INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

ISO 7539-6

Fourth edition
2018-08

Corrected version
2018-11

Corrosion of metals and alloys — Stress corrosion testing —

Part 6:

Preparation and use of precracked specimens for tests under constant load or constant displacement

Corrosion des métaux et alliages — Essais de corrosion sous contrainte —

Partie 6: Préparation et utilisation des éprouvettes préfissurées pour essais sous charge constante ou sous déplacement constant

Reference number
ISO 7539-6:2018(E)

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ISO copyright office
CP 401 • Ch. de Blandonnet 8
CH-1214 Vernier, Geneva
Phone: +41 22 749 01 11
Fax: +41 22 749 09 47
Email: copyright@iso.org
Website: www.iso.org

Published in Switzerland

Contents

Foreword

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The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

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This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 156, *Corrosion of metals and alloys*, in collaboration with the National Physical Laboratory (United Kingdom).

This fourth edition cancels and replaces the third edition (ISO 7539-6:2011), which has been technically revised to revise Figure 14.

This corrected version of ISO 7539-6:2018 incorporates the following corrections:

— in Figure 2, the symbol “^” has been corrected to “≥” in two places.

A list of all parts in the ISO 7539 series can be found on the ISO website.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user’s national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

INTERNATIONAL STANDARD **ISO 7539-6:2018(E)**

Corrosion of metals and alloys — Stress corrosion testing —

Part 6:

Preparation and use of precracked specimens for tests under constant load or constant displacement

1 Scope

This document specifies procedures for designing, preparing and using precracked specimens for investigating susceptibility to stress corrosion. It gives recommendations for the design, preparation and use of precracked specimens for investigating susceptibility to stress corrosion. Recommendations concerning notched specimens are given in Annex A.

The term “metal” as used in this document includes alloys.

Because of the need to confine plasticity at the crack tip, precracked specimens are not suitable for the evaluation of thin products, such as sheet or wire, and are generally used for thicker products including plate bar and forgings. They can also be used for parts joined by welding.

Precracked specimens can be loaded with equipment for application of a constant load or can incorporate a device to produce a constant displacement at the loading points. Tests conducted under increasing displacement or increasing load are dealt with in ISO 7539-9.

A particular advantage of precracked specimens is that they allow data to be acquired, from which critical defect sizes, above which stress corrosion cracking can occur, can be estimated for components of known geometry subjected to known stresses. They also enable rates of stress corrosion crack propagation to be determined. The latter data can be taken into account when monitoring parts containing defects during service.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 7539-1, *Corrosion of metals and alloys — Stress corrosion testing — Part 1: General guidance on testing procedures*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 7539-1 and the following apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at https://www.iso.org/obp
- IEC Electropedia: available at http://www.electropedia.org/

3.1
crack length

a

distance from the crack tip to either the mouth of the notch or the loading point axis, depending on the specimen geometry

3.2
specimen width

W

distance from the back face to either the face containing the notch or the loading plane, depending on the specimen geometry

3.3
specimen thickness

B

side-to-side dimension of the specimen being tested

3.4
reduced thickness at side grooves

B_n

minimum side-to-side dimension between the notches in side-grooved specimens

3.5
specimen half-height

H

50 % of the distance between both sides of the specimen measured parallel to the direction of *load* (3.6) application for compact tension, double cantilever beam and modified wedge-opening-loaded test pieces

3.6
load

P

force, which, when applied to the specimen, is considered positive if its direction is such as to cause the crack faces to move apart

3.7
deflection at loading point axis

V_{LL}

crack opening displacement produced at the loading line during the application of *load* (3.6) to a constant displacement specimen

3.8
deflection away from the loading line

V_0

crack opening displacement produced at a location remote from the loading plane, e.g. at knife edges located at the notch mouth, during the application of *load* (3.6) to a constant displacement specimen

3.9
modulus of elasticity

E

ratio of stress to strain without deviation in proportionality of the stress and strain (Hooke's law)

3.10
stress intensity factor

K_{I}

function of applied *load* (3.6), *crack length* (3.1) and specimen geometry having dimensions of stress × √length which uniquely define the elastic-stress field intensification at the tip of a crack subjected to opening mode displacements (mode I)

Note 1 to entry: It has been found that stress intensity factors, calculated assuming that specimens respond purely elastically, correlate with the behaviour of real cracked bodies, provided that the size of the zone of plasticity at the crack tip is small compared to the crack length and the length of the uncracked ligament. In this document, mode I is assumed and the subscript I is implied everywhere.

3.11
initial stress intensity factor

K_{Ii}

stress intensity applied at the commencement of the stress corrosion test

3.12
plane strain fracture toughness

K_{Ic}

critical value of K_{I} at which the first significant environmentally independent extension of the crack occurs under the influence of rising stress intensity under conditions of high resistance to plastic deformation

3.13
provisional value of K_{Ic}

K_{Q}

$K_{\mathrm{Q}} = K_{\mathrm{Ic}}$ when the validity criteria for plane strain predominance are satisfied

3.14
threshold stress intensity factor for susceptibility to stress corrosion cracking

K_{ISCC}

stress intensity factor (3.10) above which stress corrosion cracking will initiate and grow for the specified test conditions under conditions of high resistance to plastic deformation, i.e. under plane strain predominant conditions

3.15
provisional value of K_{ISCC}

K_{QSCC}

$K_{\mathrm{QSCC}} = K_{\mathrm{ISCC}}$ when the validity criteria for plane strain predominance are satisfied

3.16
maximum stress intensity factor

K_{max} in fatigue

highest algebraic value of the *stress intensity factor* (3.10) in a cycle, corresponding to the maximum *load* (3.6)

3.17
0,2 % proof stress

$R_{\mathrm{p0,2}}$

stress which is applied to produce a plastic strain of 0,2 % during a tensile test

3.18
applied stress

σ

stress resulting from the application of *load* (3.6) to the specimen

3.19
stress intensity factor coefficient

Y

factor derived from the stress analysis for a particular specimen geometry which relates the *stress intensity factor* (3.10) for a given *crack length* (3.1) to the *load* (3.6) and specimen dimensions

3.20
load ratio in fatigue loading

R

algebraic ratio of minimum to maximum *load* (3.6) in a cycle:

$$R = \frac{P_{\text{min}}}{P_{\text{max}}} = \frac{K_{\text{min}}}{K_{\text{max}}}$$

3.21
crack velocity

instantaneous rate of stress corrosion crack propagation measured by a continuous crack monitoring technique

3.22
average crack velocity

average rate of crack propagation calculated by dividing the change in *crack length* (3.1) due to stress corrosion by the test duration

3.23
specimen orientation

fracture plane of the specimen identified in terms of firstly the direction of stressing and secondly the direction of crack growth expressed with respect to three reference axes identified by the letters X, Y and Z

Note 1 to entry: Where X, Y and Z are defined as follows:

X is coincident with the direction of grain flow (longitudinal axis);

Z is coincident with the main working force used during manufacture of the material (short-transverse axis);

Y is normal to the X and Z axes.

4 Principle

4.1 The use of precracked specimens acknowledges the difficulty of ensuring that crack-like defects introduced during either manufacture or subsequent service are totally absent from structures. Furthermore, the presence of such defects can cause a susceptibility to stress corrosion cracking which in some materials (e.g. titanium) may not be evident from tests under constant load on smooth specimens. The principles of linear elastic fracture mechanics can be used to quantify the stress situation existing at the crack tip in a precracked specimen or structure in terms of the plane strain-stress intensity.

4.2 The test involves subjecting a specimen in which a crack has been developed by fatigue from a machined notch to either a constant load or displacement at the loading points during exposure to a chemically aggressive environment. The objective is to quantify the conditions under which environmentally assisted crack extension can occur in terms of the threshold stress intensity for stress corrosion cracking, K_{ISCC}, and the kinetics of crack propagation.

4.3 The empirical data can be used for design or life prediction purposes, in order to ensure either that the stresses within large structures are insufficient to promote the initiation of environmentally assisted cracking, whatever pre-existing defects may be present, or that the amount of crack growth which would occur within the design life or inspection periods can be tolerated without the risk of unstable failure.

4.4 Stress corrosion cracking is influenced by both mechanical and electrochemical driving forces. The latter can vary with crack depth, opening or shape because of variations in crack-tip chemistry and electrode potential and may not be uniquely described by the fracture-mechanics stress intensity factor.

4.5 The mechanical driving force includes both applied and residual stresses. The possible influence of the latter shall be considered in both laboratory testing and the application to more complex geometries. Gradients in residual stress in a specimen may result in non-uniform crack growth along the crack front.

5 Specimens

5.1 General

5.1.1 A wide range of standard specimen geometries of the type used in fracture toughness tests may be applied. The particular type of specimen used will be dependent upon the form, the strength and the susceptibility to stress corrosion cracking of the material to be tested and also on the objective of the test.

5.1.2 A basic requirement is that the dimensions be sufficient to maintain predominantly triaxial (plane strain) conditions in which plastic deformation is limited to the vicinity of the crack tip. Experience with fracture toughness testing has shown that, for a valid K_{Ic} measurement, both the crack length, a, and the thickness, B, shall not be less than:

$$2{,}5\left(\frac{K_{\mathrm{Ic}}}{R_{\mathrm{p}0{,}2}}\right)^2$$

and that, where possible, larger specimens where both a and B are at least:

$$4\left(\frac{K_{\mathrm{Ic}}}{R_{\mathrm{p}0{,}2}}\right)^2$$

shall be used to ensure adequate constraint.

From the point of view of fracture mechanics, a minimum thickness from which an invariant value of K_{ISCC} is obtained cannot be specified at this time. The presence of an aggressive environment during stress corrosion may reduce the extent of plasticity associated with fracture and hence the specimen dimensions needed to limit plastic deformation. However, in order to minimize the risk of inadequate constraint, it is recommended that similar criteria to those used during fracture toughness testing also be used regarding specimen dimensions, i.e. both a and B shall be not less than:

$$2{,}5\left(\frac{K_{\mathrm{I}}}{R_{\mathrm{p}0{,}2}}\right)^2$$

and preferably should be not less than:

$$4\left(\frac{K_{\mathrm{I}}}{R_{\mathrm{p}0{,}2}}\right)^2$$

where K_{I} is the stress intensity to be applied during testing.

The threshold stress intensity value eventually determined should be substituted for K_{I} in the first of these expressions as a test for its validity.

5.1.3 If the specimens are to be used for the determination of K_{ISCC}, the initial specimen size should be based on an estimate of the K_{ISCC} of the material (in the first instance, it is better to over-estimate the K_{ISCC} value and therefore use a larger specimen than may eventually be found necessary). Where the service application involves the use of material of insufficient thickness to satisfy the conditions for validity, it is permissible to test specimens of similar thickness, provided that it is clearly stated that the threshold intensity value obtained, K_{QSCC}, is of relevance only to that specific application. Where determining stress corrosion crack growth behaviour as a function of stress intensity is required, the specimen size shall be based on an estimate of the highest stress intensity at which crack growth rates are to be measured.

5.1.4 Two basic types of specimen can be used:

a) those intended for testing under constant displacement, which are invariably self-loaded by means of built-in loading bolts;

b) those intended for testing under constant load, for which an external means of load application is required.

5.1.5 Constant displacement specimens, being self-loaded, have the advantage of economy in use since no external stressing equipment is required. Their compact dimensions also facilitate exposure to operating service environments. They can be used for the determination of K_{ISCC} by the initiation of stress corrosion cracks from the fatigue precrack, in which case a series of specimens must be used to pinpoint the threshold value, or by the arrest of a propagating crack since, under constant displacement testing conditions, the stress intensity decreases progressively as crack propagation occurs. In this case, a single specimen will suffice in principle, but, in practice, the use of several specimens (not less than three) is often recommended, taking into account the disadvantages described in 5.1.6.

5.1.6 The disadvantages of constant displacement specimens are as follows:

a) applied loads can only be measured indirectly by displacement changes;

b) oxide formation or corrosion products can either wedge open the crack surfaces, thus changing the applied displacement and load, or can block the crack mouth, thus preventing the ingress of corrodent and impairing the accuracy of crack length measurements by electrical resistance methods;

c) crack branching, blunting or growth out of plane can invalidate crack arrest data;

d) crack arrest must be defined by crack growth below some arbitrary rate, which can be difficult to measure accurately;

e) elastic relaxation of the loading system during crack growth can cause increased displacement and higher loads than expected;

f) plastic relaxation due to time-dependent processes within the specimen can cause lower loads than expected;

g) it is sometimes impossible to introduce the test environment prior to application of the load, which can retard crack initiation during subsequent testing.

5.1.7 Constant load specimens have the advantage that stress parameters can be quantified with confidence. Since crack growth results in increasing crack opening, there is less likelihood that oxide films will either block the crack or wedge it open. Crack length measurements can be readily made via a number of continuous monitoring methods. A wide choice of constant load specimen geometries is available to suit the form of the test material, the experimental facilities available and the objectives of the test. This means that crack growth can be studied under either bend or tension loading conditions. The specimens can be used for either the determination of K_{ISCC} by the initiation of a stress corrosion crack from a pre-existing fatigue crack using a series of specimens, or for measurements of crack growth rates. Constant load specimens can be loaded during exposure to the test environment in order to avoid the risk of unnecessary incubation periods.

5.1.8 The principal disadvantage of constant load specimens is the expense and bulk associated with the need for an external loading system. Bend specimens can be tested in relatively simple cantilever beam equipment, but specimens subjected to tension loading require constant load creep rupture or similar testing machines. In this case, the expense can be minimized by testing chains of specimens connected by loading links which are designed to prevent unloading on the failure of specimens. The size of these loading systems means that it is difficult to test constant load specimens under operating conditions, but they can be tested in environments bled off from operating systems.

5.2 Specimen design

5.2.1 Figure 1 shows some of the precracked specimen geometries which are used for stress corrosion testing.

5.2.2 Constant load specimens can be of two distinct types:

a) those in which the stress intensity increases with increasing crack length;

b) those in which the stress intensity is effectively independent of crack length.

Type a) is suitable for K_{ISCC} determinations and studies of crack propagation rates as a function of K_{I}, while type b) is useful for fundamental studies of stress corrosion mechanisms.

5.2.3 Increasing-K constant load specimens can be subjected to either tension or bend loading. Depending on the design, tension-loaded specimens can experience stresses at the crack tip which are predominantly tensile (as in remotely-loaded tension types such as the centre-cracked plate) or contain a significant bend component (as in crackline-loaded types such as compact tension specimens). The presence of significant bending stress at the crack tip can adversely affect the crack path stability during stress corrosion testing and can facilitate crack branching in certain materials. Bend specimens can be loaded in 3-point, 4-point or cantilever bend fixtures.

5.2.4 Constant-K constant load specimens can be subjected to either torsion loading as in the case of the double-torsion single edge cracked plate specimen, or tension loading as in the case of contoured double-cantilever-beam specimens. Although loaded in tension, the design of the latter specimens produces crackline bending with an associated tendency for crack growth out of plane, which can be curbed by the use of side grooves.

5.2.5 Constant displacement specimens are usually self-loaded by means of a loading bolt in one arm which impinges on either an anvil or a second loading bolt in the opposite arm. Two types are available:

a) those which are (W–a) dominated, such as the modified wedge-opening-loaded (modified WOL) specimen in which the proximity of the back face to the crack tip influences the crack tip stress field;

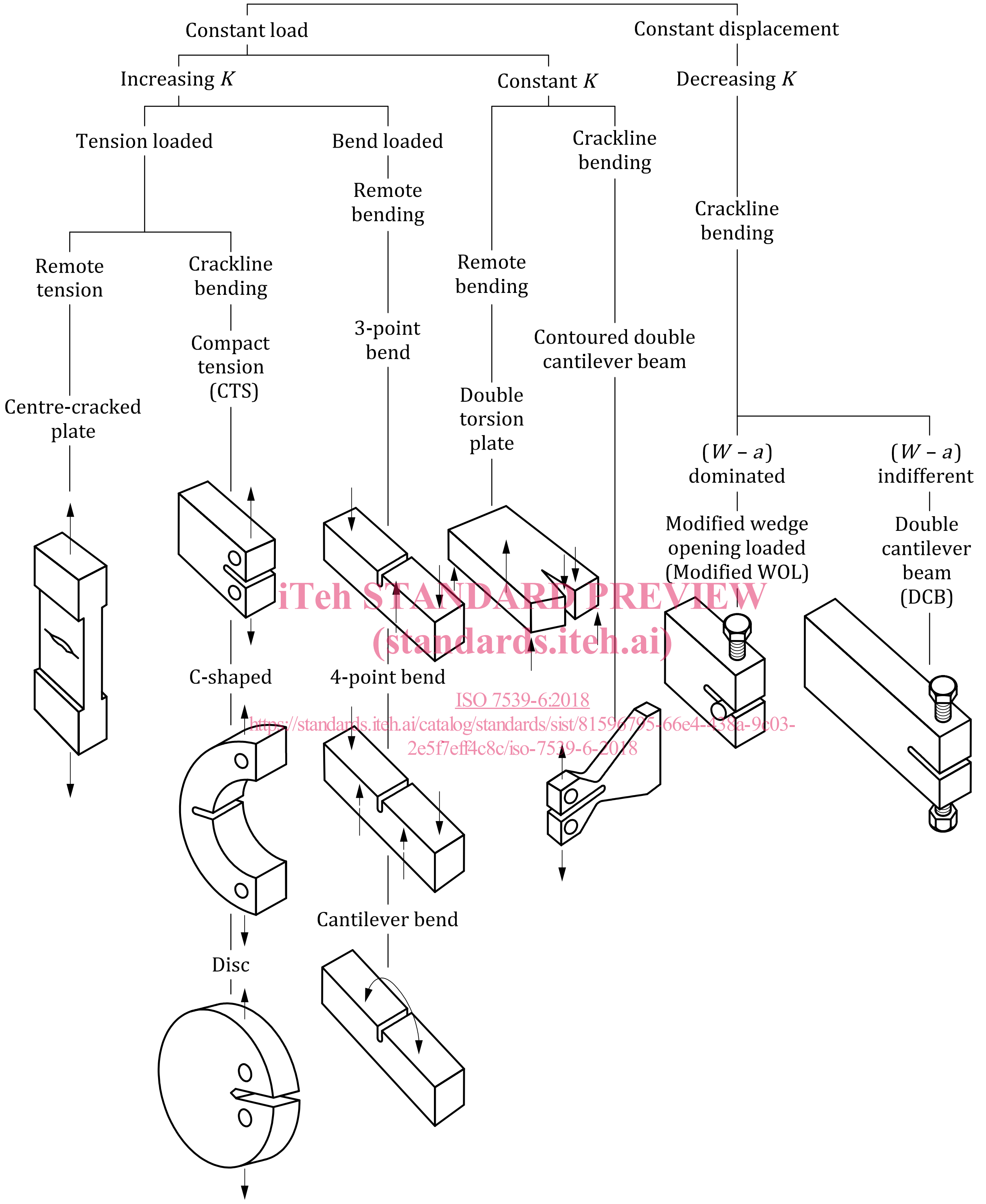
b) those which are (W–a) indifferent, such as the double-cantilever-beam (DCB) specimen in which the back face is sufficiently distant from the crack tip to ensure that its position has a negligible effect on the crack tip stress field.

5.2.6 A number of the specimen geometries described above have specific advantages which have caused them to be frequently used for stress corrosion testing. These include the following:

a) cantilever bend specimens, which are easy to machine and inexpensive to test under constant load;

b) compact tension (CTS) specimens, which minimize the material requirement for constant load testing;

c) self-loaded double-cantilever-beam (DCB) specimens, which are easy to test under constant displacement in service situations;



NOTE Stress intensity factor coefficients for the specimens shown above are available in the published literature.

Figure 1 — Precracked specimen geometries for stress corrosion testing

d) modified wedge-opening-loaded (modified WOL) specimens, which are also self-loaded and minimize the material requirement for constant displacement testing;

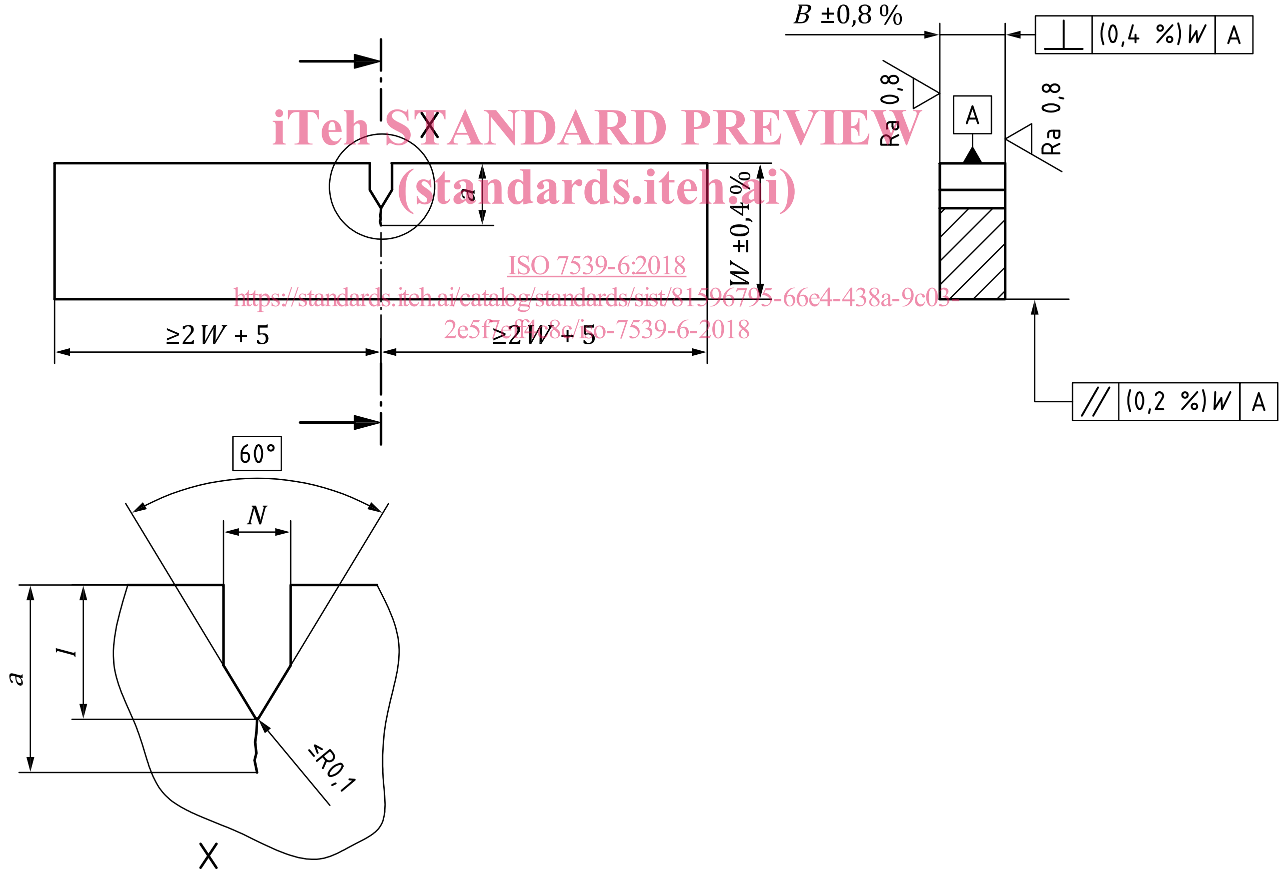
e) C-shaped specimens, which can be machined from thick-walled cylinders in order to study the radial propagation of longitudinally oriented cracks under constant load.

Details of standard specimen designs for each of these types of specimen are given in Figures 2 to 6.

5.2.7 If required, for example if fatigue crack initiation and/or propagation is difficult to control satisfactorily, a chevron notch configuration as shown in Figure 7 may be used. If required, its included angle may be increased from 90° to 120°.

5.2.8 Where it is necessary to measure crack opening displacements, as during the application of deflection to constant displacement specimens, knife edges for the location of displacement gauges can be machined into the mouth of the notch, as shown in Figure 8 a). Alternatively, separate knife edges can either be screwed or glued onto the specimen at opposite sides of the notch, as shown in Figure 8 b). Details of a suitable tapered beam displacement gauge are given in Figure 9.

Dimensions in millimetres, surface roughness values in micrometres



Key

W	width	
B	thickness	$= 0{,}5W$
N	notch width	$= 0{,}065W$ maximum (if $W > 25$ mm) or 1,5 mm maximum (if $W \leq 25$ mm)
l	effective notch length	$= 0{,}25W$ to $0{,}45W$
a	effective crack length	$= 0{,}45W$ to $0{,}55W$

Figure 2 — Proportional dimensions and tolerances for cantilever bend test pieces