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Standard Specification for Agencies Performing Nondestructive Testing¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation E 543; 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.

This specification has been approved for use by agencies of the Department of Defense.

1. Scope

1.1 This specification covers minimum requirements for agencies performing nondestructive testing (NDT).

1.2 When using this specification to assess the capability of, or to accredit NDT agencies, Guide E 1359 shall be used as a basis for the survey. It can be supplemented as necessary with more detail in order to meet the auditor's specific needs.

1.3 This specification can be used as a basis to evaluate testing or inspection agencies, or both, and is intended for use for the qualifying or accrediting, or both, of testing or inspection agencies, public or private.

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1.4 The use of SI or inch-pound units, or combination thereof, will be the responsibility of the technical committee whose standards are referred to in this standard.

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:*²

E 94 [Guide for Radiographic Examination](#)

E 114 [Practice for Ultrasonic Pulse-Echo Straight-Beam Examination by the Contact Method](#)

E 125 [Reference Photographs for Magnetic Particle Indications on Ferrous Castings](#)

E 127 [Practice for Fabricating and Checking Aluminum Alloy Ultrasonic Standard Reference Blocks](#)

E 164 [Practice for Contact Ultrasonic Testing of Weldments](#)

E 165 [Test Method for Liquid Penetrant Examination](#)

E 213 [Practice for Ultrasonic Examination of Metal Pipe and Tubing](#)

E 214 [Practice for Immersed Ultrasonic Testing by the Reflection Method Using Pulsed Longitudinal Waves](#)

E 215 [Practice for Standardizing Equipment for Electromagnetic Examination of Seamless Aluminum-Alloy Tube](#)

E 243 [Practice for Electromagnetic \(Eddy-Current\) Examination of Copper and Copper-Alloy Tubes](#)

E 273 [Practice for Ultrasonic Examination of the Weld Zone of Welded Pipe and Tubing](#)

E 309 [Practice for Eddy-Current Examination of Steel Tubular Products Using Magnetic Saturation](#)

E 317 [Practice for Evaluating Performance Characteristics of Ultrasonic Pulse-Echo Testing Instruments and Systems without the Use of Electronic Measurement Instruments](#)

E 376 [Practice for Measuring Coating Thickness by Magnetic-Field or Eddy-Current \(Electromagnetic\) Examination Methods](#)

E 426 [Practice for Electromagnetic \(Eddy-Current\) Examination of Seamless and Welded Tubular Products, Austenitic Stainless Steel and Similar Alloys](#)

E 427 [Practice for Testing for Leaks Using the Halogen Leak Detector \(Alkali-Ion Diode\)](#)

E 428 [Practice for Fabrication and Control of Metal, Other than Aluminum, Reference Blocks Used in Ultrasonic Testing](#)

E 431 [Guide to Interpretation of Radiographs of Semiconductors and Related Devices](#)

E 432 [Guide for Selection of a Leak Testing Method](#)

E 433 [Reference Photographs for Liquid Penetrant Inspection](#)

E 479 [Guide for Preparation of a Leak Testing Specification](#)

E 493 [Test Methods for Leaks Using the Mass Spectrometer Leak Detector in the Inside-Out Testing Mode](#)

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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.

- E 494 Practice for Measuring Ultrasonic Velocity in Materials
- E 498 Test Methods for Leaks Using the Mass Spectrometer Leak Detector or Residual Gas Analyzer in the Tracer Probe Mode
- E 499 Test Methods for Leaks Using the Mass Spectrometer Leak Detector in the Detector Probe Mode
- E 515 Test Method for Leaks Using Bubble Emission Techniques
- E 545 Test Method for Determining Image Quality in Direct Thermal Neutron Radiographic Examination
- E 566 Practice for Electromagnetic (Eddy-Current) Sorting of Ferrous Metals
- E 569 Practice for Acoustic Emission Monitoring of Structures During Controlled Stimulation
- E 570 Practice for Flux Leakage Examination of Ferromagnetic Steel Tubular Products
- E 571 Practice for Electromagnetic (Eddy-Current) Examination of Nickel and Nickel Alloy Tubular Products
- E 587 Practice for Ultrasonic Angle-Beam Examination by the Contact Method
- E 592 Guide to Obtainable ASTM Equivalent Penetrant Sensitivity for Radiography of Steel Plates 14 to 2 in. [6 to 51 mm] Thick with X Rays and 1 to 6 in. [25 to 152 mm] Thick with Cobalt-60
- E 650 Guide for Mounting Piezoelectric Acoustic Emission Sensors
- E 664 Practice for the Measurement of the Apparent Attenuation of Longitudinal Ultrasonic Waves by Immersion Method
- E 690 Practice for In Situ Electromagnetic (Eddy-Current) Examination of Nonmagnetic Heat Exchanger Tubes
- E 703 Practice for Electromagnetic (Eddy-Current) Sorting of Nonferrous Metals
- E 709 Guide for Magnetic Particle Testing
- E 746 Practice for Determining Relative Image Quality Response of Industrial Radiographic Imaging Systems
- E 747 Practice for Design, Manufacture and Material Grouping Classification of Wire Image Quality Indicators (IQI) Used for Radiology
- E 748 Practices for Thermal Neutron Radiography of Materials
- E 749 Practice for Acoustic Emission Monitoring During Continuous Welding
- E 750 Practice for Characterizing Acoustic Emission Instrumentation
- E 751 Practice for Acoustic Emission Monitoring During Resistance Spot-Welding
- E 797 Practice for Measuring Thickness by Manual Ultrasonic Pulse-Echo Contact Method
- E 801 Practice for Controlling Quality of Radiological Examination of Electronic Devices
- E 803 Test Method for Determining the *L/D* Ratio of Neutron Radiography Beams
- E 908 Practice for Calibrating Gaseous Reference Leaks
- E 976 Guide for Determining the Reproducibility of Acoustic Emission Sensor Response
- E 999 Guide for Controlling the Quality of Industrial Radiographic Film Processing
- E 1001 Practice for Detection and Evaluation of Discontinuities by the Immersed Pulse-Echo Ultrasonic Method Using Longitudinal Waves
- E 1004 Test Method for Determining Electrical Conductivity Using the Electromagnetic (Eddy-Current) Method
- E 1025 Practice for Design, Manufacture, and Material Grouping Classification of Hole-Type Image Quality Indicators (IQI) Used for Radiology
- E 1030 Test Method for Radiographic Examination of Metallic Castings
- E 1032 Test Method for Radiographic Examination of Weldments
- E 1033 Practice for Electromagnetic (Eddy-Current) Examination of Type F-Continuously Welded (CW) Ferromagnetic Pipe and Tubing Above the Curie Temperature
- E 1067 Practice for Acoustic Emission Examination of Fiberglass Reinforced Plastic Resin (FRP) Tanks/Vessels
- E 1118 Practice for Acoustic Emission Examination of Reinforced Thermosetting Resin Pipe (RTRP)
- E 1139 Practice for Continuous Monitoring of Acoustic Emission from Metal Pressure Boundaries
- E 1211 Practice for Leak Detection and Location Using Surface-Mounted Acoustic Emission Sensors
- E 1212 Practice for Quality Management Systems for Nondestructive Testing Agencies
- E 1254 Guide for Storage of Radiographs and Unexposed Industrial Radiographic Films
- E 1312 Practice for Electromagnetic (Eddy-Current) Examination of Ferromagnetic Cylindrical Bar Product Above the Curie Temperature
- E 1315 Practice for Ultrasonic Examination of Steel with Convex Cylindrically Curved Entry Surfaces
- E 1316 Terminology for Nondestructive Examinations
- E 1359 Guide for Evaluating Capabilities of Nondestructive Testing Agencies
- E 1417 Practice for Liquid Penetrant Testing
- E 1419 Practice for Examination of Seamless, Gas-Filled, Pressure Vessels Using Acoustic Emission
- E 1444 Practice for Magnetic Particle Testing
- E 1496 Test Method for Neutron Radiographic Dimensional Measurements
- E 1571 Practice for Electromagnetic Examination of Ferromagnetic Steel Wire Rope
- E 1606 Practice for Electromagnetic (Eddy-Current) Examination of Copper Redraw Rod for Electrical Purposes
- E 1629 Practice for Determining the Impedance of Absolute Eddy-Current Probes
- E 1742 Practice for Radiographic Examination

- E 1774 Guide for Electromagnetic Acoustic Transducers (EMATs)
- E 1781 Practice for Secondary Calibration of Acoustic Emission Sensors
- E 1816 Practice for Ultrasonic Testing Using Electromagnetic Acoustic Transducer (EMAT) Techniques
- E 1888/E 1888M Practice for Acoustic Emission Examination of Pressurized Containers Made of Fiberglass Reinforced Plastic with Balsa Wood Cores
- E 1901 Guide for Detection and Evaluation of Discontinuities by Contact Pulse-Echo Straight-Beam Ultrasonic Methods
- E 1930 Practice for Examination of Liquid-Filled Atmospheric and Low-Pressure Metal Storage Tanks Using Acoustic Emission
- E 1932 Guide for Acoustic Emission Examination of Small Parts
- E 1961 Practice for Mechanized Ultrasonic Testing of Girth Welds Using Zonal Discrimination with Focused Search Units
- E 1962 Test Method for Ultrasonic Surface Examinations Using Electromagnetic Acoustic Transducer (EMAT) Techniques
- E 2001 Guide for Resonant Ultrasound Spectroscopy for Defect Detection in Both Metallic and Non-metallic Parts
- E 2075 Practice for Verifying the Consistency of AE-Sensor Response Using an Acrylic Rod
- E 2076 Test Method for Examination of Fiberglass Reinforced Plastic Fan Blades Using Acoustic Emission
- E 2096 Practice for In Situ Examination of Ferromagnetic Heat-Exchanger Tubes Using Remote Field Testing
- E 2191 Practice for Examination of Gas-Filled Filament-Wound Composite Pressure Vessels Using Acoustic Emission
- E 2192 Guide for Planar Flaw Height Sizing by Ultrasonics
- E 2223 Practice for Examination of Seamless, Gas-Filled, Steel Pressure Vessels Using Angle Beam Ultrasonics
- E 2261 Practice for Examination of Welds Using the Alternating Current Field Measurement Technique
- E 2338 Practice for Characterization of Coatings Using Conformable Eddy-Current Sensors without Coating Reference Standards
- E 2373 Practice for Use of the Ultrasonic Time of Flight Diffraction (TOFD) Technique
- E 2374 Guide for Acoustic Emission System Performance Verification
- E 2375 Practice for Ultrasonic Testing of Wrought Products

2.2 Other Documents:

- SNT-TC-1A Recommended Practice for Personnel Qualification and Certification in Nondestructive Testing³
- ANSI/ASNT-CP-189 ASNT Standard for Qualification and Certification in Nondestructive Testing Personnel³
- NAS-410 Certification and Qualification of Nondestructive Personnel (Quality Assurance Committee)⁴

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—Additional definitions are contained in the specific specification or in Terminology E 1316.

3.2 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.2.1 *agency*—the public, independent, or in-house nondestructive testing organization selected by the authority to perform the examination(s) required by the purchase order or specification.

3.2.2 *authority*—the owner, prime contractor, engineer, architect, or purchasing agent in responsible charge of the work, or duly recognized or designated representative.

3.2.2.1 *Discussion*—The agency and the authority may be the same in some cases.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 This specification is applicable where the systematic assessment of the competence of a nondestructive testing agency by a user or other party is desired.

4.2 It is intended that the requirements specified in this specification apply to independent, public, or in-house agencies to the extent required by the purchase order or specification. This specification does not apply to in-house equipment, methods, and examinations used for the exclusive purpose of internal process control. It is intended that this specification apply to all examination(s) used for the final acceptance examination(s) if such examination(s) are required by the purchase order or specification.

4.3 Criteria are provided for evaluating the capability of an agency to properly perform designated examinations and establishes essential characteristics pertaining to the organization, personnel, facilities, and quality systems of the agency. This specification may be supplemented by more specific criteria and requirements for particular projects.

5. Organization of the Agency

5.1 The following information concerning the organization of the agency shall be provided by documentation:

5.1.1 A description of the organization including:

5.1.1.1 The complete legal name and address of the main office,

5.1.1.2 The names and positions of the principal officers and directors,

³ Available from American Society for Nondestructive Testing (ASNT), P.O. Box 28518, 1711 Arlingate Ln., Columbus, OH 43228-0518, <http://www.asnt.org>.

⁴ Available from Aerospace Industries Association of America, Inc. (AIA), 1000 Wilson Blvd., Suite 1700, Arlington, VA 22209-3928, <http://www.aia-aerospace.org>.

5.1.1.3 The agency's ownership, managerial structure, and principal members,

5.1.1.4 The functional description of the agency's organization structure, operational departments, and support departments and services. This may be demonstrated in the form of charts that depict all the divisions, departments, sections and units, and their relationships,

5.1.1.5 All relevant organizational affiliates of the agency and the principal officers of affiliates and directors of the affiliates where applicable,

5.1.1.6 External organizations and organizational components and their functions that are utilized for significant technical support services, and

5.1.1.7 A brief history of the agency including its relationship with its organizational component affiliations and other supporting information.

5.1.2 A general description of the type of users of the agency's services.

5.1.3 A listing of the relevant technical services offered.

5.1.4 A list giving applicable dates of the qualifications, accreditations, and recognition of the agency by others.

6. Responsibilities and Duties

6.1 A nondestructive testing agency's capabilities should include, but not be limited to, one or more of the following methods: magnetic particle, penetrant, radiographic/fluoroscopic, ultrasonic, eddy current, and leak testing.

NOTE 1—A comparison of selected NDE Methods is provided as Appendix X1.

6.2 It is the responsibility of the agency to ensure that:

6.2.1 It performs only examinations for which it is adequately equipped and staffed.

6.2.2 Its employees perform only examinations for which they are adequately qualified.

6.2.3 Its equipment is calibrated and personnel are certified in accordance with applicable specifications.

6.2.4 All equipment is properly maintained.

6.2.5 It informs the authority of any discrepancy or limitation imposed on the testing accuracy by such factors as surface finish, form, shape, or procedure.

6.3 The following duties are those usually performed by the agency:

6.3.1 To perform all examinations in accordance with specified standards or quality-control criteria, or both. (The necessary documents shall be furnished by the authority, or the agency, or both, as specified in the applicable purchase agreements.) The agency should call to the attention of the authority at once any irregularity or deficiency noted in the documents.

6.3.2 To submit promptly to the authority formal reports of all examinations that indicate compliance or noncompliance of the material with 6.3.1. The agency should be prepared to substantiate examination results when required.

6.4 The agency may, in accordance with an agreement with the authority, report only compliance or noncompliance with the applicable specifications or control documents. The authority reserves the right for disposition of noncomplying material.

6.5 The authority may, at its discretion, inspect the procedures, equipment, and personnel program of the agency.

7. Human Resources of the Agency Personnel

7.1 The agency shall document the following:

7.1.1 Written outline or chart defining operational personnel positions and their lines of responsibility and authority.

7.1.2 Summary job description for each professional, scientific, supervisory, and technical position category, documenting the required education, training, or experience, or a combination thereof.

7.1.3 Records or resumes that document the qualifications, work experience, and training history of each person in a position described in 7.1.2.

7.2 The agency shall make available a description of its means of ensuring the continued competence of its personnel to perform NDT, including the maintenance of written records to document the results.

8. Personnel Qualification Personnel Qualification/Certifications

8.1 Nondestructive testing (NDT) personnel shall be qualified and certified in accordance with a nationally or internationally recognized NDT personnel qualifications practice or standards such as ANSI/ASNT-CP-189, SNT-TC-1A, NAS-410, or a similar document. The practice or standard used and the applicable revision shall be specified in the contractual agreement between parties.

PROCEDURE MANUAL

9. Minimum Requirements

9.1 Each agency shall have prepared a written Procedures Manual for the type of work for which the agency is contracted. The manual shall be prepared in accordance with the requirements of Practice E 1212. Additional requirements or clarifications are contained in 9.2 through 9.6. The manual shall be of sufficient detail to provide complete guidance for their use by the agency's personnel.

9.1.1 The agency management shall designate a person or persons within the agency who has responsibility for maintaining the agency's quality system. This person(s) shall have direct access to top management. This person shall conduct and document an

internal audit at least once every year to verify that the quality system is functioning properly.

9.2 *Process Control (Operational Procedures)*—This section shall contain the information necessary to control the various activities necessary for the examination of materials. Items covered shall include receiving and preparing material, identification and marking, test procedures and specifications to use, reports, and return of material.

9.3 *Personnel Qualification*—The requirements, procedures for training, certification, and recertification for each level of qualification.

9.4 *Equipment Maintenance and Calibration*—This section shall contain all of the following:

9.4.1 *Inventory Listing*—All available equipment shall be listed with the following information noted:

9.4.1.1 Name of the manufacturer.

9.4.1.2 Equipment model and serial number.

9.4.1.3 Characteristics subject to calibration.

9.4.1.4 Range of operation and range of calibration.

9.4.1.5 Reference to recognized standardization procedures acceptable to the authority, if applicable.

9.4.1.6 Frequency of calibration.

9.4.1.7 Allowable tolerances or maximum sensitivity.

9.4.1.8 Source of verification.

9.4.2 *Calibration*—Each instrument or machine, when calibration is required, shall have either a calibration sticker affixed, or record of certification on file, containing the following:

9.4.2.1 Instrument calibrated.

9.4.2.2 Serial number.

9.4.2.3 Calibration date.

9.4.2.4 Calibration next due.

9.4.2.5 Name of individual who performed last calibration. If calibration is not required, a sticker, stating no calibration is necessary shall be affixed, or a record shall be on file to this effect.

9.4.3 The equipment shall be calibrated against currently certified standards calibrated by accepted government or industrial agencies (or shall indicate that it is calibrated as used, or that no calibration is necessary) at least at the following specific intervals in accordance with a written procedure which shall also specify who is to calibrate each equipment type:

9.4.3.1 *Magnetic Particle*:

(1) *Timer and Ammeter*—Check every 90 days, unless subjected to electrical repair or inadvertently damaged, at which time calibration is required prior to use.

(2) *Black Lights*—Maintain a minimum level of intensity, as specified by the agency.

(3) *Suspension Concentration Test*—Check prior to use or daily, whichever is less restrictive.

9.4.3.2 *Penetrant*:

(1) *Penetrants and Emulsifiers*—Check monthly for contamination.

(2) *Dryers*—Check monthly for thermostat accuracy.

(3) *Black Lights*—Maintain a minimum level of intensity, as specified by the agency.

9.4.3.3 *Radiographic*—Calibrate densitometers prior to each use, utilizing calibrated film strips.

9.4.3.4 *Ultrasonic*—The authority shall approve the required calibration intervals.

9.4.3.5 *Leak Testing*:

(1) The equipment shall be calibrated at the beginning of each shift.

(2) The standards shall be calibrated at 6-month intervals.

9.4.3.6 *Eddy Current*—Calibration of the system at the start and end of each run and at the beginning of each shift (or turn) using the reference standard (secondary) is normally required. This or other required calibration intervals shall be approved by the authority.

9.4.3.7 Written records of the results of the checks and calibrations are to be maintained at a central location. The above checks are minimum and do not relieve the responsibility of constantly checking and immediately repairing any item which may affect test results. A history of the repairs, modifications, or substitutions shall be maintained.

9.5 *Equipment Operation and Technique File*:

9.5.1 Each type of equipment in use shall have a complete manual which contains all information necessary to operate and maintain the equipment in accordance with applicable codes and specifications. The manual shall include the maintenance procedures and schedules for each type of equipment and the calibration schedule of each type of equipment.

9.5.2 A technique file should be maintained for each type of equipment. It should be available for the guidance of the technician. The manual shall include:

9.5.2.1 Summary of test procedure.

9.5.2.2 Step-by-step preparation of material for examination.

9.5.2.3 Reference standard.

9.5.2.4 Control of essential variables, such as the time required for each test step (if applicable).

9.5.2.5 What indications should appear at each step.

9.5.2.6 Indications and their evaluations.

9.5.2.7 Recording of test results.

9.6 *Records and Documentation:*

9.6.1 *Records*—All applicable records pertaining to 9.2 through 9.5 shall be maintained in a central file and in other accessible files as necessary, and should be available for examination by the authority.

9.6.2 The internal process forms or job record forms shall be filed with the written report to the authority and become a part of the permanent record. They should include the following minimum information:

9.6.2.1 Order and reference numbers.

9.6.2.2 Specification.

9.6.2.3 Type of test and procedure identification.

9.6.2.4 Serial or part numbers, alloy numbers, heat and lot numbers, as applicable.

9.6.2.5 Special instructions from the customer.

9.6.2.6 Customer's (authority's) name.

9.6.2.7 Results of the examination.

9.6.2.8 A notation of all known deviations from any standard test method(s) referenced and all requirements of the test method(s) that were not performed by the agency.

9.6.3 All applicable internal reports should be signed by the technician performing the work and by Level II or Level III personnel. A procedure for auditing of reports by Level III personnel must be included.

9.6.4 Personnel qualification records should be developed in accordance with 8.1 and be available in an active file as long as employment continues. When personnel leave the agency, the records may be transferred to an inactive file but should not be discarded for a period of five years or as otherwise specified.

9.6.5 *Specification File*—The company should maintain an orderly file containing all codes, specifications, and amendments under which it is performing work. The company does not have to possess codes and specifications for which it has no use.

10. Keywords

10.1 equipment calibration; laboratory evaluation; NDT laboratories; personnel certification; quality control; quality manual

ANNEX

(Mandatory Information)

A1. EQUIPMENT FOR NONDESTRUCTIVE TESTING

ASTM E543-09

A1.1 General

A1.1.1 The agency responsible for nondestructive examination of material should be equipped with, or have access to, at least the equipment listed for the applicable processes.

A1.1.2 Nondestructive testing systems can include multiple examination stations with extensive supporting mechanisms and controls. Others may be simply utilizing only manual application of a basic instrument.

NOTE A1.1—Sections A1.2 through A1.8 of this specification are intended to be educational although they do contain some mandatory requirements. Section 2 provides a list of documents which include specific requirements in the applicable test methods.

A1.2 Magnetic Particle Equipment

A1.2.1 *Equipment for Magnetization of Parts* shall be capable of inducing a flux density of sufficient intensity and direction to perform the required examination. Either a-c or d-c (fullwave or half-wave rectified) equipment or permanent magnets shall be used as specified by the contract, purchase order, or specification to produce the required magnetization.

A1.2.1.1 The part or a section of the part may be magnetized by induction or by passing current through the part or section by permanent conductors, contact plates, clamps, or prods. After proper cleaning of the part, the magnetic particles may be applied either wet or dry.

A1.2.1.2 The magnetic field is induced in the part by the use of any of the following:

(1) *Yoke*—Used to magnetize sections of parts. It is a U-shaped iron core with a coil around the cross bar or a U-shaped or flexible permanent magnet. The magnetic field across the open ends is used to induce a magnetic field in the part or section. The yoke's fixed or movable legs are used with the open ends in contact with the part. The yoke is normally operated by line voltages (110 or 220 V).

(2) *Coil*—Used to magnetize parts or sections. It is a current-carrying conductor formed into a coil of several turns. The magnetic field inside the coil is used to induce a magnetic field into the part or section.

(3) *Prods*—Used to magnetize sections of parts. They are rods, normally ½ to 1 in. [12.7(12.7 to 25.4 mm)] in diameter and 8 to 10 in. [203(203 to 254 mm)] in length, made of copper with a handle on one end. The ends of a pair of prods are