



Designation: D6980 – 09

Standard Test Method for Determination of Moisture in Plastics by Loss in Weight¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D6980; 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 test method covers the quantitative determination of moisture by means of loss in weight technology down to 50 ppm as it applies to most plastics.

1.2 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as the standard.

1.3 Specimens tested in this method can reach or exceed 250°C, use caution when handling them after testing has been completed.

1.4 *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.*

NOTE 1—There is no similar or equivalent ISO standard.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards*:²

D883 Terminology Relating to Plastics

D1600 Terminology for Abbreviated Terms Relating to Plastics

D6869 Test Method for Coulometric and Volumetric Determination of Moisture in Plastics Using the Karl Fischer Reaction (the Reaction of Iodine with Water)

E177 Practice for Use of the Terms Precision and Bias in ASTM Test Methods

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—The definitions used in this test method are in accordance with Terminologies **D883** and **D1600**.

3.1.1 *lift*—the result of convection currents created during the heating of the specimen raising the sample pan off of its support falsely indicating a moisture loss.

3.1.1.1 *Discussion*—The effects of lift are compensated for in different ways by different manufacturers.

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee **D20** on Plastics and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee **D20.70** on Analytical Methods.

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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.

3.1.2 *tempering*—a process that re-defines the molecular structure of a metal to enhance its performance.

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 The specimen is spread onto a sample pan that is supported on a balance in a heating chamber that has been preheated and equilibrated to the specified idle temperature. It is then heated to vaporize the moisture. The analysis is completed when the indicated weight loss falls below a rate specified in the test conditions. The total loss of weight is integrated and displayed as the percent of moisture. Both the analyzer's balance and heater are calibrated to NIST standards to achieve precise and accurate results.

4.2 Through adjustment of the analyzer's parameter settings, a set of conditions is developed to measure moisture.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 This test method is intended for use as a control, acceptance, and assessment test.

5.2 Moisture can seriously affect the processability of plastics. It is possible that high moisture content will cause surface imperfections (that is, splay or bubbling) or degradation by hydrolysis. Low moisture (with high temperature) has been known to cause solid phase polymerization.

5.3 The physical properties of some plastics are greatly affected by the moisture content.

6. Interferences

6.1 When testing plastic materials for moisture by a loss in weight technique, the possibility exists for volatiles other than water to be evolved and cause a biased high result if the material has not been dried to remove excess moisture and low boiling volatiles. It is important to have a working knowledge of the material that is being tested and to remain below any melting or decomposition temperatures that would unnecessarily cause the emission of volatiles which can be harmful.

7. Apparatus

7.1 *Moisture Analyzer*,³ containing:

³ The model Computrac MAX 2000XL Moisture Analyzer, available from Arizona Instrument, LLC, 1912 West 4th Street, Tempe, Arizona, 85281, and the Mark 2HP Moisture Analyzer, available from Omnimark Instrument Corporation, 1320 South Priest Drive, Tempe, Arizona, 85281 have been found satisfactory for this purpose, or equivalent.

7.1.1 The capability of the oven shall be selected based upon the specific material being tested. Suggested test temperatures for specific plastics are shown in [Tables A1.1 and A2.1](#).

NOTE 2—It will be necessary to contact the analyzer manufacturer for suggested test temperatures for materials not listed in [Tables A1.1 and A2.1](#).

7.1.2 A balance capable of measuring to 0.0001 g.

7.1.3 An electronic or mechanical means of compensating for lift caused by convection currents created during testing.

7.1.4 A processor that is capable of converting the loss of weight to digital data.

7.1.5 Digital display for presenting the digital data as percent moisture.

7.1.6 *Sample Pans*, made from “0” temper, Aluminum 3003 or other nonreactive material.

8. Test Specimen and Sample

8.1 Due to the small specimen size, exercise care to ensure that the specimen is representative of the sample.

8.2 Due to the hygroscopic nature of many plastics, samples shall be stored in airtight containers made of glass or other qualified or suitable material.

8.3 Samples that have been heated to remove moisture prior to processing and testing shall be allowed to cool to room temperature in a sealed container prior to determination.

8.4 Test specimens in the form of powders, pellets, or ground material.

9. Calibration and Standardization

9.1 To maintain the integrity of the test results the balance and heater shall both be calibrated using NIST-traceable weights and an NIST-traceable temperature calibration interface.

9.2 The calibration is validated by way of using sodium tartrate dihydrate⁴ exhibiting a theoretical crystal water content of 15.66 % with an acceptable result range of 15.61 to 15.71 %. Other materials with known theoretical water content are acceptable for validation.

9.3 Prepare the analyzer for use and perform the analysis as described in [10.1](#).

9.4 If the result is not within the acceptable range, return to [9.3](#) for re-analysis.

9.5 If results are still not within the acceptable range, first perform a temperature calibration and then a balance calibration to ensure analyzer performance. Retest with sodium tartrate dihydrate. If results still are not within the acceptable range, contact analyzer manufacturer.

10. Procedure

10.1 Sample Analysis:

10.1.1 Place the analyzer on a flat, level surface.

10.1.2 Turn the analyzer on and allow equilibration at the programmed idle temperature for 15 min.

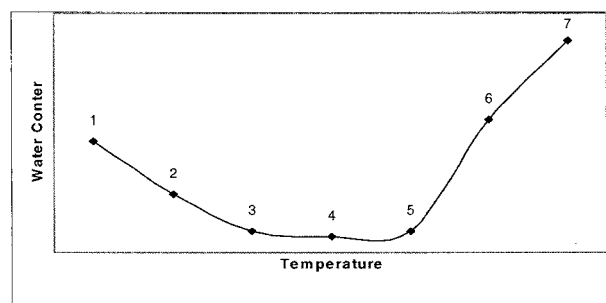


FIG. 1 Optimum Test Temperature Selection

10.1.3 Program the analyzer with the suggested test conditions listed in [Annex A1](#) or [Annex A2](#).

NOTE 3—If test conditions for a specific material are not listed in [Annex A1](#) or [Annex A2](#), they will have to be determined experimentally or by contacting the analyzer manufacturer.

10.1.4 Begin the program and follow the prompts for placing the sample on the sample pan.

10.1.5 At the end of the test allow the analyzer to cool and remove the sample pan.

10.1.6 Record the result as displayed in percent moisture.

10.1.7 Place a clean sample pan in the analyzer and allow equilibration prior to beginning subsequent tests.

10.2 Determination of Optimal Test Conditions:

NOTE 4—When determining the optimal test conditions for a material, it is useful to have a Karl Fischer apparatus available and test in accordance with Test Method [D6869](#) or contact the analyzer manufacturer who in some cases will provide this service for you.

10.2.1 Program the analyzer in accordance with the conditions listed in [Annex A1](#) or [Annex A2](#).

10.2.2 To determine the optimum test temperature for a material, run a single test which includes several consecutive programs that have been linked together. Each program is identical in its parameters except the temperature is increased 5°.

NOTE 5—When increasing the test temperature, do not exceed a temperature where the potential exists for the emission of harmful fumes.

NOTE 6—Ensure that the program selected to run first is the lowest temperature.

10.2.3 After the tests have completed, plot the result versus temperature to make a curve as in [Fig. 1](#).

10.2.3.1 Most of the moisture is vaporized in temperature range from points 1 to 3.

10.2.3.2 Between points 3 and 5 the moisture result is very low and constant. Choose a temperature in this range as the optimum test temperature.

10.2.3.3 Above point 5 the moisture result begins to increase. This is likely caused by the generation of water due to decomposition or solid phase polymerization of the sample.

NOTE 7—It is not uncommon for the optimal test temperature to be above the melting point of the selected plastic due to the distance between the resistive thermal device and the sample pan.

11. Calculation

11.1 Result is reported in percent moisture to three decimal places so no further calculations are necessary.

⁴ Sodium tartrate dihydrate may be sourced from the analyzer manufacturer or from GFS Chemicals, P.O. Box 245, Powell, Ohio, 43065.