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Standard Test Method for CBR (California Bearing Ratio) of Soils in Place[1]

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D 4429; 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.

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

1. Scope

1.1 This test method covers the determination of the California Bearing Ratio (CBR) of soil tested in place by comparing the penetration load of the soil to that of a standard material. This test method covers the evaluation of the relative quality of subgrade soils, but is applicable to subbase and some base-course materials. This test method is designed to test in-situ materials and corresponds to Test Method D 1883.

1.2 The values stated in inch-pound units are to be regarded as the standard.

1.3 *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 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:*

D 1556 Test Method for Density of Soil in Place by the Sand-Cone Method[2]

D 1883 Test Method for CBR (California Bearing Ratio) of Laboratory-Compacted Soils[2]

D 2167 Test Method for Density of Soil in Place by the Rubber-Balloon Method[2]

D 2216 Method for Laboratory Determination of Water (Moisture) Content of Soil, Rock, and Soil-Aggregate Mixtures[2]

D 2937 Test Method for Density of Soil in Place by the Drive-Cylinder Method[2]

D 3017 Test Method for Water Content of Soil and Rock in Place by Nuclear Methods (Shallow Depth)[2]

3. Significance and Use

3.1 Field in-place CBR tests are used for evaluation and design of flexible pavement components such as base and subbase course and subgrades and for other applications (such as unsurfaced roads) for which CBR is the desired strength parameter. If the field CBR is to be used directly for evaluation or design without consideration for variation due to change in water content, the test should be conducted under one of the following conditions: (*a*) when the degree of saturation (percentage of voids filled with water) is 80 % or greater, (*b*) when the material is coarse grained and cohesionless so that it is not significantly affected by changes in water content, or (*c*) when the soil has not been modified by construction activities during the two years preceding the test. In the last-named case, the water content does not actually become constant, but generally fluctuates within a rather narrow range. Therefore, the field in-place test data may be used to satisfactorily indicate the average load-carrying capacity.

3.2 Any construction activities, such as grading or compacting, carried out subsequent to the bearing ratio test will probably invalidate the results of the test.

NOTE 1—Field in-place tests are used to determine the relative strength of soils, subbase, and some base materials in the condition at which they exist at the time of testing. Such results have direct application in test section work and in some expedient construction, military, or similar operations. Also, as indicated in 3.1, field in-place tests can be used for design under conditions of nominal stability of water, density, and general characteristics of the material tested. However, any significant treating, disturbing, handling, compaction, or water change can affect the soil strength and make the prior to test determination inapplicable, leading to the need for retest and reanalysis.

4. Apparatus

4.1 *Mechanical Screw Jack*—A manually operated mechanical screw jack equipped with a special swivel head for applying the load to the penetration piston, and designed with the following specifications:

4.1.1 Minimum capacity of 5950 lb (2700 kg),

4.1.2 Minimum lift of 2 in. (50 mm),

4.1.3 Detachable handle, 6-in. (150-mm) radius,

4.1.4 High-gear ratio, approximately 2.4 revolutions per 0.04 in. (1 mm) of penetration,

4.1.5 Medium-gear ratio, approximately 5 revolutions per 0.04 in. (1 mm) of penetration, and

4.1.6 Low-gear ratio, approximately 14 revolutions per 0.04 in. (1 mm) of penetration.

4.1.7 Other gear ratios may be used as desired if it is found to be more convenient to do so.

4.1.8 Other mechanical jacks with the same maximum load and lift may be utilized, provided that a uniform load-penetration rate of 0.05 in. (1.3 mm)/min can be achieved.

[1] This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D-18 on Soil and Rock and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D18.10 on Bearing Tests of Soils in Place.

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[2] *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 04.08.