
**Metallic powders — Test method for the
determination of non-metallic inclusions
in metal powders using a powder-forged
specimen**

*Poudres métalliques — Détermination de la teneur en inclusions non
métalliques dans les poudres métalliques à l'aide d'une éprouvette
forgée de poudre*

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ISO 13947:2007

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Case postale 56 • CH-1211 Geneva 20
Tel. + 41 22 749 01 11
Fax + 41 22 749 09 47
E-mail copyright@iso.org
Web www.iso.org

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Foreword

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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 13947 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 119, *Powder metallurgy*, Subcommittee SC 2, *Sampling and testing methods for powders (including powders for hardmetals)*.

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Metallic powders — Test method for the determination of non-metallic inclusions in metal powders using a powder-forged specimen

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS — This standard does not purport to address all of the safety problems, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this International Standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and to determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.

1 Scope

This International Standard specifies a metallographic method for determining the non-metallic inclusion level in metal powders using a powder-forged specimen. The test method covers repress powder-forged test specimens in which there has been minimal lateral flow ($< 1\%$). The core region of the powder-forged test specimen contains no porosity detectable at $100\times$ magnification.

This test method can also be used to determine the non-metallic inclusion content of powder-forged steel parts. However, in parts where there has been a significant amount of material flow, the near-neighbour separation distance needs to be changed, or the inclusion sizes agreed between the parties need to be adjusted.

This test method is not suitable for determining the non-metallic inclusion level of parts that have been forged such that the core region contains porosity. At the magnification used for this test method, residual porosity is hard to distinguish from inclusions. Too much residual porosity makes a meaningful assessment of the inclusion population impossible.

This test method may be applied to materials that contain manganese sulfide (admixed or prealloyed), provided the near-neighbour separation distance is changed from $30\ \mu\text{m}$ to $15\ \mu\text{m}$.

2 Normative references

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/TR 14321:1997, *Sintered metal materials, excluding hardmetals — Metallographic preparation and examination*

ASTM B 796-02, *Standard test method for nonmetallic inclusion content of powders intended for powder forging (P/F) applications*

ASTM E 3-01, *Standard practice for preparation of metallographic specimens*

ASTM E 768-99, *Standard practice for preparing and evaluating specimens for automatic inclusion assessment of steel*

3 Principle

A section representing the core region of the test specimen (part) is cut from the test piece (part) prior to metallographic grinding and polishing (mounting the section is optional).

The polished sample is examined microscopically at a magnification of $100\times$ and a note is made of inclusions greater than a predetermined size.

The maximum Feret's diameter is used to determine inclusion size. A Feret's diameter is a caliper diameter, as illustrated in Figure 1.

The fragmented nature of some inclusions means that their size determination is somewhat complicated. The concept of near-neighbour separation shall be used in determining inclusion size. According to this concept, if an inclusion is within a certain distance of its neighbouring particles, it is considered as a member of an inclusion cluster or agglomerate. Detected features within $30\ \mu\text{m}$ of one another are considered as part of the same inclusion. The concept is illustrated schematically in Figure 2.

The non-metallic inclusion level of the test specimen (part) is reported as the number of inclusions, per $100\ \text{mm}^2$, greater than or equal to the predetermined size.

4 Significance and use

4.1 The non-metallic inclusion level of ferrous powders is an indication of powder cleanliness. In pressed and sintered ferrous P/M materials, the extensive porosity present masks the effect of inclusions on mechanical properties. In contrast, the properties of a P/M material processed to near pore-free density are strongly influenced by the composition, size, size distribution, and location of non-metallic inclusions.

4.2 The test for non-metallic inclusions in fully dense steel parts is useful as

- a characteristic to classify or differentiate one grade of powder or batch of parts from another, and
- a lot-to-lot quality comparison of powders intended for powder forging.

4.3 A significant amount of variation in non-metallic inclusion content will occur

- if the powder used to form the test specimen (parts) does not meet the required quality standards for non-metallic inclusion content, or
- processing of the test specimen (parts) has been carried out under conditions that do not permit oxide reduction or allow oxidation of the test specimen (part), or both.

4.4 The use of the near-neighbour concept offers a more conservative estimate of the inclusions: it will overestimate rather than underestimate them.

5 Apparatus

5.1 Equipment, for the metallographic preparation of test specimens.

5.2 Metallographic microscope, permitting observation and measurement up to a magnification of 100 diameters using light with a wavelength of 544 nm (green filter), an objective lens with a magnification of from $8\times$ to $12,5\times$, and a numerical aperture between 0,16 and 0,20.

NOTE Defining the light optics used is important because this determines the features that will be resolved, and all detected features are included in the assessment of inclusion size.

6 Test piece

6.1 For the evaluation of the non-metallic inclusion content of a powder that is intended for use in powder-forging applications, the powder shall be mixed with an appropriate amount of graphite and lubricant and compacted to a specified green density. The test method covers repress powder-forged test specimens in which there has been minimal lateral flow ($< 1\%$) so the diameter of the green compact shall be such, relative to the diameter of the forging die, that this requirement is met.

6.2 A metallographic specimen shall be removed from the powder-forged test specimen (part), austenitized, and quenched. Hardening of the specimen facilitates sample preparation by preventing smearing of soft inclusions and scratching.

6.3 The polished surface of the specimen (part) to be examined shall be not less than 350 mm^2 in area. Multiple sections are permitted, in order to obtain the necessary area for measurement on small parts.

6.4 The polished surface shall be parallel to the direction of working; that is, parallel to the direction of travel of the forging tools, and shall represent the core region of the test specimen (part).

7 Procedure

7.1 Preparation of specimens

In polishing the specimens, it is highly important that a clean polish be obtained and that the inclusions not be pitted, dragged or obscured. It is therefore recommended that the procedures described in ASTM E 3 and E 768 be followed. Automated grinding and polishing procedures are recommended. Examine specimens in the as-polished condition, free of the effects of any prior etching (if used). ISO/TR 14321:1997 shall be followed.

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7.2 Measurement of non-metallic inclusion content

7.2.1 Survey at least 350 mm^2 of the surface of the polished specimen at a magnification of $100\times$ using light with a wavelength of 544 nm (green filter), an objective lens with a magnification of from $8\times$ to $12,5\times$ and a numerical aperture between $0,16$ and $0,20$.

7.2.2 Size the detected inclusions on the basis of near-neighbour separation.

Features within $30\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ ($0,03\text{ mm}$) of one another (within 3 mm of one another at $100\times$ magnification) are considered to be part of the same inclusion.

7.2.3 For individual features less than $30\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ in size, three such features within $30\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ of one another are required to constitute an inclusion aggregate, when the near-neighbour separation principle is used.

7.2.4 Add an individual feature less than $30\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ in size to an inclusion larger than $30\text{ }\mu\text{m}$, provided both features are within $30\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ of one another, when the near-neighbour separation principle is used. Examples are given in Figure 2.

7.2.5 Measure and record the number of inclusion particles according to the principle of near-neighbour separation and sized using the maximum Feret's diameter that are

- greater than or equal to $30\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ in length,
- greater than or equal to $100\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ in length, and
- greater than or equal to $150\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ in length.

In addition to the use of the near-neighbour separation concept to size the inclusions, the size of the individual particles can be measured.

7.2.6 If the inclusions are also sized individually, the inclusions are sized using the maximum Feret's diameter as in 7.2.5. Results from the use of the near-neighbour separation concept will usually be more conservative (more larger inclusions).

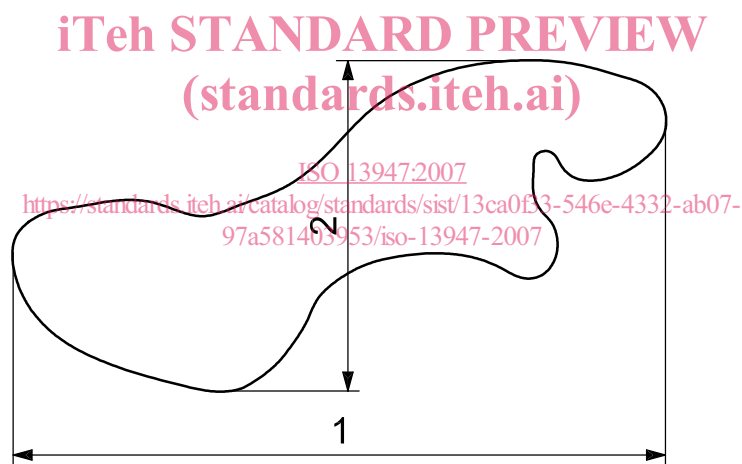
8 Test report

The test report should include the following information:

- a) a reference to this International Standard;
- b) the number of non-metallic inclusions per 100 mm² that are
 - greater than or equal to 30 µm in length,
 - greater than or equal to 100 µm in length, or
 - greater than or equal to 150 µm in length;
- c) whether the particles were sized individually, in addition to using the near-neighbour separation principle;
- d) the total area examined.

9 Precision and bias

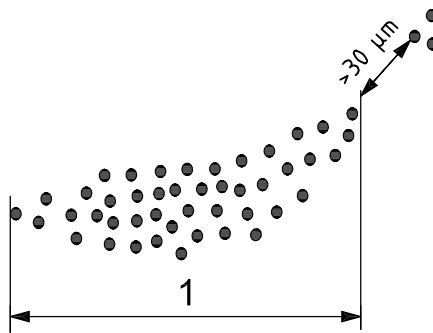
9.1 The precision and bias that can be expected through the use of this test method is currently under review by ASTM Subcommittee B09.11 on near-full-dense P/M materials.



Key

- 1 Maximum Feret's diameter
- 2 Feret's diameter

Figure 1 — Schematic illustration of Feret's diameter

**Key**

1 Maximum Feret's diameter

Figure 2 — Schematic illustration of the “near-neighbour” concept and maximum Feret's diameter

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