



Standard Test Method for Pilling Resistance and Other Related Surface Changes of Textile Fabrics: Martindale Tester¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This test method covers the determination of the resistance to the formation of pills and other related surface changes on textile fabrics using the Martindale tester. The procedure generally is applicable to all types of fabrics, being particularly suitable for woven fabrics.

NOTE 1—For other methods, if testing the pilling resistance of textiles, refer to Test Methods D 3511, D 3512, and D 3514.

1.2 This test method is not suitable for fabrics thicker than 3 mm (0.125 in.) because such fabrics cannot be mounted in the specimen holder.

1.3 The fabric may be laundered or dry cleaned before testing.

1.4 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as the standard. The values given in parentheses are provided for information only.

1.5 *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:

D 123 Terminology Relating to Textiles²

D 1776 Practice for Conditioning Textiles for Testing²

D 3511 Test Method for Pilling Resistance and Other Related Surface Changes of Textile Fabrics: Brush Pilling Tester³

D 3512 Test Method for Pilling Resistance and Other Related Surface Changes of Textile Fabrics: Random Tumble Pilling Tester Method³

D 3514 Test Method for Resistance of Apparel Fabrics to Pilling (Elastomeric Pad Method)³

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—For definitions of other textile terms used

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² *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 07.01.

³ Discontinued 1995, *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 07.02.

in this test method, refer to Terminology D 123.

3.2 Description of Terms Specific to This Standard:

3.2.1 *cycle, n*—in the Martindale tester, the sixteen movements required to complete one Lissajous figure.

3.2.2 *fuzz, n*—tangled fiber ends that protrude from the surface of a yarn or fabric.

3.2.3 *movement, n*—one rotation of the outer gearing of the Martindale tester.

3.2.4 *pilling resistance, n*—resistance to formation of pills on the surface of a textile fabric.

3.2.5 *pills, n*—bunches or balls of tangled fibers, which are held to the surface of a fabric by one or more fibers.

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 Pilling and other changes in the surface appearance, such as fuzzing, that occur in normal wear are simulated on a laboratory testing machine. Fabrics are mounted on the Martindale Tester, and the face of the test specimen is rubbed against the face of the same mounted fabric in the form of a geometric figure, that is, a straight line, which becomes a gradually widening ellipse, until it forms another straight line in the opposite direction and traces the same figure again under light pressure for a specific number of movements. The degree of fabric pilling or surface appearance change produced by this action is evaluated by comparison of the tested specimen with visual standards that may be actual fabrics, or photographs of fabrics, showing a range of pilling resistance. The observed resistance to pilling is reported using an arbitrary rating scale.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 *Acceptance Testing*—This test method for resistance to pilling for fabrics is not recommended for acceptance testing. If it is used for acceptance testing, it should be used with caution because interlaboratory data are not available. In some cases the purchaser or supplier may have to test a commercial shipment of one or more specific materials by the best available method even though the method has not been recommended for acceptance testing. Although this test method is not recommended for acceptance testing, it is useful because it is used widely outside the United States.

5.2 If there is a disagreement arising from differences in values reported by the purchaser and the supplier when using this test method, the statistical bias, if any, between the laboratory of the purchaser and the laboratory of the supplier



FIG. 2 Apparatus for Fabric Evaluation



FIG. 1 Martindale Abrasion Tester

should be determined with comparison being based on testing specimens randomly drawn from one sample of material of the type being evaluated. Competent statistical assistance is recommended for the investigation of bias. A minimum of two parties should take a group of test specimens, which are as homogeneous as possible and which are from a lot of material of the type in question. The test specimens then should be assigned randomly in equal numbers to each laboratory for testing. The average test results from the two laboratories should be compared using an acceptable statistical protocol and probability level chosen by the two parties before the testing is started. Appropriate statistical disciplines for comparing data must be used when the purchaser and supplier cannot agree. If a bias is found, either its cause must be found and corrected, or the purchaser and the supplier must agree to interpret future results with consideration for the known bias.

5.3 The pilling of textile fabrics is a very complex property because it is affected by many factors that include: type of fiber or blends, fiber dimensions, yarn and fabric construction, and

fabric finishing treatments. The pilling resistance of a specific fabric in actual wear varies more with general conditions of use and individual wearers than in replicate fabric specimens subjected to controlled laboratory tests. This experience should be borne in mind when adopting levels of acceptability for a series of standards.

5.4 Finishes and fabric surface changes may exert a large effect on pilling. It is recommended that fabrics be tested after laundering or drycleaning, or both. Testing before refurbishing also may be advisable. Prior agreement between interested parties should determine the state of the test.

5.5 Pills vary appreciably in size and appearance and depend on the presence of lint and degree of color contrast. These factors are not evaluated when pilling is rated solely on the number of pills. The development of pills may be accompanied by other surface phenomena, such as loss of cover, color change, or the development of fuzz. Since the overall acceptability of a specific fabric is dependent on both the characteristics of the pills and the other factors affecting the surface appearance, it is suggested that fabrics tested in the laboratory be evaluated subjectively with regard to their acceptability and not rated solely on the number of pills developed. A series of standards, based on graduated degrees of surface change of the fabric type being tested, may be set up to provide a basis for subjective ratings. The visual standards are most advantageous when the laboratory test specimens correlate closely in appearance with worn fabrics and show a similar ratio of pills to fuzz. Counting the pills and weighing their number with respect to their size and contrast, as a combined measure of pilling resistance, is not recommended because of the excessive time required for counting, sizing, and calculation.

5.6 The degree of fabric pilling is evaluated by comparing the tested specimens with visual standards, which may be actual fabrics or photographs of fabrics, showing a range of pilling resistance. The observed resistance to pilling is reported on an arbitrary scale ranging from 5 to 1 (no pilling to very severe pilling).

5.7 This test method is applicable to a wide variety of woven and knitted fabrics that vary in pilling propensity as a result of variations in fiber, yarn and fabric structure, and finish. The applicability of this test method to nonwoven fabrics has not been determined.

6. Apparatus and Materials

6.1 *Martindale Tester*⁴ (see Fig. 1).

6.2 *Standard Felt*,⁴ of mass $750 \pm 50 \text{ g/m}^2$ ($22 \pm 1.5 \text{ oz/yd}^2$) and $3 \pm 0.3 \text{ mm}$ ($0.12 \pm 0.01 \text{ in.}$) thick.

6.3 *Apparatus for Fabric Evaluation*⁴ (see Fig. 2)—Facilities for illumination (cool white fluorescent tube) and simultaneous viewing test specimens and fabric or photographic rating standards.

6.4 *Standard In-House Pilling Test Fabric*, having an established pilling resistance rating for checking machine performance. No universal standard fabric is available. Each test facility must decide on an appropriate fabric.

⁴ Available with accessories from Ahiba, 2175 Hawkins St., Charlotte, NC 28203, or from other commercial manufacturers and distributors.