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Standard Practice for Outdoor Weathering of Plastics¹

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This standard has been approved for use by agencies of the Department of Defense.

1. Scope*

1.1 This practice is intended to cover procedures for the exposure of plastic materials to weather.

NOTE 1—See Practice G24 for aging under glass.

1.2 This practice is limited to the method by which the material is to be exposed and the general procedure to be followed. It is intended for use with finished articles of commerce as well as with all sizes and shapes of test specimens.

1.3 Means of evaluation of the effects of weathering will depend on the intended use for the test material.

1.4 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as the standard.

1.5 *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.*

NOTE 2—This standard and ISO 877.2-1991, Method A, are technically equivalent.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*²

D883 Terminology Relating to Plastics

D1600 Terminology for Abbreviated Terms Relating to Plastics

E772 Terminology of Solar Energy Conversion

G7 Practice for Atmospheric Environmental Exposure Testing of Nonmetallic Materials

G24 Practice for Conducting Exposures to Daylight Filtered Through Glass

¹ This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D20 on Plastics and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D20.50 on Durability of Plastics.

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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.

G84 Practice for Measurement of Time-of-Wetness on Surfaces Exposed to Wetting Conditions as in Atmospheric Corrosion Testing

G113 Terminology Relating to Natural and Artificial Weathering Tests of Nonmetallic Materials

G141 Guide for Addressing Variability in Exposure Testing of Nonmetallic Materials

G147 Practice for Conditioning and Handling of Nonmetallic Materials for Natural and Artificial Weathering Tests

2.2 *ISO Standard:*

ISO 877.2-1991 Method A, Methods for Exposure to Direct Weathering, to Weathering Using Glass-Filtered Daylight, and to Intensified Weathering Using Fresnel Mirrors³

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—For definitions of technical terms pertaining to plastics used in this practice, see Terminologies D883, D1600, G113, and E772.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 Tests conducted in accordance with this practice are used to evaluate the stability of plastic materials when they are exposed outdoors. The relative durability of plastics in outdoor use can be very different depending on the location of the exposure because of differences in ultraviolet (UV) radiation, time of wetness, temperature, pollutants, and other factors. It cannot be assumed, therefore, that results from one exposure in a single location will be useful for determining relative durability in a different location. Exposures in several locations with different climates that represent a broad range of anticipated service conditions are recommended.

4.1.1 Because of year-to-year climatological variations, results from a single exposure test cannot be used to predict the absolute rate at which a material degrades. Several years of repeat exposures are needed to get an average test result for a given location.

4.2 The results of short-term exposure tests can provide an indication of relative outdoor performance, but they should not be used to predict the absolute long-term performance of a

³ Available from American National Standards Institute (ANSI), 25 W. 43rd St., 4th Floor, New York, NY 10036.

*A Summary of Changes section appears at the end of this standard

material. The results of tests conducted for less than twelve months will depend on the particular season of the year in which they begin.

5. Apparatus

5.1 The test site shall conform to the requirements of Practice G7. Unless otherwise specified, position exposure racks so that they face the equator. The angle of the exposure rack relative to the horizontal can vary depending upon the end-use conditions that are being evaluated.

NOTE 3—Test sites at latitudes less than 23°27' from the equator in either hemisphere will have a period during the year when the declination of the sun will exceed the latitude of the site.

5.1.1 *At-Latitude Racks*—These racks shall be adjusted such that the exposed surfaces are at an angle from the horizontal corresponding exactly to the site latitude angle (Note 4).

NOTE 4—At-latitude exposure provides maximum annual total solar-radiant exposure at most non-subtropical sites. In most non-desert areas, however, maximum annual ultraviolet-radiant exposure is provided by exposure at an angle of the latitude angle minus 10°.

5.1.2 *45° Racks*—These racks shall be adjusted such that the exposed surfaces of specimens are at an angle of 45° to the horizontal.

5.1.3 *90° Racks*—These racks shall be adjusted such that the exposed surfaces of specimens are at an angle of 90° to the horizontal.

5.1.4 *Horizontal Racks*—These racks shall be positioned such that the exposed surfaces of the specimens are horizontal (Note 5).

NOTE 5—To provide moisture runoff for most horizontal-type testing of plastics, 5° south exposure is usually preferred. However, plastic roofing membranes, artificial turf, and other plastics that may be exposed at horizontal in their end-use condition should be exposed at 0° horizontal.

5.1.5 *Other-Angle Racks*—These racks shall be adjusted such that the exposed surfaces of specimens are at a tilt angle mutually agreed upon between the interested parties.

5.2 *Materials and Manner of Construction*—Test racks and hardware shall conform to the requirements of Practice G7 and shall provide for attachment of specimens or holders of any convenient width and length. The structural members of the test racks shall not constitute a backing to the specimens under test unless it is used in relation to an end-use system. Fasteners used to attach specimens to the test rack shall provide for secure attachment but allow specimens to expand or contract with thermal changes, moisture absorption or desorption, or plasticizer loss.

5.3 Specimen Holders:

5.3.1 Most specimens under test will not be of an exact size for mounting directly on the frame. Specimen holders should be used to support the many sizes of specimens involved in this testing. The specimen holder shall not constitute a backing for that portion of the material to be evaluated unless it is used in relation to an end-use system.

5.3.2 The specimen holders shall be constructed of an inert material. (Aluminum extruded shapes have been found to be suitable.)

5.3.3 The design of the specimen holders shall be such that each specimen or sheet in a holder cannot shift its position, yet is not constrained (that is, it is free to expand or contract with thermal changes, swell because of moisture absorption, or shrink because of plasticizer loss).

5.3.4 *Frame Holders*—These holders are in the shape of a frame that may be subdivided as necessary to provide proper spacing of the specimens. The exposure aperture of each frame shall be of sufficient size to expose the entire test area of each specimen when sufficient specimens are contained.

5.3.5 *Plate Holders*—This type of holder is a universal panel consisting of a slotted-aluminum plate on which electrical white glaze porcelain insulators⁴ are mounted at proper positions to affix various-sized specimens. The specimens are mounted in the grooves of the insulators at a fixed distance of 11 mm from the slotted back plate. The insulators provide inert mounting while the slotted plate permits free circulation of air behind the specimen. This method of mounting is shown in Fig. 1.

5.4 Instruments for Measuring Climatological Data:

5.4.1 *Instruments Used to Measure Ambient Temperature and Relative Humidity*—Instruments and procedures used for measurement of ambient temperature and relative humidity shall be in accordance with Practice G7.

5.4.2 *Instruments Used to Measure Solar Radiation*—Instruments and calibration procedures used for measurement of total solar radiation, total solar ultraviolet radiation, or narrow band solar ultraviolet radiation shall be in accordance with Practice G7.

6. Sampling

6.1 Sampling shall be in accordance with the pertinent considerations outlined in Guide G141.

7. Test Specimens

7.1 Exposure test specimens may be of any size or shape that can be mounted in a holder or applied directly to the racks. They may be specimens suited to the means of evaluating the effects of weathering on a specific physical property, or they may be larger specimens from which smaller specimens for evaluation may be cut. Exposure test specimens should be large enough that mounting edges may be removed where evaluation test results would otherwise be affected.

7.2 As far as practical, exposure test specimens shall simulate service conditions of an end-use application. All materials of an unknown end use application will normally be run in an unbacked condition. When conditions of use are known, the specimen exposed will consist of the plastic material being evaluated plus suitable backing materials to conform to projected practice. The effect of backing is highly significant and contributes to the degradation as a function of reflectance, heat absorption, moisture retention, etc. It shall always be used in relation to an end-use system rather than as a standard mounting method.

⁴ A satisfactory insulator for this purpose is Catalog No. 615160, Special No. 6 Knob, dry-process, porcelain insulator, available from Porcelain Products, Carey, OH.