



Standard Test Method for Notch Tensile Test to Measure the Resistance to Slow Crack Growth of Polyethylene Pipes and Resins¹

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^{e1} NOTE—Replaced reference to withdrawn standard Practice D 1928 with current standard Practice D 4703 in November 2003.

1. Scope

1.1 This test method determines the resistance of polyethylene materials to slow crack growth under conditions specified within.

1.2 The test is generally performed at 80°C and at 2.4 MPa, but may also be done at temperatures below 80°C and with other stresses low enough to preclude ductile failure and thereby eventually induce brittle type of failure. Generally, polyethylenes will ultimately fail in a brittle manner by slow crack growth at 80°C if the stress is below 2.4 MPa.

1.3 The test method is for specimens cut from compression molded plaques.² See Appendix X1 for information relating to specimens from pipe.

1.4 *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:*³

D 618 Practice for Conditioning Plastics and Electrical Insulating Materials for Testing

D 1600 Terminology for Abbreviated Terms Relating to Plastics

D 3350 Specification for Polyethylene Plastics Pipe and Fittings Materials

D 4703 Practice for Compression Molding Thermoplastic Materials into Test Specimens, Plaques, or Sheets

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee F17 on Plastic Piping Systems and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee F17.40 on Test Methods.

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² Lu, X., and Brown, N., "A Test for Slow Crack Growth Failure in Polyethylene Under a Constant Load," *Journal of Polymer Testing*, Vol 11, pp. 309–319, 1992.

³ For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

F 412 Terminology Relating to Plastic Piping Systems

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions:

3.1.1 Definitions are in accordance with Terminology F 412. Abbreviations are in accordance with Terminology D 1600, unless otherwise indicated.

3.1.2 *brittle failure*—a pipe failure mode which exhibits no visible (to the naked eye) permanent material deformation (stretching, elongation, or necking down) in the area of the break (F 412).

3.2 Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:

3.2.1 *slow crack growth*—the slow extension of the crack with time.

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 Specimens are cut from compression molded plaques. It is precisely notched and then exposed to a constant tensile stress at elevated temperatures in air. The time for complete failure is recorded.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 This test method is useful to measure the slow crack growth resistance of molded plaques of polyethylene materials at accelerated conditions such as 80°C, 2.4-MPa stress, and with a sharp notch.

5.2 The time to failure depends on the following test parameters: temperature; stress; notch depth; and specimen geometry. Increasing temperature, stress, and notch depth decrease the time to failure. Thus, in reporting the time to failure, all the conditions of the test must be specified.

6. Apparatus

6.1 *Lever Loading Machine*, with a lever arm ratio of about 5:1. The tensile load may also be applied directly using dead weights or any other method for producing a constant load. The pull rods on the grips shall have universal action to prevent bending. The grips shall be serrated to prevent slippage. The load on the specimen shall be accurate to at least $\pm 0.5\%$.

6.2 *Furnace*, heated by ordinary incandescent light bulbs covered with aluminum foil or any other suitable heating element.

6.3 *Temperature Controller*, shall be able to control the temperature within $\pm 0.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ with respect to the set point.

6.4 *Temperature-Measuring Device*, a thermometer or a thermocouple which can measure the temperature with an accuracy better than 0.5°C .

6.5 *Timer*, shall have an accuracy of at least 1 % and shall automatically stop when the specimen fails.

6.6 *Alignment Jig*, as shown in Fig. 1, which aligns the grips and the specimen when the specimen is being tightened in the grips. Alignment jigs which produce the same function may be used.

6.7 *Notching Machine*, for notching the specimen is shown in Fig. 2 or other machines which produce the same results may be used. The notching machine presses a razor blade into the specimen at a speed less than 0.25 mm/min. The depth of the notch is controlled within ± 0.01 mm. The machine is designed so that the main notch and the side notches will be coplanar and the plane of the notching is perpendicular to the tensile axis of the specimen. The thickness of the razor blade is approximately 0.2 mm.

7. Precautions

7.1 The load shall be carefully added to avoid shocking the specimen. When the specimen is inserted in the grips, bending and twisting shall be avoided in order to prevent the premature activation of the notch. Avoid exposure to fluids such as detergents.

8. Test Specimens

8.1 Specimens are machined from a compression molded plaque of the polyethylene material.

8.2 *Specimen Geometry*—A representative geometry for compression molded plaque specimens is shown in Fig. 3.

8.3 *Dimensional Requirements:*

8.3.1 The side groove shall be 1.0 ± 0.10 mm for all plaque thicknesses.

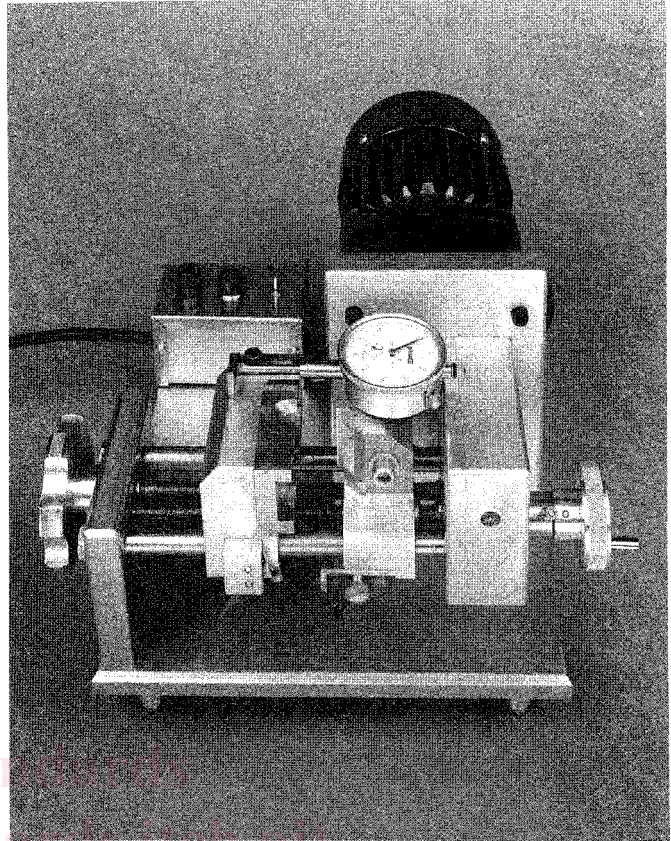


FIG. 2 Notching Machine

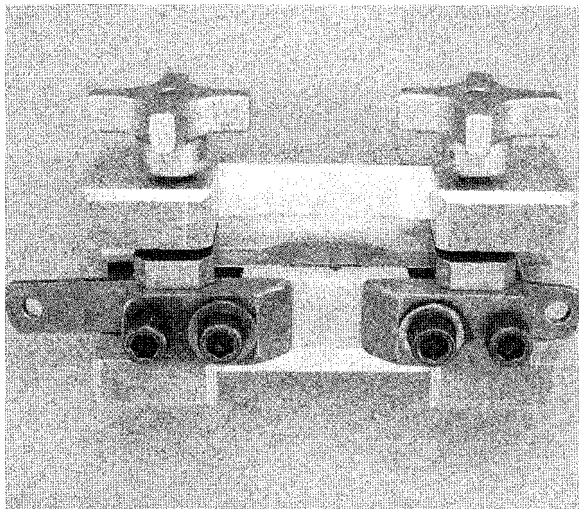


FIG. 1 Alignment Jig

8.3.2 The overall length is not critical except that the distance between the notch and the end of a grip should be more than 10 mm. Thicker specimens should have a greater overall length so that the gripped area will be greater in order to avoid slippage in the grip.

8.4 *Preparation of Compression Molded Plaques*—Polyethylene resins shall be evaluated by using specimens that are machined from compression molded plaques using Practice D 4703, except for the following procedures. After the resin is heated to 140 to 160°C, apply and remove the pressure three times. Increase the temperature to 170 to 190°C for 10 to 15 min without pressure. Then apply and remove the pressure three times. The specific temperatures that are used depend on the melt index of the resin, that is, a higher temperature for a lower melt index. The purpose of applying and removing the pressure is to eliminate voids. Turn off the heat and apply pressure. The time to cool between 130 and 90°C shall be greater than 80 min. Alternatively, the time to cool from the molding temperature to about room temperature shall be greater than 5 h. During cooling the pressure is allowed to decrease naturally.

8.5 *Specimen Notching*—The specimen has two types of notches, the main notch and two side notches. The side notches are usually referred to as “side grooves.” The depth requirements for these notches are given in Table 1. The main notch is produced by pressing a razor blade into the specimen at a speed of less than 0.25 mm/min. A fresh razor blade shall not be used for more than three specimens and shall be used within

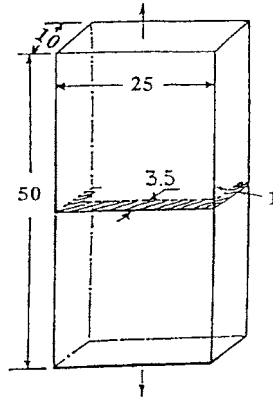


FIG. 3 Representative Geometry for Compression-Molded Specimen

Legend:

Arrows designate direction of tensile stress.

t = thickness.

All dimensions are in millimetres.

TABLE 1 Notch Depth as a Function of Specimen Thickness^A

NOTE 1— This table is based on the stress intensity being the same for all thicknesses.

Thickness, mm	Notch Depth, mm
4.00	1.90
5.00	2.28
6.00	2.50
7.00	2.80
8.00	3.09
9.00	3.30
10.00	3.50
11.00	3.70
12.00	3.90
13.00	4.18
14.00	4.39
15.00	4.48
16.00	4.65
17.00	4.88
18.00	4.95
19.00	5.09
20.00	5.20

^A For an intermediate thickness, linearly interpolate to obtain the notch depth. The notch depth in the specimen shall be within ± 0.05 mm of the interpolated value.

one day. The rate of notching for the side grooves is not important. It is important to make the side grooves coplanar with the main notch. Specimens shall be notched at room temperature.

9. Conditioning

9.1 Unless otherwise specified, hold the test specimens for at least 1 h at the test temperature prior to loading. The length of time between notching and testing is not important.

10. Procedure

10.1 Calculation of Test Load:

10.1.1 Calculate the test load, P , as follows:

$$P = \sigma \times w \times t \tag{1}$$

where:

σ = stress,
 w = specimen width, and
 t = specimen thickness.

The variables w and t are based on the unnotched cross section.

10.1.2 If σ has the units of megapascals and w and t are in millimetres, and A is in square millimetres, then P has the units of Newtons. To convert Newtons to pounds, multiply by 0.225. If a lever-loaded machine is used, divide P by the lever arm ratio. The load on the specimen shall be $\pm 0.5\%$ of the calculated load.

10.2 *Gripping the Specimen*—Using an alignment jig (Fig. 1), center the specimen in the grips so that the axis of the specimen is aligned with the grips. When the grips are tightened, it is important not to activate the notch by bending or twisting the specimen. The ends of the grips shall be at least 10 mm from the notch.

10.3 *Loading the Specimen*—When the specimen in the grips is removed from the alignment jig and transferred to the testing machine, take care that the notch is not activated by bending the specimen. Apply the load after the specimen has been held for at least 1 h at the test temperature. Apply the load gradually within a period of about 5 to 10 s without any impact on the specimen.

10.4 *Temperature Measurement*—Place the thermocouple or thermometer near the notched part of the specimen. Periodically record the temperature with a frequency that depends on the length of the test.

10.5 When the specimen fails, record the time to failure. Failure occurs when the two halves of the specimen separate completely or extensive deformation occurs in the remaining ligament.

11. Report

11.1 Compression-molded test specimens shall be identified by the polyethylene material source (resin manufacturer or other source) and lot number.

11.2 Stress based on the unnotched area.