



Designation: ~~E2178 – 13~~ E2178 – 21

Standard Test Method for Air Determining Air Leakage Rate and Calculation of Air Permeance of Building Materials¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation E2178; 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.

1. Scope

1.1 This test method is to determine the air ~~permeance-leakage rate~~ of building materials at various pressure differentials with the intent of ~~determining~~calculating an assigned air permeance rate of the material at the reference pressure difference (ΔP) of 75 Pa.

1.2 The method is intended to assess flexible sheet or rigid panel-type materials using a 1 m \times 1 m specimen size.

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

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 ~~health~~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 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

[ASTM E2178-21](#)

<https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/sist/13ac4de7-caf6-495c-9bc3-5f8c9d3ebbeb/astm-e2178-21>

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*²

[E283/E283M](#) Test Method for Determining Rate of Air Leakage Through Exterior Windows, Skylights, Curtain Walls, and Doors Under Specified Pressure Differences Across the Specimen

[E631](#) Terminology of Building Constructions

[E1677](#) Specification for Air Barrier (AB) Material or Assemblies for Low-Rise Framed Building Walls

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions:*

3.1.1 For definitions of general terms related to building construction used in this test method, refer to Terminology [E631](#).

3.2 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.2.1 *air leakage rate (Q), $L/(s \cdot m^2)$* —the air leakage per unit specimen area (A).

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee [E06](#) on Performance of Buildings and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee [E06.41](#) on Air Leakage and Ventilation Performance.

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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~~ standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

3.2.2 *air permeance*—*permeance, L/s*—the rate of air flow (L/s), per unit area (m²) and per unit static pressure differential (Pa).

4. Significance and Use

4.1 The purpose of this test is to ~~measure the~~ calculate an assigned air permeance of flexible sheet or rigid panel-type materials at a reference air pressure differential of 75 Pa. The results of this test may be useful in determining suitability of that material as a component of an air retarder system.

4.2 This method does not address the installed air leakage performance of building materials. The installed performance of air retarder materials and air retarder systems in low-rise framed wall construction is addressed in Specification E1677.

5. Sampling

5.1 The number of specimens to be tested shall be suitable to establish an air leakage rate which is representative of the product. In no case shall less than five specimens be tested.

NOTE 1—Because of the variability in the manufacture of a product, the number of specimens to be tested may vary from product to product. Certain materials may have standard methods for sampling that shall be used to sample these materials.

6. Test Apparatus

6.1 A schematic of the air leakage rate test apparatus is presented in Fig. 1.

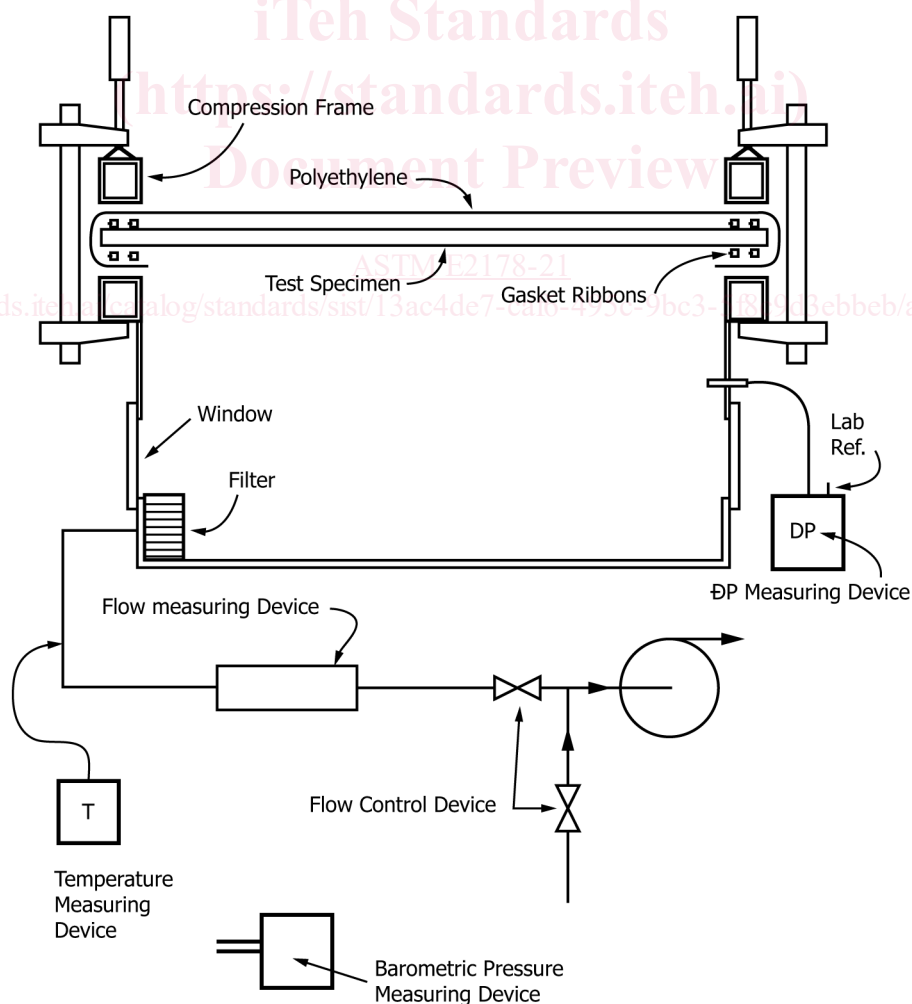


FIG. 1 General Configuration of Test Apparatus

6.1.1 *Airtight Test Chamber*—The airtight test chamber shall be at least 320 mm deep and capable of receiving a 1 m by 1 m test specimen, anchored to the test chamber by means of a compression frame and clamping devices. The test chamber and compression frame shall be stiff enough to limit deflection within the operating flexibility of the gaskets used to seal the test specimen to the chamber. Two parallel ribbons of self-adhesive gasket material shall be applied at all sealing points of the apparatus/test specimen assembly. The gasket ribbons shall be made of medium-density gasket material that can be fused or glued at joints. The test apparatus shall contain an over-pressure control device and windows to verify the specimen installation.

6.1.2 *Flow Measuring Devices*—The flow measuring devices used to gage the air flow through the test specimen shall be capable of measuring air flow rate from $1 \times 10^{-6} \text{ m}^3/\text{s}$ (~~0.001~~ 0.001 L/s) up to $1.88 \times 10^{-2} \text{ m}^3/\text{s}$ (18.8 L/s), with an accuracy of ~~$\pm 3\%$~~ $\pm 3\%$ of the reading.

6.1.3 *Pressure Measuring Devices*—The static pressure differential across the test specimen shall be measured by pressure measuring devices with an accuracy of ~~$\pm 0.5\%$~~ $\pm 0.5\%$ of the pressure reading. The laboratory barometric pressure shall be measured with a device capable of measuring barometric pressure within ~~$\pm 3\%$~~ $\pm 3\%$ of the reading.

6.1.4 *Piping*—The piping connecting the flow measuring devices and the vacuum blower shall be airtight and contain flow control devices to regulate the static pressure across the test specimen within $\pm 0.5\%$ of the pressure reading. The pipe connection to the test chamber shall contain an air filter to prevent dust or particulate matter from affecting the flow measuring device reading. The piping downstream and upstream of the flow measuring device shall be designed so the flow regime does not affect the device's accuracy. The piping shall contain a temperature measuring device capable of measuring air temperature within ~~$\pm 0.5^\circ\text{C}$~~ $\pm 0.5^\circ\text{C}$ to convert all flow rate measurement to STP: standard temperature and pressure (STP).

6.1.5 *Vacuum Blower*—The blower used to create a vacuum in the test chamber shall be able to produce static pressure differential across the test specimen within $\pm 0.5\%$ of the pressure reading.

7. Specimen Preparation

7.1 *Conditioning for Tests*—Unless otherwise stated, all specimens to be tested shall be conditioned for a minimum period of seven days at ~~$2 \pm 21^\circ\text{C}$~~ $23 \pm 1^\circ\text{C}$ and ~~40~~ 40 $\% \pm 5\%$ RH: relative humidity.

7.2 *Flexible Sheet Materials*—Due to lack of rigidity, flexible materials shall be tested over a rigid support having an air permeance much greater than the test specimen. An open grill or wire mesh/screen, fabricated with welded wire having a minimum of ~~25 mm × 25-mm-square~~ 25 mm square grid (or an alternative means that provides an equivalent degree of support and air permeance) shall be used for this purpose. The wire mesh portion of the support shall be welded or otherwise mechanically secured to a solid metal frame which shall be gasketed and compressed within the test frame. A detailed description of the support grill, including the gage wire used, shall be included in the test report. Fig. 2 shows the preparation for a typical flexible sheet material. The following procedure shall be used to seal the perimeter of the specimen:

7.2.1 Apply a self-adhesive gasket ribbon over the frame of the wire mesh/screen around the entire perimeter of the test area under investigation (1 m × 1 m);

7.2.2 Apply a second self-adhesive gasket ribbon along the perimeter of the first ribbon in 7.2.1;

7.2.3 All joints in the gasket ribbons shall be fused or glued;

7.2.4 Cut the flexible sheet material specimen to 1100 mm × 1100 mm;

7.2.5 Upon removal of the protective paper over the self-adhesive gasket, install the specimen over the wire mesh/screen;

7.2.6 Apply the self-adhesive gasket over the specimen so it lines up with the first ribbon in 7.2.1, and then apply a second self-adhesive gasket along its perimeter;

7.2.7 All joints in the gasket ribbons shall be fused or glued;

7.2.8 Cut polyethylene film (0.15 mm (6 mils)) to 1400 mm × 1400 mm;

7.2.9 Upon removal of the protective paper over the ribbon, cover the specimen with the polyethylene film;

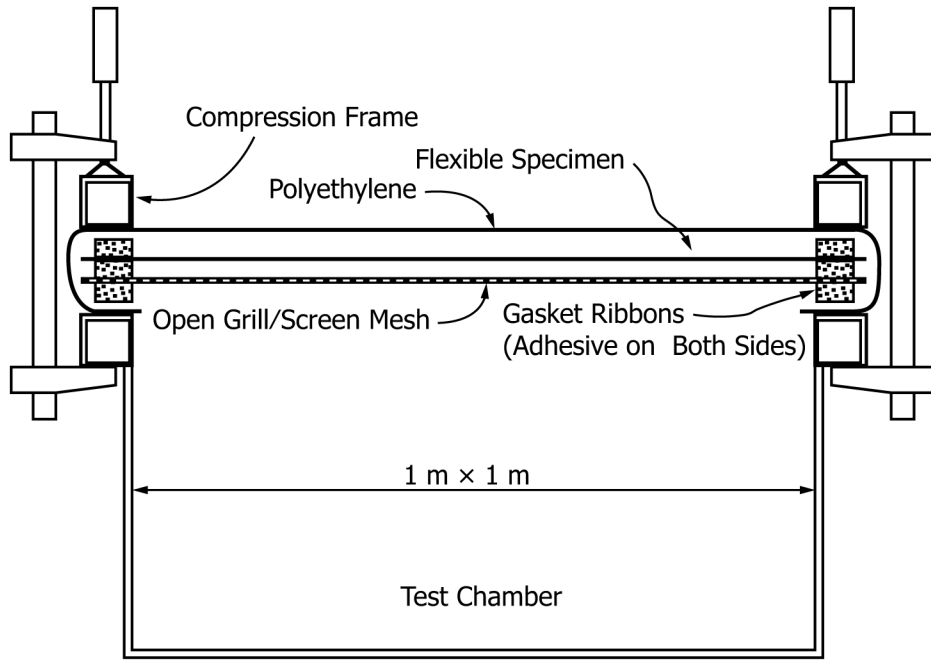


FIG. 2 Flexible Sheet Test Specimen

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<https://standards.itih.ai>
 Document Preview

7.2.10 Cut the polyethylene film at each corner as in accordance with Fig. 3;

7.2.11 Apply two self-adhesive gaskets to the underside of the wire mesh/screen support (the gaskets shall line up below the first ribbon installed in 7.2.1);

7.2.12 Upon removal of the protective paper over the gasket, fold and tape each corner of the film with construction tape to ensure complete airtightness as in accordance with Fig. 4;

7.2.13 From the interior line of the adhesive gasket, cut and remove all the excess polyethylene film.

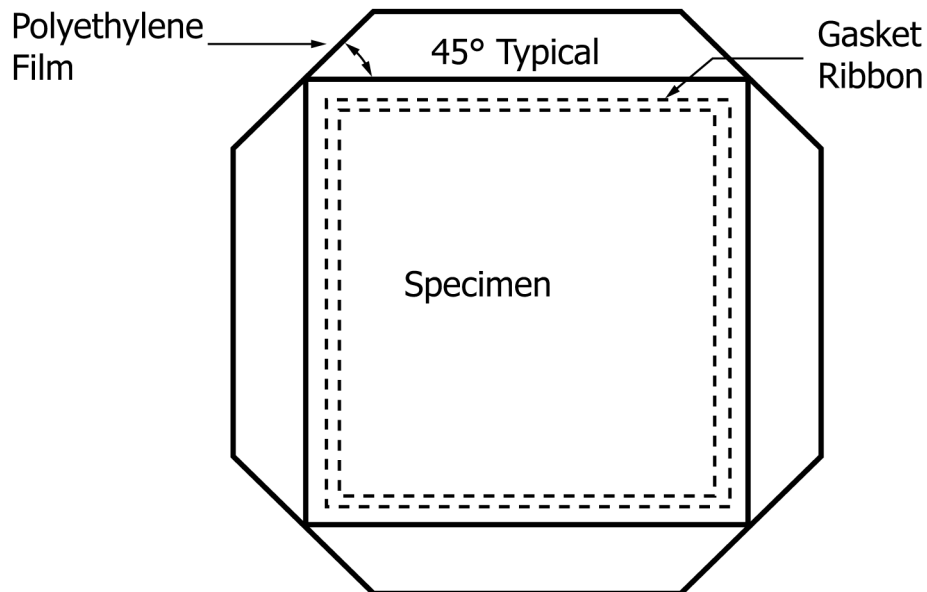


FIG. 3 Top View of Polyethylene Placement Over Specimen with Double Perimeter Gaskets

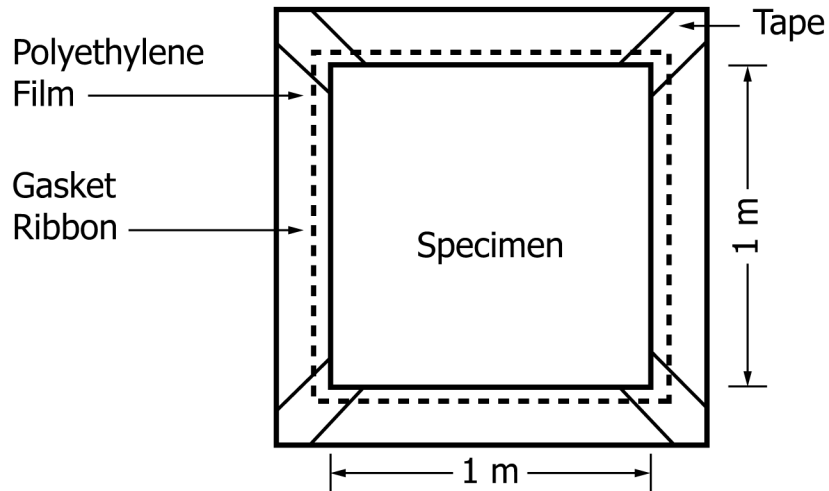


FIG. 4 Bottom View of Polyethylene Seal at Double-Perimeter Gaskets on Underside of Rigid Panel-Type Specimen or Open Mesh/Screen for Flexible Sheet Specimen Set-up

7.3 Rigid Panel-Type Materials—Fig. 5 shows the preparation for a typical rigid panel-type material. The following procedure shall be used to seal the perimeter of the specimen:

7.3.1 Apply a self-adhesive gasket ribbon over the rigid panel-type test specimen around the entire perimeter of the area under investigation (1 m × 1 m);

7.3.2 All joints in the gasket ribbons shall be fused or glued;

7.3.3 Cut polyethylene film (0.15 mm (6 mils)) to 1400 mm × 1400 mm;

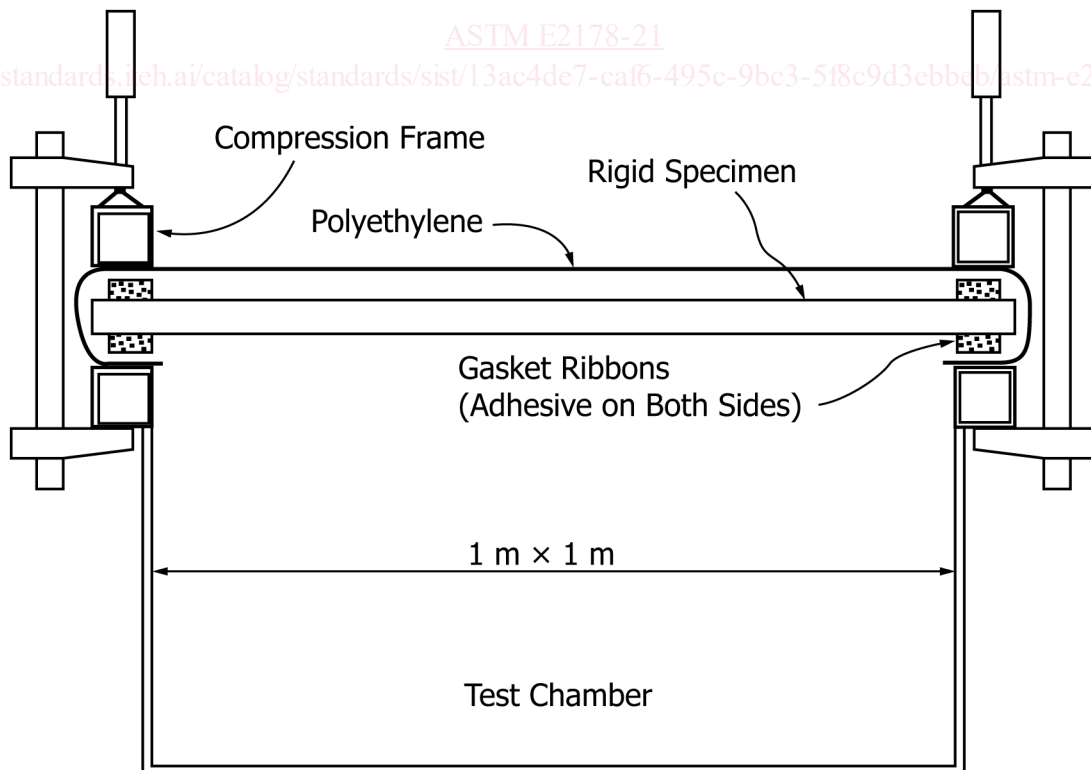


FIG. 5 Rigid Panel-Type Specimen Test Set-up

7.3.4 Upon removal of the protective paper over the self-adhesive gasket ribbon, cover the specimen with the polyethylene film;

7.3.5 Cut the polyethylene film at each corner as in accordance with Fig. 3;

7.3.6 Apply a second self-adhesive gasket ribbon to the underside of the specimen (the ribbon shall be applied directly below the first ribbon installed in 7.3.1), and seal corner junctions by fusing or gluing;

7.3.7 Upon removal of the protective paper over the self-adhesive gasket ribbon, fold and tape each corner of the film with construction tape to ensure complete airtightness as in accordance with Fig. 4;

7.3.8 From the interior line of the self-adhesive gasket ribbon, cut and remove all the excess polyethylene film.

8. Test Procedure

8.1 *Control Tests*—The laboratory shall confirm the integrity and accuracy of the apparatus by verifying the following:

8.1.1 The impact of the open mesh/screen on the air leakage rate measurements shall be assessed. If not negligible, it shall be taken into account when ~~calculating~~determining the air ~~permeance~~leakage rate.

8.1.2 Calibrate the test apparatus according to the procedure in Section 9.

8.2 *Specimen Testing*—The testing on each specimen shall be conducted as follows:

8.2.1 Install the sealed test specimen on the test chamber;

8.2.2 Install the compression frame over the specimen;

8.2.3 Check through the window if the specimen is properly placed;

8.2.4 Anchor the specimen to the test chamber and compress the gaskets, as required;

8.2.5 Measure the extraneous air leakage rate (Q_{ei}) of the test apparatus/specimen at various static pressure differentials (ΔP) as follows: ~~25, 50, 75, 100, 150 and 300 Pa.~~25 Pa, 50 Pa, 75 Pa, 100 Pa, 150 Pa, and 300 Pa.

8.2.6 Cut the top section of the polyethylene film;

8.2.7 Measure the total air leakage rate (Q_{ti}) at various static pressure differentials (ΔP), and correct the air flow rate values to STP. The air ~~permeance~~leakage rate of each specimen shall be determined with a minimum of six measurements when conducted in accordance with Test Method ~~E283E283/E283M~~. The six measurements shall be taken as follows: ~~25, 50, 75, 100, 150~~25 Pa, 50 Pa, 75 Pa, 100 Pa, 150 Pa, and 300 Pa.

NOTE 2—A calculation to correct air flow rate values to STP is provided in ~~Section~~Subsection 12.1 of Test Method ~~E283E283/E283M~~.

8.2.8 After measuring the air leakage rate at the maximum static pressure differential (ΔP), 300 Pa, remeasure the air leakage rate at ~~100, 75, 100 Pa, 75 Pa,~~ and 50 Pa to determine if the measurement process has ~~effected~~affected the air leakage rate of the material. If the difference between the two measured air leakage measurement rates is greater than 10 %, the cause of the air leakage rate change shall be identified.

9. Calibration

9.1 Calibration shall be performed by mounting a rigid metal blank to the test apparatus in place of a test specimen, using the same mounting procedures as used for standard specimens. Orifice plates or gas flow standards with an accuracy of ± 0.5 % shall be used as reference standards. The reference standard shall be NIST National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) traceable. The blank shall have a suitable opening for mounting of the reference standard which can be tightly sealed.

9.2 Calibration of the air leakage rate test equipment shall consist of determining the flow through the air flow system to be

calibrated using all applicable reference standards for the design range of the flow metering apparatus. Flow should be calibrated at three points for each flowmeter: minimum (~~0–10~~ 0 % to 10 % of range used for measurements at 25 Pa), midpoint (~~35–65~~ 35 % to 65 % of range used for measurements at 100 Pa), maximum (~~90–100~~ 90 % to 100 % of range used for measurements at 300 Pa).

9.3 Fasten the reference standard to the blank panel. Seal the inlet in a suitable manner so that an extraneous reading on the air flow system can be obtained. Measure the amount of such leakage with reference standard sealed, at the air pressure difference to be applied during calibration. The extraneous leakage shall not exceed 0.001 L/s at 25 Pa and 0.005 L/s at 300 Pa. Leakage rates in excess of these limits indicate system leakage shall be found and corrected. After determining the extraneous leakage, unseal the reference standard and repeat the process to determine the total measured flow for each required point.

9.4 The measured flow at each condition shall be determined with an error not greater than 5 %.

9.5 Alternate means may be used for calibrating the air flow measuring system as long as they can be proven to provide the same level of accuracy and are traceable to NIST.

9.6 Calibration shall be performed at least once every six months using the method described above. Alternative orifice mounting conditions may be used during interim calibration periods for air flow checking purposes.

9.7 The following shall apply to the use of orifice plates:

9.7.1 Each NIST traceable orifice plate shall be constructed of 3 mm thick stainless steel having an outside diameter of 200 mm and interior square edge diameters suitable for testing the full range of the apparatus and each independent flowmeter in the system.

9.7.2 The rigid metal blank shall have a ~~150-mm~~ 150 mm diameter hole(s) over which orifice plates shall be mounted.

9.7.3 The orifice plate shall be mounted to the blank, centered over the ~~150-mm~~ 150 mm diameter hole.

9.7.4 For extraneous leakage readings, seal the hole in the orifice plate with a suitable adhesive tape. After determining the extraneous leakage, remove the adhesive tape from the hole in the orifice plate and repeat the process to determine the total measured flow.

10. Calculation of Air Permeance

10.1 At each pressure station, the flow rate through the specimen (Q) shall be determined by subtracting the extraneous air flow rate (Q_{ei}) from the total air leakage rate (Q_{ti}).

10.2 The flow rate equation of the form $Q = C A (\Delta P)^n$ shall be established by fitting the data, and errors estimated. A recommended procedure is provided in **Annex A1**.

10.3 Calculate the material permeance at the pressure differences measured. The air permeance (P) of a specimen at a given pressure differential (ΔP) is calculated by the following equation.

TABLE 1 Example Calibration Grid Using Orifice Plates

NOTE 1—Flow ranges are for example only and do not reflect an actual test apparatus.

Flowmeter, #	Minimum Flow Reading, L/s	Maximum Flow Reading, L/s	Orifice Diameter, mm	Minimum Orifice Flow at 25 Pa	Midpoint Orifice Flow at 100 PA	Maximum Orifice Flow at 300 PA
Flowmeter, #	Minimum Flow Reading, L/s	Maximum Flow Reading, L/s	Orifice Diameter, mm	Minimum Orifice Flow at 25 Pa	Midpoint Orifice Flow at 100 PA	Maximum Orifice Flow at 300 Pa
1	0.001	0.005	0.67	0.001	0.002 – 0.004	0.005
2	0.006	0.029	1.6	0.006 – 0.008	0.014 – 0.021	0.027 – 0.029
3	0.030	0.149	3.6	0.030 – 0.042	0.072 – 0.107	0.137 – 0.149
4	0.150	0.751	8.2	0.150 – 0.210	0.360 – 0.541	0.691 – 0.751
5	0.752	3.75	18.5	0.752 – 1.052	1.801 – 2.701	3.450 – 3.750
6	3.76	18.8	41	3.760 – 5.264	9.024 – 13.54	17.30 – 18.80