Designation: D7490 – 13 (Reapproved 2022)

Standard Test Method for Measurement of the Surface Tension of Solid Coatings, Substrates and Pigments using Contact Angle Measurements[1]

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D7490; 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 describes a procedure for the measurement of contact angles of two liquids, one polar and the other nonpolar, of known surface tension on a substrate, pigment (in the form of a disk), or cured or air dried coating in order to calculate the surface properties (surface tension and its dispersion and polar components) of the solid.

1.2 The total solid surface tension range that can be determined using this method is approximately 20 to 60 dyn/cm.

1.3 The values stated in CGS units (dyn/cm) are to be regarded as standard. No other units of measurement 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 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

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*[2]

D1193 Specification for Reagent Water

D5725 Test Method for Surface Wettability and Absorbency of Sheeted Materials Using an Automated Contact Angle Tester (Withdrawn 2010)[3]

D7334 Practice for Surface Wettability of Coatings, Substrates and Pigments by Advancing Contact Angle Measurement

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions:*

3.1.1 *contact angle, n*—the interior angle that a drop makes between the substrate and a tangent drawn at the intersection between the drop and the substrate as shown in Fig. 1; this is the angle formed by a liquid at the three phase boundary where a liquid, gas (air) and solid intersect.

3.1.2 *dispersion component, n*—the component of solid surface tension that is related to intermolecular attraction caused by nonpolar dispersion forces.

3.1.3 *polar component, n*—the component of solid surface tension that is related to polar forces, such as hydrogen bonding and ion-dipole forces.

3.1.4 *solid surface tension, n*—the surface tension of a solid surface; this parameter cannot be measured directly, but must be determined by extrapolation of polymer melt or solution data to 100 % solids or by contact angles with liquids of known surface tension.

3.1.5 *surface energy, n*—excess free energy of surface molecules compared to those of the bulk material; arises from unbalanced molecular cohesive forces at a surface that cause the surface to contract and behave like a film or membrane (units are energy/unit areas such as joules/cm^2).

3.1.6 *surface tension, n*—the force necessary to break the surface of a film of a given length (units are force/length, such as dyn/cm or newtons/m); the same numerically as surface energy, but different units.

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 Contact angles of drops of distilled water and diiodomethane (methylene iodide) are measured on the surface of interest. The two values are then substituted into two

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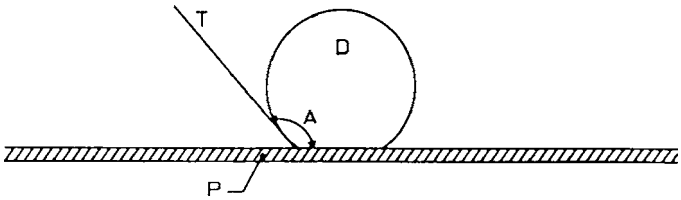
[2] For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

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



A = contact angle
D = drop of liquid
P = specimen
T = tangent at specimen surface

FIG. 1 Measuring Angle of Contact

separate expressions of the Owens-Wendt-Kaelble equation (one for each liquid). This results in two equations in two unknowns, which are then solved for the dispersion and polar components of surface tension. The sum of the components is the surface tension of the solid.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 The method described in this standard is based on the concept that the total free energy at a surface is the sum of contributions from different intermolecular forces, such as dispersion, polar and hydrogen bonding. There are other techniques that employ three components (dispersion, polar and hydrogen bonding). These methods are further complicated by needing three to five test liquids and are not practical for routine testing. This method uses contact angles of two liquids to provide data for the calculation of two components, dispersion, γ_s^d, and polar, γ_s^p.

5.2 Dispersion and polar component data, along with the total solid surface tension, are useful for explaining or predicting wetting or adhesion, or both, of coatings on pretreatments, substrates and other coatings. Low solid surface tension values often are a sign of contamination and portend potential wetting problems. High polar components may signal polar contamination. There is evidence in the literature that matching of polar components of topcoats and primers gives better adhesion.[4]

5.3 Solid surface tensions of pigments, particularly the polar components, may be useful in understanding dispersion problems or to provide signals for the composition of dispersants and mill bases. However, comparison of pigments may be difficult if there are differences in the roughness or porosity, or both, of the disks prepared from them.

5.4 Although this technique is very useful in characterizing surfaces, evaluating surface active additives and explaining problems, it is not designed to be a quality control or specification test.

6. Interferences

6.1 The following factors may interfere with results:

6.1.1 Dirt, fingerprints or other contamination on the surface being tested. Contact angles are very sensitive to surface contamination.

6.1.2 A rough or porous test surface such that drops sink in rapidly. Such surfaces are most likely found with pigment disks or sanded coatings.

6.1.3 A curved test surface such that angles are difficult or impossible to measure.

6.1.4 Low humidity (<40 % RH) when water is the test liquid such that the contact angle changes rapidly.

7. Apparatus

7.1 *Goniometer*—An instrument consisting of a controlled light source, a stage to hold the test specimen, and a microscope or camera for viewing of the drop on the specimen is required. An automated instrument for measuring angle of contact and a method for using it can be found in Test Method D5725.

7.2 *Hypodermic Syringe*—A syringe, such as a 1-mL hypodermic, equipped with a No. 27 stainless steel needle, capable of providing 100 to 200 drops from 1 mL, is suitable for use with water-like liquids. More viscous liquids may require a needle of different size.

8. Reagents and Materials

8.1 *Water*—Type II reagent water (distilled) in accordance with Specification D1193.

8.2 *Diiodomethane*—reagent grade or better.

9. Preparation of Specimens

9.1 If the part or panel of interest is too large to fit on the stage, then test specimens should be cut to a size appropriate for the instrument being used. They shall be cut in such a way as to be thoroughly representative of the sample.

9.2 The areas tested shall not contain visible blemishes or defects and shall not be touched with the fingers or contaminated in any other way.

9.3 If contamination or improper handling is suspected, the specimen may be rinsed with water or washed with laboratory detergent and water. However, cleaning may affect the results and must be noted on the report.

9.4 Pigment specimens shall be in the form of disks prepared in a press such as those used to prepare KBr disks for infrared analysis.

10. Procedure

10.1 Test the specimens at a standard temperature of 23 ± 2 °C and at a relative humidity ≥50 %, unless otherwise agreed upon.

10.2 Set up the goniometer and level the stage according to the manufacturer's instructions.

10.3 Measure contact angles of water and diiodomethane on the specimen of interest as described in Practice D7334 or the manufacturer's literature for the instrument being used.

10.4 Make two angle measurements (one on each drop edge) of each of three drops on the specimen. If the contact angles on two edges are significantly different, the values

[4] Imai, T, *Organic Coatings Science and Technology*, G. D. Parfitt and A. V. Patsis, eds, Vol. 6, Marcel Dekker, New York, 1984, p. 301.