



Standard Test Method for Constituent Content of Composite Prepreg by Soxhlet Extraction¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation C 613/C 613M; 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.

This standard has been approved for use by agencies of the Department of Defense.

1. Scope

1.1 This test method covers a Soxhlet extraction procedure to determine the matrix content, reinforcement content, and filler content of composite material prepreg. Volatiles content, if appropriate, and required, is determined by means of Test Method D 3530/D 3530M.

1.1.1 The reinforcement and filler must be substantially insoluble in the selected extraction reagent and any filler must be capable of being separated from the reinforcement by filtering the extraction residue.

1.1.2 Reinforcement and filler content test results are total reinforcement content and total filler content; hybrid material systems with more than one type of either reinforcement or filler cannot be distinguished.

1.2 This test method focuses on thermosetting matrix material systems for which the matrix may be extracted by an organic solvent. However, other, unspecified, reagents may be used with this test method to extract other matrix material types for the same purposes.

1.3 Alternate techniques for determining matrix and reinforcement content include Test Methods D 3171 (matrix digestion), D 2584 (matrix burn-off/ignition), and D 3529 (matrix dissolution). Test Method D 2584 is preferred for reinforcement materials, such as glass, quartz, or silica, that are unaffected by high-temperature environments.

1.4 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as standard.

1.5 *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.* Specific precautionary statements are given in Section 9 and Note 1 and Note 3.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D-30 on High Modulus Fibers and Their Composites and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D30.03 on Constituent/Precursor Properties.

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D 883 Terminology Relating to Plastics²

D 2584 Test Method for Ignition Loss of Cured Reinforced Resins³

D 3171 Test Method for Fiber Content of Resin-Matrix Composites by Matrix Digestion⁴

D 3529/D 3529M Test Method for Matrix Solids Content and Matrix Content of Composite Prepreg⁴

D 3530/D 3530M Test Method for Volatiles Content of Composite Material Prepreg⁴

D 3878 Terminology of High-Modulus Reinforcing Fibers and Their Composites⁴

E 122 Practice for Choice of Sample Size to Estimate a Measure of Quality for a Lot or Process⁵

E 177 Practice for Use of Terms Precision and Bias in ASTM Test Methods⁵

E 456 Terminology Relating to Quality and Statistics⁵

E 1309 Guide for Identification of Composite Materials in Computerized Material Property Databases⁴

E 1471 Guide for Identification of Fibers, Fillers, and Core Materials in Computerized Material Property Databases⁴

2.2 NFPA Standard:

NFPA 86 Standard for Ovens and Furnaces⁶

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—Terminology D 3878 defines terms relating to composite materials. Terminology D 883 defines terms relating to plastics. Terminology E 456 and Practice E 177 define terms relating to statistics. In the event of a conflict between terms, Terminology D 3878 shall have precedence over the other documents.

3.1.1 *matrix content, n*—the amount of matrix present in a composite or prepreg expressed either as percent by weight or percent by volume. For polymer matrix composites this is resin content. See Terminology D 3878.

3.1.2 *prepreg, n*—the admixture of fibrous reinforcement and polymeric matrix used to fabricate composite materials. Its form may be sheet, tape, or tow. For thermosetting matrices it

² *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 08.01.

³ *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 08.02.

⁴ *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 15.03.

⁵ *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 14.02.

⁶ Available from National Fire Protection Association Standards Council, 1 Batterymarch Park, PO Box 9101, Quincy, MA 02269-9101.

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has been partially cured to a controlled viscosity called “B stage”. See Terminology D 3878.

3.1.3 *resin content, n*—see matrix content. See Terminology D 3878.

3.1.4 *sample, n*—a small part or portion of a material or product intended to be representative of the whole. See Terminology D 883.

3.1.5 *test result, n*—the value obtained for a given property from one test unit.⁷

3.1.5.1 *Discussion*—A test result may be a single observation or a combination of a number of observations when two or more test specimens are measured for each test.

3.1.6 *test specimen, n*—a test unit or portion of a test unit upon which a single or multiple observation is to be made.⁷

3.1.7 *test unit, n*—a unit or portion of a material that is sufficient to obtain a test result(s) for the property or properties to be measured.

3.1.7.1 *Discussion*—A test unit may be a subunit of a primary (first stage) sampling unit or it may be a subunit of a composite of primary sampling units or of increments from these primary sampling units.

3.2 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.2.1 *dry resin content, n*—prepreg resin content calculated by subtracting the average mass loss due to volatiles from the initial test specimen mass.

3.2.2 *filler content, n*—the amount of filler present in a prepreg or composite expressed either as percent by weight or percent by volume.

3.2.2.1 *Discussion*—In this test method the reinforcement is separated from the remainder of the material, which includes the matrix and the filler. If the filler is not then separated from the matrix to determine the proportion of each, then the filler content is included in the matrix content.

3.2.3 *reinforcement content, n*—the amount of reinforcement present in a composite or prepreg expressed either as percent by weight or percent by volume. This is sometimes stated as a fraction, that is, reinforcement volume fraction.

3.2.4 *replicate, n*—a test specimen tested under nominally identical conditions as other test specimens from the same sample.

3.2.5 *volatiles content, n*—the amount of volatiles present in a prepreg expressed as percent by weight.

3.2.6 *wet resin content, n*—prepreg resin content determined by considering volatiles as part of the resin mass.

3.3 *Symbols:*

3.3.1 *A*—initial mass of dry reinforcement during a reagent exposure evaluation.

3.3.2 *B*—final mass of dry reinforcement during a reagent exposure evaluation.

3.3.3 *c*—percent reinforcement mass change due to reagent exposure.

3.3.4 *CV*—coefficient of variation statistic of a sample population for a given property.

3.3.5 M_a —additional mass of filler in the test specimen.

3.3.6 M_e —mass of the test specimen extraction residue.

3.3.7 M_i —initial mass of the test specimen.

3.3.8 M_r —mass of reinforcement in the test specimen.

3.3.9 *n*—number of replicates in the sample population.

3.3.10 s_{n-1} —standard deviation statistic of a sample population for a given property.

3.3.11 W_f —weight percent of filler in prepreg.

3.3.12 W_m —weight percent of matrix in prepreg.

3.3.13 W_r —weight percent of reinforcement in prepreg.

3.3.14 x_i —test result for an individual test specimen from the sample population for a given property.

3.3.15 \bar{x} —average value of a sample population for a given property.

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 The exposed surface area of the prepreg material test specimen is increased by cutting the test specimen into smaller pieces. The test specimen is weighed and the matrix material removed by means of Soxhlet extraction. The extracted residue is dried and weighed. If a filler is present in the residue, in addition to reinforcement, the two components are separated by filtering the residue. From mass measurements of the initial test specimen, and of the residue taken at various stages in the process, the matrix content, reinforcement content, and filler content are calculated and reported in weight percent.

4.1.1 *Soxhlet Process*—While described in detail in common quantitative chemical analysis textbooks, the Soxhlet process is summarized as follows. The test specimen is loaded into a filtering extraction thimble, which is placed into the extraction chamber of a Soxhlet extraction assembly (see Fig. 1) containing an appropriate extraction reagent. The porous thimble allows the liquid extraction reagent to pass while retaining the test specimen. Freshly distilled liquid reagent enters from the top of the extraction chamber, filling it until the liquid reaches the highest level of the reagent-return tube. At this moment the tube operates as a siphon, draining the extraction chamber completely as it returns the liquid reagent and any extracted material to a reservoir beneath the extraction chamber. The heated reservoir boils the reagent, the vapor of which is led to a condenser placed above the extraction chamber. The distilled condensate then drips down into the thimble, starting once again the process of filling the extraction chamber. The Soxhlet operation is not a continuous operation, but rather a sequence of fillings and siphonings, each cycle of

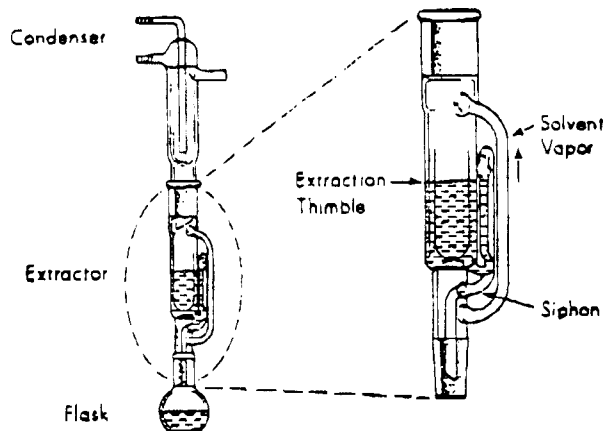



FIG. 1 Schematic of Soxhlet Extraction Apparatus

⁷ See Form and Style for ASTM Standards.

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which is called a reflux change. The heat input and reagent volume are adjusted to cause the boiling reagent to return to the extraction flask from the condenser at 3 to 10 reflux changes per hour, with the extraction continuing for a minimum of 4 h or 20 reflux changes, whichever comes first.

4.1.2 *Volatiles Content*—Volatiles content is primarily applicable to thermosetting materials, and, if required, is determined by Test Method D 3530/D 3530M. Volatiles content determination requires different test specimens than those used in the extraction process, since the process of determining volatiles content renders thermosetting material specimens unsuitable for subsequent organic solvent extraction.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 The prepreg volatiles content, matrix content, reinforcement content, and filler content of composite prepreg materials are used to control material manufacture and subsequent fabrication processes, and are key parameters in the specification and production of such materials, as well as in the fabrication of products made with such materials.

5.2 The extraction products resulting from this test method (the extract, the residue, or both) can be analyzed to assess chemical composition and degree of purity.

6. Interferences

6.1 *Extent of Cure in Thermosetting Systems*—The efficiency of extraction for thermosetting matrix materials is directly related to the extent of cure of the resin system. Resins that have started to cross-link (such as B-staged resins) will be increasingly more difficult to extract as the cure advances. This test method may not be appropriate for such materials; Test Methods D 3171 or D 2585 may be better test method choices.

6.2 *Reagent Selection*—The proper reagent, in a suitable quantity, must be selected for the constituents under test. The reagents listed in Section 8 are provided for consideration, particularly with regard to thermosetting materials, but cannot be assured to perform well on all material systems within the scope of this test method.

6.3 *Thimble Contamination*—If the extract is to undergo further analysis, the thimble must be clean to avoid a significant source of contamination.

6.4 *Reinforcement Mass Change As a Result of Reagent*—The calculations of this test method assume that the reinforcement mass (or filler, if filler content is being determined) is not significantly affected (whether mass increase or mass loss) by exposure to the reagent. Small, consistent, changes in the reinforcement mass caused by exposure to the reagent can be corrected by the process described in 14.4.5. The resulting correction may be used if this change is sufficiently reproducible under the conditions of the test, and if this change has the same value for the reinforcement alone as for the reinforcement in the matrix. Otherwise, a different reagent, or another test method, must be selected.

7. Apparatus

7.1 General Requirements:

7.1.1 *Container Volume*—A suggested volume is shown for each container. However, other sizes may be required depending upon the test specimen size, the amount of reagent needed

to complete the extraction process, and the relative sizes of related equipment.

7.1.2 *Thermal Shock*—Laboratory equipment that is subjected to non-ambient temperatures (hot or cold) shall be of tempered-glass or PTFE materials.

7.1.3 *Post-Test Elemental Analysis*—If a post-test elemental analysis of the extract or residue is to be performed, laboratory equipment contacting the test specimen shall be constructed of PTFE and test specimen cutting shall be limited to tools that do not leave an elemental trace.

7.2 General Equipment:

7.2.1 *Analytical Balance*—The analytical balance shall be capable of reading to within ± 0.1 mg.

7.2.2 *Muffle Furnace*—The muffle furnace used to condition glass extraction thimbles shall be capable of maintaining a temperature of $510 \pm 15^\circ\text{C}$.

7.2.3 *Air-Circulating Drying Oven*—The drying oven shall be capable of maintaining a temperature of $163 \pm 3^\circ\text{C}$.

NOTE 1—**Warning:** For safety purposes listed in NFPA 86, take care to limit volatile concentration in the oven by controlling sample quantity, temperature, and ventilation.

7.2.4 *Desiccator*—The desiccator shall be capable of containing the required test specimens.

7.3 Extraction Assembly:

7.3.1 *Extraction Thimbles*—The extraction thimbles shall be deep, narrow filtering cups, of either borosilicate glass in an appropriate pore size, or fat-extracted cellulose paper, suitable for use in the extraction chamber.

7.3.2 *Hot Plate*—The hot plate shall have adjustable controls suitable for heating the reagent within the reservoir flask to 260°C and shall be capable of controlling the required reagent temperature within $\pm 15^\circ\text{C}$.

7.3.3 *Reservoir Flask*—The reservoir flask shall be of borosilicate glass, of suitable volume (125 mL is suggested) for the reagent quantity and extraction chamber volume, and shall have a ground tapered joint capable of connection with the remainder of the assembly.

7.3.4 *Soxhlet Extraction Chamber*—The extraction chamber shall be of borosilicate glass, with an automatic recycling siphon that recycles at a suitable liquid volume (50 mL is suggested), and with a ground tapered joint at each end capable of connecting with the remainder of the assembly.


7.3.5 *Condensing Chamber*—The condensing chamber shall be of borosilicate glass, shall be water cooled, and shall have a ground tapered joint capable of connecting with the remainder of the assembly.

7.4 For Determining Filler Content:

7.4.1 *Vacuum Filter System*—The vacuum filter system shall be suitable for filtering material from the filtering crucible and holder.

7.4.2 *Filtering Crucible*—The filtering crucible shall be of fritted glass and of suitable pore size and of appropriate volume (30 mL is suggested).

NOTE 2—Filter porosity should be sized to filter the smallest expected filler size from the reinforcement. If there is any doubt about the filter pore-size selection, evaluate, with the material under test, filters of successively different porosity size until confidence is established in the filter size selected. While the glass fiber filter is used in concert with the

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fritted filter to reduce any tendency to clog, note that certain materials, particularly those containing filler of a broad range of particle size and shape, may nevertheless clog the filter pores without visible sign. The filter tare mass should be monitored for change as a result of the test. A change in the filter tare mass indicates a potentially incorrect determination of reinforcement to filler proportion, and therefore, incorrect reinforcement and filler content test results.

7.4.3 Crucible Holder—The crucible holder shall be capable of holding the filtering crucible.

7.4.4 Glass Fiber Filter—A glass fiber filter of suitable porosity and of appropriate diameter to fit in the filtering crucible.⁸

7.5 Miscellaneous Common Laboratory Items—Other commonly available laboratory items may be needed including: scissors or knife, beakers or flasks, flexible tubing, equipment connectors, wash bottles, aluminum foil, and lint-free wipes.

8. Reagents and Materials

8.1 Purity of Reagents—As a minimum, a technical-grade reagent is required to provide accurate results. However, when resolving disputes or performing subsequent analysis of extract or residue, a reagent-grade reagent shall be used. Unless otherwise indicated, it is intended that the reagent conform to the specifications of the Committee on Analytical Reagents of the American Chemical Society, where such specifications are available.⁹ Other equivalent grades may be used, provided the reagent is of sufficiently high purity to permit its use without lessening the accuracy of the determination.

8.2 Extraction Reagents—A suitable extraction reagent shall be selected that is compatible with the material system under test and the apparatus. Read and understand the precautions listed in Section 9 before selecting an extraction reagent. Extraction reagents that have been found effective for many thermosetting matrices include the following:

8.2.1 Dimethylformamide (DMF), (CH₃)₂NCHO.

NOTE 3—Warning: As of the approval date of this standard, DMF was listed by the International Agency for Research on Cancer in Group 2B as a “possible human carcinogen” and is considered a reproductive toxin by the National Toxicology Program. See a recent DMF material safety data sheet for more information.

8.2.2 Ethanol (Ethyl Alcohol), C₂H₅OH.

8.3 Washing Reagents—A suitable washing reagent(s) shall be selected that is compatible with the material system under test and the apparatus. Read and understand the precautions listed in Section 9 before selecting a washing reagent. Washing reagents that have been found effective include the following:

8.3.1 Acetone (2-Propanone), CH₃COCH₃.

8.3.2 Water, Distilled or Demineralized.

9. Hazards

9.1 This test method should be used only by laboratory workers with general training in the safe handling of chemi-

icals. A source of useful information is given in Footnote 10.¹⁰

NOTE 4—Precaution: In addition to other precautions, consult the appropriate material safety data sheet for each material used, including reagent materials and test specimen materials, for specific recommendations on safety and handling.

NOTE 5—Precaution: In addition to other precautions, the extraction and filtering processes should be performed under a suitable vented chemical fume hood.

NOTE 6—Precaution: In addition to other precautions, materials that have been exposed to potentially toxic or flammable reagents must be air-dried under a hood before being subsequently oven-dried, to eliminate build-up of a potentially dangerous concentration of vapor in the drying oven. Useful guidelines for estimating the safe volatiles mass for a given oven size are given in NFPA Standard 86.

9.2 Use of mixed extraction reagents with different boiling points are not covered by this test method.

NOTE 7—Precaution: In addition to other precautions, do not use mixed extraction reagents with different boiling points. Use of mixed extraction reagents with different boiling points can result in an explosion if the low-boiling fraction siphons into the extraction chamber while the high-boiling fraction is being heated; the low-boiling fraction may then superheat and overpressure the apparatus.

10. Sampling, Test Specimens, and Test Units

10.1 Test Units—Unless otherwise specified, the test unit shall consist of a single test specimen upon which a single observation is to be made.

10.2 Sampling—Unless otherwise specified, at least three test specimens (test units) per sample shall be evaluated. For statistically significant data the procedures outlined in Practice E 122 should be consulted. The method of sampling shall be reported.

10.3 Test Specimen Geometry—The mass of each individual test specimen shall be at least 1.0 g and, unless otherwise specified, shall be 2.0 to 3.0 g.

10.4 Test Specimen Preparation:

10.4.1 Labeling—Label each test specimen container so that they will be distinct from each other and traceable back to the sampled material. Report the labeling scheme and method.

11. Preparation of Apparatus

11.1 Clean the extraction thimbles and filter crucibles. Dry the filter crucibles (including the glass fiber filters) and extraction thimbles in the drying oven (unless otherwise specified, dry at 163 ± 3°C) until there is no perceptible mass change with time. Remove from the oven and cool in the desiccator. Determine and record, to within 0.1 mg, the initial tare mass of each. The tare mass of the filter crucibles shall include the installed glass-fiber filter.

11.2 After cleaning, drying, and taring, store all extraction thimbles and filter crucibles in the desiccator until use.

12. Calibration and Standardization

12.1 All measuring equipment shall have certified calibrations that are current at the time of use of the equipment. The calibration documentation shall be available for inspection.

¹⁰ *Prudent Practices in the Laboratory: Handling and Disposal of Chemicals*, National Academy Press, 1995.

⁸ A Reeve Angle Grade 934 AH or equivalent is suggested.

⁹ *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. Pharmacopoeial Convention, Inc. (USPC), Rockville, MD.