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**Graphic technology — Colour and  
transparency of printing ink sets for  
four-colour printing —**

**Part 5:  
Flexographic printing**

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*Technologie graphique — Couleur et transparence des gammes  
d'encre d'impression en quadrichromie —*

*Partie 5: Impression flexographique*

ISO 2846-5:2005

<https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/sist/7cda3e2a-faa0-4a0c-bf51-dc9eee9ce845/iso-2846-5-2005>



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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

The main task of technical committees is to prepare International Standards. Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

ISO 2846-5 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 130, *Graphic technology*.

ISO 2846 consists of the following parts, under the general title *Graphic technology — Colour and transparency of printing ink sets for four-colour printing*:

— *Part 1: Sheet-fed and heat-set web offset lithographic printing*

— *Part 2: Coldset offset lithographic printing* [ISO 2846-5:2005](https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/sist/7cda3e2a-faa0-4a0c-bf51-dc9eee9ce845/iso-2846-5-2005)

— *Part 3: Publication gravure printing*

— *Part 4: Screen printing*

— *Part 5: Flexographic printing*

## Introduction

The demand for the flexographic printing process to become more consistent and predictable has required standardization of the process to ensure that the various parties involved in flexographic printing production are able to control their part of the process in a meaningful way. An essential component in this process is the specification of the colorimetric and transparency characteristics of the ink set.

The purpose of this part of ISO 2846 is to define the colorimetric and transparency characteristics of standard sets of flexographic process inks. Standard inks allow flexographic printers to obtain different sets of inks which will all produce a similar colour when printed on the same substrate (paper, board, plastic, etc.). So, by meeting the requirements of this part of ISO 2846 a standard set of inks can be supplied by any ink manufacturer to any printer, who can then supply prints to a print buyer confident that the colour of the work produced will be that required. In addition, this part of ISO 2846 will allow colour separations for flexographic printing to be produced to known colour standards.

The colorimetric characteristics specified may only be obtained when the inks are printed on the specified reference substrate. However, two inks that are similar in colorimetric characteristics and transparency, according to this part of ISO 2846, will normally ensure similarity between the results obtained when both inks are printed on another substrate.

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# Graphic technology — Colour and transparency of printing ink sets for four-colour printing —

## Part 5: Flexographic printing

### 1 Scope

This part of ISO 2846 specifies the colour and transparency to be produced by each ink in a process colour ink set (including extender) intended for four-colour flexographic printing, when printed under specified flexographic printing conditions. It also describes the conformance test method.

This part of ISO 2846 does not specify pigments (or spectral reflectance), in order not to preclude developments that may enable different pigment combinations to be used advantageously, while still achieving the colorimetric requirements specified in this part of ISO 2846.

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### 2 Normative references (standards.iteh.ai)

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application 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.

ISO 535, *Paper and board — Determination of water absorbiveness — Cobb method*

ISO 536, *Paper and board — Determination of grammage*

ISO 2144, *Paper and board — Determination of residue (ash) on ignition at 900 °C*

ISO 2846-1, *Graphic technology — Colour and transparency of ink sets for four-colour printing — Part 1: Sheet-fed and heat-set web offset lithographic printing*

ISO 6588:1981, *Paper, board and pulps — Determination of pH of aqueous extracts*

ISO 8254-1, *Paper and board — Measurement of specular gloss — Part 1: 75 degree gloss with a converging beam, TAPPI method*

ISO 8791-4, *Paper and board — Determination of roughness/smoothness (air leak methods) — Part 4: Print-surf method*

ISO 13655, *Graphic technology — Spectral measurement and colorimetric computation for graphic arts images*

### 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

**3.1 extension**  
 addition of a transparent material (colorant-free ink) to the ink to reduce the pigment concentration without significantly influencing the rheological properties of the ink

**3.2 press-ready ink**  
 ink that has all necessary components and is at press viscosity

**3.3 transparency**  
*T*  
 ability of an ink film to transmit and absorb light without scattering

NOTE It is generally expressed as some measure of the unwanted scattering.

[ISO 2846-1]

### 4 Requirements

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#### 4.1 General

For an ink set to conform to this part of ISO 2846 each ink shall meet the specification for colour defined in 4.2, at some percentage of press-ready ink, as well as the specification for transparency defined in 4.3.

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#### 4.2 Colorimetric values

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To meet the specification for colour, each ink in the set shall produce a colour that falls within the tolerances specified for the appropriate colorimetric values given in Table 1, when printed as defined in 5.2.1 at some percentage of press-ready ink.

**Table 1 — Colorimetric values for 0/45 and 45/0 geometry, illuminant D50, 2° observer**

Ink	CIELAB values		Tolerances				
	<i>L</i> <sup>*</sup>	<i>a</i> <sup>*</sup>	<i>b</i> <sup>*</sup>	$\Delta E_{ab}^*$	$\Delta a^*$	$\Delta b^*$	$\Delta L^*$
Yellow	91,0	− 5,0	95,0	5,0	—	—	—
Magenta	52,0	71,0	1,0	6,0	—	—	—
Cyan	58,0	− 38,0	− 45,0	6,0	—	—	—
Black	≤ 18,0	0,5	0,0		± 1,5	± 2,0	0,0 <sup>a</sup> − 18,0

<sup>a</sup> This means that for black there is no symmetrical tolerance for *L*<sup>\*</sup> but an upper limit.

NOTE 1 Typical spectral data for inks conforming to this part of ISO 2846 are provided in Annex A. Reference spectral data for 8°/diffuse (specular included) are also included in Annex A.

NOTE 2 CIELAB data calculated from the CIE 1931 (2°) standard colorimetric observer, together with CIE standard illuminant D<sub>65</sub>, are included in Annex B for both geometries. CIELAB data for 8°/diffuse or diffuse/8° (specular included) geometry and illuminant D<sub>50</sub> are also included in Annex B.



### 4.3 Transparency characteristics

To meet the specification for transparency, each ink in the set shall produce a value greater than that specified in Table 2 when determined according to the principles and test methods outlined in 5.2.

**Table 2 — Transparency requirements**

Ink	Transparency $T$
Yellow	2
Magenta	5
Cyan	8

For highly transparent inks, the slope of the regression line may be zero or negative. In such a situation the transparency value,  $T$ , meets the specification.

NOTE For further information concerning transparency evaluation using instruments with different geometry see C.3.2.

## 5 Test methods

### 5.1 Principle

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Colorimetric conformance is verified by printing each ink on the reference substrate described in Annex D at a range of colorations obtained by varying the extension of the press-ready ink. The colours of the resultant test prints are measured and the colour difference determined between the sample and the pertinent value given in Table 1. If at least one of these samples has a smaller colour difference than that specified in Table 1 the ink conforms colorimetrically to this part of ISO 2846.

It is often more convenient to determine the colorimetric conformance of an ink by graphic means. This is achieved by calculating the colour difference ( $\Delta E^*_{ab}$ ) from the values given in Table 1, for each print made from the extension series and plotting this against the percentage by mass of press-ready ink. The ink conforms if the resultant curve shows a pronounced minimum which is below the  $\Delta E^*_{ab}$  value specified in Table 1. If the ink series does not produce such a curve, another series of specimens should be prepared starting from a different ink extension. A lower extension should be applied if the colour difference decreases with an increasing percentage of press-ready ink; a higher extension if the colour difference increases with an increasing percentage of press-ready ink. See Annex C for further information.

Transparency,  $T$ , is determined by printing or applying each of the chromatic process inks on to a black substrate at a range of ink extensions. The CIELAB colour difference,  $\Delta E^*_{ab}$ , is determined for each sample, between the overprinted and unprinted black substrate. These values of  $\Delta E^*_{ab}$  are plotted against the percentage by mass of press-ready ink over a range of extensions. The linear regression coefficient (slope of the regression line) of this plot is determined. An ink conforms to the transparency requirements of this part of ISO 2846 if the reciprocal of the regression coefficient is greater than the value specified or negative, see Annex C for further information.

If one or more printed samples of each ink conform to the colorimetric values within the tolerances specified, and the ink also meets the transparency criteria, that ink can be said to comply to this part of ISO 2846.

## 5.2 Test print preparation

### 5.2.1 Prints for colorimetric evaluation

For each ink to be evaluated an extension series with 50 %, 60 %, 70 %, 80 %, 90 % and 100 % of press-ready ink shall be prepared using an extender diluted to press viscosity. The series of extended inks shall be applied to the reference substrate specified in Annex D by a method that produces an even ink film thickness. (Typical methods for producing the test prints are printing with a printability tester for flexographic inks, or by using a coating applicator.) The ink film thickness applied shall be close to practice and approximately the same for all prints made from the extension series.

### 5.2.2 Prints for transparency evaluation

Test prints for transparency evaluation shall be produced by printing the inks to be tested over a black such that a range of samples is achieved, each with a different percentage of press-ready ink. The black shall have a lightness,  $L^*$ , less than 6 when determined in accordance with ISO 13655 and the CIELAB values of the unprinted black shall be measured prior to overprinting.

NOTE Although in principle it is possible for the user to produce the black by printing, it is difficult to ensure that the lightness is sufficiently low without adversely affecting the gloss and printing properties of the substrate. It is usually preferable to use a black substrate or a substrate pre-printed commercially. One appropriate substrate is the contrast card<sup>1)</sup>.

### 5.2.3 Drying of test prints

Prior to colour measurement all samples shall be thoroughly dried.

### 5.2.4 Colour measurement procedure

Test prints shall be measured in accordance with ISO 13655, except that a substrate backing consisting of at least 3 sheets of the unprinted reference substrate shall be used.

NOTE Conformance to ISO 13655 means that the samples are measured spectrally with a 0°/45° or 45°/0° geometry instrument. The CIE 1931 (2°) standard colorimetric observer data are used, together with that for CIE illuminant D<sub>50</sub>, for calculation of CIELAB values and colour differences. Where spectral data are obtained at wavelength intervals greater than 5 nm, the weighting functions for the standard colorimetric observer specified in ISO 13655 are used.

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1) Leneta paper or card. (No 105 C) which may be purchased from Leneta Corp., Mahwah, NJ, USA. Leneta is the trade name of a product supplied by Leneta Corporation. This information is given for the convenience of users of this part of ISO 2846 and does not constitute an endorsement by ISO of the product named. Equivalent products may be used if they can be shown to lead to the same results.

## Annex A (informative)

### Spectral data

For some applications, such as calculating CIELAB values for a different observer or illuminant, it is useful to have access to spectral data. As stated in the introduction it was deliberately decided not to standardize such data since it can be very restrictive for ink manufacturing and future development of ink with improved properties. However, the following data may be taken as 'typical' of those which were obtained during development of this part of ISO 2846.

Two tables of data are presented: Table A.1 is for 0°/45° geometry and Table A.2 is for 8°/diffuse (specular included). The data in Table A.1 are in accordance with the values in Table 1. The data of Tables A.1 and A.2 have been used to compute the values in the tables of Annex B.

For the purposes of this part of ISO 2846, the 0°/45° and 45°/0° geometries are deemed to be equivalent to each other, as are the 8°/diffuse and diffuse/8° geometries (specular included). Thus, whilst only one of the equivalent geometries is specified in the tables of this Annex it may be interpreted that either is acceptable. Of course, the values obtained with each geometry are different.

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