



Designation: D 789 – 05

## Standard Test Methods for Determination of Relative Viscosity of Polyamide (PA)<sup>1, 2</sup>

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D 789; 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 approval. A superscript epsilon ( $\epsilon$ ) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

### 1. Scope\*

1.1 These test methods cover the determination of relative viscosity as they apply to polyamide (PA).

1.2 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as the standard. The values given in brackets are for information only.

1.3 *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 1—This standard and ISO 307 address the same subject, but the technical content is different.

### 2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*<sup>3</sup>

D 446 Specifications and Operating Instructions for Glass Capillary Kinematic Viscometers

D 883 Terminology Relating to Plastics

D 4000 Classification System for Specifying Plastic Materials

2.2 *ISO Standards:*<sup>4</sup>

ISO 307 Determination of Viscosity Number of Polyamides in Dilute Solutions

ISO 17025 General Requirements for the Competence of Testing and Calibration Laboratories

### 3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions—The definitions used in these test methods are in accordance with Terminology D 883.

### 4. Significance and Use

4.1 These test methods are intended for use as control and acceptance tests. They are also applicable in the partial

evaluation of materials for specific end uses and as a means for detecting changes in materials due to specific deteriorating causes.

4.2 Since some materials require special treatment, refer to the ASTM test methods applicable to the material being tested. Classification System D 4000 lists materials that would be applicable to the tests contained in these test methods.

### 5. Test Specimen

5.1 Test specimens for the various tests shall conform to the requirements prescribed herein.

### 6. Number of Tests

6.1 One determination shall be considered sufficient for testing each molding powder batch or resin lot. Table 1 at the end of this test method gives repeatability and reproducibility statistics for relative viscosity testing.

### 7. Sampling

7.1 The material shall be sampled statistically or the sample shall come from a process that is in statistical control.

7.2 Samples in many forms, such as molded powder, molded shapes, or re-grind are permitted. It is recommended that molded specimens be cut into smaller parts prior to testing.

### 8. Conditioning

8.1 *Test Conditions*—Do not remove samples from sealed, airtight containers until ready for testing.

## TEST METHOD

### 9. Relative Viscosity

9.1 *General*—Determine the relative viscosity of the nylon polymer by ASTM Ubbelohde (Suspended-Level)-type viscometer. The ASTM Ubbelohde-type viscometer is the reference and referee method. Ostwald-type viscometers, pipet viscometer, and rotational viscometer<sup>5</sup> are acceptable as an alternative method.

<sup>1</sup> This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D20 on Plastics and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D20.15 on Thermoplastic Materials (Section D20.15.09).

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<sup>2</sup> There is no similar or equivalent ISO standard.

<sup>3</sup> For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, [www.astm.org](http://www.astm.org), or contact ASTM Customer Service at [service@astm.org](mailto:service@astm.org). For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

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

<sup>5</sup> The sole source of supply of the Brookfield viscometer known to the committee at this time is Brookfield Engineering Laboratories, Inc., 240 Cushing St., Stoughton, MA 02072. If you are aware of alternative suppliers, please provide this information to ASTM International Headquarters. Your comments will receive careful consideration at a meeting of the responsible technical committee,<sup>1</sup> which you may attend.

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

9.2 ASTM Ubbelohde (Suspended Level)-type Viscometer—To determine the viscosity of formic acid use an ASTM Ubbelohde viscometer Size 1 with an inside diameter of  $0.58 \text{ mm} \pm 2\%$ . For use to determine the viscosity of the polyamide solutions use the appropriate ASTM Ubbelohde viscometer as defined in Specification D 446, Fig. A2.1 for the polyamide viscosity range.

9.2.1 Apparatus:

9.2.1.1 Constant-Temperature Liquid Bath, set to operate at  $25 \pm 0.1^\circ\text{C}$ .

9.2.1.2 Precision Thermometer, calibrated, for use in the liquid bath (ASTMS45C (non-mercury), and ASTM 45C (mercury-filled)).

9.2.1.3 Ubbelohde (Suspended Level)-type Viscometer), calibrated by an ISO 17025-accredited laboratory or in accordance with the procedure set out in 9.2.3 and manufactured from low-expansion borosilicate glass.

9.2.1.4 Ostwald-type Viscometer, calibrated by an ISO 17025-accredited laboratory or in accordance with the procedure set out in 9.2.5 and manufactured from low-expansion borosilicate glass.

9.2.1.5 Pipet Viscometer, calibrated by an ISO 17025-accredited laboratory or in accordance with the procedure set out in 9.2.4, 25 mL and manufactured from low expansion borosilicate glass.<sup>6</sup>

9.2.1.6 Pycnometer, calibrated, 50-mL.

9.2.1.7 Automatic Pipet, calibrated, 100-mL.

9.2.1.8 Erlenmeyer Flasks, 250-mL, heat-resistant glass.

9.2.1.9 Shaking Machine.

9.2.1.10 Rubber Bulbs.

9.2.1.11 Timer, accurate to 0.2 s.

9.2.1.12 With the exception of the pipet, Ostwald, and Ubbelohde viscometers, apparatus capable of equivalent accuracy may be substituted.

9.2.2 Reagents and Materials:

9.2.2.1 Acetone, commercial grade.

9.2.2.2 Chromic Acid Cleaning Solution—Dissolve sodium dichromate  $\text{Na}_2\text{CrO}_7 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ , technical grade, in concentrated sulfuric acid ( $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$ , sp gr 1.84).

9.2.2.3 *m*-Cresol,<sup>7</sup> having a viscosity of 12.83 cP at  $25^\circ\text{C}$  and a density of  $1.029 \pm 0.0011 \text{ g/mL}$  at  $25^\circ\text{C}$ .

9.2.2.4 Formic Acid ( $90 \pm 0.2\%$ )—Clear, water-white. ACS-grade formic acid with the following additional requirements: Methyl formate content 0.2 % maximum; density  $1.1985 \pm 0.001 \text{ g/mL}$  at  $25^\circ\text{C}$ ; viscosity  $1.56^\circ \pm 0.02 \text{ cP}$  at  $25^\circ\text{C}$ .

9.2.2.5 Standard Viscosity Oils—Use certified viscosity oils, which have been calibrated by a laboratory-accredited to ISO 17025<sup>8</sup>. S-3, S-20, K-50, S-60, and S-200. The approximate kinematic viscosities at  $25^\circ\text{C}$  are 4.0, 35, 90, 120, and 480 cSt, respectively.

9.2.2.6 Stopcock Lubricant.<sup>9</sup>

9.2.2.7 Analytical Balance—Capable of weighing 0.1 mg (four decimal place balance).

9.2.3 Calibration of ASTM Ubbelohde (suspended level)-type viscometer (note that a kinetic energy correction factor may be required on all flow times less than 200 seconds, refer to 7.2 of Specification D 446)—Size 1 type used to determine absolute viscosity of formic acid. Size 3 type used to determine nylon polymer-formic acid solutions.

9.2.3.1 Add to the viscometer 10-18 mL of viscosity oil standard from a volumetric pipet. Use S-3 for Size 1 viscometer and N-100 for Size 3 viscometers. Immerse the viscometer in the constant temperature bath at  $25 \pm 0.02^\circ\text{C}$  and allow it to remain at least 20 minutes. Block off the air arm (not the capillary) and apply air pressure to the large diameter (filling) tube by means of a rubber bulb so that oil passes into the capillary until oil is above the upper timing mark. Un-block the air arm and simultaneously allow the oil to flow down. This ensures that the viscometer is wet. Again, force oil above the upper timing mark, and observe the time (to 0.2 seconds) required for the liquid to fall from the upper timing mark to the lower timing mark. Repeat until three successive values agree within 0.5 %, and record the average for the viscosity oil standard at  $25^\circ\text{C}$  as  $t_3(\text{S-3})$  or  $t_{100}(\text{N-100})$ . Remove the viscometer from the bath, clean and dry the inside surfaces thoroughly.

9.2.3.2 Repeat the above procedure, using 10-18 mL of 90 % formic acid in a Size 1 tube. Record the average efflux time as  $t_f$ . Calculate the absolute viscosity of the 90 % formic acid as follows:

$$\eta_f = f_t \times d_f \times t_f \quad (1)$$

where:

- $\eta_f$  = absolute viscosity of formic acid,  $\text{kPa} \times \text{s}(\text{cP})$
- $f_t$  = Size 1 viscometer tube factor,  $\text{mm}^2/\text{s}(\text{cSt})/\text{s} = \eta_3/t_3$
- $d_f$  = density of formic acid at  $25^\circ\text{C}$ ,  $\text{g/mL} = 1.1975$
- $t_f$  = average efflux time for 90 % formic acid at  $25^\circ\text{C}$ , s
- $\eta_3$  = kinematic viscosity of Oil S-3  $\text{mm}^2/\text{s}$  (cSt)
- $\eta_{100}$  = kinematic viscosity of Oil N-100,  $\text{mm}^2/\text{s}$  (cSt)
- $t_3$  = average efflux time for oil S-3 at  $25^\circ\text{C}$ , s
- $t_{100}$  = average efflux time for oil N-100 at  $25^\circ\text{C}$ , s

9.2.4 Calibration of Pipet Viscometer—(Note that a kinetic energy correction factor may be required on all flow times of less than 200 seconds, refer to 7.2 of Specification D 446.) Use Oil S-20. Assemble the pipet viscometer so that the lowest mark on the pipet aligns with the 50-mL mark on the reservoir to the pipet. Place the assembly in the water bath adjusted to a temperature of  $25 \pm 0.1^\circ\text{C}$ . After at least 20 min, apply air pressure to the reservoir or vacuum to the capillary, by means of a rubber bulb, to drive the oil up into the pipet above the

<sup>6</sup> The sole source of supply of the Drawing No. 66-1644 known to the committee at this time is Scientific Glass Apparatus Co., 51 Ackerman St., Bloomfield, NJ 07003. If you are aware of alternative suppliers, please provide this information to ASTM International Headquarters. Your comments will receive careful consideration at a meeting of the responsible technical committee,<sup>1</sup> which you may attend.

<sup>7</sup> The compound *m*-cresol is used with *n*-alkoxyalkyl nylon 6:6 resin because formic acid tends to crosslink this nylon. It is used with nylon 6:10 resin because of this nylon's insolubility in formic acid. It is available as No. 5072 from Matheson, Coleman, and Bell Co., East Rutherford, NJ 07073.

<sup>8</sup> Suitable standard viscosity oils are available from a number of companies.

<sup>9</sup> "Cello-Grease," available from the Fisher Scientific Co., 717 Forbes St., Pittsburgh, PA 15219, has been found satisfactory for this purpose.

upper timing mark. Place a finger over the top of the pipet, and release the pressure by opening the system to air. Remove the finger and allow pipet to drain. Repeat at least three times to wet the pipet thoroughly, and then record the time (to 0.2 s) for the liquid level to fall from the upper timing level to the lower. Determine the efflux time,  $t_{20}$ , repeating until three successive values agree within 0.5 %, and record the average. Repeat the procedure with Oil S-60 to obtain  $t_{60}$ . Calculate the viscometer tube factor as follows:

$$\text{tube factor} = (f_{20} + f_{60})/2 \quad (2)$$

where:

- $f_{20}$  = kinematic viscosity of S-20 oil,  $\text{mm}^2/\text{s}$  (cST)/ $t_{20}$ ,
- $f_{60}$  = kinematic viscosity of S-60 oil,  $\text{mm}^2/\text{s}$  (cST)/ $t_{60}$ ,
- $t_{20}$  = average efflux time of S-20 oil, s, and
- $t_{60}$  = average efflux time of S-60 oil, s.

This value shall be used in calculating the relative viscosity of a polymer solution, as shown in 9.2.8.

**9.2.5 Calibration of Ostwald (Cannon-Fenske Routine) Viscometer**—(Note that a kinetic energy correction factor may be required on all flow times of less than 200 seconds, refer to 7.2 of Specification D 446.) Add to the viscometer 10 mL of Oil S-3 at approximately 25°C from a volumetric pipet. Immerse the viscometer in the constant-temperature bath at  $25 \pm 0.1^\circ\text{C}$  and allow it to remain at least 20 min. Apply air pressure to the large diameter leg by means of a rubber bulb until oil is above the upper timing mark. Allow the oil to flow down. Repeat several times to ensure thorough wetting of the viscometer. Again, force oil above the upper timing mark, and observe the time (to 0.2 s) required for the liquid to fall from the upper timing mark to the lower timing mark. Repeat until three successive values agree within 0.5 %, and record the average for Oil S-3 at 25°C as  $t_3$ . Remove the viscometer from the bath, clean and dry the inside surfaces thoroughly, and repeat the above procedure, using 10 mL of 90 % formic acid. Record the average efflux time as  $t_f$ . Calculate the absolute viscosity of the 90 % formic acid as follows:

$$\eta_f = f_i \cdot d_f \cdot t_f \quad (3)$$

where:

- $\eta_f$  = absolute viscosity of formic acid,  $\text{kPa} \cdot \text{s}$  (cP),
- $f_i$  = viscometer tube factor,  $\text{mm}^2/\text{s}$  (cSt)/s =  $\eta_3/t_3$ ,
- $\eta_3$  = kinematic viscosity of Oil S-3,  $\text{mm}^2/\text{s}$  (cSt),
- $t_3$  = average efflux time for Oil S-3 at 25°C, s,
- $d_f$  = density of 90 % formic acid at 25°C,  $\text{g/mL}$ , = 1.1975, and
- $t_f$  = average efflux time for 90 % formic acid at 25°C, s.

#### 9.2.6 Preparation of Solutions:

**9.2.6.1 Preparation of Nylon Polymer-Formic Acid Solutions**—Weigh 11.00 g of nylon polymer into a clean, dry, 250-mL, ground-glass stoppered Erlenmeyer flask (see Note 2). Add, by means of the calibrated 100-mL automatic pipet, 100 mL of 90 % formic acid at  $25 \pm 1^\circ\text{C}$ . Slowly shake the flask while adding the acid to prevent the polymer from forming a gelatinous mass. Set the flask in an oven at 50°C for 15 min, if needed, to obtain complete solutions. Then put stopcock lubricant on the glass stopper, insert it tightly into the flask, and place the flask and contents on a shaking machine. Agitate until the solution is complete (see Note 3).

9.2.6.2 The procedure for the preparation of *n*-alkoxy-alkyl nylon 6:6 and nylon 6:12 polymers in *m*-cresol is the same as for the preparation of formic acid solutions, except that the quantity of nylon polymer shall be 9.44 g instead of 11.00 g, and the *m*-cresol shall be specified as the solvent instead of formic acid.

NOTE 2—The polymer should contain less than 0.28 % moisture. If it contains more than 0.28 %, the polymer should be dried. Normally, drying at 70°C in a vacuum for 4 to 6 h or 90°C for 20 min is adequate.

NOTE 3—Heating may be continued for a maximum of 2 h while shaking at a temperature not exceeding 50°C.

**9.2.7 Procedure**—Pipet or pour 10 mL of the nylon polymer-formic acid solution into the viscometer. Determine the efflux time,  $t_p$ , as described in 9.2.3, 9.2.4, or 9.2.5.

**9.2.8 Calculation of Relative Viscosity**—The relative viscosity,  $\eta_r$ , is the ratio of the absolute viscosity of the polymer solution to that of the formic acid:

$$\eta_r = (\eta_p/\eta_f) = (f_i \cdot d_p \cdot t_p)/\eta_f \quad (4)$$

where:

- $d_p$  = density of formic acid-polymer solution at 25°C (see 9.2.9), and
- $t_p$  = average efflux time for formic acid-polymer solution, s.
- $\eta_f$  = absolute viscosity of formic acid,  $\text{kPa} \times \text{s}$  (cP)
- $f_i$  = viscometer tube factor,  $\text{mm}^2/\text{s}$  (cSt)/s =  $\eta_3/t_3$

Calculate the relative viscosity of *n*-alkoxyalkyl nylon 6:6 and nylon 6:12 resins using *m*-cresol as the comparison base, not formic acid. Substitution of proper constants in the calculation formulas will then be necessary.

#### 9.2.9 Density of Nylon Polymer-Formic Acid Solution:

**9.2.9.1** Prepare the nylon polymer-formic acid solution as described in 9.2.6.1.

NOTE 4—Calibration of the pycnometer used to determine density is made by repeating the procedure specified in 9.2.9.2 and 9.2.9.3, using distilled water in place of the nylon polymer-formic acid solution.

**9.2.9.2** Weigh (to  $\pm 0.1$  mg) a clean, dry, calibrated 50-mL pycnometer, and fill it with the nylon polymer-formic acid solution at a temperature slightly below (1 to 2°C) the test temperature. Stopper or cap the pycnometer, leaving the overflow orifice open. Take care to prevent the formation of bubbles in the pycnometer. Immerse the filled pycnometer (the neck of the pycnometer shall be above the water line) into a constant-temperature liquid bath, maintained at  $25 \pm 0.1^\circ\text{C}$ . Allow 20 to 30 min for temperature equilibrium to be reached.

**9.2.9.3** Remove the pycnometer from the liquid bath, and wipe away any overflow with paper towels or other absorbent material, taking care not to remove any subsequent overflow that may be caused in this step. Dry the pycnometer thoroughly, and weigh immediately ( $\pm 0.1$  mg).

**9.2.9.4** The density of the nylon polymer-formic acid solution, in grams per cubic centimetre, is calculated by the following formulas:

$$d_p = \frac{m_p - m_o}{V} \quad (5)$$

and