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Standard Test Method for Expansion Index of Soils[1]

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D 4829; 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. ~~Note—Table 1 was editorially updated and the year date was changed on April 18, 2008.~~

1. Scope*

1.1 This test method allows for determination of expansion potential of compacted soils when inundated with distilled water.[2]

1.2 This test method provides a simple yet sensitive method for determination of expansion potential of compacted soils for practical engineering applications using an index parameter.

1.3 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as the standard. The values stated in inch-pound units are approximate.

1.4 All observed and calculated values shall conform to the guidelines for significant digits and rounding established in Practice D 6026.

1.4.1 The method used to specify how data are collected, calculated, or recorded in this standard is not directly related to the accuracy to which the data can be applied in design or other uses, or both. How one applies the results obtained using this standard is beyond its scope.

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:*[3]

D 653 Terminology Relating to Soil, Rock, and Contained Fluids

D 698 Test Methods for Laboratory Compaction Characteristics of Soil Using Standard Effort (12 400 ft-lbf/ft^3(600 kN-m/m^3))

D 854 Test Methods for Specific Gravity of Soil Solids by Water Pycnometer

D 2216 Test Methods for Laboratory Determination of Water (Moisture) Content of Soil and Rock by Mass

D 2435 Test Methods for One-Dimensional Consolidation Properties of Soils Using Incremental Loading

D 3740 Practice for Minimum Requirements for Agencies Engaged in Testing and/or Inspection of Soil and Rock as Used in Engineering Design and Construction

D 3877 Test Methods for One-Dimensional Expansion, Shrinkage, and Uplift Pressure of Soil-Lime Mixtures

D 4753 Guide for Evaluating, Selecting, and Specifying Balances and Standard Masses for Use in Soil, Rock, and Construction Materials Testing

D 6026 Practice for Using Significant Digits in Geotechnical Data

E 11 Specification for Wire Cloth and Sieves for Testing Purposes

E 145 Specification for Gravity-Convection and Forced-Ventilation Ovens

3. Terminology

3.1 For common definitions of other terms used in this Test Method, refer to Terminology D 653.

3.2 *Definitions:*

3.2.1 *scarification*—scratching the surface of a compacted layer to facilitate bonding with the next layer to avoid potential separation between compacted layers.

3.3 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.3.1 *expansion index (EI), n*—1000 times the difference between final and initial height of the specimen divided by the initial height.

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[1] This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D18 on Soil and Rock and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D18.05 on Strength and Compressibility of Soils.

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[2] Refer to Anderson, J. N., and Lade, P. V., "The Expansion Index ~~Test,"~~ Test," *Geotechnical Testing Journal*, Vol 4, No. 2, ASTM, 1981, pp. 58–67.

[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.

***A Summary of Changes section appears at the end of this standard.**

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 A specimen is prepared by compacting a test soil into a metal ring at a degree of saturation of 50 ± 2 %. The specimen and the ring are then placed in a consolidometer. A vertical confining pressure of 6.9 kPa (1 lbf/in.^{2}) is applied to the specimen and the specimen is then inundated with distilled water. The deformation of the specimen is recorded for 24 h or until the rate of deformation becomes less than 0.005 mm/h (0.0002 in./h), whichever occurs first. A minimum recording time of 3 h is required.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 The expansion index, *EI*, provides an indication of swelling potential of a compacted soil.

5.2 The *EI* test is not used to duplicate any particular field conditions such as soil density, water content, loading, in-place soil structure, or soil water chemistry. However, consistent test conditions are used in preparation of compacted specimens such that direct correlation of data can be made between organizations.

NOTE 1—Qualitative classification of potential expansion in a soil based on *EI* is provided in Table 1.

NOTE 2—Notwithstanding the statements on precision and bias contained in this test method: The precision of this test method is dependent on the competence of the personnel performing it and the suitability of the equipment and facilities used. Agencies which meet the criteria of Practice D 3740 are generally considered capable of competent testing. Users of this test method are cautioned that compliance with Practice D 3740 does not ensure reliable testing. Reliable testing depends on several factors; Practice D 3740 provides a means of evaluating some of those factors.

6. Apparatus

6.1 *Mold*—The mold shall be cylindrical in shape, made of metal, and shall have the capacity and dimensions indicated in Fig. 1. The mold shall have a detachable collar inscribed with a mark 50.8 mm (2.00 in.) above the base. The lower section of the mold is designed to retain a removable stainless steel ring 25.4 mm (1 in.) in height, 101.9 mm (4.01 in.) in internal diameter, and not less than 3.10 mm (0.120 in.) in wall thickness.

6.2 *Rammer*—A metal rammer with a circular face with a diameter of 50.8 mm (2.00 in.) and a mass of 2.5 kg (5.5 lbm) shall be used. The rammer shall be equipped with a suitable arrangement to control height of drop to a free fall of 304.8 mm ± 1.3mm (12 in. ± 0.05 in.) over the top of the soil to be compacted. See Test Methods D 698 for further specification of a suitable rammer.

6.3 *Balance*—A balance of at least 1000 g capacity meeting the requirements of Guide D 4753, Class GP2.

6.4 *Drying Oven*—A thermostatically controlled drying oven (specified in Specification E 145) capable of maintaining a temperature of 110 ± 5°C (230 ± 9°F) for drying water content samples.

6.5 *Straight Edge*—Steel straight edge at least 150 mm (6 in.) in length with one beveled edge.

6.6 *Sieves*—A 4.75-mm (No. 4) sieve conforming to the requirements of Specification E 11.

6.7 *Mixing Tools*—Miscellaneous tools such as mixing pans, spoons, trowels, spatula, a suitable mechanical device, and so forth for thoroughly mixing the sample of soil with water.

6.8 *Loading Device*—A consolidometer or equivalent loading device as described in Test Methods D 2435 for supporting and submerging the specimen, for applying a vertical load, and for measuring the change in height of the specimen. The consolidometer ring must be as specified in 6.1.

6.9 *Porous Disks*—The disks shall be smooth ground and fine enough (Note 3) to minimize intrusion of soil into the disks. The disk shall reduce false displacements caused by seating of the specimen against the surface of the disk. Such displacements are significant, especially if displacements and applied vertical pressures are small.

NOTE 3—A suitable pore size is 10 μm.

6.9.1 Porous disks shall be air dry.

6.9.2 Porous disks shall have a close fit to the consolidometer ring to avoid extrusion or punching. Suitable disk dimensions are 12.7 mm ± 0.13 mm (0.50 in. ± 0.005 in.) in height and 101.5 mm ± 0.13 mm (3.995 in. ± 0.005 in.) in diameter or as described in 6.3 of Test Methods D 2435.

7. Sample Preparation

7.1 *Preparation for Sieving*—If the soil sample is damp when received from the field, dry it until it becomes friable using a trowel. Air drying or oven drying at temperatures below 60°C (140°F) may be used. Thoroughly break up the aggregations in a manner such that the natural size of individual particles is not reduced.

NOTE 4—If particles larger than 6.35 mm (0.25 in.) are potentially expansive, such as particles of claystone, shale, or weathered volcanic rock, they

TABLE 1 Classification of Potential Expansion of Soils Using *EI*

Expansion Index, *EI*	Potential Expansion
0–20	Very Low
21–50	Low
51–90	Medium
91–130	High
>130	Very High