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Metallic materials — Rockwell hardness test —

Part 3: Calibration of reference blocks

Matériaux métalliques — Essai de dureté Rockwell —

Partie 3: Étalonnage des blocs de référence

Reference number
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Foreword

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The committee responsible for this document is ISO/TC 164, *Mechanical testing of metals*, Subcommittee SC 3, *Hardness testing*.

This third edition cancels and replaces the second edition (ISO 6508-3:2005), which has been technically revised.

ISO 6508 consists of the following parts, under the general title *Metallic materials — Rockwell hardness test*:

— *Part 1: Test method*

— *Part 2: Verification and calibration of testing machines and indenters*

— *Part 3: Calibration of reference blocks*

Metallic materials — Rockwell hardness test —

Part 3: Calibration of reference blocks

1 Scope

This part of ISO 6508 specifies a method for the calibration of reference blocks to be used for the indirect and daily verification of Rockwell hardness testing machines, as specified in ISO 6508-2:2015.

Attention is drawn to the fact that the use of hard metal for ball indenters is considered to be the standard type of Rockwell indenter ball. Steel indenter balls can be used only when complying with ISO 6508-1:2015, Annex A.

2 Normative references

The following documents, in whole or in part, are normatively referenced in this document and are indispensable for its application. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 376, *Metallic materials — Calibration of force-proving instruments used for the verification of uniaxial testing machines*

ISO 6508-1:2015, *Metallic materials — Rockwell hardness test — Part 1: Test method*

ISO 6508-2:2015, *Metallic materials — Rockwell hardness test — Part 2: Verification and calibration of testing machines and indenters*

3 Manufacture of reference blocks

3.1 The block shall be specially manufactured for use as a hardness-reference block.

NOTE Attention is drawn to the need to use a manufacturing process, which will give the necessary homogeneity, stability of structure, and uniformity of surface hardness.

3.2 Each hardness reference block shall be of a thickness not less than 6 mm. To minimize the effect of hardness change with increasing number of indents, thicker blocks should be used.

3.3 The reference blocks shall be free of magnetism. It is recommended that the manufacturer ensure that the blocks, if made of steel, have been demagnetized at the end of the manufacturing process (before calibration).

3.4 The deviation from surface flatness of the top and bottom surfaces shall be ≤0,01 mm. The bottom of the blocks shall not be convex. The deviation from parallelism of the top and bottom surfaces shall be ≤0,02 mm per 50 mm.

3.5 The test surface and lower surface shall be free from damage, such as notches, scratches, oxide layers, etc., which can interfere with the measurement of the indentations. The surface roughness, *Ra*, shall not exceed 0,000 3 mm for the test surface and 0,000 8 mm for the bottom surface. Sampling length is l = 0,8 mm (see ISO 4287:1997, 3.1.9).

3.6 To verify that no material is subsequently removed from the reference block, the thickness at the time of calibration shall be marked on it, to the nearest 0,1 mm, or an identifying mark shall be made on the test surface [see 8.1 e)].

4 Calibration machine and calibration indenter

4.1 General

4.1.1 Calibrations and verifications of Rockwell calibration machines and calibration indenters shall be carried out at a temperature of (23 ± 5) °C.

4.1.2 The instruments used for calibration shall be traceable to national standards.

4.2 Calibration machine

4.2.1 In addition to fulfilling the general conditions specified in ISO 6508-2:2015, Clause 3, the calibration machine shall also meet the requirements given in 4.2.2, 4.2.3, 4.2.4, 4.2.5, and 4.2.6.

4.2.2 The machine shall be directly verified in intervals not exceeding 12 months. Direct verification involves calibration and verification of the following:

a) test force;

b) measuring system;

c) testing cycle; if this is not possible, at least the force versus time behaviour.

4.2.3 The test force shall be measured by means of an elastic proving device (according to ISO 376) class 0,5 or better and calibrated for reversibility, or by another method having the same or better accuracy.

Evidence should be available to demonstrate that the output of the force-proving device does not vary by more than 0,1 % in a period of 1 s to 30 s, following a stepped change in force.

4.2.4 Each test force shall be measured and shall agree with the nominal preliminary test force, F_0, to within ±0,2 % and the nominal total test force, F, to within ±0,1 %.

4.2.5 The measuring system shall have a resolution of ±0,000 1 mm and a maximum expanded uncertainty of 0,000 2 mm, when calculated with a confidence level of 95 % over its working range.

4.2.6 The testing cycle shall be timed with an uncertainty less than ±0,5 s and shall conform to the testing cycle of Clause 5.

4.3 Calibration diamond indenter

4.3.1 The geometric shape and performance of calibration diamond indenters shall be calibrated as defined below. Direct verification of the geometric shape shall be made before first use and at a frequency of no greater than five years. Verification of the indenter performance, as specified in 4.3.3, shall be made before first use and at a frequency of no greater than 12 months.

4.3.2 The diamond indenter shall be measured on at least eight unique axial section planes equidistant from each other (e.g. the eight cross-sections will be spaced approximately 22,5° apart at 0°, 22,5°, 45°, 67,5°, 90°, 112,5°, 135°, 157,5°), and shall meet the following requirements:

a) The cone angle shall be measured adjacent to the blend. The diamond cone shall have a mean included angle of (120 ± 0,1)°. In each measured axial section, the included angle shall be (120 ± 0,17)°.

b) The mean deviation from straightness of the generatrix of the diamond cone adjacent to the blend shall not exceed 0,000 5 mm over a minimum length of 0,4 mm. In each measured section, the deviation shall not exceed 0,000 7 mm.

c) The radius of the spherical tip of the diamond shall be measured adjacent to the blend. The tip shall have a mean radius of (0,200 ± 0,005) mm. In each measured section, the radius shall be within (0,200 ± 0,007) mm and local deviations from a true radius shall not exceed 0,002 mm.

NOTE The tip of the diamond indenter is usually not truly spherical, but often varies in radius across its surface. Depending on the crystallographic orientation of the diamond stone with respect to the indenter axis, diamond tends to preferentially polish away more easily or with more difficulty at the tip, producing an increasingly flat or sharp surface in the central indenter axis region. The sphericity of the diamond tip can be better evaluated by measuring multiple measurement windows of varying width. The measurement window would be bounded by widths measured along a line normal to the indenter axis. For example, the following window sizes can be evaluated:

— between ±80 μm from the indenter axis;

— between ±60 μm from the indenter axis;

— between ±40 μm from the indenter axis.

d) The surfaces of the cone and the spherical tip shall blend in a smooth tangential manner. The location where the spherical tip and the cone of the diamond blend together will vary depending on the values of the tip radius and cone angle. Ideally for a perfect indenter geometry, the blend point is located at 100 μm from the indenter axis measured along a line normal to the indenter axis. To avoid including the blend area in the measurement of the tip radius and cone angle, the portion of the diamond surface between 90 μm and 110 μm should be ignored.

e) The inclination of the axis of the diamond cone to the axis of the indenter holder (normal to the seating surface) shall be within 0,3°.

4.3.3 Calibration diamond indenters shall be performance verified by performing comparison tests with reference diamond indenter(s) that meet the requirements of Annex C. Calibration diamond indenters can be verified for use on either regular or superficial Rockwell diamond scales or both. The test blocks used for the comparison testing shall meet the requirements of Clause 3 and be calibrated at the hardness levels given in Table 1, Table 2, Table 3, or Table 4, depending on the scales for which the indenter is verified. The testing shall be carried out in accordance with ISO 6508-1:2015.

NOTE The alternate hardness levels given in Table 2 are provided to accommodate indenters calibrated to other International Standards. It is believed that calibrations conducted to Table 1 or Table 2 will yield equivalent results.

For each block, the mean hardness value of three indentations made using the calibration diamond indenter to be verified shall not differ from the mean hardness value of three indentations obtained with a reference diamond indenter by more than ±0,4 Rockwell units. The indentations made with the calibration diamond indenter to be verified and with the reference diamond indenter should be adjacent.

Table 1 — Hardness levels for indenters to be used for calibrating Rockwell regular and superficial scale test blocks (A, C, D, and N)

Scale	Nominal hardness	Ranges
HRC	23	20 to 26
HRC	55	52 to 58
HR45N	43	40 to 46
HR15N	91	88 to 94

Table 2 — Alternate hardness levels for indenters to be used for calibrating Rockwell regular and superficial scale test blocks (A, C, D, and N)

Scale	Nominal hardness	Ranges
HRC	25	22 to 28
HRC	63	60 to 65
HR30N	64	60 to 69
HR15N	91	88 to 94

Table 3 — Hardness levels for indenters to be used for calibrating Rockwell regular scale test blocks only (A, C, and D)

Scale	Nominal hardness	Ranges
HRC	25	22 to 28
HRC	45	42 to 50
HRC	63	60 to 65
HRA	81	78 to 84

Table 4 — Hardness levels for indenters to be used for calibrating Rockwell superficial scale test blocks only (N)

Scale	Nominal hardness	Ranges
HR15N	91	88 to 94
HR30N	64	60 to 69
HR30N	46	42 to 50
HR45N	25	22 to 29

4.4 Calibration ball indenter

4.4.1 The calibration tungsten carbide composite ball shall be replaced at a frequency no greater than 12 months.

4.4.2 Calibration tungsten carbide composite balls shall meet the requirements of ISO 6508-2:2015, with the exception of the following tolerances for the ball diameter:

— ±0,002 mm for the ball of diameter 1,587 5 mm;

— ±0,003 mm for the ball of diameter 3,175 mm.

5 Calibration procedure

5.1 The reference blocks shall be calibrated in a calibration machine as described in Clause 4, at a temperature of (23 ± 5) °C, using the general procedure described in ISO 6508-1:2015.

During calibration, the thermal drift should not exceed 1 °C.

5.2 The velocity of the indenter, when it comes into contact with the surface, shall not exceed 1 mm/s.

The velocity of the indenter, when it comes into contact with the surface, should not exceed 0,3 mm/s for undamped systems.

5.3 Bring the indenter into contact with the test surface and apply the preliminary test force, F_0, without shock or vibration and without oscillation or overload of the test force. The application time, T_a, of the preliminary test force, F_0, shall not exceed 2 s.

The duration, T_p, of the preliminary test force, F_0, shall be equal to (3 ± 1) s, as shown in Formula (1):

$$T_p = T_a/2 + T_{pm} = (3 \pm 1)\,\mathrm{s} \tag{1}$$

where

T_p is the preliminary test force time;

T_a is the application time of preliminary test force;

T_{pm} is the duration time of preliminary test force prior to measuring the initial indentation depth.

For testing machines that apply the preliminary test force in less than 1 s (T_a), T_p can be calculated as being equal to T_{pm}.

5.4 Bring the measuring system to its datum position, and without shock, vibration, oscillation, or overload, apply the additional test force, F_1.

For the regular Rockwell scale tests, apply the additional test force, F_1, in 7^{+1}_{-6} s. For all HRN and HRTW Rockwell superficial test scales, apply the additional test force, F_1, in less than or equal to 4 s. During the final stage of the indentation process (approximately in the range of 0,8 F to 0,99 F), the indentation speed should be in the range of 0,015 mm/s to 0,04 mm/s.

5.5 The duration of the application of the total force, F, shall be equal to (5 ± 1) s.

5.6 The final reading shall be made (4 ± 1) s after removing the additional test force, F, and returning to the preliminary test force, F_0.

6 Number of indentations

On each reference block, at least five indentations shall be made, uniformly distributed over the test surface. The arithmetic mean of the hardness values characterizes the hardness value of the block.

To reduce the measurement uncertainty, more than five indentations should be made.

7 Uniformity of hardness

7.1 For each reference block, let H_1, H_2, H_3, H_4, ... H_n be the values of the measured hardness, arranged in increasing order of magnitude.

The mean hardness value of all the indentations is defined according to Formula (2):

$$\overline{H} = \frac{H_1 + H_2 + H_3 + H_4 + \ldots + H_n}{n} \tag{2}$$

where

$H_1, H_2, H_3, H_4, \ldots H_n$ are the hardness values corresponding to all the indentations arranged in increasing order of magnitude;

n is the total number of indentations.

The non-uniformity, R, of the block in Rockwell units, under the particular conditions of calibration, is characterized by Formula (3):

$$R = H_n - H_1 \quad (3)$$

7.2 The maximum permissible value of non-uniformity, R, of a reference block in Rockwell units is given in Table 5 and is graphically presented in Figure A.1 and Figure A.2.

Table 5 — Maximum permissible value of non-uniformity

Rockwell hardness scale	Maximum permissible value of non-uniformity, R [a]
A	0,015 (100 - $\bar{H}$) or 0,4 HRA Rockwell units
B	0,020 (130 - $\bar{H}$) or 1,0 HRBW Rockwell units
C	0,010 (100 - $\bar{H}$) or 0,4 HRC Rockwell units
D	0,010 (100 - $\bar{H}$) or 0,4 HRD Rockwell units
E	0,020 (130 - $\bar{H}$) or 1,0 HREW Rockwell units
F	0,020 (130 - $\bar{H}$) or 1,0 HRFW Rockwell units
G	0,020 (130 - $\bar{H}$) or 1,0 HRGW Rockwell units
H	0,020 (130 - $\bar{H}$) or 1,0 HRHW Rockwell units
K	0,020 (130 - $\bar{H}$) or 1,0 HRKW Rockwell units
15N, 30N, 45N	0,020 (100 - $\bar{H}$) or 0,6 HR-N Rockwell units
15T, 30T, 45T	0,030 (100 - $\bar{H}$) or 1,2 HR-TW Rockwell units

[a] The greater of the two values shall apply.

7.3 The uncertainty of measurement of the hardness reference blocks shall be calculated. An example method is given in Annex B.

8 Marking

8.1 Each reference block shall be marked with the following:

a) arithmetic mean of the hardness values found in the calibration test. For example, 66,3 HRC;

b) name or mark of the supplier or manufacturer;

c) serial number;

d) name or mark of the calibration agency;

e) thickness of the block, or an identifying mark on the test surface (see 3.6);

f) year of calibration, if not indicated in the serial number.

8.2 Any mark put on the side of the block shall be upright when the test surface is the upper face.

9 Calibration certificate

9.1 Each delivered reference block shall be accompanied with a document giving at least the following information:

a) reference to this part of ISO 6508 (i.e. ISO 6508-3);

b) identity of the block;

c) date of calibration;

d) individual calibration results;

e) arithmetic mean of the hardness values;

f) value characterizing the non-uniformity of the block (see 7.1);

g) statement of uncertainty.

10 Validity

The hardness reference block is only valid for the scale for which it was calibrated.

The calibration validity should be limited to a duration of five years. Attention is drawn to the fact that, for Al-alloys and Cu-alloys, the calibration validity could be reduced to two years to three years.

The calibration result is only valid for the reference block at the time of calibration. The hardness of the block can be changed by repeated test on the block and attention must be drawn to the fact that it might not be negligible when the number of indentation is large.