



Designation: D 2234 – 00

Standard Practice for Collection of a Gross Sample of Coal¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D 2234; 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.

INTRODUCTION

Data obtained from coal samples are used in establishing price, controlling mine and cleaning plant operations, allocating production costs, and determining plant or component efficiency. The task of obtaining a sample of reasonable weight to represent an entire lot presents a number of problems and emphasizes the necessity for using standard sampling procedures.

Coal is one of the most difficult of materials to sample, varying in composition from noncombustible particles to those which can be burned completely, with all gradations in between. The task is further complicated by the use of the analytical results, the sampling equipment available, the quantity to be represented by the sample, and the degree of precision required.

This practice gives the overall requirements for the collection of coal samples. The wide varieties of coal-handling facilities preclude the publication of detailed procedures for every sampling situation. The proper collection of the sample involves an understanding and consideration of the physical character of the coal, the number and weight of increments, and the overall precision required.

1. Scope

1.1 This practice covers procedures for the collection of a sample under various conditions of sampling. The sample is to be crushed and further prepared for analysis in accordance with Method D 2013. However, the procedures for dividing large samples before any crushing are given in this practice.

1.2 This practice describes general and special purpose sampling procedures for coals (1) by size and condition of preparation (for example, mechanically cleaned coal or raw coal) and (2) by sampling characteristics.

1.3 *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.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:

D 121 Terminology of Coal and Coke

D 2013 Method of Preparing Coal Samples for Analysis²

E 177 Practice for Use of the Terms Precision and Bias in ASTM Test Methods³

¹ These methods are under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D05 on Coal and Coke and are the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D05.23 on Sampling. Current edition approved Nov. 10, 2000. Published January 2001. Originally published as D 2234 – 63 T. Last previous edition D 2234 – 99.

² *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 05.06.

³ *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 14.02.

E 456 Terminology Relating to Quality and Statistics²

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:

3.1.1 accuracy:

3.1.1.1 *generally*—a term used to indicate the reliability of a sample, a measurement, or an observation.

3.1.1.2 *specifically*—a measure of closeness of agreement between an experimental result and the true value. Example: the observed and true sulfur content of a coal consignment. This measure is affected by chance errors as well as by bias.

3.1.2 *cross-belt sampler*—a sampling machine designed to extract an increment directly from a conveyor belt surface by taking a sweep through the material on the conveyor.

3.1.3 *falling-stream sampler*—a sampling machine designed to extract an increment from a falling stream of coal at the discharge end of a conveyor or chute by moving through the falling stream of material.

3.1.4 *gross sample*—a sample representing one lot of coal and composed of a number of increments on which neither reduction nor division has been performed.

3.1.5 *increment*—a small portion of the lot collected by one operation of a sampling device and normally combined with other increments from the lot to make a gross sample.

3.1.6 *representative sample*—a sample collected in such a manner that every particle in the lot to be sampled is equally represented in the gross or divided sample.

3.1.7 *sample*—a quantity of material taken from a larger quantity for the purpose of estimating properties or composition of the larger quantity.

3.1.8 *size consist*—the particle size distribution of a coal.

4. Summary of Practice

4.1 The general-purpose sampling procedures are intended to provide, in 19 of 20 cases, dry ash results that are within an interval of $\pm 1/10$ of the average dry ash results that would be obtained in hypothetical repeated sampling.

4.2 Special-purpose sampling procedures apply to the sampling of coal when other precision limits are required, or when other constituents are used to specify precision, or for performance tests.

4.3 For coals of known size and condition of preparation, tables are given for the determination of the number and weight of increments required for a gross sample for both general and special-purpose sampling.

4.4 The procedures appear in the following order:

Test Method	Section
Sampling of Coals Based on Size and Condition of Preparation	8.1
General-Purpose Sampling Procedure	8.1.1
Number and Weight of Increments	8.1.1.2
Number of Gross Samples	8.1.1.4
Special-Purpose Sampling	8.1.2
Number and Weight of Increments	8.1.2.2
Number of Gross Samples	8.1.2.3
Division of the Gross Samples Before Crushing	8.2
Sampling of Coal for Total Moisture Determination	8.3
Types of Moisture Samples	8.3.1
Entire Gross Samples	8.3.1.1
Special Moisture Subsamples	8.3.1.2
Other Subsamples for Moisture Testing	8.3.1.3
Special Precautions	8.3.2
Weight of Increments	8.3.3
Number of Increments	8.3.4
Moisture Sampling Based Only on Size	8.3.4.1

5. Significance and Use

5.1 It is intended that this practice be used to provide a representative sample of the coal from which it is collected. Because of the variability of coal and the wide variety of sampling equipment, caution should be used in all stages of sampling from system specifications and equipment procurement to equipment acceptance testing and actually taking the final sample.

5.2 After further processing (Method D 2013), the sample may be analyzed for a number of different parameters. These parameters may affect the lot's value, its ability to meet specifications, its environmental impact, as well as other properties.

6. Increment Collection Classification

6.1 The type of selection, the conditions under which individual increments are collected, and the method of spacing of increments from the coal consignment or lot are classified according to the following descriptions and Table 1. These designations are to be used for sampling specifications and for descriptions of sampling programs and sampling equipment.

6.2 *Types of Increments*—The types of selection of increments are based on whether or not there is human discretion in the selection of the pieces of coal or portions of the coal stream.

6.2.1 *Type I*, in which specific pieces or portions are not subject to selection on a discretionary basis. This includes that in which the increment is collected in precise accord with previously assigned rules on timing or location that are free of any bias. Type I selection increments generally yield more accurate results.

6.2.2 *Type II*, in which some measure of human discretion is exercised in the selection of specific pieces of coal or of specific portions of the stream, pile, or shipment.

6.3 *Conditions of Increment Collection*—The conditions under which individual increments are collected are the conditions of the main body of coal relative to the portion withdrawn. Four conditions are recognized:

6.3.1 *Condition A (Stopped-Belt Cut)*, in which a loaded conveyor belt is stopped and a full cross-section cut with parallel sides is removed from the coal stream. The distance between the parallel faces shall not be less than three times the normal top size of the coal.

6.3.2 *Condition B (Full-Stream Cut)*, in which a full cross-section cut is removed from a moving stream of coal.

6.3.3 *Condition C (Part-Stream Cut)*, in which a portion, not a full cross section, is removed from a moving stream of coal.

6.3.4 *Condition D (Stationary Coal Sampling)*, in which a portion of coal is collected from a pile, a rail car, a barge, or a shiphold.

TABLE 1 Number and Weight of Increments for General Purpose Sampling Procedure^A

Top Size	5/8 in. [16 mm]	2 in. [50 mm]	6 in. [150 mm] ^B
Mechanically Cleaned Coal ^C			
Minimum number of increments	15	15	15
Minimum weight of increments, lbs	2	6	15
Minimum weight of increments, kg	1	3	7
Raw (Uncleaned Coal) ^C			
Minimum number of increments	35	35	35
Minimum weight of increments, lbs	2	6	15
Minimum weight of increments, kg	1	3	7

^AUnder Conditions C and D, see 7.2.1 and 7.2.2.

^BFor coals above 6-in. [150-mm] top size, the sampling procedure should be mutually agreed upon in advance by all parties concerned.

^CIf there is any doubt as to the condition of preparation of the coal (for example, mechanically cleaned coal or raw coal), the number of increments for raw coal shall apply. Similarly, although a coal has been mechanically cleaned, it may still show great variation because of being a blend of two different portions of one seam or a blend of two different seams. In such cases, the number of increments should be as specified for raw (uncleaned) coal.

6.4 *Spacing of Increments*—The spacing of increments pertains to the kind of intervals between increments. Two spacing methods are recognized: systematic and random. Systematic spacing is usually preferable.

6.4.1 *Systematic Spacing 1*, in which the movements of individual increment collection are spaced evenly in time or in position over the lot.

6.4.2 *Random Spacing 2*, in which the increments are spaced at random in time or in position over the lot.

7. Organization and Planning of Sampling Operations

7.1 *Precaution*—It is imperative that every gross sample be collected carefully and conscientiously and in strict accordance with the procedures prescribed in this practice; for if the sampling is done improperly, the sample will be in error, and it may be impossible or impracticable to take another sample. However, if the analysis is in error, another analysis can easily be made of the original sample, except for moisture.

7.2 *Selection of Appropriate Sampling Procedure*—Variations in coal-handling facilities make it impossible to publish rigid rules covering every sampling situation in complete and exact details. Proper sampling involves an understanding and proper consideration of the minimum number and weight of increments, the size consist of the coal, the condition of preparation of the coal, the variability of the constituent sought, and the degree of precision required.

7.2.1 *Number and Weight of Increments*—The number and weight of increments required for a given degree of precision depends upon the variability of the coal. This variability increases with an increase in free impurity. A coal high in inherent impurity and with comparatively little free impurity may exhibit much less variability than a coal with a low inherent impurity and a relatively high proportion of free impurity. For most practical purposes, an increase in the ash content of a given coal usually indicates an increase in variability. It is imperative that not less than the minimum specified number of increments of not less than the minimum specified weight be collected from the lot. For Condition D, the increments shall be of equal weight.

7.2.2 *Increment Collection Method to Be Used*—To obtain complete representation of all sizes, it is most desirable that the sample increments be withdrawn from the full cross section of the stream. The best possible increment is a full cross-section cut removed from a stopped belt, Classification I-A-1 in Table 2. The best possible increment from a flowing stream of coal is one obtained by moving a cutter device entirely across the stream at a uniform speed, the same for each increment, into

one side of the stream and out of the other, without allowing the receptacle to overflow (Classification I-B-1 in Table 2). Classification methods given in Table 2 are listed in order of decreasing reliability. The highest possible classification method, wherever feasible, should be used. Details of sampling procedures should be agreed upon in advance by all parties concerned. Whenever circumstances dictate utilization of increment collection classifications “Condition C” or “Condition D” or “Type II,” details of sampling procedure shall be agreed upon in advance by all parties concerned.

7.3 *Distribution of Increments*—It is essential that the increments be distributed throughout the lot to be sampled. This distribution is related to the entire volume of the lot, not merely its surface or any linear direction through it or over it. If circumstances prevent the sampler from applying this principle, the lot is sampled only in part, and the gross sample is representative only of this part. The spacing of the increments shall be varied if the possibility exists that increment collection may get “in phase” with the sequence of coal variability. Example: routine sampling of commercial coal from a continuous stream (conveyor belt) in which increment collection is automatic and its sequence coincides with the “highs” or “lows” in the content of fines.

7.4 *Dimensions of Sampling Device*—The opening of the sampling device shall be no less than 2.5 times the nominal top size of the coal and no less than 31.8 mm (1.25 in.). The sampling device shall be of sufficient capacity to completely retain or entirely pass the increment without spillage at the maximum rate of coal flow.

7.5 *Characteristics and Movement of Sampling Device*—In sampling from moving streams of coal, the sampling device shall be designed to collect each increment with no selective rejection of material by size and with no contamination by nonsample material.

7.5.1 *Falling-Stream Sampler*—In collecting an increment, the falling-stream cutter should move at a constant velocity through the falling stream of coal. Falling-stream cutter speeds of 18 in./s (457 mm/s) or less have been found to produce acceptable results.

7.5.2 *Cross-Belt Sampler*—The cross-belt cutter should be designed and operated at a velocity across the conveyor surface that is high enough to prevent selective rejection of material by size. The velocity and design of the cutter should also prevent contamination of the sample with material not collected within the cutter. The sampling machine should be designed to assure

TABLE 2 Increment Types, Conditions, and Spacing

Condition of Increment Collection from the Main Body of Coal	Types of Increment			
	Type I No Human Discretion Is Used		Type II Human Discretion Is Used	
	Spacing of Increments		Spacing of Increments	
	1. Systematic	2. Random	1. Systematic	2. Random
Condition A, stopped belt cut	I-A-1	I-A-2	II-A-1	II-A-2
Condition B, full-stream cut	I-B-1	I-B-2	II-B-1	II-B-2
Condition C, part-stream cut	I-C-1	I-C-2	II-C-1	II-C-2
Condition D, stationary sampling	I-D-1	I-D-2	II-D-1	II-D-2

a complete increment extraction, and the arc of travel of the sweep-arm cutter should closely fit the configuration of the conveyor belt.

7.6 Preservation of Moisture—The increments obtained during the sampling period shall be protected from changes in composition as a result of exposure to rain, snow, wind, sun, contact with absorbent materials, and extremes of temperature. The circulation of air through equipment must be reduced to a minimum to prevent both loss of fines and moisture. Samples in which moisture content is important shall be protected from excessive air flow and then shall be stored in moisture-tight containers. Metal cans with airtight lids, or heavy vapor-impervious bags, properly sealed, are satisfactory for this purpose.

7.7 Contamination—The sampling arrangement shall be planned so that contamination of the increments with foreign material or unrelated coal does not create bias of practical consequence.

7.8 Mechanical System Features—It is essential that mechanized systems as a whole, including sampling machines, chutes, feed conveyors, crushers and other devices, be self-cleaning and non-clogging and be designed and operated in a manner that will facilitate routine inspection and maintenance.

7.9 Personnel—Because of the many variations in the conditions under which coal must be sampled, and in the nature of the material being sampled, it is essential that the samples be collected under the direct supervision of a person qualified by training and experience for this responsibility. Where human labor is employed to collect the increments, it is essential that samples be collected by a trained and experienced sampler or under the direct personal observation of such a person. This includes sampling for the purpose of determining sampling characteristics of a coal or characteristics of a particular sampling apparatus.

7.10 Criteria of Satisfactory Performance—A satisfactory sampling arrangement is one that takes an unbiased sample at the desired degree of precision of the constituent for which the sample is to be analyzed. One fundamental characteristic of such an arrangement is that the size consist of the sample will adequately represent the true size consist of the coal. Sampling systems shall be tested initially and at regular intervals to determine whether the sample adequately represents the coal. In addition, sampling systems should be given a rough performance check as a matter of routine. This is done by comparing the weight or volume of collected sample with that of the total flow of coal to ensure a constant sampling ratio.

7.11 Relative Location of Sampling and Weighing—It is preferable that coal be weighed and sampled at the same time. If there is a lapse in time between these two events, consideration should be given by both the purchaser and the seller to changes in moisture during this interval and the consequent shift in relationship of moisture to the true quality of the coal at the instant when ownership of the coal transfers from one to the other.

8. Procedures

8.1 Sampling of Coals Based on Size and Condition of Preparation:

8.1.1 General-Purpose Sampling:

8.1.1.1 The general-purpose sampling procedures are intended to provide, in 19 of 20 cases, dry ash results that are within the interval of $\pm 1/10$ of the average dry ash results that would be obtained in hypothetical repeated sampling. Under some conditions, as detailed in 7.2.1 and 7.2.2, Conditions C and D and Type II, this precision may not be obtained.

8.1.1.2 Number and Weight of Increments—Obtain the number and weight of increments as specified in Table 1 except as provided in 8.1.1.5(b). Determine the minimum number of increments from the condition of preparation, and determine the minimum weight of each increment from the top size of the coal. Classify the coals to be sampled according to the general purpose procedure into three groups by top size. Further classify each of these groups into two subgroups in accordance with the condition of preparation. These classifications are shown in Table 1.

8.1.1.3 Variations in construction of the sampling device and flow, structure, or size consist of the coal may make it impracticable to collect increments as small as the minimum weight specified in Table 1. In such cases, collect an increment of greater weight. However, do not reduce the minimum number of increments, regardless of large excesses of individual increment weights. Table 1 lists the absolute minimum number of increments for general-purpose sampling which may not be reduced except as specified in 8.1.1.5(b). Other considerations may make it advisable or necessary to increase this number of increments.

8.1.1.4 Number of Gross Samples—Under the general-purpose sampling procedure, for quantities up to approximately 1000 tons [908 metric tons] [908 Mg] it is recommended that one gross sample represent the lot. Take this gross sample in accordance with the requirements prescribed in Table 1.

8.1.1.5 For quantities over 1000 tons [908 Mg], use any of the following alternatives:

(a) Take separate gross samples for each 1000-ton [908-Mg] lot of coal or fraction thereof.

(b) Use one gross sample to represent the total tonnage provided the number of increments, as stated in Table 1, are increased as follows:

$$N_2 = N_1 \sqrt{\frac{\text{total lot size (tons or Mg)}}{1000 \text{ tons or } 908 \text{ Mg}}} \quad (1)$$

N_1 = number of increments specified in Table 1 and

N_2 = number of increments required.

For example, a 4000-ton [3632-Mg] lot will require twice the number of increments specified in Table 1. Using this technique, it is theoretically possible to collect one gross sample to represent a lot of infinite tonnage. Practical experience, however, indicates the maximum size of a lot of coal to be represented by one gross sample should not exceed 10 000 tons [9080 Mg].

(c) Take separate gross samples for each 1000-ton [908-Mg] lot of coal or fraction thereof, and thoroughly mix their No. 60 sieve size analysis samples together in proportion to the tonnage represented by each sample. Make one analysis of the composite sample.