
**Plastics — Quantitative evaluation of
scratch-induced damage and scratch
visibility**

*Plastiques — Évaluation quantitative des dommages induits par
rayure et visibilité des rayures*

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Published in Switzerland

Contents

	Page
Foreword.....	iv
1 Scope	1
2 Normative references	1
3 Terms and definitions	1
4 Principle	3
5 Apparatus	3
5.1 General description.....	3
5.2 Scratch tip.....	3
5.3 Load and position sensors.....	4
5.4 Test load.....	4
5.5 Test speed.....	4
5.6 Specimen stage.....	4
6 Test specimens	5
6.1 General.....	5
6.2 Shape and dimensions.....	5
6.3 Preparation.....	5
6.4 Conditioning.....	5
6.5 Number of test specimens.....	5
7 Procedure	5
7.1 Test atmosphere.....	5
7.2 Scratch tip.....	5
7.3 Method A (constant load condition).....	5
7.4 Method B (linearly increasing load condition).....	6
7.5 Scratch testing.....	6
8 Interpretation of result	7
8.1 General.....	7
8.2 Scratch strength and scratch resistance.....	7
8.3 Single-damage (SD).....	7
8.4 Multiple-damage (MD).....	8
9 Test report	10
Annex A (informative) 3-D colour model	12
Annex B (informative) Example for quantitative determination of scratch damage and scratch visibility	13
Bibliography	17

Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see www.iso.org/patents).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation on the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the WTO principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see the following URL: Foreword - Supplementary information

The committee responsible for this document is ISO/TC 61, *Plastics*, Subcommittee SC 2, *Mechanical properties*.

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Plastics — Quantitative evaluation of scratch-induced damage and scratch visibility

1 Scope

This International Standard deals with quantitative evaluation of scratch-induced damage and scratch visibility in polymers.

This International Standard specifies two methods to assess scratch damage and scratch visibility expressed by three colour coordinates of a 3-D colour model.

Method A uses a scratch tip capable of area-contact or line-contact with material surfaces under a constant load condition. It is represented by scratch damage index (SDI).

Method B uses a scratch tip capable of line-contact under a linearly increasing load condition. It is represented by scratch visibility index (SVI).

The methods are suitable for use with coated and uncoated thermoplastic and thermosetting moulding materials.

The methods specify the preferred dimensions of testing specimens and the preferred scratch-tip geometry.

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 291, *Plastics — Standard atmospheres for conditioning and testing*

ISO 294-1, *Plastics — Injection moulding of test specimens of thermoplastic materials — Part 1: General principles, and moulding of multipurpose and bar test specimens*

ISO 294-2, *Plastics — Injection moulding of test specimens of thermoplastic materials — Part 2: Small tensile bars*

ISO 294-3, *Plastics — Injection moulding of test specimens of thermoplastic materials — Part 3: Small plates*

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

ISO 19252, *Plastics — Determination of scratch properties*

ISO 20753, *Plastics — Test specimens*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

3.1

scratch

visual surface damage such as cutting and whitening, which is generated by sliding of the scratch tip over the surface of the test specimen under defined conditions

3.2
normal force

F_n
load applied by the scratch tip in a direction perpendicular to the material surface

Note 1 to entry: It is expressed in newtons.

3.3
tangential force

F_t
load applied by the scratch tip in a horizontal direction on the material surface

Note 1 to entry: It is expressed in newtons.

3.4
scratch path

connected line of scratch damage induced on the material surface by the scratch tip

3.5
whitening

visual damage which is generated on the material surface along the scratch path such as micro-cracking, crazing, voiding, and debonding

3.6
single-damage

SD
simple surface damage which is generated in a single direction on the material surface

3.7
multiple-damage

MD
lattice damages which are generated in two perpendicular, horizontal directions on the material surface

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3.8
scratch force

F_s
resultant force applied to the material surface as the summation of the normal and tangential force vectors

Note 1 to entry: It is expressed in newtons.

3.9
scratch strength

S_s
scratch force per unit contact area of area-contact scratch tip

Note 1 to entry: It is expressed in newtons per square millimetre.

3.10
scratch resistance

R_s
scratch force per unit contact length of line-contact scratch tip

Note 1 to entry: It is expressed in newtons per millimetre.

3.11
degree of scratch damage

ΔD
euclidean distance between the color coordinates of the scratched and unscratched surfaces

3.12**percent difference in luminance** L_{norm}

percent difference between the luminance values of the scratched and unscratched surfaces

3.13**scratch damage index (SDI)** $[\Delta D, S_S \text{ (or } R_S)]$ or $[L_{\text{norm}}, S_S \text{ (or } R_S)]$

set of the relative severity of scratch damage and scratch strength (or scratch resistance) values, which are quantitative values obtained under a constant normal load

3.14**critical intensity value** I_c

threshold intensity value where the onset of scratch visibility occurs

3.15**critical saturation value** S_c

threshold saturation value where the onset of scratch visibility occurs

3.16**scratch visibility index (SVI)** $[I_c, S_c, R_S]$

set of the relative intensity, saturation, and scratch resistance values, which is the onset of scratch visibility obtained under a linearly increasing normal load

4 Principle

This test method provides a quantitative evaluation of scratch damage and visibility on polymer and coated surfaces. Scratching is generated by a scratch tip capable of area-contact or line-contact on the material surface and can be induced under a constant normal load or a linearly increasing load.

The scratch damage index (SDI), the severity of surface damage caused by scratching under a constant normal load condition, is determined by comparing the Euclidean distance or percent difference in the luminance between colour coordinates of the scratched surface and the ones of the unscratched surface. SDI is defined as a set of the degree of scratch damage (or percent difference in luminance) and scratch strength (or scratch resistance) values, as a quantitative determination.

The scratch visibility index (SVI), the onset point of scratch visibility where the surface damage can be perceived by the naked eye, is determined under a linearly increasing load condition and defined as a set of intensity, saturation, which are two of three coordinates in HSI colour model, and scratch resistance value.

5 Apparatus**5.1 General description**

The instrumented scratch machine consists of a load device, position sensor, specimen stage, clamping devices, and scratch tip with a preferred geometry. An environmental chamber can also be added for testing at non-ambient condition. For evaluation after scratching, tools such as optical microscopes, flatbed scanners, profilometer, and colour analysis software are used.

5.2 Scratch tip

The scratch tip shall be made from stainless steel or tungsten carbide having a hardness greater than Rockwell HRC 64 value, as specified by ISO 6508-1, and a roughness less than 0,20 μm , in accordance with ISO 19252.

Two scratch tips with a preferred geometry are used in this method. Type 1 is used to induce an area-contact with the material surface (see [Figure 1](#)). Type 2 is used to induce a line-contact with the material surface (see [Figure 2](#)). It is permissible to use other sizes of the scratch tip but this shall be noted in the report.

Dimensions in millimetres

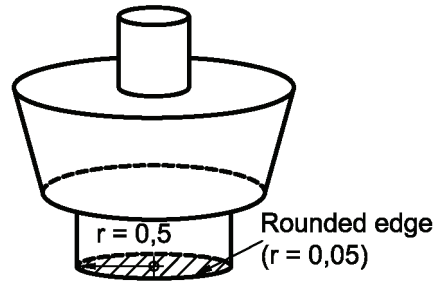


Figure 1 — Schematic of area-contact scratch tip, Type 1

Dimensions in millimetres

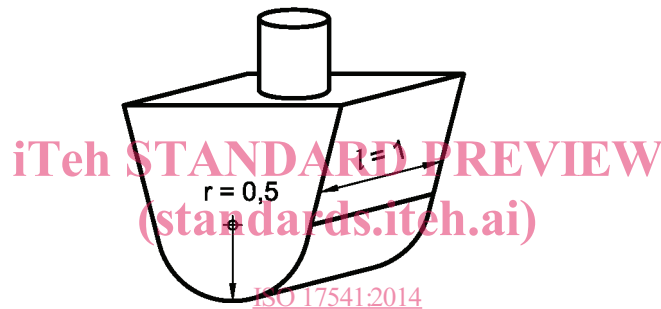


Figure 2 — Schematic of line-contact scratch tip, Type 2

5.3 Load and position sensors

The instrumented scratch machine shall be equipped with devices to monitor the normal force, tangential force, instantaneous scratch depth, and horizontal position. The forces acting on the scratch tip shall be measured with an accuracy of $\pm 1\%$ of actual value. The data acquired for depth and horizontal position of the scratch tip shall have an accuracy of $\pm 10\ \mu\text{m}$ or better.

5.4 Test load

The instrumented scratch machine shall be capable of maintaining the test load within a tolerance of $\pm 1\%$, for any test load chosen as specified in [7.3](#) and [7.4](#), and shall be capable of applying the load perpendicular to the test specimen within a tolerance of $\pm 1^\circ$.

5.5 Test speed

The instrumented scratch machine shall be capable of maintaining the test speed within a tolerance of $\pm 1\%$, except for the first stage and the end stage of 10 mm for the total scratch distance, for any test speed chosen as specified in [7.3](#) and [7.4](#), and shall be capable of reaching the test speed within 10 mm and stopping within 10 mm.

5.6 Specimen stage

The specimen stage shall be flat, smooth, and free of holes in the area where the test specimen will be placed.

6 Test specimens

6.1 General

Test specimens having homogeneous surface in texture, colour, and flatness shall be prepared and tested.

The specimen shall be cleaned to remove any contaminants or residues which can alter surface characteristics. The reagent used for cleaning shall not affect the inherent surface properties of the specimen.

6.2 Shape and dimensions

Bars, plaques, discs, or other specimen types of sufficient size for testing can be used.

For only single-damage tests, standard multipurpose test specimens as specified in ISO 20753 can be used. If the scratch length is taken to be 100 mm, the specimen shall be at least 150 mm in length to provide enough area for clamping.

For both multiple-damage and single-damage tests, injection-moulded test specimens shall be acceptable. It is recommended to use plaques having dimensions of at least 150 mm wide by at least 150 mm long.

6.3 Preparation

Prepare test specimens as required by the relevant moulding materials standard, or, if none exists, following the conditions in ISO 294-1, ISO 294-2, and ISO 294-3, as applicable, and the recommendations of the material supplier.

6.4 Conditioning

The specimens shall be conditioned in one of the standard atmospheres specified in ISO 291 or the appropriate material specification.

6.5 Number of test specimens

At least five specimens shall be tested to assess repeatability for each set of test conditions.

7 Procedure

7.1 Test atmosphere

The atmosphere used for testing shall be the same as that used for conditioning, as specified in accordance with ISO 291 or the appropriate material specification. If scratch tests are to be conducted at temperatures other than the room temperature, an environmental chamber shall be used to maintain the scratch tip and the specimen at the desired temperature. Prior to testing, the scratch tip and specimen shall be conditioned in the environmental chamber for not less than 30 min.

7.2 Scratch tip

Before testing, the scratch tip shall be inspected for damage, deformation, or contamination using a microscope, magnifying glass, or other suitable inspection device.

7.3 Method A (constant load condition)

Choose one of two scratch tips (i.e. area-contact tip, Type 1 or line-contact type tip, Type 2), as specified in [5.2](#).

In order to quantitatively determine the scratch damage, it is recommended that one of the combinations of constant loads and test speeds specified in [Table 1](#) is used over a scratch length of 100 mm. It is permissible to use scratch lengths other than 100 mm but this shall be noted in the report. However, the scratch length shall be at least 50 mm long.

Although the constant loads stated in this standard are 10N, 20N, 30N, 40N, and 50N, it is permissible to use loads other than those shown in the table but this shall be noted in the report.

7.4 Method B (linearly increasing load condition)

Use the line-contact tip, Type 2, as specified in [5.2](#).

In order to quantitatively determine the scratch visibility, it is recommended that one of the combinations of linearly increasing loads and test speeds specified in [Table 2](#) is used over a scratch length of 100 mm. It is permissible to use scratch lengths other than 100 mm but this shall be noted in the report. However, the scratch length shall be at least 50 mm long.

Although the linearly increasing loads stated in this standard are 1-10N, 1-20N, 1-30N, 1-40N, and 1-50N, it is permissible to use loads other than those shown in [Table 2](#) but this shall be noted in the report.

Table 1 — Type of constant load used and test conditions

Type of load	Test load	Test speed
constant load	10N, 20N, 30N, 40N, 50N	1 mm/s, 10 mm/s, 100 mm/s

Table 2 — Type of linearly increasing load used and test conditions

Method	Test load	Test speed
linearly increasing load	1-10N, 1-20N, 1-30N, 1-40N, 1-50N	1 mm/s, 10 mm/s, 100 mm/s

7.5 Scratch testing

7.5.1 Single-damage test

- 7.5.1.1 Securely mount a clean specimen on the specimen stage with lockable clamps.
- 7.5.1.2 Remove any dust and contaminant from the specimen surface.
- 7.5.1.3 Check that the scratch tip is not contaminated or damaged.
- 7.5.1.4 Define the start and end position of scratch path.
- 7.5.1.5 Setup the appropriate test method (A or B) and the necessary parameters (e.g. test speed and test load).
- 7.5.1.6 Apply pre-load of less than 1 N to the start position of the specimen surface.
- 7.5.1.7 Start the scratch process.
- 7.5.1.8 Record the normal load, tangential load, depth of scratch tip, and scratch length.

7.5.2 Multiple-damage test

- 7.5.2.1 Follow [7.5.1](#), using constant loads only, except for the following steps.

7.5.2.2 Make a set of scratches with a total of 15 lines at intervals of 2 mm.

7.5.2.3 Remove the specimen, rotate it 90°, and securely remount it.

7.5.2.4 Make additionally a set of scratches with 15 lines at intervals of 2 mm oriented 90° from the original set of scratches.

8 Interpretation of result

8.1 General

The types of surface damage measured in this International Standard include single-damage in which a scratch is generated in one direction under a constant or a linearly increasing load, and multiple-damage in which two sets of scratches, superimposed in a normal (90°) orientation, are generated under a constant load (see [Figure 3](#)).

8.2 Scratch strength and scratch resistance

During the scratch test, there exist two orthogonal vectors, the applied normal force and the resulting tangential force on a scratched surface. The scratch force, scratch strength, and scratch resistance are calculated using Formula (1) to Formula (3):

$$F_s = F_n + F_t \quad \text{iTeh STANDARD PREVIEW} \quad (1)$$

$$S_s = F_s / A \quad (\text{standards.iteh.ai}) \quad (2)$$

$$R_s = F_s / l \quad \begin{array}{l} \text{ISO 17541:2014} \\ \text{https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/sist/3c12e0db-fccd-460c-bb2b-} \\ \text{dab3521f7a7f/iso-17541-2014} \end{array} \quad (3)$$

where

A is the contact area of area-contact scratch tip;

l is the length of line-contact scratch tip.

8.3 Single-damage (SD)

8.3.1 Digital image processing

A digitized image of the scratch-induced damage can be obtained using a flatbed scanner, with a resolution of 600 × 600 dpi or higher and 24-bit colour mode for the quantification of scratch damages. For colour calibration of flatbed scanner, a spectrophotometer shall be used with a calibration chart and software, and then the new scanner profile obtained shall be assigned to a scanning software prior to scanning.

The resulting digital image is analysed using a colour analysis software, capable of determining colour coordinates using three-dimensional colour space (e.g. HSI model).

Colour analysis software is used to quantify the scratch damage. In order to increase the reliability of experimental data and to exclude the unusual data on the edge region, a 3-tuple of colour coordinates within a 90 % region of a scratch width may be represented (see [Figure 3](#)).

Representative colour coordinates for each column of pixels along the scratch path are calculated as averages of the corresponding pixel values in that column. Overall average and standard deviation