



Standard Classification of Industrial Fluid Lubricants by Viscosity System¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This classification is applicable to all petroleum-base fluid lubricants and to those nonpetroleum materials which may be readily blended to produce fluid lubricants of a desired viscosity, that is, lubricants for bearings, gears, compressor cylinders, hydraulic fluids, etc.

1.2 This classification is applicable to fluids ranging in kinematic viscosity from 2 to 3200 cSt (mm^2/s) as measured at a reference temperature of 40°C. In the category of petroleum-base fluids, this covers the range from kerosine to heavy cylinder oils.

1.3 Fluids of either lesser or greater viscosity than the range described in 1.2 are at present seldom used as industrial lubricants. Should industrial practices change, then this system, based on a mathematical series of numbers, may be extended to retain its orderly progression.

2. Referenced Documents

- 2.1 *ASTM Document:*
D341 Viscosity-Temperature Charts for Liquid Petroleum Products²
- 2.2 *SAE Standard:*³
J 300 Engine Oil Viscosity Classification
- 2.3 *ISO Standard:*⁴
ISO 3448 Industrial Liquid Lubricants—ISO Viscosity Classification

3. Significance and Use

3.1 This classification establishes a series of definite viscosity levels so that lubricant suppliers, lubricant users, and equipment designers will have a uniform and common basis for designating, specifying, or selecting the viscosity of industrial fluid lubricants.

3.2 This classification is used to eliminate unjustified intermediate viscosities, thereby reducing the total number of viscosity grades used in the lubrication of industrial equipment.

3.3 This system provides a suitable number of viscosity grades, a uniform reference temperature, a uniform viscosity tolerance, and a nomenclature system for identifying the viscosity characteristics of each grade.

3.4 This system implies no evaluation of lubricant quality and applies to no property of a fluid other than its viscosity at the reference temperature. It does not apply to those lubricants used primarily with automotive equipment and identified with an SAE number.

4. Basis of Classification

- 4.1 Twenty viscosity grades are given in Table 1.
- 4.2 Each grade shall be designated by its nominal viscosity at 40°C.
- 4.3 The permissible variance in viscosity of each grade shall be as shown in the two right-hand columns of Table 1. These limits are based upon a $\pm 10\%$ deviation from the mathematical values which were used as the basis of construction of this system.

4.4 The lubricant supplier may choose to exert a manufacturing control on a given product that is closer than this $\pm 10\%$ tolerance. It is to be understood that any different percentage variation that he uses will still guarantee maximum and minimum values that are not outside the limits of the standard viscosity grade limits. However, the lubricant purchaser or the equipment designer shall not normally specify control closer than the maximum and minimums established herein for a given grade. Any exception to this rule shall be handled outside the scope of this system and on a direct consumer-supplier relationship.

5. Adoption of System

5.1 Adoption of this viscosity system is to be voluntary on the part of all persons or organizations. The system will be effective only if used widely by designers, producers, and consumers. There is nothing to prohibit use of a viscosity grade not listed in the system if the producer and consumer mutually agree. It may be expected, however, that viscosity grades not in accordance with this classification will be less readily available to the purchaser than those grades which do conform.

5.2 For the sake of world-wide uniformity of nomenclature in identifying the viscosity characteristics of fluid lubricants the following wording shall be used to designate a particular viscosity grade:

ISO viscosity grade ...

which may be abbreviated to:

¹ This classification is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D-2 on Petroleum Products and Lubricants and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D02.L on Industrial Lubricants.

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² *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 05.01.

³ Available from the Society of Automotive Engineers, 400 Commonwealth Dr., Warrendale, PA 15096.

⁴ Available from American National Standards Institute, 11 W. 42nd St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10036.