



Designation: B 858 – 95

## Standard Test Method for Determination of Susceptibility to Stress Corrosion Cracking in Copper Alloys Using an Ammonia Vapor Test<sup>1</sup>

This standard is issued under the fixed designation B 858; 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<sup>2</sup> describes a procedure that may be used to determine the presence of residual stresses which may lead to stress corrosion cracking of wrought copper alloy products. This test method uses an ammonia atmosphere to simulate service conditions under which stress corrosion cracking may occur.

1.2 This test method is only suitable for products fabricated from copper alloys that are known to be susceptible to stress corrosion cracking in ammonia vapor atmospheres. It is intended to create an environmental condition of reproducible severity, but it is well known that the critical step in the cracking mechanism is the development of an environment in the condensate film that occurs on the surface of the test specimen, which is rich in copper complex ions.

1.3 This test method is a conversion of ISO 6957, “Copper Alloys—Ammonia Test for Stress Corrosion Resistance.”

1.4 The severity of this test method depends upon the pH of the corrosive solution. In Annex A1 are given four different atmospheres to which the product may be exposed, and the appropriate pH of the solution to be used for the test, depending on the risk level associated with the intended application.

1.4.1 The appropriate pH value for the test shall be specified in the product specification, or as per established agreement between the supplier and purchaser, with respect to the alloy and its intended application.

1.5 The values stated in SI units are the standard.

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 and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

<sup>1</sup> This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee B05 on Copper and Copper Alloys and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee B05.06 on Methods of Test.

Current edition approved June 15, 1995. Published August 1995.

<sup>2</sup> This test method is a conversion of ISO 6957 “Copper Alloys—Ammonia Test for Stress Corrosion Resistance.” Additional background information is included in Appendix X1.

### 2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*

B 154 Test Method for Mercurous Nitrate Test for Copper and Copper Alloys<sup>3</sup>

D 1193 Specification for Reagent Water<sup>4</sup>

2.2 *Other Documents:*

ISO 6957 Copper Alloys—Ammonia Test for Stress Corrosion Resistance<sup>5</sup>

### 3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions:*

3.1.1 *applied stress*—stress in a body as a result of application of an external load.

3.1.2 *residual stress*—stresses that remain within a body as the result of processing, which may include plastic deformation or casting.

3.1.3 *stress corrosion crack*—spontaneous failure of metals by cracking under combined action of corrosion and stress, residual or applied.

### 4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 The prepared test specimen is placed in a closed container and exposed to ammonia vapor at ambient temperature for 24 h. Upon removal from the test atmosphere, the test specimen is examined for the presence of cracks.

### 5. Significance and Use

5.1 This test method is an accelerated test to determine if a copper alloy product in a specific stress condition will be susceptible to stress corrosion cracking when exposed to a particular atmospheric condition during service with the appropriate risk level—see Annex A1. This test method is generally intended to determine if a copper alloy product will crack because of internal stresses when subjected to the test, and is not intended for testing assemblies under applied stress. If used for this purpose it shall be for information only and not

<sup>3</sup> *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 02.01.

<sup>4</sup> *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 11.01.

<sup>5</sup> Available from American National Standards Institute, 11 W. 42nd St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10036.

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

a cause for rejection of the assembly, its component parts, or the original mill product.

## 6. Apparatus

- 6.1 *pH meter.*
- 6.2 *Closed vessel*, such as a desiccator.
- 6.3 Equipment for examining test pieces at 10 to 15× magnification.

## 7. Reagents and Materials

7.1 *Purity of Reagents*—Reagent grade chemicals shall be used in all tests. Unless otherwise indicated, it is intended that all reagents conform to the specifications of the Committee on Analytical Reagents of the American Chemical Society where such specifications are available.<sup>6</sup> Other grades may be used, provided it is first ascertained that the reagent is of sufficiently high purity to permit its use without lessening the accuracy of the determination.

7.2 *Purity of Water*—Unless otherwise indicated, references to water shall be understood to mean reagent water as defined by Type IV or better, of Specification D 1193D 1193.

7.3 *Ammonium Chloride Solution (4N)*—Dissolve 107 g of ammonium chloride ( $\text{NH}_4\text{Cl}$ ) in water and dilute to 500 mL. Store the solution in a closed vessel.

7.4 *Hydrogen Peroxide ( $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$ )*, 30 to 35 % technical grade. (**Warning**—Hydrogen peroxide in high concentrations can cause severe skin burns.)

7.5 *Sodium Hydroxide Solution (300 to 500 g/L)*—Dissolve 300 to 500 g of sodium hydroxide ( $\text{NaOH}$ ) into water and dilute to 1 L. (**Warning**—Sodium hydroxide can cause chemical burns to the skin and eyes. Use of proper safety equipment is advised.)

7.6 A clean organic solvent or hot alkaline solution.

7.7 *Sulfuric Acid Solution (50 mL/L)*—Slowly add 50 mL of concentrated sulfuric acid ( $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$ ) into water and dilute to 1 L.

## 8. Test Media

8.1 Slowly add sodium hydroxide solution to ammonium chloride solution to give a test solution with a pH value appropriate to the intended application (see **Annex A1**). Maintain the solution at ambient temperature and dilute with DI water up to a volume of 1 L. Check the pH value with the pH meter after dilution. Prepare the solution preferably in a fume hood in a laboratory using appropriate safe laboratory procedures and store it in a closed vessel. Before use, check the pH value again, and adjust if necessary.

8.1.1 In the closed test vessel, the ratio of surface area of test solution to air volume of the vessel above the solution shall be a minimum of 20  $\text{cm}^2/\text{L}$ .

8.2 The pickling solution for cleaning test pieces before and after testing shall be 5 % sulfuric acid. If necessary, for cleaning test pieces after testing, a small amount of hydrogen

peroxide solution may be added to the pickling solution (for example, 20 to 30 mL of hydrogen peroxide solution per litre of pickling solution).

## 9. Test Specimen Preparation

9.1 The test specimen shall be prescribed in the material specification for the product or part being tested. In the event that a test specimen size is not prescribed in a given rod, wire, or tube specification, a full cross section having a minimum length of 152 mm shall be tested.

9.2 The presence of burrs on the test specimen may contribute to acceleration of stress corrosion cracking if not removed before the ammonia vapor test. The burrs shall be removed by fine file or abrasive paper to facilitate this test.

9.3 Degrease the test specimen using the clean organic solvent or alkaline solution.

9.4 After degreasing, clean the test piece in the pickling solution and immediately thereafter thoroughly rinse it, first in cold running water, then in hot water, and finally, completely dry it in a stream of warm air.

## 10. Test Procedure

10.1 Allow the dry test piece to reach the exposure temperature specified below, and transfer it immediately to the closed vessel (see 6.2) at the same temperature, and containing the freshly prepared test solution at the specified pH value (see 8.1).

10.1.1 Suspend (or place) the test piece in such a way that the ammonia vapor has free access to all surfaces, not less than 50 mm above the test solution surface.

10.1.1.1 When placed on a porcelain support within the test vessel, the region of the test piece within 5 mm of the support shall be disregarded when inspecting for cracks.

10.1.1.2 The test piece shall be placed no less than 10 mm from the inside walls of the test vessel.

10.1.1.3 When more than one test piece is placed in the vessel, the test pieces shall be no less than 10 mm apart.

10.2 The volume of the test solution shall be at least 200 mL per square decimetre of test piece surface. The exposure temperature shall be between 20 and 30°C and shall be kept constant to within  $\pm 1^\circ\text{C}$  during the test. In case of dispute, the temperature shall be kept at  $25^\circ\text{C} \pm 1^\circ\text{C}$ .

10.3 The exposure time shall be 24 h.

10.4 After exposure, remove the test piece from the closed vessel and immediately clean it in pickling solution for a few minutes at ambient temperature (below 40°C), or until the surfaces of the test piece are sufficiently clean from corrosion products to allow observation of possible cracks. After rinsing in water and drying in warm air, examine the surface of the test piece for cracks at a magnification of 10 to 15×.

10.5 Before inspection, deform the test piece slightly by bending or flattening to open up fine cracks to make them more easily observable.

10.6 Metallographic examination may be used to determine the metallurgical nature of any observed cracks.

## 11. Test Report

11.1 The test report shall contain the following information:

11.1.1 Sample identification,

<sup>6</sup> *Reagent Chemicals, American Chemical Society Specifications*, American Chemical Society, Washington, DC. For suggestions on the testing of reagents not listed by the American Chemical Society, see *Analar Standards for Laboratory Chemicals*, BDH Ltd., Poole, Dorset, U.K., and the *United States Pharmacopeia and National Formulary*, U.S. Pharmacopeial Convention, Inc. (USPC), Rockville, MD.