



Designation: **C1314–22a** C1314 – 23

Standard Test Method for Compressive Strength of Masonry Prisms¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation C1314; 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 covers procedures for masonry prism construction and testing, and procedures for determining the compressive strength of masonry, f_{mr} , used to determine compliance with the specified compressive strength of masonry, f'_m . When this test method is used for research purposes, the construction and test procedures within serve as a guideline and provide control parameters.

1.2 This test method also covers procedures for determining the compressive strength of prisms obtained from field-removed masonry specimens.

1.3 The text of this standard 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 the standard.

1.4 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.

1.5 *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.*

1.6 *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:²

[C67/C67M Test Methods for Sampling and Testing Brick and Structural Clay Tile](#)

[C136/C136M Test Method for Sieve Analysis of Fine and Coarse Aggregates](#)

[C140/C140M Test Methods for Sampling and Testing Concrete Masonry Units and Related Units](#)

[C143/C143M Test Method for Slump of Hydraulic-Cement Concrete](#)

[C144 Specification for Aggregate for Masonry Mortar](#)

[C270 Specification for Mortar for Unit Masonry](#)

[C476 Specification for Grout for Masonry](#)

[C780 Test Method for Preconstruction and Construction Evaluation of Mortars for Plain and Reinforced Unit Masonry](#)

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee C15 on Manufactured Masonry Units and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee C15.04 on Research. Current edition approved Dec. 1, 2022/Jan. 1, 2023. Published December 2022/February 2023. Originally approved in 1995. Last previous edition approved in 2022 as C1314 – 22. C1314 – 22a. DOI: 10.1520/C1314-22A-10.1520/C1314-23.

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.

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

[C1019 Test Method for Sampling and Testing Grout for Masonry](#)
[C1093 Practice for Accreditation of Testing Agencies for Masonry](#)
[C1180 Terminology of Mortar and Grout for Unit Masonry](#)
[C1232 Terminology for Masonry](#)
[C1532/C1532M Practice for Selection, Removal, and Shipment of Manufactured Masonry Units and Masonry Specimens from Existing Construction](#)
[C1552 Practice for Capping Concrete Masonry Units, Related Units and Masonry Prisms for Compression Testing](#)
[C1587/C1587M Practice for Preparation of Field Removed Manufactured Masonry Units and Masonry Specimens for Testing](#)
[C1716/C1716M Specification for Compression Testing Machine Requirements for Concrete Masonry Units, Related Units, and Prisms](#)
[E105 Guide for Probability Sampling of Materials](#)
[E111 Test Method for Young's Modulus, Tangent Modulus, and Chord Modulus](#)

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions:

3.1.1 For definitions of terms used in this test method, refer to Terminologies [C1180](#) and [C1232](#).

3.2 Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:

3.2.1 *set*—a set consists of at least three prisms constructed of the same material and tested at the same age.

3.3 Notations:

3.3.1 f'_m —specified compressive strength of masonry.

3.3.2 f_{m1} —compressive strength of masonry.

3.3.3 h_p —prism height.

3.3.4 t_p —least actual lateral dimension of prism.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 This test method provides a means of verifying that masonry materials used in construction result in masonry that meets the specified compressive strength (Note 1).

NOTE 1—A prism is an assembly of components used to measure or verify a property (in this case, the specified compressive strength of masonry, f'_m). Testing of prisms may be part of a project's field quality control or assurance program. In these cases, prisms are built as companions to a masonry element (for example, a masonry wall, column, pilaster, beam, or other element) at a jobsite where the masonry element is site-constructed, or within a factory or shop where the element is shop-built. These prisms are not intended to replicate or model the performance or design attributes of the as-built element. Prisms may also be fabricated in a laboratory for research purposes (Appendix X2). In each scenario (field or research) the test procedures are structured so that masonry assembly compressive strength (f'_m) is measured in an accurate and repeatable manner.

4.2 This test method provides a means of evaluating compressive strength characteristics of in-place masonry construction through testing of prisms obtained from that construction when sampled in accordance with Practice [C1532/C1532M](#). Decisions made in preparing such field-removed prisms for testing, determining the net area, and interpreting the results of compression tests require professional judgment.

4.3 If this test method is used as a guideline for performing research to determine the effects of various prism construction or test parameters on the compressive strength of masonry, deviations from this test method shall be reported. Such research prisms shall not be used to verify compliance with a specified compressive strength of masonry.

NOTE 2—The testing laboratory performing this test method should be evaluated in accordance with Practice [C1093](#).

4.3.1 [Appendix X2](#) includes guidance information for the researcher on aspects of materials, construction, and analysis.

5. Masonry Prism Construction

5.1 Construct prisms of units representative of those used in the construction. If units have projections (see [Note 23](#)) that project ½ in. (12.5 mm) or more, remove those projections by saw cutting flush with the surface of the unit at the base of the projection. If units contain insulation inserts, remove those inserts prior to prism construction. The resulting units shall be a fully enclosed cell or cells that will ensure a full bearing surface over the net cross-section of the prism. If saw cutting will not result in a fully enclosed cell or cells, use full-size units, and, if grout is used, grout in accordance with [5.9.4](#). If prisms are used for field quality control or assurance, record the location in the structure that corresponds to the set of prisms constructed.

NOTE 3—Examples of projections include flutes, ribs, and face shells of open-ended units.

NOTE 4—Building codes or project specifications may require a set of prisms for a given square footage of construction. Recording the location of the structure that corresponds to a set of prisms allows the test results to be attributed to a particular portion of the structure.

5.2 Construct a set of prisms for each combination of materials and each test age at which the compressive strength of masonry is to be determined.

5.3 Build each prism in an opened, moisture-tight bag large enough to enclose and seal the completed prism. Construct prisms on a flat, level base. Construct prisms in a location where they will remain undisturbed until transported for testing.

5.4 Construct prisms as shown in [Fig. 1](#) with units laid in stack bond in stretcher position. Orient units in the prism as in the corresponding construction. At the time of prism construction, the surfaces of the units shall be free of moisture. Where the corresponding construction is of multi-wythe masonry having wythes composed of different units or mortar, build prisms representative of each different wythe and test separately.

5.5 Build prisms with full-size or reduced length units. Any required saw cutting shall be performed on units prior to prism construction. The moisture content(s) of units used to construct prisms shall be representative of those used in construction. Prisms composed of units that contain closed cells shall have at least one complete cell with one full-width cross web on either end (see [Fig. 2](#)). Prisms composed of units without closed cells shall have as symmetrical a cross section as possible. The minimum length of prisms shall be 4 in. (100 mm).

NOTE 5—When using larger masonry units, experience has shown that reducing the length of these units prior to prism construction makes their handling and transportation easier. Thus, these reduced length unit prisms are less likely to be damaged and are more likely to be properly capped and tested. Also, the smaller prism will be less likely to be affected by plate bending effects during testing, and will therefore provide a more accurate assessment of the strength of the materials in the masonry prism. For these reasons, the use of reduced length prisms is encouraged.

5.6 Build masonry prisms with full mortar beds (mortar all webs and face shells of hollow units). Use mortar representative of that used in the corresponding construction. Use mortar joint thickness and a method of positioning and aligning units, that are representative of the corresponding construction. Use mortar joints that are cut flush. For prisms to be grouted, remove mortar “fins” that protrude into the grout space.

5.7 Build prisms a minimum of two units high with a height-to-thickness ratio, h_p/t_p , between 1.0 and 5.0.

5.8 Immediately following the construction of the prism, seal the moisture-tight bag around the prism.

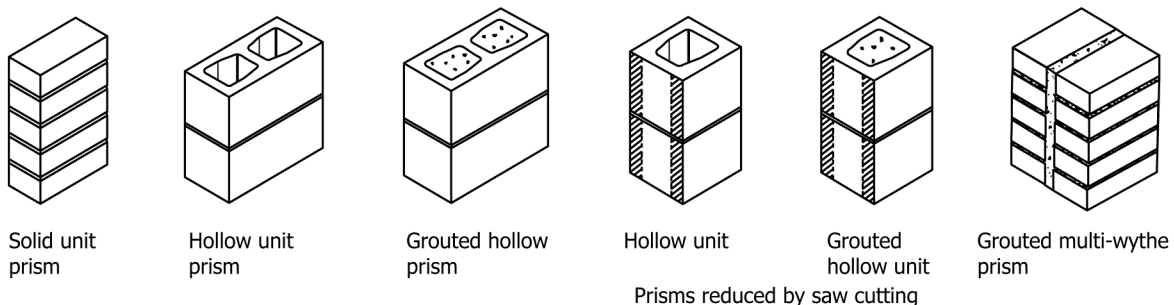


FIG. 1 Masonry Prism Construction

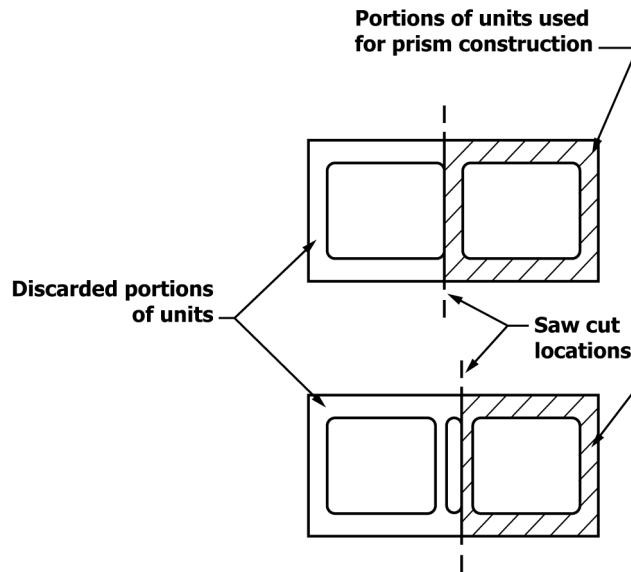


FIG. 2 Reduction of Hollow Units Prior to Prism Construction

5.9 Grouted Prisms.

5.9.1 If prisms are fabricated for field quality control or assurance, build prisms at the same time as the corresponding construction, and grout prisms when the corresponding construction is being grouted. If prisms are used for other purposes, grout prisms not less than 4 h nor more than 48 h following the construction of the prisms.

Note 5—Testing of prisms may be part of a project’s field quality control or assurance program. These prisms are intended to be representative of a constructed masonry element such as a wall, column, pilaster, or beam. They are built as companions to the masonry element at a jobsite where the masonry element is site-constructed, or within a factory or shop where the element is shop-built. Prisms may also be fabricated in a laboratory for research purposes.

5.9.2 If the corresponding construction is to be solidly grouted, solidly grout the prisms. Use grout representative of that used in the corresponding construction. Before placing grout, remove mortar droppings from the grout space. Use grout consolidation and reconsolidation procedures representative of those used in the construction. Place additional grout into the prisms as necessary after each consolidation. Screen off excess and finish the grout so that it is level with the top of the prism and in contact with the units at the perimeter of the grout space. Grouted prisms shall contain no reinforcement.

5.9.3 If the corresponding construction is to be partially grouted, construct two sets of prisms; grout one set solid as described in 5.9.2 and leave the other set ungrouted.

5.9.4 If open-end units or prisms containing grout between similar wythes are to be grouted, use a rigid impermeable material as a form to confine the grout during placement on all ends that are open (see Note 6). Brace forms to prevent displacement during grouting. Grout as described in 5.9.2.

Note 6—Satisfactory performance of forming material has been achieved using wood covered with plastic, steel plates, or pieces of rigid acrylic and strapped or clamped in place. Use of impermeable material is more representative of actual construction if grouted open ends are not in contact with webs of adjacent units.

5.9.5 Immediately following the grouting operation, reseal the moisture-tight bag around the prism.

5.10 Keep all prisms from freezing. Do not disturb or move prisms for the first 48 h after construction and grouting. Keep prisms in the moisture-tight bags until 48 h prior to testing.

5.11 Store an indicating maximum-minimum thermometer with the sample and record the maximum and minimum temperatures experienced during the initial 48-h period.

6. Obtaining and Transporting Masonry Prisms

6.1 For field-removed masonry specimens, select and remove specimens in accordance with Practice [C1532/C1532M](#).

6.2 Prior to transporting constructed prisms and field-removed masonry specimens, strap or clamp each prism or specimen to prevent damage during handling and transportation. Secure prisms and specimens to prevent jarring, bouncing, or tipping over during transporting.

6.3 Transport prisms and masonry specimens in accordance with Practice [C1532/C1532M](#).

6.4 For field-removed masonry specimens, after the specimens have been transported to the laboratory, obtain prisms from the masonry specimens using procedures outlined in Practice [C1587/C1587M](#).

7. Curing

7.1 After the initial 48 h of curing for constructed prisms, maintain the bagged prisms in an area with a temperature of $75 \pm 15^\circ\text{F}$ ($24 \pm 8^\circ\text{C}$). Two days prior to testing, remove the moisture-tight bags and continue storing at a temperature of $75 \pm 15^\circ\text{F}$ ($24 \pm 8^\circ\text{C}$) and a relative humidity less than 80 %.

7.2 For prisms obtained from field-removed masonry, store within the laboratory at a temperature of $75 \pm 15^\circ\text{F}$ ($24 \pm 8^\circ\text{C}$) and a relative humidity less than 80 % for at least two days prior to testing.

7.3 Prisms shall not be oven-dried or otherwise exposed to temperatures exceeding storage temperature requirements at any time prior to testing.

7.4 Visible moisture shall not be present on the surface of the prisms at the time of testing. Extend storage time as needed to ensure dry surface conditions of the prisms at the time of testing.

7.5 Test prisms at an age of 28 days or at the designated test ages. Test a set of prisms at each age. Prism age shall be determined from the time of laying units for ungrouted prisms, and from the time of grouting for grouted prisms.

8. Measurements and Determination of Net Area

8.1 *Measuring Prisms*—As shown in [Fig. 3](#), measure the length and width at the edges of the top and bottom faces of the prisms to the nearest 0.05 in. (1 mm). Determine the length and width by averaging the four measurements of each dimension. Measure the height of the prism at the center of each face to the nearest 0.05 in. (1 mm). Determine the height by averaging the four measurements.

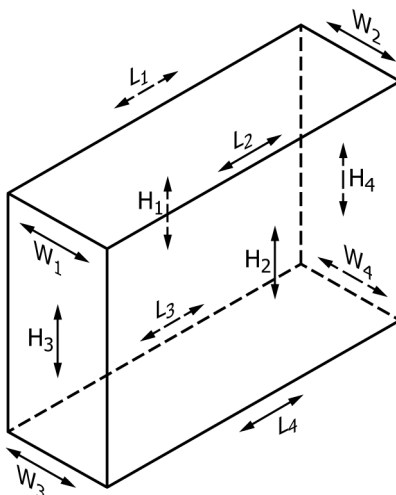


FIG. 3 Prism Measurement Location

8.1.1 For prisms obtained from field-removed masonry specimens, perform additional measurements as needed to document the condition and dimensions of the specimen.

NOTE 7—Prisms obtained from field-removed masonry specimens will have many different sizes, shapes, and configurations. These variations are a result of differing bonding arrangements, mortaring or joining practices, presence of reinforcement and other accessories in conjunction with the masonry in service, and of techniques used to remove the specimens from wall assemblies. These variations may create non-uniform prism dimensions along its length or in its cross-section. As such, additional measurements are often required to adequately document the condition of the prism and to communicate that condition to readers of the test report.

8.2 *Net Cross-Sectional Area:*

8.2.1 *Constructed Prisms*—Take the net cross-sectional area of ungrouted prisms as the net cross-sectional area of masonry units, determined from a representative sample of additional units tested in accordance with Test Methods **C140/C140M** for concrete masonry and with Test Methods **C67/C67M** for clay masonry. If cut units are used for prism construction, determine the net cross-sectional area from additional units cut in a similar manner. Determine net cross-sectional area of fully grouted prisms by multiplying the length and width of the prism (see **8.1**).

NOTE 8—Net area determined by Test Methods **C140/C140M** for hollow concrete units is usually slightly different from the minimum net cross-sectional area because unit face shells and webs are typically tapered.

8.2.1.1 Consider clay masonry units whose net cross-sectional area is at least 75 % of the gross cross-sectional area as 100 % solid.

8.2.2 *Prisms Obtained from Field-Removed Masonry Specimens*—Use methods identified above to determine net area if appropriate. Net area for prisms obtained from field-removed masonry specimens is considered to be minimum bearing area. If prisms are not of uniform length or width throughout the height of the specimen, or if mortared surfaces are not fully bedded, use professional judgment to determine the minimum bearing area that exists for the prism at whatever location that occurs. Refer to **Appendix X3** for additional guidance on determining the net cross-sectional area of masonry prisms obtained from field removed masonry.

9. **Capping**

9.1 *Capping Prisms*—Cap prisms in accordance with Practice **C1552**.

10. **Procedure**

10.1 *Test Apparatus*—The compressive strength testing machine shall conform to Specification **C1716/C1716M**.

NOTE 9—Previous versions of this standard have contained specific requirements for compressive strength test machines. These requirements have been replaced with reference to Specification **C1716/C1716M**.

10.2 *Installing the Prism in the Test Machine*—Wipe clean the bearing faces of the platens, the bearing plates, and the test specimen. Place the test specimen on the lower platen or bearing plate. Align both mass centroidal axes of the specimen with the center of thrust of the machine (see **Note 10**). As the spherically seated upper platen or plate is brought to bear on the specimen, rotate the movable portion of the upper platen gently by hand so that uniform seating is obtained.

NOTE 10—For those masonry prisms that are symmetrical about a mass centroidal axis, the location of that axis can be determined geometrically by dividing the dimension perpendicular to that axis (but in the same plane) by two. For those masonry prisms that are nonsymmetrical about a mass centroidal axis, the location of that axis can be determined by balancing the masonry prisms on a knife edge or a metal rod placed parallel to that axis. Use a rod that is straight, cylindrical (able to roll freely on a flat surface), has a diameter of not less than 0.25 in. (6 mm) and not more than 0.75 in. (19 mm), and has a length sufficient to extend past each end of the specimen when placed upon it. Place the metal rod on a smooth, flat, level surface. Once determined, mark the mass centroidal axis on each end of the prism. A tamping rod used for consolidation of concrete and grout for slump tests performed in accordance with Test Method **C143/C143M** is often used as a balancing rod.

10.3 *Loading:*

10.3.1 For constructed prisms, apply an initial load to the prism up to one-half of the expected total load at any convenient rate. Apply the remaining load at a uniform rate in not less than 1 nor more than 2 min. The results of the first specimen shall not be discarded so long as the actual loading time for the remaining portion of the actual load is greater than 30 s.

10.3.2 For prisms obtained from field-removed masonry specimens, apply an initial load to the prisms up to one-fourth of the expected load at any convenient rate. Apply the remaining load at a uniform rate in not less than 2 nor more than 4 min. The results of the first specimen shall not be discarded so long as the actual loading time for the remaining portion of the actual load is greater than 1 min.

NOTE 11—The allowance for a loading rate on the first specimen outside of that required acknowledges that the expected load may be different than the actual maximum load. The load rate for the remaining two specimens should be based on the first specimen results.

10.3.3 If the mode of failure cannot be determined once the maximum load is reached, continue loading the specimen until the mode of failure is identifiable. Record the maximum load and note the mode of failure.

10.4 *Observations*—Describe the mode of failure as fully as possible or illustrate, or both, crack patterns and spalling on a sketch or photograph. Note whether failure occurred on one side or one end of the prism prior to fracture of the opposing side or end of the prism. Identify mode of failure using Fig. 4.

11. Calculation

11.1 *Masonry Prism Strength*—Calculate each masonry prism strength by dividing each prism’s maximum compressive load sustained by the net cross-sectional area of that prism, and express the result to the nearest 10 psi (69 kPa).

11.1.1 Where sets of grouted and ungrouted prisms are tested, calculate the masonry prism strength separately for the grouted set and the ungrouted set.

11.1.2 Where a set of prisms is tested for each wythe of a multi-wythe wall, calculate the masonry prism strength for each wythe.

11.2 *Compressive Strength of Masonry:*

11.2.1 Calculate the h_p/t_p ratio for each prism using the height and the least lateral dimension of that prism. Determine the correction factor from Table 1. If a prism’s height to thickness ratio lies between the h_p/t_p values of Table 1, determine the corresponding correction factor by linear interpolation between the given values.

11.2.2 Multiply the masonry prism strength by the correction factor for the respective prism.

11.2.3 Calculate the compressive strength of masonry, f_{mr} , for each set of prisms by averaging the values obtained.

12. Report

12.1 *For constructed prisms, report the following information:*

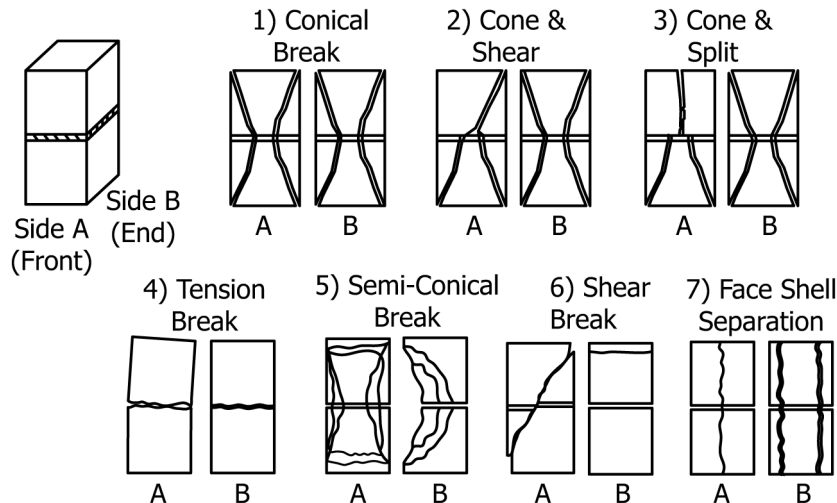


FIG. 4 Sketches of Mode of Failure