062, <http://www.plasticpipe.org>.

TABLE 1 Polyethylene Compound Requirements

Requirement	Material Designation			
	PE2708	PE3608	PE4608	PE4710
	Required Value			
Minimum HDB at 140 °F (60 °C), psi (MPa), per Test Method D2837 and PPI TR-3	800 (5.5) ^A	800 (5.5) ^A	800 (5.5) ^A	800 (5.5) ^A
HDS for water at 73 °F (23 °C) psi (MPa), per Test Method D2837 and PPI TR-3 ^A	800 (5.5)	800 (5.5)	800 (5.5)	1000 (6.9)
Melt flow rate per Test Method D1238	≤0.40 g/10 min Cond. 190/2.16 or ≤20 g/10 min Cond. 190/21.6	≤0.15 g/10 min Cond. 190/2.16 or ≤20 g/10 min Cond. 190/21.6	≤0.15 g/10 min Cond. 190/2.16 or ≤20 g/10 min Cond. 190/21.6	≤0.15 g/10 min Cond. 190/2.16 or ≤20 g/10 min Cond. 190/21.6
Specification D3350 Cell Classification Property Requirement Density (natural base resin)	Required Value			
	2	3	4	4
SCG Resistance	7	6	6	7
Color and UV Stabilizer Code ^B	C, D or E	C, D or E	C, D or E	C, D or E

^A Contact manufacturer or see PPI TR-4 for listed value.

^B See **5.1.1**.

have 2 to 3 percent carbon black, and Code D or E polyethylene compounds shall have sufficient UV stabilizer to protect tubing from deleterious UV exposure effects during unprotected outdoor shipping and storage for at least eighteen (18) months.

NOTE 4—Pipe users should consult with the pipe manufacturer about the outdoor exposure life of the product under consideration. Evaluation of UV stabilizer in Code D or E PE compound using Practice D2565 or Practice G154 or Practice G155 may be useful for this purpose.

5.1.2 *Colors for solid color, an external color layer or color stripes*—In accordance with the APWA Uniform Color Code, blue shall identify potable water service; green shall identify sewer service; and purple (lavender) shall identify reclaimed water service. Yellow identifies gas service and shall not be used.

5.2 Products intended for contact with potable water shall be evaluated, tested and certified for conformance with NSF/ANSI Standard No. 61 or the health effects portion of NSF/ANSI Standard No. 14 by a certifying organization acceptable to the authority having jurisdiction.

5.3 *Rework Material*—Clean polyethylene compound from the manufacturer’s own tubing production that met 5.1 through 5.2 as new PE compound is suitable for re-extrusion into tubing when blended with new PE compound having the same material designation. Tubing containing rework material shall meet all the requirements of this specification.

6. Requirements

6.1 *Workmanship*—The tubing shall be homogeneous throughout and free from visible cracks, holes, foreign inclusions, or other defects. The tubing shall be as uniform as commercially practicable in color, opacity, density, and other physical properties. See 5.1.2.

6.2 *Dimensions and Tolerances:*

6.2.1 *Outside Diameters*—The outside diameters and tolerances shall be as shown in Table 2 when measured in accordance with 7.4.

6.2.1.1 *Out-of-roundness*—Out of roundness shall be in accordance with Table 2 as extruded, but before coiling for packaging when measured in accordance with 7.4.

NOTE 5—Coiling may increase out-of-roundness, depending on the coiling method and coil dimensions.

6.2.2 *Wall Thicknesses*—The wall thicknesses and tolerance shall be as shown in Table 3 when measured in accordance with 7.4. Wall thickness shall be inclusive of all extruded concentric layers.

6.2.3 *Wall Thickness Variation*—The wall thickness variation shall not exceed 12 % when measured in accordance with 7.4.

6.2.4 *Thickness of Outer Layer*—For tubing produced by simultaneous multiple extrusion, the outer concentric layer shall be at least 0.020 in (0.5 mm) thick.

6.3 *Bond*—For tubing produced by simultaneous multiple extrusion, the bond between the layers shall be strong and uniform. It shall not be possible to cleanly separate any two layers with a probe or point of a knife blade at any point.

6.4 *Carbon Black*—Polyethylene tubing produced using Code C polyethylene compound per 5.1.1 shall contain 2 to 3% carbon black when tested in accordance with 7.5.

6.5 *Burst Pressure*—The minimum burst pressure for tubing shall be as given in Table 4, when determined in accordance with 7.6 using a minimum hoop stress of 2520 psi (17.4 MPa) for Table 1 density cell 2 polyethylene compound or 2900 psi (20.0 MPa) for Table 1 density cell 3 or 4 polyethylene compound. In addition, the failure shall be ductile.

6.6 *Elevated Temperature Sustained Pressure*—Elevated temperature sustained pressure tests for each polyethylene compound designation per Table 1 used in production at the facility shall be conducted twice annually per 7.7.

6.7 *Inside Surface Ductility for Tubing*—Tubing shall be tested for inside surface ductility in accordance with 7.8 or 7.9.

NOTE 6—Tensile elongation testing per 7.9 provides a quantifiable result and is used for referee testing and in cases of disagreement.

7. Test Methods

7.1 *Conditioning*—Condition as specified in the test method. Where conditioning is not specified in the test method, condition the test specimens at 73 ± 3.6 °F (23 ± 2 °C) without regard to relative humidity for not less than 4 h prior to the test in accordance with Procedure A of Practice D618, or at 73 ± 3.6 °F (23 ± 2 °C) for not less than 1 h in accordance with Procedure D of Practice D618.

7.2 *Test Conditions*—Conduct tests in accordance with the conditions specified in the test method, or if not specified in the test method, at 73.4 ± 3.6 °F (23 ± 2 °C) without regard to relative humidity.

7.3 *Sampling*—The number and selection of samples shall be as specified in the test method, or if not specified in the test method, sample selection shall be as agreed upon by the purchaser and seller. In case of no prior agreement, any sample selected by the testing laboratory shall be deemed adequate.

TABLE 2 Outside Diameters and Tolerances for PE Plastic Tubing

Tubing Size	Outside Diameter, in. (mm)	Outside Diameter Tolerance, in. (mm)	Out-of-Roundness, in. (mm)
1/2	0.625 (15.87)	±0.004 (±0.10)	0.030 (0.76)
5/8	0.750 (19.05)	±0.004 (±0.10)	0.030 (0.76)
3/4	0.875 (22.23)	±0.004 (±0.10)	0.030 (0.76)
1	1.125 (28.58)	±0.005 (±0.13)	0.030 (0.76)
1 1/4	1.375 (34.93)	±0.005 (±0.13)	0.030 (0.76)
1 1/2	1.625 (41.23)	±0.006 (±0.15)	0.030 (0.76)
2	2.125 (53.98)	±0.006 (±0.15)	0.030 (0.76)

TABLE 3 Wall Thickness and Tolerances for PE Plastic Tubing

Tubing Size, in.	Wall Thickness, in. ^A											
	SDR 7.3				SDR 9				SDR 11			
	in.		(mm)		in.		(mm)		in.		(mm)	
	Minimum	Tolerance	Minimum	Tolerance	Minimum	Tolerance	Minimum	Tolerance	Minimum	Tolerance	Minimum	Tolerance
1/2	0.086	+0.010	(2.18)	(0.25)	0.069	+0.010	(1.75)	(0.25)	0.062	+0.010	(1.57)	(0.25)
5/8	0.103	+0.010	(2.62)	(0.25)	0.083	+0.010	(2.11)	(0.25)	0.068	+0.010	(1.73)	(0.25)
3/4	0.120	+0.012	(3.05)	(0.30)	0.097	+0.010	(2.46)	(0.25)	0.080	+0.010	(2.03)	(0.25)
1	0.154	+0.015	(3.91)	(0.38)	0.125	+0.012	(3.18)	(0.30)	0.102	+0.010	(2.59)	(0.25)
1 1/4	0.188	+0.019	(4.78)	(0.48)	0.153	+0.015	(3.89)	(0.38)	0.125	+0.012	(3.18)	(0.30)
1 1/2	0.233	+0.022	(5.92)	(0.56)	0.181	+0.018	(4.60)	(0.46)	0.148	+0.015	(3.76)	(0.38)
2	0.291	+0.029	(7.39)	(0.74)	0.236	+0.024	(5.99)	(0.61)	0.193	+0.019	(4.90)	(0.48)

^A The minimum is the lowest wall thickness of the pipe at any cross section. The maximum permitted wall thickness, at any cross section, is the minimum wall thickness plus the stated tolerance. All tolerances are on the plus side of the minimum requirement. Wall thickness variation shall be in accordance with 6.2.3.

TABLE 4 Minimum Burst Pressure for PE Plastic Tubing Pipe

SDR	Minimum Burst Pressure ^A psi (kPa)			
	PE2708		PE3608, PE4608, PE4710	
	psi	(kPa)	psi	(kPa)
7.3	800	(5517)	921	(6352)
9	630	(4345)	725	(5000)
11	504	(3476)	580	(4000)

^AMinimum burst pressure calculated in accordance with:

$$P_B \frac{2S}{D_o} - 1$$

where:

- P_B = burst test pressure, psi (kPa)
- S = minimum hoop fiber stress, psi. (kPa)
- S = 2520 psi (17,370 kPa) for Specification D3350 density cell 2 PE compound per Table 2.
- S = 2900 psi (20,000 kPa) for Specification D3350 density cell 3 and 4 PE compound per Table 2.
- D_o = measured average inside diameter, in. (mm)
- t = measured minimum wall thickness, in. (mm).

Test temperature tolerance ±3.6 °F (± 2 °C). Test pressure tolerance ± 5 psi (± 35 kPa);

7.3.1 *Test Specimens*—Not less than 50 % of the test specimens required for any pressure test shall have at least a part of the marking in their central sections. The central section is that portion of the tubing sample that is at least one pipe diameter away from an end closure. The entire marking shall be documented in testing records.

7.4 *Dimensions and Tolerances*—Use any length of tubing to determine the dimensions. Outside diameter, out-of-roundness, and wall thickness shall be measured in accordance with Test Method D2122.

7.4.1 *Outside Diameter*—Measure the outside diameter of the tubing in accordance with Test Method D2122. The average outside diameter is the arithmetic average of the maximum and minimum diameter at any cross section. The tolerance for out-of-roundness shall apply only to tubing prior to shipment.

7.5 *Carbon Black*—For all tubing manufactured with Code C polyethylene compound, determine in duplicate the carbon black content in accordance with Test Method D1603 or Test Method D4218.

7.6 *Burst Pressure*—The test equipment, procedures and failure definitions shall be as specified in Test Method D1599.

7.7 *Elevated Temperature Sustained Pressure Test*—Elevated temperature sustained pressure tests for each Table 1 material designation used in production of tubing in accordance with this specification at the facility shall be conducted per D1598, and Table 5 using water as the pressurizing medium. The “test sample” shall be three specimens of any tubing size or SDR. One Table 5 Condition for the applicable material designation shall be selected for the test.

7.7.1 For the selected Table 5 Condition, passing results are (a) non-failure for all three specimens at a time equal to or greater than the “minimum average time before failure”, or (b) not more than one ductile specimen failure and the average time before failure for all three specimens shall be greater than the specified “minimum average time before failure” for the selected Table 5 Condition, or (c) successful retest per 7.7.3.

7.7.2 For the selected Table 5 condition, failure to meet this requirement is (a) brittle failure of any specimen when tested at Table 5 Condition 1 through 6, or (b) ductile failure of all three specimens.

7.7.3 *Provision for Retest for Table 5 Conditions 1 through 5*—If a second ductile failure occurs before the “minimum average time before failure”, it is permissible to conduct one retest at a Table 5 Condition of lower stress and longer minimum average time before failure for the material designation. The retest sample shall be three additional specimens of the same tubing size and material designation from the same time frame as the test sample per 7.7. For the retest, any specimen failure before the “minimum average time before failure” shall be documented in testing records.

7.7.3 *Provision for Retest for Table 5 Conditions 1 through 5*—If a second ductile failure occurs before the “minimum average time before failure”, it is permissible to conduct one retest at a Table 5 Condition of lower stress and longer minimum average time before failure for the material designation. The retest sample shall be three additional specimens of the same tubing size and material designation from the same time frame as the test sample per 7.7. For the retest, any specimen failure before the “minimum average time before failure” shall be documented in testing records.