



Designation: F792 – 08

Standard Practice for Evaluating the Imaging Performance of Security X-Ray Systems¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation F792; 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.

1. Scope

1.1 This practice applies to all X-ray based screening systems, with tunnel apertures up to 1 m wide \times 1 m high, whether it is a conventional X-ray system or an explosives detection system (EDS) that provides a projection or projection/scatter image for an operator to interpret.

1.2 This practice applies to X-ray systems used for the screening for prohibited items such as weapons, explosives, and explosive devices in baggage, packages, cargo, or mail.

1.3 This practice establishes quantitative and qualitative methods for evaluating the systems. This practice does not establish minimum performance requirements for any particular application.

1.4 This practice relies upon the use of a standard test object (ASTM X-ray Test Object) to determine the applicable performance levels of the systems. The specific test object is subsequently described and referred to in this document as the “Test Object.”

1.5 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as standard. No other units of measurement are included in this standard.

1.6 *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

¹ This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee F12 on Security Systems and Equipment and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee F12.60 on Controlled Access Security, Search, and Screening Equipment.

Current edition approved Oct. 1, 2008. Published November 2008. Originally approved in 1982. Last previous edition approved in 2001 as F792 – 01^{ε2}. DOI: 10.1520/F0792-08.

² Examples are Part 21 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1020.40 in the United States and Health & Safety Regulation 1333 in the United Kingdom.

If film safety, defined as $<2.58 \times 10^{-7}$ C/kg (<1 mR) per screening, is of importance, refer to Test Method F1039.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:³

B258 Specification for Nominal Diameters and Cross-Sectional Areas of AWG Sizes of Solid Round Wires Used as Electrical Conductors

E1025 Practice for Design, Manufacture, and Material Grouping Classification of Hole-Type Image Quality Indicators (IQI) Used for Radiology

E1316 Terminology for Nondestructive Examinations

E1647 Practice for Determining Contrast Sensitivity in Radiology

F1039 Test Method for Measurement of Low Level X-Radiation Used in X-Ray Security Screening Systems (Withdrawn 2002)⁴

2.2 ASTM Adjuncts:

30 Autocad Drawings⁵

2.3 Other Documents:

Part 21 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1020.40 Cabinet X-ray Systems (United States)⁶

Health & Safety Regulation 1333 (United Kingdom)

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:

3.1.1 *contrast sensitivity*—a measure of the minimum change in an object that produces a perceptible brightness change in the radiological image on a monitor.

3.1.2 *effective atomic number (Z_{eff})*—the effective atomic number of a chemical compound or mixture of compounds is

³ 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.

⁴ The last approved version of this historical standard is referenced on www.astm.org.

⁵ Available from ASTM International Headquarters. Order Adjunct No. ADJF0792.

⁶ Available from the United States Government Printing Office, 732 North Capitol St. NW, Washington, DC 20401.

the atomic number of a single hypothetical element that would exhibit essentially identical X-ray attenuation characteristics.

3.1.3 *explosive*—a material that can be detonated, that is, undergo a chemical reaction, expand suddenly, and create a shock wave.

3.1.4 *explosive device*—a device containing explosives, a detonator, a timer/switch and an energy source.

3.1.5 *image quality indicator (IQI)*—in industrial radiography, a device or combination of devices whose demonstrated image or images provide visual or quantitative data, or both, to determine radiological quality and sensitivity.

E1316

3.1.6 *IQI sensitivity*—in radiography, the minimum discernible image and the designated hole in the plaque type or the designated wire image in the wire type IQI.

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3.1.7 *organic differentiation*—the ability of an X-ray system to differentiate, on a video monitor, between organic materials of different effective atomic numbers.

3.1.8 *organic/inorganic differentiation*—the ability of an X-ray system to differentiate, on a video monitor organic and inorganic matter.

3.1.9 *radiation chamber*—the X-ray shielded enclosure in which an item is exposed to X-radiation.

3.1.10 *radiation monitor*—an instrument to measure X-radiation.

3.1.11 *scatter block*—a block of soft wood (for example, pine or similar) that measures at least 300 mm by 300 mm by 75 mm, used as X-ray scattering material to create a difficult case when measuring radiation levels.

3.1.12 *simple penetration*—the ability of an X-ray system to penetrate through steel and display, on a video monitor, lead objects that would otherwise be hidden by the steel.

3.1.13 *spatial resolution*—the ability of an X-ray system to display as separate, on a video monitor, high contrast wires separated by a wire diameter (Line Pair Test Pattern; see Terminology **E1316**).

3.1.14 *thin organic imaging*—the ability of an X-ray system to display, on a video monitor, thin organic material.

3.1.15 *useful organic differentiation*—the ability of an X-ray system to penetrate through steel and differentiate on a video monitor between organic materials of different effective atomic number.

3.1.16 *useful penetration*—the ability of an X-ray system to penetrate through aluminum and display, on a video monitor, wires that would otherwise be hidden by the aluminum.

3.1.17 *weapon*—a device intended to do damage to personnel or equipment without harming the attacker, but requiring the attacker to physically activate the device. Examples include gun, knife and hand grenade.

3.1.18 *wire display*—the ability of an X-ray system to display, on a video monitor, metal wires.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 This practice applies to and establishes a method to measure the imaging performance of X-ray systems used for

the screening for prohibited items such as weapons, explosives and explosive devices in baggage, packages, cargo or mail.

4.2 This practice is intended for use by manufacturers to assess performance and by evaluators of security and contraband screening X-ray systems to verify performance.

4.3 This practice is intended to establish whether an X-ray system meets the manufacturer's specification or if the system's performance has deteriorated over time.

4.4 This practice may be used for manufacturing control, specification acceptance, service evaluation or regulatory statutes.

4.5 This practice is intended for use at both the point of manufacture and where the system is operated. The latter includes locations such as security checkpoints of transportation terminals, nuclear power stations, correctional institutions, corporate mailrooms, government offices and other security areas.

4.6 The most significant attributes of this practice are the design of a standard Test Object and standard methods for determining the performance levels of the system.

4.7 In screening objects with X-ray systems video images are the primary inputs provided to operators. The better the quality of these images, the better the potential performance of the operator.

5. Test Object

5.1 The following describes the ASTM X-ray Test Object (**Fig. 1**) to be used throughout the test procedures to determine the applicable performance levels of a system. It was developed to assess an X-ray based screening system's image quality in 9 distinct areas. A Drawings Index for the Test Object is provided in **Table 1**. Copies of the AutoCad drawings listed in **Table 1** are available from ASTM International Headquarters.

5.2 *Test 1—Wire Display*—To determine how well an X-ray system displays wires, the test object incorporates a set of unobstructed wires. The gauge of these wires provides a sufficient range to characterize the system's ability to display wires. These wires are laid out on the test object in a sinusoidal pattern. For details as to the type, quantity and gauge of the wires or regarding the spacing between each wire refer to **Fig. 1**.

5.3 *Test 2—Useful Penetration*—To determine the useful penetration of an X-ray system, the test object incorporates a set of wires placed under aluminum that varies in thickness. The gauge of these wires and the thickness of the aluminum provides sufficient range to characterize the system's Useful Penetration. The wires shall be laid out on the test object, under an aluminum step wedge in a sinusoidal pattern. For details as to the type, quantity, gauge and spacing between the wires or regarding the thickness of the aluminum refer to **Fig. 1**.

5.4 *Test 3—Spatial Resolution*—To determine the spatial resolution of an X-ray system, the test object incorporates a set of narrowly spaced wires. The gauge of these wires and the spacing between them provides sufficient range to characterize

1/2 scale diagram

All wires are un-insulated, tinned, solid copper wires.

All characters are 6 mm tall and made of lead unless otherwise specified. Character spacing = 2 mm min.

All wires in "Test 3" are 20 mm long
 2.05 mm diameter (12 AWG) with 2.0 mm spacing
 1.63 mm diameter (14 AWG) with 1.6 mm spacing
 1.29 mm diameter (16 AWG) with 1.3 mm spacing
 1.02 mm diameter (18 AWG) with 1.0 mm spacing

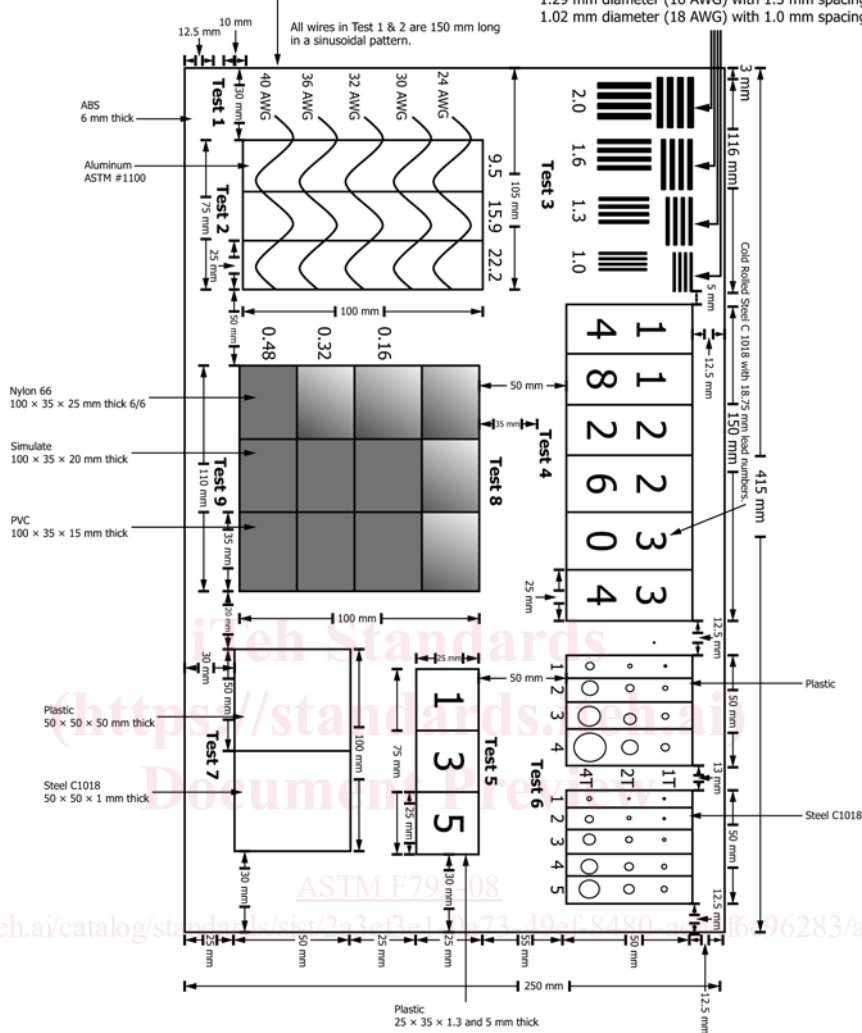


FIG. 1 ASTM X-Ray Test Object Assembly Plan

the system's Spatial Resolution. For details as to the type, quantity, gauge or spacing between the wires refer to Fig. 1.

5.5 Test 4—Simple Penetration—To determine the simple penetration of an X-ray system, the test object incorporates lead digits placed on top of steel that varies in thickness. The thickness of the steel provides sufficient range to characterize the system's Simple Penetration. For further details regarding the test object refer to Fig. 1.

5.6 Test 5—Thin Organic Imaging—To determine the thin organic imaging capability of an X-ray system, the test object incorporates plastic of various thicknesses. The thickness of the plastic provides sufficient range to characterize the system's ability to image thin organic material. For details regarding the plastic samples refer to Fig. 1.

5.7 Test 6—IQI Sensitivity—To determine the IQI sensitivity of an X-ray system, the test object incorporates a set of

flat-bottom holes drilled into steel and plastic samples that vary in thickness. The diameter of these holes, the depth of these holes, and the thickness of the steel and plastic samples provides sufficient range to characterize the system's IQI Sensitivity. For details as to the diameter and depth of these holes or regarding the thickness of the steel and plastic refer to Fig. 1.

5.8 Test 7—Organic/Inorganic Differentiation—To determine the organic/inorganic differentiation capability of an X-ray system, the test object incorporates a steel and plastic sample. For details regarding the steel and plastic samples refer to Fig. 1.

5.9 Test 8—Organic Differentiation—To determine the organic differentiation capability of an X-ray system, the test object incorporates various samples of plastic. The plastics chosen shall have different effective atomic numbers but