



Designation: E569 – 07

Standard Practice for Acoustic Emission Monitoring of Structures During Controlled Stimulation¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This practice provides guidelines for acoustic emission (AE) examination or monitoring of structures, such as pressure vessels, piping systems, or other structures that can be stressed by mechanical or thermal means.

1.2 The basic functions of an AE monitoring system are to detect, locate, and classify emission sources. Other methods of nondestructive testing (NDT) may be used to further evaluate the significance of acoustic emission sources.

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

[E543 Specification for Agencies Performing Nondestructive Testing](#)

[E650 Guide for Mounting Piezoelectric Acoustic Emission Sensors](#)

[E750 Practice for Characterizing Acoustic Emission Instrumentation](#)

[E1316 Terminology for Nondestructive Examinations](#)

[E2374 Guide for Acoustic Emission System Performance Verification](#)

2.2 *Other Documents:*³

[SNT-TC-1A Recommended Practice for Nondestructive Testing Personnel Qualification and Certification](#)

[ANSI/ASNT CP-189 Standard for Qualification and Certification of Nondestructive Testing Personnel](#)

[NAS-410 Certification and Qualification of Nondestructive Testing Personnel](#)⁴

2.3 *AIA Standard:*

[NAS-410 Certification and Qualification of Nondestructive Testing Personnel](#)⁴

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—Definitions of terms relating to acoustic emission may be found in Section B of Terminology [E1316](#).

3.2 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.2.1 *AE activity*—the presence of acoustic emission during an examination.

3.2.2 *active source*—one which exhibits increasing cumulative AE activity with increasing or constant stimulus.

3.2.3 *critically active source*—one which exhibits an increasing rate of change of cumulative AE activity with increasing or constant stimulus.

3.2.4 *AE source intensity*—average energy, counts or amplitude per hit.

3.2.5 *intense source*—one in which the AE source intensity of an active source consistently exceeds, by a specified amount, the average AE source intensity of active sources.

3.2.6 *critically intense source*—one in which the AE source intensity consistently increases with increasing stimulus or with time under constant stimulus.

4. Summary of Practice

4.1 Acoustic emission examination of a structure usually requires application of a mechanical or thermal stimulus. Such stimulation produces changes in the stresses in the structure. During stimulation of a structure, AE from discontinuities (such as cracks and inclusions) and from other areas of stress concentration, or from other acoustic sources (such as leaks, loose parts, and structural motion) can be detected by an instrumentation system, using sensors which, when stimulated by stress waves, generate electrical signals.

4.2 In addition to immediate evaluation of the emissions detected during the application of the stimulus, a permanent

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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 Available from American Society for Nondestructive Testing (ASNT), P.O. Box 28518, 1711 Arlingate Ln., Columbus, OH 43228-0518, <http://www.asnt.org>.

⁴ Available from Aerospace Industries Association of America, Inc. (AIA), 1000 Wilson Blvd., Suite 1700, Arlington, VA 22209-3928, <http://www.aia-aerospace.org>.

record of the number and location of emitting sources and the relative amount of AE detected from each source provides a basis for comparison with sources detected during the examination and during subsequent stimulation.

5. Basis of Application

5.1 The following items are subject to contractual agreement between the parties using or referencing this practice.

5.2 Personnel Qualification

5.2.1 If specified in the contractual agreement, personnel performing examinations to this standard shall be qualified in accordance with a nationally and internationally recognized NDT personnel qualification practice or standard such as ANSI/ASNT CP-189, SNT-TC-1A, NAS-410, or a similar document and certified by the employer or certifying agency, as applicable. The practice or standard used and its applicable revision shall be identified in the contractual agreement between the using parties.

5.3 *Qualification of Nondestructive Testing Agencies*—If specified in the contractual agreement, NDT agencies shall be qualified and evaluated as described in Practice E543. The applicable edition of Practice E543 shall be specified in the contractual agreement.

5.4 *Timing of Examination*—The timing of the examination shall be in accordance with a contractual agreement or with an established internal procedure.

5.5 *Extent of Examination*—Many applications will require an arrangement of sensors such that all areas of the structure are monitored. In other applications, only a portion of the structure may require monitoring.

5.6 *Reporting Criteria/Acceptance*—Reporting criteria for the examination results shall be in accordance with Sections 10, 11, and 12.

5.7 *Reexamination of Repaired/Reworked Items*—Reexamination of repaired/reworked items is not addressed in this standard and if required shall be specified in a contractual agreement.

6. Examination Preparation

6.1 Before the examination begins, make the following preparations for AE monitoring:

6.1.1 Determine the type, number, and placement of sensors. This requires knowledge of both material and physical characteristics of the structure and the features of the instrumentation. This determination is also dependent upon the required precision and accuracy of the examination.

6.1.2 Establish communications between the control point for the application of the stimulus and the AE examination control center.

6.1.3 Provide a means for continuously recording a measure of the stimulus.

6.1.4 Identify potential sources of extraneous acoustic noise, such as vibration, friction, and fluid flow. Such sources may require acoustic isolation or control, in order not to mask valid acoustic emissions.

6.1.5 Attach the sensors; both the couplant and sensing device must be compatible with the surface conditions and the composition of the structural material being examined (see Guide E650).

6.1.6 Verify the AE monitoring system in accordance with Section 8 and Guide E2374.

7. Safety Precautions

7.1 When examining vessels, ambient temperature should not be below the ductile-brittle transition temperature of the pressure vessel construction material.

8. Calibration and Standardization

8.1 Annual calibration and verification of pressure transducer, AE sensors, preamplifiers (if applicable), signal processor (particularly the signal processor time reference), and AE electronic waveform generator should be performed. Equipment should be adjusted so that it conforms to equipment manufacturer's specifications. Instruments used for calibrations must have current accuracy certification that is traceable to the National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST).

8.2 Routine electronic evaluations (verification) must be performed any time there is concern about signal processor performance. A waveform generator should be used in making evaluations. Each signal processor channel must respond with peak amplitude reading within ± 2 dBV of the electronic waveform generator output.

8.3 A system performance verification (see Guide E2374) must be conducted immediately before, and immediately after, each examination. Performance verifications can also be conducted during the examination if there is any suspicion that the system performance may have changed. A performance verification uses a mechanical device to induce stress waves into the structure at a specified distance from each sensor. Induced stress waves stimulate a sensor in a manner similar to acoustic emission. Performance verifications verify performance of the entire system (including couplant).

8.3.1 The preferred technique for conducting a performance verification is a pencil lead break. Lead should be broken on the structure at a distance of 4 in. (100 to 102 mm) from the sensor centerline. 2H lead, 0.3 mm diameter, 0.1 in. (2 to 3 mm) long should be used (see Fig. 4 of Guide E976). If circumstances require different values to be used, the values used shall be documented in the examination report.

8.3.2 *Location Sensitivity Check*—A simulated AE source is created on the surface of the structure in order to check location sensitivity. Sensor source location sensitivity is determined as follows.

8.3.2.1 *Zone Location Sensitivity Check*—Each channel shall have the same system examination threshold. The simulated AE source generated anywhere on the vessel shall be detected by at least one sensor.

8.3.2.2 *Source Location Algorithm Sensitivity Check*—Each channel shall have the same system examination threshold. Two or more sensors define the structure mounted sensor array. The simulated AE source generated in each structure mounted