



Standard Test Method for Length and Length Distribution of Cotton Fibers (Array Method)¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D 1440; 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.

1. Scope

1.1 This test method covers the determination of the fiber length and length distribution in loose cotton fibers.

NOTE 1—For another method for measuring fiber length, see Test Method D 1447.

1.2 *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 123 Terminology Relating to Textiles²

D 1441 Practice for Sampling Cotton Fibers for Testing²

D 1447 Test Method for Length and Length Uniformity of Cotton Fibers by Fibrograph Measurement²

D 1776 Practice for Conditioning Textiles for Testing²

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions:*

3.1.1 *coefficient of variation, CV, n*—a measure of the dispersion of observed values equal to the standard deviation for the values divided by the average of the values; may be expressed as a percentage of the average (*CV %*).

3.1.2 *length group, n*—all fibers, or pulls, whose lengths fall within a given length interval.

3.1.3 *length interval, n*—a class interval of $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (3 mm), usually designated by its midpoint length in odd-numbered sixteenths of an inch.

Example: the 0 to $\frac{1}{8}$ -in. interval is designated as $\frac{1}{16}$.

3.1.4 *mean length, n*—in testing of cotton fibers, the average length of all fibers in the test specimen based on weight-length data.

3.1.5 *pull, n*—a group of fibers grasped by the forceps at one time and drawn from the specimen in the combs.

3.1.6 *upper quartile length, n*—in testing of cotton fibers,

that length which is exceeded by 25 % of the fibers by weight in the test specimen.

3.2 For definitions of other terms used in this test method, refer to Terminology D 123.

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 A sorting apparatus consisting of two banks of parallel combs is used to straighten and align the fibers in a 75-mg test specimen. The fibers are pulled from one bank of combs and transferred to the other in such a manner that one end of each fiber is aligned with the base comb. The transfer is repeated to straighten the other ends of the fibers. As the fibers are withdrawn from the combs for the third time, they are placed in order of length on velvet covered boards. The pulls are measured, and those that fall within each length interval are collected and weighed. From these weight-length data, the upper quartile length, mean length, and coefficient of length variation are calculated.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 The array method provides objective measurements for determining the fiber length and length distribution in a sample of cotton. The results can be plotted to show the length-weight distribution of all the fibers in the sample. Data obtained from array tests are useful in fiber length research studies, for investigation of changes in fiber length distribution in ginning and mill processing, and for other research purposes.

5.2 Upper quartile length is correlated with, but usually longer than, Fibrograph and 2.5 % span length as defined in Test Method D 1447. Judgment must be used in making comparisons between length measures from arrays and measures obtained by other methods, which may be basically different.

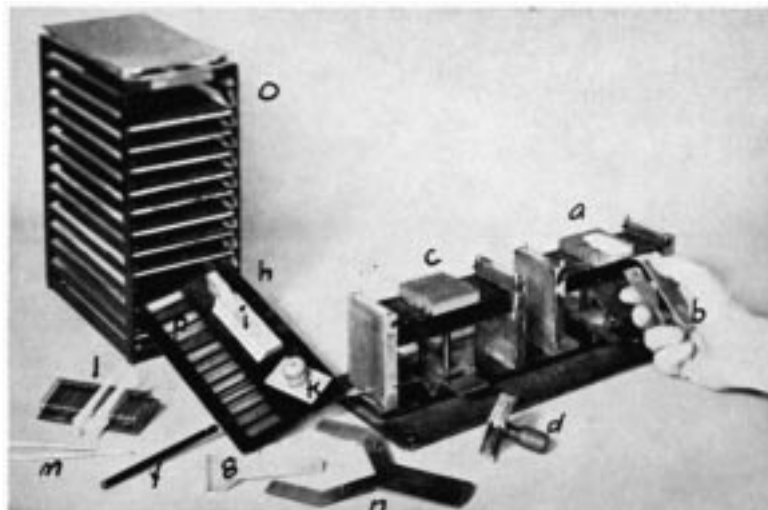
5.3 The coefficient of length variation is a measure of length distribution, or nonuniformity of length. Because the fiber weight-length distribution is usually highly skewed, statistical judgments based on the assumption of normality are not justified.

5.4 The array method makes a physical separation of fibers of different lengths. It therefore serves as a standard, or benchmark, with which other methods may be compared and by which their precision and accuracy may be judged.

5.5 Test Method D 1440 for testing length and length

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D-13 on Textiles, and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D13.11 on Cotton Fibers. Current edition approved Nov. 10, 1996. Published March 1997. Originally published as D 1440 – 55. Last previous edition D 1440 – 90.

² *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 07.01.



- a and o—Banks of combs.
- b—Forceps, tips padded with hard leather, for transferring fibers from one set of combs to the other.
- d—Depressor for placing fibers in combs.
- f—Dissecting needle.
- g—Fork for scooping up fiber groups off velvet surface.
- h—Aluminum plate covered with velvet cloth.
- i—Special rule for measuring length of fiber groups.
- k—Smooth plate for placing fibers onto velvet surfaces.
- l—Wire rack for holding fiber groups wrapped in papers.
- m—Smooth pointed tweezers.
- n—Lift for raising combs in place.
- o—Rack for holding velvet-covered boards.
- p—Velvet-covered boards on which several pulls have been arrayed.

NOTE 1—Other accessories required for length arraying, not shown above, consist of the following: small whisk broom for cleaning velvet surfaces, one pair of tweezers with smooth round tips, forceps similar to *b* but having tips padded with rubber for laying groups on velvet surfaces, small papers for wrapping groups of fibers (papers 2½ by 3 in. (62 by 75 mm)) with small envelopes for them (2½ by 4¼ in. (62 by 110 mm)), and balances having ranges from 0 to 25 mg and 0 to 100 mg.

FIG. 1 Combs and Accessories for Arraying Fibers According to Length

distribution of cotton fibers (array method) is not commonly used for acceptance testing of commercial shipments.

6. Apparatus and Materials

6.1 *Double Bank Sorter*, and equipment as illustrated in Fig. 1. The method outlined here is especially adapted to the Suter-Webb Duplex Cotton Fiber Sorter,³ but the procedure may be carried out with other similar apparatus with more or less obvious alterations.

6.2 *Balance*, with a capacity of at least 25 mg and a sensitivity of ± 0.05 mg.

6.3 *Balance*, with a capacity of at least 100 mg and a sensitivity of ± 0.1 mg.

6.4 *Standard Calibration Cotton Samples*, for the calibration of array length measurements.

NOTE 2—Standard calibration cotton samples are available from the Cotton Division, Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 3275 Appling Rd., Memphis, TN 38133.

6.5 *Secondary Standard Cotton*—Lots of cotton the length of which has been established by extensive comparisons with USDA standards.

³ The sole source of supply of the apparatus known to the committee at this time is the Alfred Suter Co., New York, NY. If you are aware of alternative suppliers, please provide this information to ASTM Headquarters. Your comments will receive careful consideration at a meeting of the responsible technical committee,¹ which you may attend.

7. Sampling

7.1 Prepare the laboratory sample as directed in Test Method D 1441. Take either two or three subsamples depending on the precision desired. Take subsamples that weigh approximately 80 mg each for use in preparing the test specimen in one of the following manners:

7.1.1 From a hand sliver, carefully separate a 2-in. (50-mm) length of the sliver for each subsample.

7.1.2 From a mechanically blended 3-g sliver, separate 2-in. (50-mm) subsamples.

7.1.3 From a mechanically blended 10-g sliver, pull out of the middle of the sample a subsample about 2 in. (50 mm) long, extending through its whole thickness, and wide enough to weigh approximately 80 mg. Take subsamples from near the beginning, midway, and near the end of the sliver.

7.2 If the laboratory samples have not been in the standard atmosphere for at least 2 h before the preparation of subsamples, bring the subsamples to approximate equilibrium with the standard atmosphere for testing before preparing specimens. Exposure to moving air in the laboratory for 2 h is sufficient.

8. Preparation of Test Specimen

8.1 Prepare one specimen from each of the three subsamples. Gently parallelize the fibers by hand. Remove all foreign matter, but do not discard any fibers.

8.2 Separate from each subsample, by longitudinal division, a portion weighing approximately 76 mg. If the specimen weighs more than 77 mg, reduce its weight by removing a small group of fibers from the side of the specimen. If the specimen weighs less than 75 mg, add a small group of fibers taken from the side of the subsample. Never remove fibers from either the specimen or subsample by pulling from the ends, as this tends to remove the longest fibers. After adjusting the specimen weight to approximately 76 mg, condition the specimen and the remaining portion of the subsample in accordance with Section 9.

9. Conditioning

9.1 Practice D 1776 covers the conditioning of textiles for testing. If the laboratory samples have a moisture content of 10 % or higher, Practice D 1776 should be used to condition the samples for testing. For samples below 10 % moisture content, the conditioning procedure outlined in 9.2 and 9.3 is considered adequate for length testing by this test method.

9.2 If the laboratory samples have not been in the standard atmosphere for at least 2 h before the preparation of the subsample, bring the subsamples to approximate equilibrium with the standard atmosphere for testing before preparing specimens. Exposure to moving air in the laboratory for 4 h is sufficient.

9.3 After the specimens have been prepared, condition them in the standard atmosphere for testing. Exposure to moving air in the standard atmosphere for a minimum period of 2 h is adequate for this test method.

10. Procedure

10.1 Weigh the conditioned specimen to the nearest 0.1 mg. Do not touch the specimen with the fingers after conditioning. If the specimen weighs more than 75.4 mg, use the tweezers (Fig. 1, *m*) to remove a small group of fibers from the side of the specimen. If the weight is less than 74.6 mg, add a small group of fibers taken with tweezers from the side of the subsample. Do all sorting, measuring, and weighing in the standard atmosphere for testing.

10.2 Before testing other samples, each technician shall have made an array on a check test cotton (Note 2), if this has not been done during the previous month. Results of regularly scheduled check tests may be used for this purpose. If the results do not agree with the standard value for the check test cotton within ± 0.02 in. (0.51 mm) in both upper quartile and mean length and ± 2.0 % for the coefficient of length variation, the technician must make some appropriate change in technique and repeat the check test until acceptable results are obtained.

10.3 If two or three technicians are available, have each technician sort one of the three specimens.

10.4 First Transfer:

10.4.1 Place the test specimen in the left bank of combs perpendicular to and approximately in the center of the combs. Using the depressor (Fig. 1, *d*), depress the test specimen at least $\frac{1}{16}$ in. (2 mm) below the tips of the comb teeth, but no lower than half the length of the teeth. The comb fork can be used to raise any fibers that are depressed below this level.

10.4.2 Drop front combs of the left bank until a smaller

number of fibers protrude beyond the comb nearest the operator.

10.4.3 Grip the ends of a few of these fibers with the forceps (Fig. 1, *b*) and withdraw them from the combs with a smooth horizontal motion.

10.4.4 Continue holding the fiber ends with the forceps. Place the forceps at the farther edge of the right bank of combs and draw the fibers carefully through the combs until the edge of the forceps is just touching the near edge of the first comb. Release the fibers from the forceps. With the depressor, push the fibers down for a short distance into the teeth of the combs. Repeat this procedure until the transfer of all protruding fibers is complete. The fibers should not protrude more than $\frac{1}{16}$ in. (2 mm) beyond the nearer comb of the right bank.

10.4.5 Drop an additional comb of the left bank and continue transferring the fibers. Do not withdraw in one pull all of the fibers protruding from a comb, but take four or more separate pulls, withdrawing in each pull those fibers which protrude farthest. The width of the specimen placed in the right comb bank should be no greater than the width of the forceps being used.

10.4.6 Continue the transferring procedure, dropping combs as necessary, until all the fibers have been transferred from the left to the right set of combs.

10.4.7 Using the dissecting needle (Fig. 1, *f*), gently untangle the fiber ends extending beyond the front comb. With the forceps, pull out any fibers that extend more than approximately $\frac{1}{16}$ in. (2 mm) beyond the front comb and replace them in the same bank of combs in the manner described in 10.4.4. Continue until the front ends of the fibers are straight and even.

10.4.8 Drop the back combs of the bank containing the specimen until fibers are encountered. Pull these protruding fibers from the back of the combs and place them on the test specimen in the same manner as was done in the transfer of the specimen. Continue this straightening process until fibers pulled from the back combs extend through the front comb and the ends of the specimen are straight and even. This completes the first transfer.

10.5 Second Transfer:

10.5.1 Raise the empty bank of combs to the working position and rotate the sorting apparatus 180° so that the specimen is on the left.

10.5.2 Repeat the procedure used in the first transfer, steps 10.4.2-10.4.8 through , transferring the specimen back to the first set of combs.

10.6 Array:

10.6.1 Insert top combs.

10.6.2 Revolve the sorting apparatus 180° and drop front combs until the longest fibers are reached.

10.6.3 Using the rubber-tipped forceps (Fig. 1, *b*), pull out a few of the longest fibers protruding from the front comb. Lay the pull near one end of the velvet covered board and near the long edge that is farthest from the hand holding the forceps. Continue holding with the forceps and cover the pull with the smooth plate (Fig. 1, *k*), press down gently and move forceps and plate together toward the nearer edge of the board, thus dragging the fibers across the velvet and straightening them. Press the fibers down firmly against the velvet, release from the