



Designation: D6883 – 04

Standard Practice for Manual Sampling of Stationary Coal from Railroad Cars, Barges, Trucks, or Stockpiles¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D6883; 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 practice covers procedures for obtaining a manual gross sample from beneath the surface of coal in railroad cars, barges, trucks, or stockpiles. These procedures are to be used to provide gross samples for estimating the quality of the coal. The gross samples are to be crushed, divided, and further prepared for analysis in accordance with Practice [D2013](#).

1.2 This practice provides instruction for sampling beneath the exposed surface coal to a depth of approximately 61 cm (24 in.). Collect samples at this depth to get below the surface of the material, since drying and oxidation may have occurred at, or near the surface. Changes in moisture, in particle size, and in other properties continue to occur deeper in the coal and, although not as drastic as near the surface, will cause the method to be biased. The user should review the conditions of the coal (weather conditions, prior transport, settling time, and so forth, see [8.1](#)) so that the interested parties can agree that potential biases are not overly great or that some adjustment in specifications is warranted. Sample increments collected from the surface layer(s) of coal in railroad cars, barges, or stockpiles are classified condition “D” (see Practice [D2234/D2234M](#), Increment Collection Classification). It is a good practice to require that “details of sampling procedure shall be agreed upon in advance by all parties concerned” whenever collection of sample increments falls under condition “D.” This practice offers a sampling procedure that parties may use to meet requirements of Practice [D2234/D2234M](#) for condition “D.” The practice does not produce samples that satisfy precision requirements of Practice [D2234/D2234M](#) general-purpose sampling, or Practice [D2234/D2234M](#) special-purpose sampling.

1.3 The user is cautioned that samples of this type do not satisfy the minimum requirements for probability sampling and as such cannot be used to draw statistical inferences such as precision, standard error, or bias.

1.4 This sampling method is intended for use only when sampling by more reliable methods that provide a probability sample is not possible.

1.5 The quantities stated in either acceptable SI units or in inch-pound units are regarded separately as standard. The quantities stated in each system may not be exact equivalents; therefore, each system must be used independently of the other, without combining quantities in any way.

1.6 *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:²

D121 Terminology of Coal and Coke

D2013 Practice for Preparing Coal Samples for Analysis

D2234/D2234M Practice for Collection of a Gross Sample of Coal

D4749 Test Method for Performing the Sieve Analysis of Coal and Designating Coal Size

D4916 Practice for Mechanical Auger Sampling (Withdrawn 2008)³

E105 Practice for Probability Sampling of Materials

E177 Practice for Use of the Terms Precision and Bias in ASTM Test Methods

E456 Terminology Relating to Quality and Statistics

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions:

3.1.1 *consignment, n*—a discrete amount of coal, such as a shipment, a carload, a unit train, or a day’s production. A consignment may include more than one lot of coal and may correspond to a specific period of time such as sampling period or billing period.

¹ This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D05 on Coal and Coke and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D05.23 on Sampling.

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² 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.

³ The last approved version of this historical standard is referenced on www.astm.org.

3.1.2 *particle segregation, n*—the segregation of sized particles to specific areas as a result of the particles rolling, falling, or sliding down the sides of a pile or a result of the peculiarities of a coal handling system used to build the pile. Particle segregation is a process of separation, not exclusively by size, but by size, shape, and density.

3.1.3 *stockpile, n*—material stored or reserved in a stacked pile or heap.

4. Summary of Practice

4.1 Use of this practice is limited to manual collection of sample increments from beneath the surface layer(s) of stationary coal from railroad cars, barges, trucks, or stockpiles for the purpose of acquiring a gross sample.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 These guidelines provide procedures for manually collecting gross samples from beneath the exposed surface of coal in railroad cars, barges, trucks, or stockpiles taking into account the wide variety of conditions that may be encountered. The samples are further processed for the laboratory to provide estimations of the coal quality. The use of this practice is conditional upon agreement among all interested parties concerning all relevant details of sample collection before sampling begins. These include, but are not limited to: lot size; number and mass of increments; the size, shape, and manipulation of the increment collection devices; location of increment collection site or sites; circumstances under which increments are not to be collected or suspended; and safety precautions. It is preferable that such agreements be in writing. The user is cautioned that samples so obtained do not represent material below the point of penetration.

6. Hazards

6.1 **Warning**—Stockpile sampling involves exposure to hazardous operations, conditions, and equipment. Awareness to personnel safety cannot be overemphasized. Personnel may require approved federal and/or state safety training before taking part in field sampling. Site-specific safety regulations must be observed. This includes personnel wearing all specified personal protection equipment. The general safety precautions necessary when working around moving equipment must be observed. Sampling technicians must never work in coal that is piled or in railroad cars over hoppers and/or feeders or where there is the possibility of the coal being eroded from beneath them. Sampling should never be performed near a face of a stockpile where the face extends upward at an angle greater than the angle of repose of the coal.

7. Procedure

7.1 *Observations*—Before sampling a lot of coal using this method, perform a visual inspection for particle distribution and possible particle segregation within the stockpile. Notes should be made on the sampling log to reflect these observations. These notes could be useful in understanding differences of analytical test results or in identifying changes in stockpiling characteristics. The approximate top size of the coal on the surface layer should be estimated in this step.

7.2 *Lot Size*—All interested parties should agree to the size of the lot to be represented by one gross sample before sampling begins.

7.3 *Weight of Increments*—Increment weights are to be equal to, or in excess of, those contained in Table 2 of Practice [D2234/D2234M](#). All increments should be of approximately equal mass.

7.4 *Number of Increments*—Meaningful levels of precision cannot be obtained with the methods described herein. Determine the number of increments to be collected for one gross sample using [Eq 1](#). Fewer increments are permissible if agreed upon in advance. Since meaningful levels of precision cannot be obtained for these samples, any multiplier can be considered valid in place of the number 35 in [Eq 1](#) if agreed upon by the parties concerned.

$$N = 35 \sqrt{\frac{\text{total lot size (Mg or tons)}}{908 \text{ Mg or } 1000 \text{ tons}}} \quad (1)$$

where:

N = number of increments.

7.5 *Increment Collection*—Collect increments from a depth of approximately 61 cm (24 in.), on top of conveyances, around the base of the stockpile, and up the slopes of the pile. The angles of the sides of the holes should be less than the angle of repose. Place the coal that is removed from the holes away from the sampling area. Remove the increment from the bottom of the hole and place it into the container. Avoid any spillage.

7.5.1 The pattern of increment placement can be dependent upon the size and number of conveyances or height and shape of the stockpile. Space the increments over the surface of the coal so that each increment will represent equally sized areas. This will require different spacing of increments as the size and number of conveyances or the profile of the pile changes. The Appendix contains a discussion of pattern selection for collection of increments from coal in conveyances.

7.5.2 As increments are collected, protect them from contamination and moisture change. Place the increments in plastic-lined canvas bags, metal drums with plastic liners, plastic buckets with airtight lids, or other moisture impervious containers. Each sample must be clearly identified. Place a moisture-proof identification tag inside the sample container and attach another securely on the outside of the sample container. Sample identification shall include the sampling technician's initials, the date, the location, weather conditions, the number of increments, and the sampling method used. This information will become part of the analytical report. Other notes or pertinent information can be recorded in the sampling log (see Section 8). This information may or may not be in the report, but it shall be retained as a part of the laboratory record.

7.6 *Collection Devices*—The estimated top size of the coal ascertained in [7.1](#) should be used to determine the opening size of the increment collection device. It should be a minimum of two and one half times the top size of the coal. Types and dimensions of sampling implements should be agreed upon by all interested parties before commencement of sampling. A