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Standard Terminology Relating to Thermal Analysis and Rheology¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation E473; 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 terminology is a compilation of definitions of terms used in ASTM documents relating to thermal analysis and rheology. This terminology includes only those terms for which ASTM either has standards or is contemplating some action. It is not intended to be an all-inclusive listing of terms related to thermal analysis and rheology.

1.2 This terminology specifically supports the single-word form for terms using thermo as a prefix, such as thermoanalytical or thermomagnetometry, while recognizing that for some terms a two-word form can be used, such as thermal analysis. This terminology does not support, nor does it recommend, use of the grammatically incorrect, single-word form using thermal as a prefix, such as, thermalanalytical or thermalmagnetometry.

1.3 A definition is a single sentence with additional information included in a *Discussion* area. It is reviewed every five years.

1.4 *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

- [E1142 Terminology Relating to Thermophysical Properties](#)
- [E2161 Terminology Relating to Performance Validation in Thermal Analysis and Rheology](#)
- [E2253 Test Method for Temperature and Enthalpy Measurement Validation of Differential Scanning Calorimeters](#)
- [E2402 Test Method for Mass Loss, Residue, and Temperature Measurement Validation of Thermogravimetric Analyzers](#)

¹ This terminology is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee E37 on Thermal Measurements and are the direct responsibility of Subcommittee E37.03 on Nomenclature and Definitions.

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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.

[E2918 Test Method for Performance Validation of Thermo-mechanical Analyzers](#)

3. Terminology

adiabatic, *adj*—no heat exchange with the surroundings.

bifilar, *adj*—involving a thread or wire doubled back upon itself.

calorimeter, *n*—apparatus for measuring quantities of absorbed or evolved heat.

combined, *adj*—the application of two or more techniques to different samples at the same time.

controlled-rate thermal analysis (CRTA), *n*—a family of techniques that monitors the temperature versus time profile needed to maintain a chosen, fixed rate of change of a property of a substance.

DISCUSSION—Compared to controlled-temperature experiments, where the reaction rate tends to increase exponentially and the rate can become limited by heat or mass transfer, CRTA experiments are more likely to involve the chemical reaction as the limiting step. This technique can also improve the resolution of multiple reactions. For example, in controlled rate experiments, power to the furnace is controlled to ensure a fixed rate of mass loss (or gain).

controlled-temperature program, *n*—the temperature history experienced by a sample during the course of a thermal analysis experiment.

DISCUSSION—In contrast to controlled-rate experiments, power to the furnace is controlled to ensure a fixed rate of temperature change for controlled-temperature experiments. The program may include heating or cooling segments in which the temperature is changed at a fixed rate, isothermal segments in which time becomes the explicit independent variable, or any sequence of these individual segments. If the atmosphere (or vacuum) around the sample is changed by some external action (depending on the independent variable only—temperature or time) during the course of the experiment, that too becomes part of the controlled-temperature program.

curve, thermal, *n*—the plot or display of a dependent parameter against an independent parameter such as temperature or time.

DISCUSSION—In thermal analysis, the term thermogram is inappropriately used as a synonym for thermal curve. Its use is deprecated to avoid confusion with a visual image that maps the temperature pattern of an object.

derivative, *adj*—pertaining to the first derivative (mathematical) of any curve with respect to temperature or time.

dielectric analysis (DEA), *n*—a technique in which the dielectric constant (permittivity or capacitance) and dielectric loss (conductance) of a substance under oscillating electric field are measured as a function of temperature or time while the substance is subjected to a controlled-temperature program in a specified atmosphere.

differential, *adj*—pertaining to a difference in measured or measurable quantities usually between a substance and some reference or standard material.

differential scanning calorimetry (DSC), *n*—a technique in which the heat flow difference into a substance and a reference material is measured as a function of temperature while the substance and reference material are subjected to a controlled-temperature program.

DISCUSSION—The record is the differential scanning calorimetric or DSC curve. Two modes, power compensation differential scanning calorimetry, and heat flux differential scanning calorimetry can be distinguished, depending on the method of measurement used.

DISCUSSION—Two conventions exist in thermal analysis. In the physicist's convention, exothermic behavior increases downward on the thermal curve. In the chemist's convention, exothermic behavior increases upward on the thermal curve. Committee E37 takes no position on which convention shall be used. To aid the user, the direction of exothermic (or conversely, endothermic) behavior shall be indicated on each thermal curve.

differential thermal analysis (DTA), *n*—a technique in which the temperature difference between the substance and a reference material is measured as a function of temperature, while the substance and reference material are subjected to a controlled-temperature program.

DISCUSSION—The term *quantitative differential thermal analysis* covers those uses of DTA where the equipment is designed to produce quantitative results.

dilatometry, *n*—see **thermodilatometry**.

dynamic mechanical analysis (DMA), *n*—a technique in which the storage modulus (elastic response) and loss modulus (viscous response) of a substance under oscillatory load is measured as a function of temperature, time, or frequency of oscillation, while the substance is subjected to a controlled-temperature program in a specified atmosphere.

electrobalance, *n*—an analytical balance where the specimen weight is balanced by the torque produced by a current in a coil in a magnetic field (that is, a torque motor) with the torque proportional to the current.

endotherm, *n*—*in thermal analysis*, the thermal record of a transition where heat is absorbed by the specimen.

enthalpic relaxation, *n*—the process of reaching equilibrium after aging, accompanied by absorption or release of energy.

DISCUSSION—The enthalpic relaxation is often observed, upon heating, as an exothermic peak following the onset of a glass transition or an endothermic peak after the midpoint.

DISCUSSION—Synonyms for enthalpic relaxation include enthalpic overshoot, enthalpy, or enthalpic release.

evolved gas analysis (EGA), *n*—a technique in which the nature or amount, or both, of gas or vapor evolved by a substance is subjected to a controlled-temperature program.

DISCUSSION—Some specific forms of EGA have become established for investigating different aspects of catalysis, such as reduction, oxidation, or desorption. In this context, EGA in a hydrogen atmosphere is known as temperature-programmed reduction (TPR); EGA in an oxygen atmosphere is temperature-programmed oxidation (TPO); and EGA in the absence of decomposition, in an inert atmosphere or vacuum, is temperature-programmed desorption (TPD). For each technique the method used for gas identification and quantification should always be clearly stated.

exotherm, *n*—*in thermal analysis*, the thermal record of a transition or reaction where heat is released by a material or reaction.

extrapolated onset value, *n*—the value of the independent parameter found by extrapolating the dependent parameter baseline prior to the event and a tangent constructed at the inflection point on the leading edge to their intersection.

first-deviation-from-baseline (FDFB), *n*—on a thermal curve, the point that is first observed to depart from the baseline before a transition.

DISCUSSION—The first-deviation-from-baseline is often determined as the first point that differs from the baseline by more than the detection limit at the onset to a sustainable change from one state to another (see Terminology E2161 and Test Methods E2253, E2402, and E2918).

DISCUSSION—*Transition onset* is a synonym. The transition onset is differentiated from the extrapolated onset.

guard heater/cooler, thermal, *n*—a heated or cooled barrier that surrounds internal components to limit heat flow between the internal components and the surroundings.

high-pressure (HP...), *adj*—a prefix for different thermoanalytical techniques in which the pressure in the apparatus is above ambient.

DISCUSSION—As an example, high-pressure thermogravimetric analysis is designated HPTGA.

isothermal, *adj*—at constant temperature.

modulated temperature, *adj*—a prefix applied to the technique named to indicate that temperature modulation has been applied to the temperature program.

DISCUSSION—As an example, a DSC experiment carried out with a modulated temperature program would be Modulated Temperature Differential Scanning Calorimetry (MTDSC).

DISCUSSION—Other modulated techniques are possible, such as modulated force TMA.

DISCUSSION—The use of the prefix MT is preferred to TM.

nonreversing, *adj*—in modulated temperature experiments, responding to the value of the temperature or time, or both.

offset, temperature, *n*—*in thermal analysis*, the difference between the measured specimen temperature and the actual specimen temperature arising from the temperature sensor being in fixed proximity, but external, to the specimen.