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Standard Guide for Design and Evaluation of Primary Flexible Packaging for Medical Products[1]

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1. Scope

1.1 This guide provides directions for the design and evaluation of primary flexible packages for medical products. The package materials must be selected appropriately for manufacturing process, end use, and the product being packaged.

1.2 This guide provides a compendium of test methods. Specific individual test methods must be selected based on the pertinent characteristics of the specific product to be packaged and the purpose for testing, research and development, or compliance. Not all test methods will be applicable.

1.3 This guide does not address acceptability criteria, which need to be determined jointly by the package producer and the medical products manufacturer.

1.4 This guide does not assess the product to be packaged; the sterilization method to be used; or package performance through sterilization, distribution, and handling.

1.5 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as standard. The values given in parentheses are mathematical conversions to inch-pound units that are provided for information only and are not considered standard.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:* [2]

D 374 Test Methods for Thickness of Solid Electrical Insulation
D 589 Test Method for Opacity of Paper (15 Diffuse Illuminant *A*, 89 % Reflectance Backing and Paper Backing)
D 638 Test Method for Tensile Properties of Plastics
D 645/D 645M Test Method for Thickness of Paper and Paperboard
D 726 Test Method for Resistance of Nonporous Paper to Passage of Air
D 882 Test Method for Tensile Properties of Thin Plastic Sheeting
D 1003 Test Method for Haze and Luminous Transmittance of Transparent Plastics
D 1434 Test Method for Determining Gas Permeability Characteristics of Plastic Film and Sheeting
D 1709 Test Methods for Impact Resistance of Plastic Film by the Free-Falling Dart Method
D 1777 Test Method for Thickness of Textile Materials
D 1894 Test Method for Static and Kinetic Coefficients of Friction of Plastic Film and Sheeting
D 1922 Test Method for Propagation Tear Resistance of Plastic Film and Thin Sheeting by Pendulum Method
D 1938 Test Method for Tear-Propagation Resistance (Trouser Tear) of Plastic Film and Thin Sheeting by a Single-Tear Method
D 2019 Test Method for Dirt in Paper and Paperboard
D 2457 Test Method for Specular Gloss of Plastic Films and Solid Plastics
D 3078 Test Method for Determination of Leaks in Flexible Packaging by Bubble Emission
D 3079 Test Method for Water Vapor Transmission of Flexible Heat-Sealed Packages for Dry Products
D 3335 Test Method for Low Concentrations of Lead, Cadmium, and Cobalt in Paint by Atomic Absorption Spectroscopy
D 3420 Test Method for Pendulum Impact Resistance of Plastic Film
D 3718 Test Method for Low Concentrations of Chromium in Paint by Atomic Absorption Spectroscopy
D 3776 Test Methods for Mass Per Unit Area (Weight) of Fabric
D 3985 Test Method for Oxygen Gas Transmission Rate Through Plastic Film and Sheeting Using a Coulometric Sensor
D 4279 Test Methods for Water Vapor Transmission of Shipping ContainersConstant and Cycle Methods

[1] This guide is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee F02 on Flexible Barrier Packaging and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee F02.50 on Package Design and Development.

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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.

D 4321 Test Method for Package Yield of Plastic Film
D 4754 Test Method for Two-Sided Liquid Extraction of Plastic Materials Using FDA Migration Cell
D 5264 Practice for Abrasion Resistance of Printed Materials by the Sutherland Rub Tester
E 398 Test Method for Water Vapor Transmission Rate of Sheet Materials Using Dynamic Relative Humidity Measurement
F 17 Terminology Relating to Flexible Barrier Packaging
F 88 Test Method for Seal Strength of Flexible Barrier Materials
F 99 Guide for Writing a Specification for Flexible Barrier Rollstock Materials
F 151 Test Method for Residual Solvents in Flexible Barrier Materials
F 372 Test Method for Water Vapor Transmission Rate of Flexible Barrier Materials Using an Infrared Detection Technique
F 392 Test Method for Flex Durability of Flexible Barrier Materials
F 748 Practice for Selecting Generic Biological Test Methods for Materials and Devices
F 813 Practice for Direct Contact Cell Culture Evaluation of Materials for Medical Devices
F 895 Test Method for Agar Diffusion Cell Culture Screening for Cytotoxicity
F 904 Test Method for Comparison of Bond Strength or Ply Adhesion of Similar Laminates Made from Flexible Materials
F 1140 Test Methods for Internal Pressurization Failure Resistance of Unrestrained Packages
F 1249 Test Method for Water Vapor Transmission Rate Through Plastic Film and Sheeting Using a Modulated Infrared Sensor
F 1306 Test Method for Slow Rate Penetration Resistance of Flexible Barrier Films and Laminates
F 1307 Test Method for Oxygen Transmission Rate Through Dry Packages Using a Coulometric Sensor ~~F1327Terminology Relating to Barrier Materials for Medical Packaging~~
F 1443 Practice for Using 0.008-in. (0.203-mm) Aperture Reflectometers as Test Instruments for Measuring Visual Image Quality of Business Copy Images
F 1608 Test Method for Microbial Ranking of Porous Packaging Materials (Exposure Chamber Method)
F 1884 Test Methods for Determining Residual Solvents in Packaging Materials
F 1886 Test Method for Determining Integrity of Seals for Medical Packaging by Visual Inspection
F 1921 Test Methods for Hot Seal Strength (Hot Tack) of Thermoplastic Polymers and Blends Comprising the Sealing Surfaces of Flexible Webs
F 1927 Test Method for Determination of Oxygen Gas Transmission Rate, Permeability and Permeance at Controlled Relative Humidity Through Barrier Materials Using a Coulometric Detector
F 1929 Test Method for Detecting Seal Leaks in Porous Medical Packaging by Dye Penetration
F 1980 Guide for Accelerated Aging of Sterile Barrier Systems for Medical Devices
F 2029 Practices for Making Heatseals for Determination of Heatsealability of Flexible Webs as Measured by Seal Strength
F 2054 Test Method for Burst Testing of Flexible Package Seals Using Internal Air Pressurization Within Restraining Plates
F 2095 Test Methods for Pressure Decay Leak Test for Flexible Packages With and Without Restraining Plates
F 2096 Test Method for Detecting Gross Leaks in Medical Packaging by Internal Pressurization (Bubble Test)
F 2203 Test Method for Linear Measurement Using Precision Steel Rule
F 2217 Practice for Coating/Adhesive Weight Determination
F 2250 Practice for Evaluation of Chemical Resistance of Printed Inks and Coatings on Flexible Packaging Materials
F 2251 Test Method for Thickness Measurement of Flexible Packaging Material
F 2252 Practice for Evaluating Ink or Coating Adhesion to Flexible Packaging Materials Using Tape
F 2227 Test Method for Non-Destructive Detection of Leaks in Non-sealed and Empty Medical Packaging Trays by CO_2 Tracer Gas Method
F 2228 Test Method for Non-Destructive Detection of Leaks in Medical Packaging Which Incorporates Porous Barrier Material by CO_2 Tracer Gas Method
F 2338 Test Method for Nondestructive Detection of Leaks in Packages by Vacuum Decay Method
F 2391 Test Method for Measuring Package and Seal Integrity Using Helium as the Tracer Gas
F 2475 Guide for Biocompatibility Evaluation of Medical Device Packaging Materials
F 2476 Test Method for the Determination of Carbon Dioxide Gas Transmission Rate (Co $_2$TR) Through Barrier Materials Using An Infrared Detector
F 2559~~Guide for Writing a Specification for Sterilizable Peel Pouches~~ Guide for Writing a Specification for Sterilizable Peel Pouches
F 2638 Test Method for Using Aerosol Filtration for Measuring the Performance of Porous Packaging Materials as a Surrogate Microbial Barrier

2.2 *EN/ISO Standards:*[3]

[3] Available from International Organization for Standardization (ISO), 1 rue de Varembé, Case postale 56, CH-1211, Geneva 20, Switzerland, http://www.iso.ch.

EN 868/1 Annex C Gurley, Schopper, Dye Penetration
ISO 2556 Plastics—Determination of Gas Transmission Rate of Films and Thin Sheets Under Atmospheric Pressure—Manometric Method
~~ISO 5636/5~~ ISO 5636–5 Paper and Board—Determination of Air Permeance (Medium Range)—Part 5: Gurley Method
ISO 11607–1 ~~Annex C~~ Packaging for Terminally Sterilized Medical Devices, Annex C
ISO 15105–1 Plastics—Film and Sheeting—Determination of Gas Transmission Rate—Part 1: Differential-Pressure Method
ISO 15105–2 Plastics—Film and Sheeting—Determination of Gas Transmission Rate—Part 2: Equal-Pressure Method

2.3 *Military Specification:*[4]
Mil Spec 36954C Bacterial Filtration Efficiency

2.4 *TAPPI Standards:*[5]
TAPPI T 404 Tensile Breaking Strength and Elongation of Paper and Paperboard
TAPPI T 437 Dirt in Paper and Paperboard
TAPPI T 460 Air Resistance of Paper (Gurley Method)
TAPPI T 494 Tensile Breaking Properties of Paper and Paperboard (Using Constant Rate of Elongation Apparatus)
TAPPI T 536~~Resistance of Paper to Passage of Air (High Pressure Gurley Method)~~ Resistance of Paper to Passage of Air (High Pressure Gurley Method)
TAPPI T 547 Air Permeance of Paper and Paperboard (Sheffield Method)

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.1.1 *barrier requirements*, *n*—the need to promote or inhibit moisture, gas, or light, or a combination thereof, while maintaining necessary levels of sterility.

3.1.2 *durability requirements*, *n*—material properties relevant to the ability of the package to protect the product.

3.1.3 *integrity and seal requirements*, *n*— the ability of the package to prevent inadvertent escape of contents or entrance of outside substances while preserving intended opening for use features.

3.1.4 *printing requirements*, *n*—the printed ink properties needed to ensure physical and chemical resistance to degradation.

3.1.5 *processing requirements*, *n*—the material characteristics needed to ensure the consistent and reliable production of the package.

3.1.6 *safety requirements*, *n*—safeguard product against contamination and deleterious health effects.

3.1.7 *visibility and appearance requirements*, *n*—the desired package aesthetics needed to permit or inhibit viewing of the product or to enhance product presentation.

3.2 For other terms used in this guide, see Terminology ~~F1327~~F 17.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 This design and evaluation guide describes seven categories for evaluating flexible medical packages and packaging materials. These include safety, barrier properties, durability, package and seal integrity, visibility and appearance, processing, and printing ink properties.

4.2 The intent of this design and evaluation guide is to evaluate all seven categories and select those that are applicable. Once the product has been characterized and the sterilization methodology has been defined, there are numerous sets of requirements for any specific package. This design and evaluation guide provides an avenue for assessing these requirements and choosing test methods for both evaluating the package design and monitoring package compliance.

4.3 Product characterization shall include mass or weight, geometry (length and width, height, and shape) and product composition.

4.4 All seven categories must be considered for applicability.

4.5 The Summary of Test Methods for Medical Packaging Design and Evaluation (Fig. 1) provides a compact graphical presentation of the test methods referenced in this guide.

4.6 *Test Description and Applicability* (see Table 1):

4.6.1 Table 1 lists the test methods commonly used to evaluate flexible medical packaging. The test methods are used in two phases.

4.6.1.1 *Package Design: Characterization of the Materials and Evaluation of the Resultant Package*—This is referred to as "R&D Evaluation" in Table 1. Testing during this phase is characterized by the generation of quantitative data on the performance of the component materials and the package assembly. These test methods are lengthy, making them inappropriate for the manufacturing environment where rapid response is required for process control. Often, they are expensive and require specialized equipment not readily available at a medical packaging or device manufacturing facility.

[4] Available from Standardization Documents Order Desk, Bldg. 4 Section D, 700 Robbins Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19111-5094, Attn: NPOPS.
[5] Available from Technical Association of the Pulp and Paper Industry (TAPPI), 15 Technology Parkway South, Norcross, GA 30092, http://www.tappi.org.

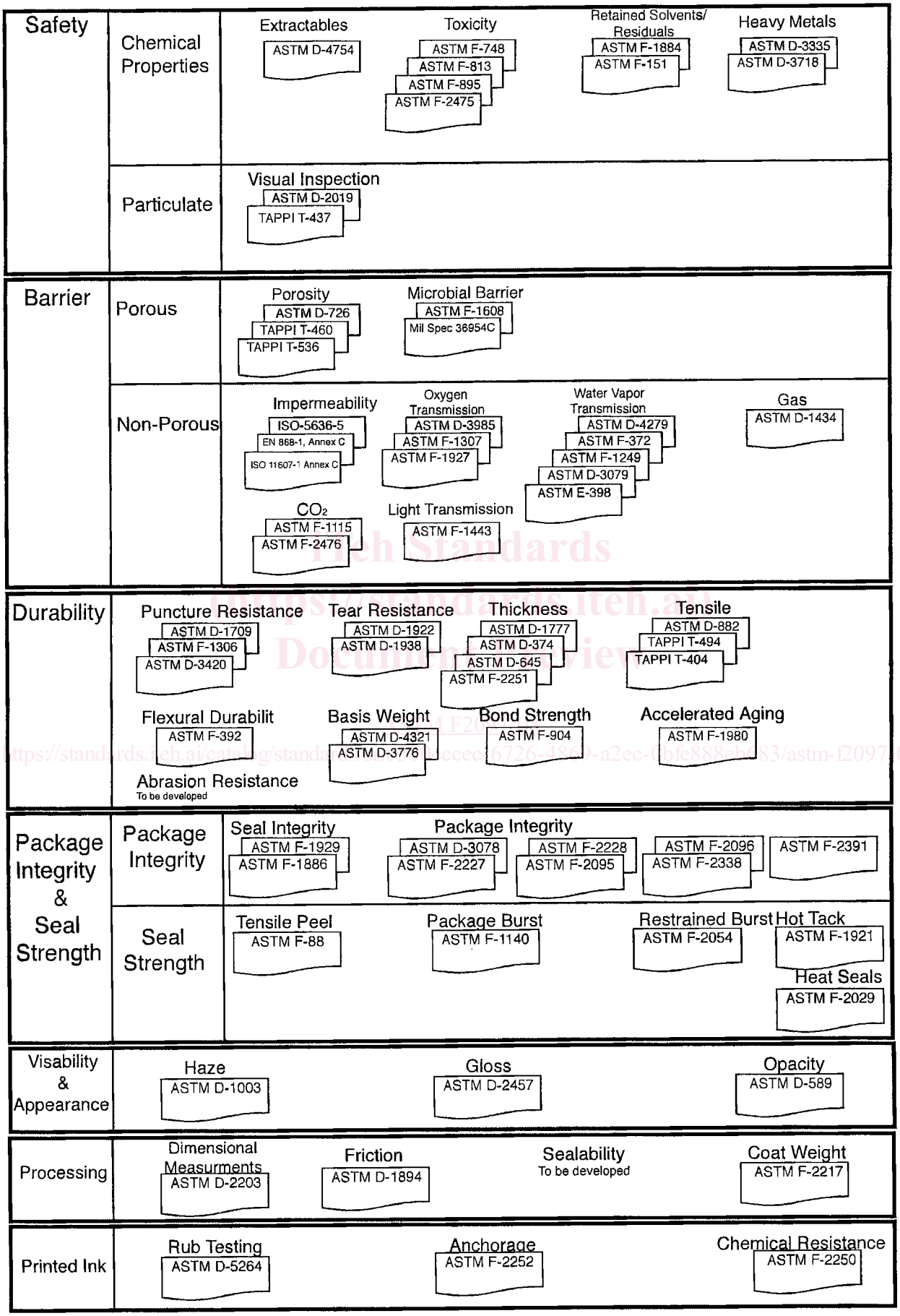

FIG. 1 Summary of Test Methods for Medical Packaging Design and Evaluation

4.6.1.2 *Package Compliance: Routine Monitoring of Adherence to Specifications*—This is referred to as "Compliance Testing" in Table 1. Testing during this phase must be rapid, inexpensive, and readily implemented in a manufacturing environment. The objective is not to develop design data, but to ensure that the design specifications are being met. These test methods do not necessarily make direct measurements of critical values, but detect variations in material, process, or product that are indicative of all critical characteristics.

4.6.2 It is important to note that no individual test method is entirely predictive of final package performance. Filled packages must be evaluated under conditions of use.

4.7 Once the design of the package and/or packaging materials has been determined, it may be appropriate to create a package and/or material specification. Guides F 99 or F 2559 may provide useful guidance.

TABLE 1 Test Description and Applicability Table

Test	Test Method	Description	Applicability
		Safety Requirements	
		Chemical Properties	
Extractibles Usage R&D evaluation	ASTM D 4754	This test method covers the use of the FDA migration cell in the extraction of components and permits quantitation of individual migrants from plastic materials by suitable extracting liquids, including liquid foods and food-stimulating solvents. This test method provides a two-sided, liquid extraction test for plastic materials that can be formed into film, sheet, or disks.	This test method has been applied to a variety of migrant/polymer systems in contact with numerous foods and food simulants. Though most of the migrants examined were radiolabeled, the use of the FDA cell has been validated for migration studies of unlabeled styrene from polystyrene. This test method has been shown to yield reproducible results under the conditions for migration tests requested by the FDA. However, if the data is to be submitted to the FDA, it is suggested that their guidelines by consulted. Because it employs two-sided extraction, this test method may not be suitable for multilayered plastics intended for single-sided food contact use. The size of the FDA migration cell as described may preclude its use in determining total nonvolatile extractives in some cases.
Toxity Usage R&D evaluation	ASTM F 748	This practice recommends generic biological test methods for materials and devices according to end-use applications. Tests include those performed on materials, end products, and extracts. Rationale and comments on current state of the art are included for all test procedures described. Biological evaluation of materials and devices, and related subjects such as pyrogen testing and batch testing of production lots are also discussed.	The biocompatibility of materials used in single-component or multicomponent medical devices for human use depends to a large degree on the particular nature of the end-use application. It is not possible to specify a set of biocompatibility test methods which will be necessary and sufficient to establish biocompatibility for all materials and applications. While chemical testing for extractable additives and residual monomers or residues from processing aids is necessary for most implant materials, such testing is not included as a part of this practice. The reader is cautioned that the area of materials biocompatibility testing is a rapidly evolving field, and improved methods are evolving rapidly, so this practice is by necessity only a guideline. These test protocols are intended to apply to materials and medical devices for human application.
Toxity Usage R&D evaluation	ASTM F 813	This practice describes a reference method of direct contact cell culture testing that may be used in evaluating the cytotoxic potential of materials for use in the construction of medical materials and devices. This practice may be used either directly to evaluate materials or as a reference against which other cytotoxicity test methods may be compared.	This practice tends to be used less frequently due to the risk of inducing a response from mechanical damage due to direct placement of the sample onto the cell layer. This practice may be suitable for products which have leachates that are not able to diffuse through agar and are not too heavy.

TABLE 1 *Continued*

Test	Test Method	Description	Applicability
Toxicity Usage R&D evaluation	ASTM F 895	The agar diffusion assay is an indirect contact test in which the test material is placed onto an agar layer that protects the cells. This test method is commonly used to evaluate the response of small samples that have at least one flat surface such as elastomeric closures.	This is one of a series of reference test methods for the assessment of cytotoxic potential, employing different techniques. Assessment of cytotoxicity is one of several tests employed in determining the biological response to a material, as recommended in Practice F 748. This test method is appropriate for materials in a variety of shapes and for materials that are not necessarily sterile. This test method would be appropriate in situations where the amount of material is limited. For example, small devices or powders could be placed on the agar and the presence of a zone of inhibition of cell growth could be examined. While the agar layer can act as a cushion to protect the cells from the specimen, there may be materials which are sufficiently heavy to compress the agar and prevent diffusion or to cause mechanical damage to the cells. This test method is not appropriate for leachables that are not water soluble because they may not diffuse through agar or agarose and thus not be detected. This test method would not be appropriate for these materials. The L 929 cell line was chosen because it has a significant history of use in assays of this type. This is not intended to imply that its use is preferred; only that the L 929 is an established cell line, well characterized and readily available, that has demonstrated reproducible results in several laboratories.
Toxicity Usage R&D evaluation	ASTM F 2475	This guide provides information to determine the appropriate testing for biocompatibility of packaging materials used to contain a medical device.	This method applies to packaging for medical devices.
Retained solvents Usage R&D evaluation Compliance testing	ASTM F 1884	This test method covers determination of the amount of residual solvents released from within a packaging material contained in a sealed vial under a given set of time and temperature conditions and is a recommended alternative for Test Method F 151. This test method covers a procedure for quantifying volatile compounds whose identity has been established, and are retained in packaging materials.	This test method does not address the determination of total retained solvents in a packaging material. Techniques such as multiple headspace extraction can be employed to this end. For purposes of verifying the identity of or identifying unknown volatile compounds, the analyst is encouraged to incorporate techniques such as gas chromatography/mass spectroscopy, gas chromatography/infrared spectroscopy, or other suitable techniques in conjunction with this test method. This is an off-line head space analysis. It is sensitive to technique and sampling equipment resulting in large variations (~25 %) between laboratories. It is a simplified version of Test Method F 151 providing about the same level of accuracy. This method differs from Test Method F 151 in that it specifies certain conditions. Test Method F 1884, for example, specifies a pre-heat condition of 90°C for 20 min. Test Method F 151 defines a procedure for determining optimum heating time and temperature conditions for the preheat. Because solvents will escape from surface wraps on a roll of film, this test should be performed immediately after manufacturing to provide an indication of solvent levels in the inner wraps of the roll of film.
Retained solvents Usage R&D evaluation Compliance testing	ASTM F 151	This test method provides an index for comparing the level of solvents retained in flexible barrier materials of the same construction, which result from casting, coating, printing, or laminating operations. This test method does not yield absolute quantitative measurements of solvents retained in flexible barrier materials.	This method is essentially identical to Test Method F 1884 except for a complicated determination of the optimum heating time and temperature for the films in the head space container. There is no improvement in the interlaboratory variation. All other comments under Test Method F 1884 apply equally to Test Method F 151.
Heavy metals Usage R&D evaluation	ASTM D 3335	This test method covers the determination of lead contents between 0.01 and 5 %, cadmium contents between 50 and 150 ppm (mg/kg), and cobalt contents between 50 and 2000 ppm (mg/kg) present in the nonvolatile portion of liquid coating or contained in dried films by means of atomic absorption.	Higher levels of all three elements can be determined by this test method, provided that appropriate dilutions and adjustments in specimen size and reagent quantities are made. This test method is not applicable to the determination of lead in samples containing antimony pigments (low recoveries are obtained). If lead is present in the sample to be analyzed in the form of an organic lead compound at a concentration greater than 0.1 %, small losses of lead may occur, resulting in slightly poorer precision.