



Designation: D7852 – 23

Standard Practice for Use of an Electrically Conductive Geotextile for Leak Location Surveys¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D7852; 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 standard practice describes standard procedures for using a conductive geotextile with electrical methods to locate leaks in exposed geomembranes and geomembranes covered with water or earth materials containing moisture.

1.2 This standard practice provides guidance for the use of appropriate conductive geotextile used in leak location surveys on geomembranes. This guide includes all types of conductive geotextiles with sufficient conductivity for the particular electrical leak location method. A conductive geotextile is applicable to all types of geoelectric surveys when there is otherwise not a conductive layer under the geomembrane.

1.3 This standard practice is intended to ensure that leak location surveys can always be performed with a reasonable level of certainty. This standard practice provides guidance for the use of appropriate conductive geotextiles used in leak location surveys on geomembranes.

1.4 Leak location surveys can be used on nonconductive geomembranes installed in basins, ponds, tanks, ore and waste pads, landfill cells, landfill caps, other containment facilities, and building applications such as in parking garages, decks, and green roofs. The procedures are applicable for geomembranes made of nonconductive materials such as polyethylene, polypropylene, polyvinyl chloride, chlorosulfonated polyethylene, bituminous material, and other electrically insulating materials. Leak location surveys involving conductive or partially conductive geomembranes are not within the scope of this document.

1.5 **Warning**—The electrical methods used for geomembrane leak location could use high voltages, resulting in the potential for electrical shock or electrocution. This hazard might be increased because operations might be conducted in or near water. In particular, a high voltage could exist between the water or earth material and earth ground, or any grounded conductor. These procedures are potentially VERY

DANGEROUS, and can result in personal injury or death. Because of the high voltage that could be involved, and the shock or electrocution hazard, do not come in electrical contact with any leak unless the excitation power supply is turned off. The electrical methods used for geomembrane leak location should be attempted only by qualified and experienced personnel. Appropriate safety measures must be taken to protect the leak location operators as well as other people at the site.

1.6 *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.*

1.7 *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

[D4439 Terminology for Geosynthetics](#)

[D6747 Guide for Selection of Techniques for Electrical Leak Location of Leaks in Geomembranes](#)

3. Terminology

3.1 For general definitions related to geosynthetics, see Terminology [D4439](#).

3.2 For definitions of conductive geotextile, electrical leak location, and leak, see the Terminology section of Guide [D6747](#).

4. Summary of Practice

4.1 The principle of the electrical leak location method is to place a voltage across a geomembrane and then locate areas where electrical current flows through discontinuities in the

¹ This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee [D35](#) on Geosynthetics and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee [D35.10](#) on Geomembranes.

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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.

geomembrane and at seams. It requires an electrically conductive layer below the geomembrane.

4.2 The electrical leak location survey can be applied to exposed and covered geomembranes. The various electrical leak location methods are described in Guide D6747.

4.3 Appropriate conductive geotextiles can be used as the conductive media that is needed under the geomembrane. The methods described in Guide D6747 will require various levels of conductivity of the geotextile depending on the method, the conductivity of the media on the geomembrane, the thickness of the material on the geomembrane, the leak detection capabilities of the equipment, the leak location survey parameters, and other factors.

For exposed geomembranes, one output of an electrical excitation power supply is connected to an electrode placed above the geomembrane. For covered geomembranes, the most common implementation of this method is to make dipole measurements using two moving electrodes spaced a constant distance apart. Pole measurements can also be made by making potential measurements on the protective soil cover using one moving electrode referenced to a second distant electrode. In both cases, the other output of the power supply is connected to an electrode clamped to the electrically conductive geotextile placed under the geomembrane (Fig. 1).

5. Significance and Use

5.1 With the increased use of geomembranes as a barrier material to restrict liquid migration from one location to another, a need has been created for standardized tests by which the continuity of the installed geomembrane, including the seams, can be evaluated. This practice is intended to meet such a need whenever the subgrade soil is nonconductive, or a geomembrane is installed on a nonconductive material.

5.2 The use of a suitably conductive geotextile installed between a nonconductive soil or material and the geomembrane will permit electrical leak location survey to be conducted.

5.3 The compatibility of a conductive geotextile and leak location equipment shall be assessed for each leak location technique considered (covered or exposed, when applicable). A realistic small-scale test shall have been conducted by the

supplier of geotextile and/or leak detection equipment to demonstrate their mutual compatibility for a given leak detection technique.

6. System Calibration and Functionality

6.1 The Conductive Geotextile:

6.1.1 *Geotextile Installation*—The geotextile shall be laid flat and be free of tension, folds, and wrinkles. The number of seams and overlaps shall be minimized by selective orientation of geotextile panels, within the limitations of maintaining a consistent pattern. Geotextile shall be placed immediately prior to geomembrane installation to limit damage to the geotextile from equipment, repeated pedestrian traffic, and weather.

6.1.2 *Seaming (Sewing) of the Geotextile*—The electrical conductive geotextile shall be sewn, heat welded, or overlapped according to the recommendations of the conductive geotextile manufacturer.

6.1.3 *Electrical Source and Connections*—Insulation must be secured prior to a survey to prevent pipe penetration, flange bolts, steel drains, and batten strips on structure to conduct electricity through the liner and mask potential leak paths. The conductive geotextile must be connected to the power supply using clamps or ground sheets/plates and electrically conducting wires installed below the geomembrane. The design, number, and spacing of the clamps, electrodes, or wires needed to connect to the conductive geotextile depends on the conductance of the geotextile, the electrical leak location method being used, and other factors. These factors must be considered to provide sufficient conductance for all possible leak points on the geomembrane being tested. Such connections should be recommended by the manufacturer.

6.1.4 *Electrical Conductivity Validation*—A test of the conductivity of the geotextile itself and of the joints between geotextile panels shall be performed onsite before the geotextile is covered by the geomembrane.

6.2 *Leak Location System Functionality Testing*—Functionality testing shall be performed in accordance with whichever practice is used as listed in Guide D6747. Functionality testing shall include the conductive geotextile in the testing circuit.

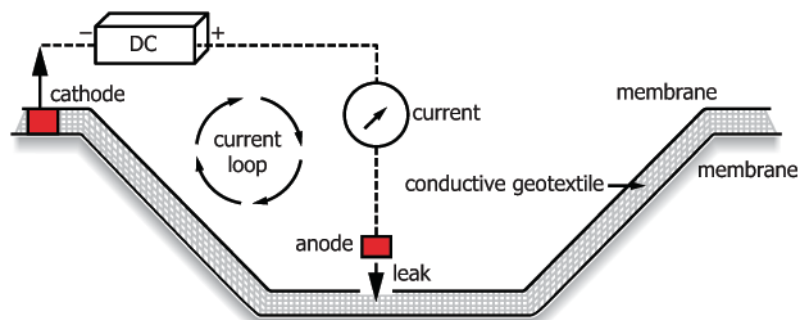


FIG. 1 Schematic of Leak Detection with Conductive Geotextile