



Standard Test Method for Low-Temperature Torque of Grease-Lubricated Wheel Bearings¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D 4693; 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.

^{e1} NOTE—Warning information was moved editorially from notes to section text in September 2002.

1. Scope

1.1 This test method determines the extent to which a test grease retards the rotation of a specially-manufactured, spring-loaded, automotive-type wheel bearing assembly when subjected to low temperatures. Torque values, calculated from restraining-force determinations, are a measure of the viscous resistance of the grease. This test method was developed with greases giving torques of less than 35 N·m at -40°C .

1.2 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as the standard. The values in parentheses are for information only.

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 217 Test Methods for Cone Penetration of Lubricating Grease²
- D 1403 Test Method for Cone Penetration of Lubricating Grease Using One-Quarter and One-Half Scale Cone Equipment²
- D 3527 Test Method for Life Performance of Automotive Wheel Bearing Grease³
- D 4175 Terminology Relating to Petroleum, Petroleum Products, and Lubricants³
- E 1 Specification for ASTM Thermometers⁴
- E 77 Test Method for Inspection and Verification of Thermometers⁴
- E 220 Test Method for Calibration of Thermocouples by Comparison Techniques⁴
- E 230 Specification and Temperature-Electromotive Force

(EMF) Tables for Standardized Thermocouples⁴

E 563 Practice for Preparation and Use of Freezing Point Reference Baths⁴

E 585/E 585M Specification for Compacted Mineral-Insulated, Metal-Sheathed, Base-Metal Thermocouple Cable⁴

E 608 Specification for Metal-Sheathed Base-Metal Thermocouples⁴

2.2 Military Standard:⁵

MIL-G-10924F Specification for Automotive and Artillery

2.3 Other Standard:

Anti-Friction Bearing Manufacturer Assoc. (AFBMA) Standard 19, 1974 (ANSI B. 3.19-1975)

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions:

3.1.1 *automotive wheel bearing grease, n*—a lubricating grease specifically formulated to lubricate automotive wheel bearings at relatively high grease temperatures and bearing speeds. **D 4693-97**

3.1.2 *lubricant, n*—any material interposed between two surfaces that reduces the friction or wear between them. **D 3527**

3.1.3 *lubricating grease, n*—a semi-fluid to solid product of a dispersion of a thickener in a liquid lubricant. **D 4175**

3.1.3.1 *Discussion*—The dispersion of the thickener forms a two-phase system and immobilizes the liquid lubricant by surface tension and other physical forces. Other ingredients are commonly included to impact special properties. **D 217**

3.1.4 *thickener, n*—in *lubricating grease*, a substance composed of finely-divided, particles dispersed in a liquid lubricant to form the product's structure.

3.1.4.1 *Discussion*—The solid thickener can be fibers (such as various metallic soaps) or plates or spheres (such as certain non-soap thickeners) which are insoluble or, at the most, only very slightly soluble in the liquid lubricant. The general requirements are that the solid particles be extremely small,

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of Committee D02 on Petroleum Products and Lubricants and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D02.G0 on Lubricating Grease.

Current edition approved June 10, 1997. Published October 1997. Originally published as D 4693-87. Last previous edition D 4693-95.

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

³ *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 05.02.

⁴ *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 14.03.

⁵ Available from Standardization Documents Order Desk, Bldg. 4 Section D, 700 Robbins Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19111-5094, Attn: NPODS.

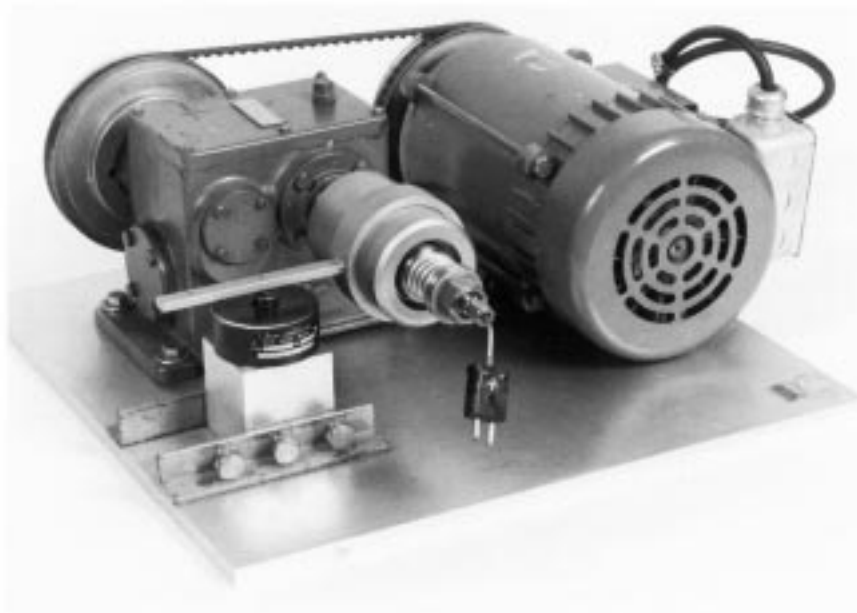


FIG. 1 Low-Temperature Torque Apparatus

uniformly dispersed, and capable of forming a relatively stable, gel-like structure with the liquid lubricant. **D 217**

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 A freshly stirred and worked sample of test grease is packed into the bearings of a specially-manufactured, automotive-type spindle-bearings-hub assembly. The assembly is heated and then cold soaked at -40°C , unless another test temperature is specified by the grease specification. The spindle is rotated at 1 rpm and the torque required to prevent rotation of the hub is measured at 60 s.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 This test method differentiates among greases having distinctly different low-temperature characteristics. This test is used for specification purposes and correlates with its precursor which has been used to predict the performance of greases in automotive wheel bearings in low-temperature service.⁶ It is the responsibility of the user to determine the correlation with other types of service.

6. Apparatus

6.1 *Low-Temperature Wheel Bearing Torque Apparatus*,⁷ illustrated in Fig. 1.

NOTE 1—Several apparatus configurations are available, differing mainly in the drive system. For example, with large cold chambers, a unitized apparatus (see Fig. 1) can be used totally within the cold chamber. With small cold chambers, the drive system can be mounted externally and only the test unit subjected to low temperature. Regardless of the exact configuration, the essential apparatus consists of a 1/3 hp electric motor connected to a gear reducer by means of a timing belt and pulleys,

which drive a specially-manufactured spindle-bearings-hub assembly equipped with a spring-loading mechanism. For apparatus contained totally within the cold chamber, the drive system should be prepared by replacing the grease in the motor bearings with a suitable low-temperature grease ($<1\text{ N}\cdot\text{m}$ torque at -40°C), such as one meeting the requirements of Specification MIL-G-10924F or similar, and the lubricant in the gear reducer should be replaced with a suitable low-temperature ($<-50^{\circ}\text{C}$ pour point) worm-gear lubricant.⁸ In addition, if not already so-equipped, large-diameter (152 mm), narrow-width (13 mm) timing pulleys and a suitable timing belt should be used.

6.2 *Torque Measuring System*, consisting of a strain-gage load cell with a matching bridge-balance unit,⁹ a suitable strip-chart recorder to record the load-cell output, and a series of weights (up to 20 kg, at least) suitable for load-cell calibration.

NOTE 2—In order to calculate torque from force measurements, the load cell should be located a known distance from the test-unit centerline; 100 mm is convenient. A convenient way to do this is to centrally drill a 1.78-mm diameter hole (No. 50 drill) in the torque arm, 100 mm from the spindle centerline; temporarily replace the load cell contact with a second contact having a 1.59-mm diameter pin (soldered in place) extending about 5 mm above the contact point; position the load cell to permit insertion of the pin in the torque-arm hole; secure the position of the load cell by tightening the clamping screws; replace pin contact with original contact before running test.

6.3 *Temperature Measuring System*, consisting of Type T (preferred) or Type J (acceptable), 3.18-mm diameter metal-sheathed, grounded thermocouples meeting Specifications E 585/E 585M and E 608 and conforming to the special limits of error defined in Table 1 of Specification E 230; a suitable potentiometer, satisfying the requirements for Groups B or C as described in Test Method E 220; an ASTM 73C precision

⁶ Verdura, T. M., "Performance of Service Station Wheel Bearing Greases in a New Low-Temperature Test," *NLGI Spokesman* 35 10-21 (1971).

⁷ Available from Koehler Instrument Co., 1595 Sycamore Avenue, Bohemia, L.I., NY 11716.

⁸ Mobil SHC 624 (or similar), available from Mobil Oil Corporation, 3225 Gallows Rd., Fairfax, VA 22037.

⁹ A Model 3167-50 load cell and matching electronic circuitry are available from Lebow Associates, Inc., 1728 Maplelawn, Troy, MI 48062.

**TABLE 1 Torque Test Results at –40°C with NLGI Reference System A (Batch 3)**

Mean value	3.7 N·m
Standard deviation	0.67 N·m
Confidence limits, 95 %:	
Lower	3.2
Upper	4.1

thermometer meeting Specification E 1, certified (traceable to National Institute of Standards and Technology certification) or verified and calibrated according to Test Method E 77; a suitable comparator as described in Test Method E 77; and an ice bath prepared according to Practice E 563.

NOTE 3—Other temperature-measuring instrumentation, such as a precision platinum resistance thermometer, may be used instead of thermocouples, providing the limits of error are within those defined in Specification E 230.

6.4 *Test Bearing*—Use LM67010-LM67048 and LM11910-LM11949 (AFBMA Standard 19) inboard and outboard tapered roller bearings, respectively.¹⁰

6.5 *Low-Temperature Test Chamber*, equipped with internal fan, and capable of maintaining the spindle at $-40 \pm 0.5^\circ\text{C}$, and with sufficient capacity to cool the spindle at the rate shown in Fig. 2(A) and Fig. 2(B).

6.6 *Laboratory Oven*, forced air, capable of maintaining $70 \pm 3^\circ\text{C}$.

6.7 *Grease Packer*, as described in Test Method D 3527 or equivalent.

6.8 *Ultrasonic Cleaner*.¹¹

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 shall conform to the specifications of the Committee on Analytical Reagents of the American Chemical Society where such specifications are available.¹² 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 *Ethylene Glycol*, commercial automotive antifreeze. (**Warning**—Moderately toxic. Can be harmful if inhaled, swallowed or absorbed through skin. Contact can irritate eyes, or mucosa.)

7.3 *Chloroform*, reagent grade. (**Warning**—Health hazard.)

7.4 *1,1,1-Trichloroethane*, reagent grade. (**Warning**—Health hazard.)

7.4.1 For routine testing, a *functionally equivalent solvent* may be substituted throughout this test method wherever 1,1,1-trichloroethane is specified. However, in referee situa-

tions, 1,1,1-trichloroethane or chloroform shall be used unless contractual parties agree on the acceptability of the functionally equivalent solvent.

7.4.1.1 To be functionally equivalent, the solvent must not affect test results, must clean as effectively as 1,1,1-trichloroethane, have similar volatility characteristics, leave no residue on evaporation, and contain no water or additives.

NOTE 4—This test method (and the precision values) was originally developed using chloroform. This was subsequently replaced by 1,1,1-trichloroethane which was declared an ozone depleting substance by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Federal regulations ban the production of this material after December 31, 1995, but existing stocks may continue to be used. Currently there are no EPA restrictions on the use of chloroform, but the user should be aware of its health hazards, if it is used. No other solvent intended as a substitute for 1,1,1-trichloroethane in this test method has been cooperatively evaluated. (**Warning**—If the functionally equivalent solvent is flammable or a health hazard, proper precautions should be taken.)

8. Calibration

8.1 Torque Calibration:

8.1.1 Place the load cell in the cold chamber at -40°C and allow it to come to temperature equilibrium. Electrically null the load cell and recording potentiometer using the adjusting potentiometer of the matching network. Adjust or standardize the range potentiometer as needed to achieve the desired zero-point and full-scale calibration. Select a millivolt range on the recording potentiometer, and record pen displacement as a known force is applied to the load cell. (It may be necessary to fabricate a platform to attach to the load cell to support the calibrating weights.) Apply several forces (up to about 200 N or more) in stepwise fashion while recording pen displacement as a function of applied force. Calibrate the other millivolt ranges in similar fashion until limited by either maximum displacement or maximum load. Remove forces stepwise to determine possible hysteresis.

8.1.2 Construct a plot of pen displacement as a function of force for each millivolt range. Use these plots for the subsequent determination of torque for the test greases. Ordinarily, the plots will be linear, and simple conversion factors can be calculated.

8.1.3 This calibration need be done only at the time of initial setup and when occasional checks indicate that it is required. The torque measuring system is to be standardized before each test, however.

8.2 Temperature Calibration:

8.2.1 In order to obtain precise torque measurements, an *accurate temperature calibration is essential*. Meticulous attention to the details described in the several ASTM methods of temperature calibration is of paramount importance.

8.2.2 Calibrate the temperature-measuring system, including both the potentiometer and the spindle thermocouple, at 0°C and -40°C by comparing the observed temperature with that of the certified thermometer as described in Test Method E 220. Alternatively, both thermometer and thermocouple can be calibrated using the freezing point of mercury as described in Test Method E 77. The reference ice bath is to be made in accordance with Practice E 563.

NOTE 5—A suitable low-temperature liquid bath can be made with a 65

¹⁰ Timken or Bower bearings are suitable.

¹¹ A Branson 220 (Branson Cleaning Equipment Co., Shelton CN 06484), having a capacity of about 4 L operating at an output frequency of about 55 kHz, with a power input of about 125 W, has been found satisfactory.

¹² *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.