



Designation: D4438 – 85 (Reapproved 2007)

Standard Test Method for Particle Size Distribution of Catalytic Material by Electronic Counting¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D4438; 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 particle size distribution of catalyst and catalyst carrier particles using an electroconductive sensing method and is one of several valuable methods for the measurement of particle size.

1.2 The range of particle sizes investigated was 20 to 150 μm (see [IEEE/ASTM SI 10](#)) equivalent spherical diameter. The technique is capable of measuring particles above and below this range. The instrument used for this method is an electric current path of small dimensions that is modulated by individual particle passage through an aperture, and produces individual pulses of amplitude proportional to the particle volume.

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.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*²

[D1193 Specification for Reagent Water](#)

[E177 Practice for Use of the Terms Precision and Bias in ASTM Test Methods](#)

[E691 Practice for Conducting an Interlaboratory Study to Determine the Precision of a Test Method](#)

[IEEE/ASTM SI 10 Standard for Use of the International System of Units \(SI\): The Modern Metric System](#)

3. Summary of Test Method

3.1 A carefully dispersed, dilute suspension of the sample in a beaker filled with an electrolyte is placed in the counting

position on the instrument sample stand. The suspension is forced through a restricting aperture. Each passing particle is recorded on an electronic counter, and the data are accumulated according to selected particle size intervals for subsequent processing.

3.2 The instrument response is proportional to liquid displacement by the particle volume. Equivalent spherical diameter is commonly used to express the particle size.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 This test method can be used to determine particle size distributions for material specifications, manufacturing control, and research and development work in the particle size range usually encountered in fluidizable cracking catalysts.

5. Apparatus³

5.1 *Electronic Particle Counter*, with sample stand and stirring motor.

5.2 *Aperture Tubes*, with varying diameters. The diameter required is dependent upon the particle size distribution of the sample. Generally, any given tube will cover a particle size range from 2 to 40 % of its aperture diameter.

5.3 *Ultrasonic Tank*, 100 W.

5.4 *Beaker*, 100-mL.

5.5 *Graduated Glass Pipet*, 5-mL.

5.6 *Wash Bottles*.

5.7 *Membrane Filtering Device* with 0.22- μm filters.

5.8 *Round-Bottom Sample Beakers*, 250-mL.

5.9 *Micro-Riffler or Chute Riffler*.

6. Reagents

6.1 *Purity of Reagents*—Reagent grade chemicals shall be used in all tests. Unless otherwise indicated, it is intended that all reagents shall conform to the specifications of the Committee on Analytical Reagents of the American Chemical Society,

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D32 on Catalysts and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D32.02 on Physical-Mechanical Properties.

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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 Supporting data have been filed at ASTM International Headquarters and may be obtained by requesting Research Report RR:D32-1011.