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Optical fibre cables –
Part 1-23: Generic specification – Basic optical cable test procedures – Cable
element test methods

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD	5
1 Scope and object	7
2 Normative references	7
3 Terms and definitions	8
4 General requirements	8
5 Method G1: Bend test for optical cable elements	8
5.1 Object	8
5.2 Sample	8
5.3 Apparatus	8
5.4 Procedure	8
5.5 Requirements	8
5.6 Details to be specified	8
6 Method G2: Ribbon dimensions and geometry – Visual method	9
6.1 Object	9
6.2 Sample	9
6.3 Apparatus	9
6.4 Procedure	9
6.4.1 General	9
6.4.2 Method 1	9
6.4.3 Method 2	9
6.5 Requirements	9
6.6 Details to be specified	10
6.7 Definitions of ribbon dimensions and geometry	10
6.7.1 General	10
6.7.2 Width and height	10
6.7.3 Basis line	10
6.7.4 Fibre alignment	10
7 Method G3: Ribbon dimensions – Aperture gauge	11
7.1 Object	11
7.2 Sample	11
7.3 Apparatus	11
7.4 Procedure	12
7.5 Requirement	12
7.6 Details to be specified	12
8 Method G4: Ribbon dimensions – Dial gauge (Test deleted obsoleted method)	12
9 Method G5: Ribbon tear (separability)	12
9.1 Object	12
9.2 Sample	12
9.3 Apparatus	13
9.4 Procedure	13
9.5 Requirements	14
9.6 Details to be specified	14
10 Method G6: Ribbon torsion	14
10.1 Object	14
10.2 Sample	14

10.3	Apparatus	14
10.4	Procedure	15
10.5	Requirements	15
10.6	Details to be specified.....	15
11	Method G7: Tube kinking.....	16
11.1	Object.....	16
11.2	Sample	16
11.3	Apparatus	16
11.4	Procedure	17
11.5	Requirements	17
11.6	Details to be specified.....	17
12	Method G8: Ribbon residual twist test.....	18
12.1	Object.....	18
12.2	Sample	18
12.3	Apparatus	18
12.4	Procedure	18
12.5	Requirements	19
12.6	Details to be specified.....	19
13	Method G9: Bleeding and evaporation	19
13.1	Object.....	19
13.2	Sample	19
13.3	Apparatus	19
13.4	Procedure	20
13.5	Requirements	20
13.6	Details to be specified.....	21
14	Method G10A: Stripping force stability of cabled optical fibres	21
14.1	Object.....	21
14.2	Sample	21
14.2.1	Sample length	21
14.2.2	Sample preparation	21
14.3	Apparatus	21
14.4	Procedure	21
14.5	Requirements	21
14.6	Details to be specified.....	22
15	Method G10B: Strippability of optical fibre ribbons.....	22
15.1	Object.....	22
15.2	Sample	22
15.3	Apparatus	22
15.3.1	General	22
15.3.2	Stripping tool	22
15.3.3	Motor and slide (if used)	23
15.4	Positioning and holding equipment.....	23
15.5	Alcohol wipe	23
15.6	Procedure	23
15.7	Requirements	24
15.8	Details to be specified.....	24
16	Method G10C: Strippability of buffered optical fibres	24
16.1	Object.....	24

16.2	Sample	24
16.3	Apparatus	24
16.4	Procedure	24
16.5	Requirements	25
16.6	Details to be specified.....	25
17	Method G11A: Tensile strength and elongation of buffer tubes and micro tubes at break	25
17.1	Object.....	25
17.2	Sample	25
17.2.1	General	25
17.2.2	Preparation and conditioning of test pieces.....	25
17.2.3	Determination of cross-sectional area	28
17.2.4	Ageing treatment	29
17.3	Apparatus	29
17.4	Procedure	30
17.5	Requirements	31
18	Method G11B: Elongation of buffer tubes and micro tubes at low temperature	31
18.1	Object.....	31
18.2	Sample	31
18.2.1	General	31
18.2.2	Preparation of test pieces	31
18.3	Apparatus	32
18.4	Procedure	32
18.5	Requirements	33
18.6	Details to be specified.....	33
	Bibliography.....	34

IEC 60794-1-23:2019

<https://standards.iteh.ai/> <https://standards.iteh.ai/standards/iec-60794-1-23-2019>

Figure 1	– Cross-sectional drawing illustrating fibre ribbon geometry	10
Figure 2	– Aperture gauge	11
Figure 3	– Sample preparation for ribbon separability test.....	13
Figure 4	– Separability procedure	14
Figure 5	– Torsion test.....	15
Figure 6	– Tube kinking test.....	16
Figure 7	– Bleeding and evaporation test set-up	20
Figure 8	– Dumb-bell test piece	27
Figure 9	– Small dumb-bell test piece	28
Figure 10	– Punch end showing groove	28
Figure 11	– Test pieces cut by grooved punch	28
Figure 12	– Machine for preparing test pieces.....	30
Table 1	– Examples of test apparatus dimensions for tube kinking.....	17
Table 2	– Condition of stripped samples	23

INTERNATIONAL ELECTROTECHNICAL COMMISSION

OPTICAL FIBRE CABLES

Part 1-23: Generic specification – Basic optical cable test procedures – Cable element test methods

FOREWORD

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International Standard IEC 60794-1-23 has been prepared by subcommittee 86A: Fibres and cables, of IEC technical committee 86: Fibre optics.

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition published in 2012. It constitutes a technical revision.

This edition includes the following significant technical changes with respect to the previous edition:

- a) addition of a new test method G9: Bleeding and evaporation (formerly known as method E15 in IEC 60794-1-21:2015);
- b) addition of a new test method G10A: Stripping force stability of cabled optical fibres (formerly known as method E5A in IEC 60794-1-21:2015);
- c) addition of a new test method G10B: Strippability of optical fibre ribbons (formerly known as method E5B in IEC 60794-1-21:2015);
- d) addition of a new test method G10C: Strippability of buffered optical fibres (formerly known as method E5C in IEC 60794-1-21:2015);
- e) addition of a new test method G11A: Tensile strength and elongation of buffer tubes (included in IEC 60811-501);
- f) addition of a new test method G11B: Elongation of buffer tubes at low temperature (included in IEC 60811-505);
- g) clarification of the sample preparation procedure in method G5: Ribbon tear (separability);

The text of this International Standard is based on the following documents:

CDV	Report on voting
86A/1912/CDV	86A/1945/RVC

Full information on the voting for the approval of this International Standard can be found in the report on voting indicated in the above table.

This document has been drafted in accordance with the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

A list of all parts in the IEC 60794 series, published under the general title *Optical fibre cables*, can be found on the IEC website.

The committee has decided that the contents of this document will remain unchanged until the stability date indicated on the IEC website under "http://webstore.iec.ch" in the data related to the specific document. At this date, the document will be

- reconfirmed,
- withdrawn,
- replaced by a revised edition, or
- amended.

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OPTICAL FIBRE CABLES

Part 1-23: Generic specification – Basic optical cable test procedures – Cable element test methods

1 ~~Scope and object~~

This part of IEC 60794 describes test procedures to be used in establishing uniform requirements for the geometrical, material, mechanical, environmental properties of optical fibre cable elements.

This document applies to optical fibre cables for use with telecommunication equipment and devices employing similar techniques, and to cables having a combination of both optical fibres and electrical conductors.

~~The object of this part of IEC 60794 is to define test procedures to be used in establishing uniform requirements for the geometrical, material, mechanical, environmental properties of optical fibre cable elements.~~

Throughout the document, the wording "optical cable" ~~may~~ can also include optical fibre units, microduct fibre units, etc.

~~General requirements and definitions are given in IEC 60794-1-20 and a complete reference guide to test method of all types in the IEC 60794-1-2.~~

NOTE The environmental testing of optical fibre ribbon would be valuable for some applications. Useful information about suitable test methods can be found in the optical fibre standards IEC 60793-1-50, IEC 60793-1-51, IEC 60793-1-52, and IEC 60793-1-53.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

IEC 60794-1-2, *Optical fibre cables – Part 1-2: Generic specification – Basic optical cable test procedures – General guidance*

IEC 60794-1-31:2018, *Optical fibre cables – Part 1-31: Generic specification – Optical cable elements – Optical fibre ribbon*

IEC 60793-1-32:2018, *Optical fibres – Part 1-32: Measurement methods and test procedures – Coating strippability*

IEC 60793-1-40, *Optical fibres – Part 1-40: ~~Measurement methods and test procedures – Attenuation measurement methods~~*

~~IEC 60794-3:2001, *Optical fibre cables – Part 3: Sectional specification – Outdoor cables*~~

IEC 60793-1-46, *Optical fibres – Part 1-46: Measurement methods and test procedures – Monitoring of changes in optical transmittance*

IEC 60811-401, *Electric and optical fibre cables – Test methods for non-metallic materials – Part 401: Miscellaneous tests – Thermal ageing methods – Ageing in an air oven*

3 Terms and definitions

No terms and definitions are listed in this document.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>
- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <http://www.iso.org/obp>

4 General requirements

IEC 60794-1-2 is the reference guide to test methods of all types. It shall be considered for general requirements and definitions.

5 Method G1: Bend test for optical cable elements

5.1 Object

The purpose of this test is to characterize cable elements for splicing purposes by determining the attenuation increase of an optical cable element (fibre, ribbon, core tube, breakout unit, etc.) ~~element~~ when bent within a splice closure or similar device.

5.2 Sample

The length of the sample of optical cable element shall be sufficient to carry out the testing specified.

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5.3 Apparatus

The apparatus consists of

- a) a mandrel having a smooth surface with diameter as stated in the detail specification, and
- b) an attenuation measuring apparatus for the determination of attenuation change (~~see~~ according to the test methods of IEC 60793-1-40 and IEC 60793-1-46).

5.4 Procedure

The element to be tested shall be ~~loosely~~ wound on the mandrel at minimal tension; the number of turns shall be stated in the detail specification.

In order to measure the attenuation increase caused by bending, allowance should be made for the intrinsic attenuation of the fibre.

5.5 Requirements

Any increase in attenuation shall comply with the limits shown in the detail specification.

5.6 Details to be specified

The detail specification shall include the following:

- optical test wavelength;
- diameter of the mandrel;

- c) number of turns;
- d) apparatus and attenuation measuring technique;
- e) temperature at which the evaluation shall be performed if different from room temperature.

6 Method G2: Ribbon dimensions and geometry – Visual method

6.1 Object

The purpose of this test is to determine the geometry of an optical fibre ribbon as defined by the parameters of width, height and fibre alignment, for the purpose of type testing to assume proper manufacturing process control. This test is not necessarily suitable for final product inspection and, unless otherwise specified, shall not be used for that purpose.

6.2 Sample

The number of samples to be tested shall be specified in the detail specification. The selected samples shall be statistically independent and representative of the ribbon population tested.

6.3 Apparatus

The apparatus consists of a microscope or profile projector with appropriate magnification.

6.4 Procedure

6.4.1 General

Either of the two following procedures methods described in 6.4.2 and 6.4.3 may be used.

For the specified number of samples, all dimensions shall be measured as average as well as maximum and minimum values.

NOTE Care should be taken that the preparation of the sample does not change the structure of the fibre ribbon and represents an undisturbed image of the fibre cladding and ribbon cross-section.

6.4.2 Method 1

The sample is prepared by cutting it perpendicular to the axis of the ribbon and placing it in a curable resin or in a tool which holds the ribbon. If necessary, the sample shall be ground and polished to prepare a smooth perpendicular end face. The prepared sample is secured with its end face perpendicular to the optical path and measured by means of a microscope or profile projector.

6.4.3 Method 2

Place the ribbon in a ribbon fibre holder and remove 20 mm to 25 mm of the fibre coating and matrix material with the ribbon hot sheath stripping tool and wipe the stripped portion of the fibres clean with an alcohol-moistened pad. Adjust the position of the ribbon in the ribbon fibre holder and cleave the fibres at a distance of 250 μm to 500 μm from the stripped edge of the ribbon. Cut and polish the other end of the ribbon, and illuminate it with a collimated light source. Align and measure the cleaved end of the ribbon under microscope.

NOTE Care should be taken that the preparation of the sample does not change the structure of the fibre ribbon and represents an undisturbed image of the fibre cladding and ribbon cross-section.

6.5 Requirements

Unless otherwise specified in the detail specification, the width, height and fibre alignment shall be in accordance with ~~IEC 60794-3:2001, Table 1~~ IEC 60794-1-31:2018.

6.6 Details to be specified

The detail specification shall include the following:

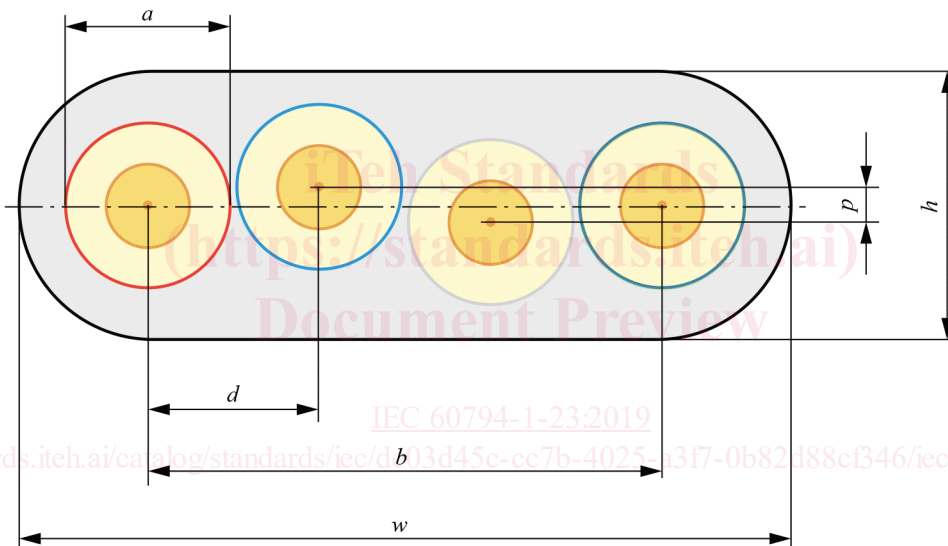
- a) permissible maximum and minimum values;
- b) limits for average values;
- c) number of samples tested.

6.7 Definitions of ribbon dimensions and geometry

6.7.1 General

The following definitions apply to a fibre ribbon cross-section as shown in Figure 1. The figure illustrates an example for a 4-fibre ribbon, where a is the diameter of a coloured fibre.

NOTE In consideration of the precision of fibre geometric attributes and the relatively larger precision of ribbon geometry requirements, it is acceptable for glass core/glass cladding fibres to use the edge of the cladding for the measurements of 6.7.3 and 6.7.4 in lieu of the fibre centres. In this case, the measurements shall can be made on the same side of all fibres (e.g. top or bottom, left or right side).



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Figure 1 – Cross-sectional drawing illustrating fibre ribbon geometry

6.7.2 Width and height

The width w and height h of the ribbon are the dimensions of the minimum rectangular area enclosing the ribbon cross-section.

6.7.3 Basis line

The basis line is given that line in the cross-section of an optical fibre ribbon as the straight line crossing the fibre centres of the first fibre (fibre 1) and the last fibre (fibre n) of the fibre ribbon, as shown in Figure 1 as dotted line. This line is used as the reference plane for the fibre alignment measurements.

6.7.4 Fibre alignment

6.7.4.1 Horizontal fibre separation

The horizontal separation of fibres is the distance of the orthogonal projection of two fibre centres on the basis line in the fibre ribbon cross-section.

Two horizontal separation parameters can be distinguished:

- centre-centre distance d between adjacent fibres;
- centre-centre distance b between the extreme fibres.

6.7.4.2 Planarity

The planarity p of the fibre ribbon structure is the sum of the maximum positive and absolute value of the maximum negative vertical separation of the fibres.

The vertical separation of the fibres is the orthogonal distance from the fibre centre to the basis line. The vertical separation is positive for fibres "above" the basis line and negative for fibres "below" the basis line.

7 Method G3: Ribbon dimensions – Aperture gauge

7.1 Object

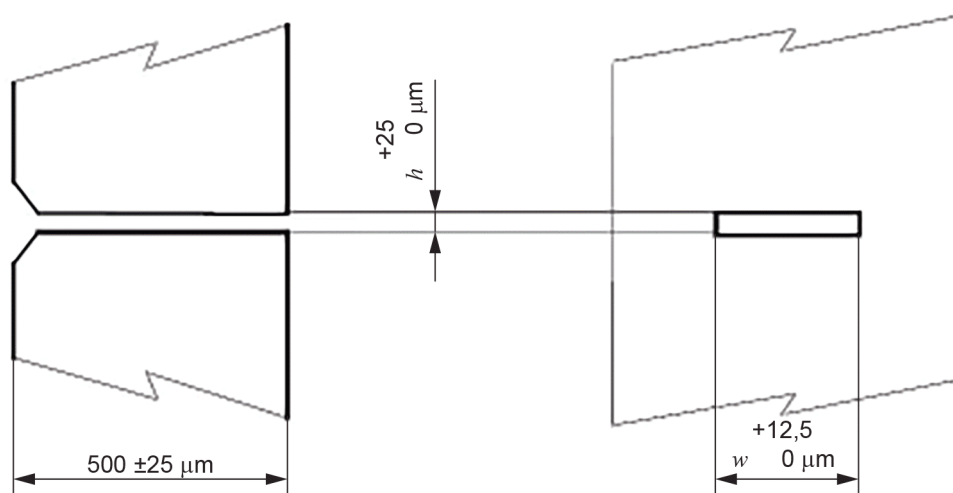
The purpose of this test is to verify the functional performance of a ribbon. In order to ensure functional performance, the dimensions of edge bonded ribbons may be controlled and verified for final inspection purposes with an aperture gauge. The intent is to verify that the end portion of a ribbon can be inserted into and would be reasonably aligned to the guide slots of commercial stripping tools. ~~This method is under consideration for encapsulated ribbons.~~

7.2 Sample

Unless otherwise specified in the detail specification, five representative ribbon samples, each with a minimum length of 50 mm, shall be taken from the ribbon to be tested.

7.3 Apparatus

An aperture gauge, as shown in Figure 2, ~~having an aperture based on the dimensions shown in IEC 60794-3:2001, Table 1, may~~ shall be used to assess the overall dimensions of a ribbon. The values for ribbon width (w) and ribbon height (h) of Figure 2 shall be the nominal ribbon dimensions as established using method G2 in an appropriate quality assessment scheme.



IEC

Figure 2 – Aperture gauge

7.4 Procedure

The ribbon sample to be tested is held in the middle, and a 10 mm end portion is inserted through the aperture gauge.

7.5 Requirement

It ~~must~~ shall be possible for the 10 mm ribbon end portion to be freely inserted through the aperture gauge without mechanical damage to the sample.

7.6 Details to be specified

The detail specification shall include the following:

- a) dimensions of the aperture gauge;
- b) number of samples to be tested.

8 Method G4: Ribbon dimensions – Dial gauge (~~Test deleted~~ **obsolete method**)

9 Method G5: Ribbon tear (separability)

9.1 Object

The purpose of this test is to assure sufficient tear resistance for ribbons where the fibres are not required to be separable, or to assure sufficient separability of the fibres for ribbons where the fibres are required to be separated. The intention of this test is to be able to tear by hand without damage.

9.2 Sample

~~For an n fibre ribbon, $n/2$ specimens, each with a minimum length of 100 mm, are taken from lengths of approximately 1 m each from the fibre ribbon.~~

~~The fibres to be tested are separated with a knife or other suitable method on a suitable length for clamping (see Figure 3) for x samples (x , typically 3 to 5, to be specified in the detail specification). One fibre is separated from the other fibres in the ribbon. For x more samples, two fibres are separated from the other fibres in the ribbon, etc. up to $n/2$ fibres.~~

A number of samples of fibre ribbon, as specified in the detail specification, typically 3 to 5, shall be selected from the ribbon or ribbons to be tested. The length of each sample shall be sufficient to provide the number of test specimens as detailed below.

For an n fibre ribbon, $n/2$ specimens are taken from each of the samples above. Each specimen shall be 100 mm minimum length, consistent with Figure 3.

Prepare the $n/2$ specimens involving increasing numbers of fibres to be separated as a ribbon unit. That is, a specimen for fibre 1; a specimen for fibres 1 to 2; a specimen for fibres 1 to 3; etc.

The fibres to be tested are separated with a knife or other suitable method on a suitable length for clamping, per Figure 3.

For the first sample, the preparation of the test sequence shall be to separate one fibre from the other fibres in the ribbon in the first specimen. Then, separate a unit of two fibres from the next specimen. Then, units of three, four, etc. fibres are separated in the other specimens, up to a unit of $n/2$ fibres in the last specimen.