Designation: C1260 – 22

Standard Test Method for Potential Alkali Reactivity of Aggregates (Mortar-Bar Method)[1]

This standard is issued under the fixed designation C1260; 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 permits detection, within 16 days, of the potential for deleterious alkali-silica reaction of aggregate in mortar bars.

1.2 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as standard. No other units of measurement are included in this standard. When this test method refers to combined-unit standards, the selection of the measurement systems is at the user's discretion.

1.3 The text of this test method refers to notes and footnotes that provide explanatory material. These notes and footnotes (excluding those in tables and figures) shall not be considered as requirements of this test method.

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.* A specific precautionary statement is given in the section on Reagents.

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]

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

C125 Terminology Relating to Concrete and Concrete Aggregates

C127 Test Method for Relative Density (Specific Gravity) and Absorption of Coarse Aggregate

C128 Test Method for Relative Density (Specific Gravity) and Absorption of Fine Aggregate

C150/C150M Specification for Portland Cement

C305 Practice for Mechanical Mixing of Hydraulic Cement Pastes and Mortars of Plastic Consistency

C490/C490M Practice for Use of Apparatus for the Determination of Length Change of Hardened Cement Paste, Mortar, and Concrete

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

C670 Practice for Preparing Precision and Bias Statements for Test Methods for Construction Materials

C1260 Test Method for Potential Alkali Reactivity of Aggregates (Mortar-Bar Method)

C1778 Guide for Reducing the Risk of Deleterious Alkali-Aggregate Reaction in Concrete

D1193 Specification for Reagent Water

E11 Specification for Woven Wire Test Sieve Cloth and Test Sieves

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—For definitions of other terms relating to concrete or aggregates, see Terminology C125.

3.1.1 *relative density (OD), n*—as defined in Test Methods C127 or C128, for coarse and fine aggregates, respectively.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 This test method provides a means of detecting the potential of an aggregate intended for use in concrete for undergoing alkali-silica reaction resulting in potentially deleterious internal expansion. It is based on the NBRI Accelerated Test Method (**1-4**).[3] It is especially useful for aggregates that react slowly or produce expansion late in the reaction. However, it does not evaluate combinations of aggregates with

[1] This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee C09 on Concrete and Concrete Aggregates and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee C09.50 on Aggregate Reactions in Concrete.

Current edition approved Nov. 1, 2022. Published December 2022. Originally approved in 1989. Last previous edition approved in 2021 as C1260 – 21. DOI: 10.1520/C1260-22.

[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 boldface numbers in parentheses refer to a list of references at the end of the text.

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

cementitious materials nor are the test conditions representative of those encountered by concrete in service.

4.2 Because the specimens are exposed to a NaOH solution, the alkali content of the cement is not a significant factor in affecting expansions.

4.3 Results of tests conducted on an aggregate as described herein should form a part of the basis for a decision as to whether precautions should be taken against excessive expansion due to alkali-silica reaction. Refer to Guide C1778 for the interpretation of the test results from Test Method C1260.

5. Apparatus

5.1 The apparatus shall conform to Specification C490/C490M, except as follows:

5.2 *Sieves*—Square hole, woven-wire cloth sieves, shall conform to Specification E11.

5.3 *Mixer, Paddle, and Mixing Bowl*—Mixer, paddle, and mixing bowl shall conform to the requirements of Practice C305, except that the clearance between the lower end of the paddle and the bottom of the bowl shall be 5.1 mm ± 0.3 mm.

5.4 *Tamper and Trowel*—The tamper and trowel shall conform to Test Method C109/C109M.

5.5 *Containers*—The containers shall be of such a nature that the bars can be totally immersed in either the water or 1N NaOH solution. The containers shall be made of material that can withstand prolonged exposure to 80 °C and must be resistant to a 1N NaOH solution (see Note 1). The containers must be so constructed that when used for storing specimens, the loss or gain of moisture is prevented by tight-fitting covers, by sealing, or both (see Note 2). The bars in the solution must be placed and supported so that the solution has access to the entire surface of the bar; therefore, it should be ensured that the specimens do not touch the sides of the container or each other. The specimens, if stood upright in the solution, shall not be supported by the metal gauge stud.

NOTE 1—The NaOH solution will corrode glass or metal containers.

NOTE 2—Some microwave-proof food storage containers made of polypropylene or high-density polyethylene have been found to be acceptable.

5.6 *Oven, or Water Bath*—A convection oven or water bath with temperature control maintaining 80.0 °C ± 2.0 °C.

6. Reagents

6.1 *Sodium Hydroxide (NaOH)*—USP or technical grade may be used, provided the Na^+ and OH^- concentrations are shown by chemical analysis to lie between 0.99N and 1.01N.

6.2 *Purity of Water*—Unless otherwise indicated, references to water shall be understood to mean reagent water conforming to Type IV of Specification D1193.

6.3 *Sodium Hydroxide Solution*—Each litre of solution shall contain 40.0 g of NaOH dissolved in 900 mL of water, and shall be diluted with additional distilled or deionized water to obtain 1.0 L of solution. The volume proportion of sodium hydroxide solution to mortar bars in a storage container shall be 4 ± 0.5 volumes of solution to 1 volume of mortar bars. The volume of a mortar bar may be taken as 184 mL. Include sufficient test solution to ensure complete immersion of the mortar bars.

6.3.1 **Warning—**Before using NaOH, review: (*1*) the safety precautions for using NaOH; (*2*) first aid for burns; and (*3*) the emergency response to spills, as described in the manufacturer's Material Safety Data Sheet or other reliable safety literature. NaOH can cause very severe burns and injury to unprotected skin and eyes. Suitable personal protective equipment should always be used. These should include full-face shields, rubber aprons, and gloves impervious to NaOH. Gloves should be checked periodically for pin holes.

7. Conditioning

7.1 Maintain the temperature of the molding room and dry materials at not less than 20 °C and not more than 27.5 °C. The temperature of the mixing water, and of the moist closet or moist room, shall not vary from 23 °C by more than 2.0 °C.

7.2 Maintain the relative humidity of the molding room at not less than 50 %. The moist closet or room shall conform to Specification C511.

7.3 Maintain the storage oven or water bath in which the specimens are stored in the containers at a temperature of 80.0 °C ± 2.0 °C.

8. Sampling and Preparation of Test Specimens

8.1 *Selection of Aggregate*—Process materials proposed for use as fine aggregate in concrete as described in the section on Preparation of Aggregate with a minimum of crushing. Process materials proposed for use as coarse aggregate in concrete by crushing to produce as nearly as practical a graded product from which a sample can be obtained. Grade the sample as prescribed in Table 1. The sample shall represent the composition of the coarse aggregate as proposed for use.

8.1.1 When a given quarried material is proposed for use both as coarse and as fine aggregate, test it only by selection of an appropriate sample crushed to the fine aggregates sizes, unless there is reason to expect that the coarser size fractions have a different composition that the finer sizes and that these differences might significantly affect expansion due to reaction with the alkalies in cement or from the environment of service. In this case test the coarser size fractions in a manner similar to that employed in testing the fine aggregate sizes.

8.2 *Preparation of Aggregate*—Grade all aggregates to which this test method is applied in accordance with the requirements given in Table 1. Crush aggregates in which sufficient quantities of the sizes specified in Table 1 do not exist until the required material has been produced. In the case of

TABLE 1 Grading Requirements

Sieve Size		Mass, %
Passing	Retained on	
4.75 mm (No. 4)	2.36 mm (No. 8)	10
2.36 mm (No. 8)	1.18 mm (No. 16)	25
1.18 mm (No. 16)	600 µm (No. 30)	25
600 µm (No. 30)	300 µm (No. 50)	25
300 µm (No. 50)	150 µm (No. 100)	15

aggregates containing insufficient amounts of one or more of the larger sizes listed in Table 1, and if no larger material is available for crushing, the first size in which sufficient material is available shall contain the cumulative percentage of material down to that size as determined from the grading specified in Table 1. When such procedures are required, make a special note thereof in the test report. After the aggregate has been separated into the various sieve sizes, wash each size with a water spray over the sieve to remove adhering dust and fine particles from the aggregate. Dry the portions retained on the various sieves and, unless used immediately, store each such portion individually in a clean container provided with a tight-fitting cover.

8.3 *Selection and Preparation of Cement:*

8.3.1 *Reference Cement*—Use a portland cement meeting the requirements of Specification C150/C150M (Note 3).

NOTE 3—The alkali content of the cement has been found to have negligible (**3**) or minor (**5**) effects on expansion in this test.

8.3.2 *Preparation of Cement*—Pass cement for use in this test through an 850-µm (No. 20) sieve to remove lumps before use.

8.4 *Preparation of Test Specimens:*

8.4.1 *Number of Specimens*—Make at least three test specimens for each cement-aggregate combination.

8.4.2 *Preparation of Molds*—Prepare the specimen molds in accordance with the requirements of Practice C490/C490M except, the interior surfaces of the mold shall be covered with a release agent (see Note 4). A release agent will be acceptable if it serves as a parting agent without affecting the time of setting of the cement and without leaving any residue that will inhibit the penetration of water into the specimen.

NOTE 4—TFE-fluorocarbon tape complies with the requirements for a mold release agent.

8.4.3 *Proportioning of Mortar*—Proportion the dry materials for the test mortar using 1 part of cement to 2.25 parts of graded aggregate by mass for aggregates with a relative density (OD) at or above 2.45. For aggregates with a relative density (OD) below 2.45, determine the aggregate proportion as follows:

$$\text{Aggregate proportion} = 2.25 \times D/2.65$$

where:

D = relative density (OD) of test aggregate.

8.4.3.1 For aggregates with a relative density (OD) equal to or greater than 2.45, the quantities of dry materials to be mixed at one time in the batch of mortar for making three specimens shall be 440 g of cement and 990 g of aggregate made up by recombining the portions retained on the various sieves in the grading prescribed in Table 1 (8.2). Use a water-cement ratio equal to 0.47 by mass (see Note 5).

8.4.3.2 For aggregates with a relative density (OD) less than 2.45, the quantities of dry materials to be mixed at one time in the batch of mortar for making three specimens shall be 440 g of cement and mass of aggregate shall be 440 g multiplied by the aggregate proportion determined in 8.4.3. This aggregate mass shall be made up by recombining the portions retained on the various sieves in the grading prescribed in Table 1 (8.2). Use a water-cement ratio equal to 0.47 by mass (see Note 5).

NOTE 5—Ruggedness tests indicated that mortar bar expansions were less variable at a fixed water to cement ratio than when gaged to a constant flow (**3**).

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

8.4.5 *Molding of Test Specimens*—Mold test specimens within a total elapsed time of not more than 2 min and 15 s after completion of the original mixing of the mortar batch. Fill the molds with two approximately equal layers, each layer being compacted with the tamper. Work the mortar into the corners, around the gauge studs, and along the surfaces of the mold with the tamper until a homogeneous specimen is obtained. After the top layer has been compacted, cut off the mortar flush with the top of the mold and smooth the surface with a few strokes of the trowel.

9. Procedure

9.1 *Initial Storage and Reading*—Place each mold in the moist cabinet or room immediately after molds have been filled. The specimens shall remain in the molds for 24 h ± 2 h. Remove the specimens from the molds and, while they are being protected from loss of moisture, properly identify and make an initial comparatory reading. Make and record the initial and all subsequent readings following the length change measurement procedures of Specification C490/C490M. Place the specimens made with each aggregate sample in a storage container with sufficient tap water to totally immerse them. The temperature of the water used to immerse the specimens shall be 23.0 °C ± 2.0 °C. Seal and place the containers in an oven or water bath at 80.0 °C ± 2.0 °C for a period of 24 h.

9.2 *Zero Readings*—Remove the containers from the oven or water bath one at a time. Remove other containers only after the bars in the first container have been measured and returned to the oven or water bath. The time elapsed between removal and return of the specimens to the oven or water bath shall not exceed 10.0 min. Remove the bars one at a time from the water and dry their surface with a towel paying particular attention to the two metal gauge studs. Take the zero reading (see Note 6) of each bar immediately after drying, and read as soon as the bar is in position. Complete the process of drying and reading within 15 ± 5 s of removing the specimen from the water. After readings, leave the specimen on a towel until comparatory readings have been taken on the remainder of the bars. Place all specimens made with each aggregate sample in a container with sufficient 1N NaOH, at 80.0 °C ± 2.0 °C for the samples to be totally immersed. Seal the container and return it to the oven or water bath.

NOTE 6—The reference bar should be read prior to each set of specimens since the heat from the mortar bars may cause the length of the comparator to change.

9.3 *Subsequent Storage and Measurement*—Make subsequent comparator readings of the specimens periodically, with at least three intermediate readings, for 14 days after the zero reading, at approximately the same time each day. If readings are continued beyond the 14-day period, take at least one