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Standard Test Method for Calibration of Non-Concentrator Photovoltaic Secondary Reference Cells¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation E1362; 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 calibration and characterization of secondary terrestrial photovoltaic reference cells to a desired reference spectral irradiance distribution. The recommended physical requirements for these reference cells are described in Specification E1040. Reference cells are principally used in the determination of the electrical performance of a photovoltaic device.

1.2 Secondary reference cells are calibrated indoors using simulated sunlight or outdoors in natural sunlight by reference to a primary reference cell previously calibrated to the same desired reference spectral irradiance distribution.

1.3 Secondary reference cells calibrated according to this test method will have the same radiometric traceability as the of the primary reference cell used for the calibration. Therefore, if the primary reference cell is traceable to the World Radiometric Reference (WRR, see Test Method E816), the resulting secondary reference cell will also be traceable to the WRR.

1.4 This test method applies only to the calibration of a photovoltaic cell that demonstrates a linear short-circuit current versus irradiance characteristic over its intended range of use, as defined in Test Method E1143.

1.5 This test method applies only to the calibration of a photovoltaic cell that has been fabricated using a single photovoltaic junction.

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

1.7 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

E490 Standard Solar Constant and Zero Air Mass Solar Spectral Irradiance Tables

E691 Practice for Conducting an Interlaboratory Study to Determine the Precision of a Test Method

E772 Terminology Relating to Solar Energy Conversion

E816 Test Method for Calibration of Pyrheliometers by Comparison to Reference Pyrheliometers

E927 Specification for Solar Simulation for Photovoltaic Testing

E948 Test Method for Electrical Performance of Photovoltaic Cells Using Reference Cells Under Simulated Sunlight

E973 Test Method for Determination of the Spectral Mismatch Parameter Between a Photovoltaic Device and a Photovoltaic Reference Cell

E1021 Test Method for Spectral Responsivity Measurements of Photovoltaic Devices

E1039 Test Method for Calibration of Silicon Non-Concentrator Photovoltaic Primary Reference Cells Under Global Irradiation

E1040 Specification for Physical Characteristics of Nonconcentrator Terrestrial Photovoltaic Reference Cells

E1125 Test Method for Calibration of Primary Non-Concentrator Terrestrial Photovoltaic Reference Cells Using a Tabular Spectrum

E1143 Test Method for Determining the Linearity of a Photovoltaic Device Parameter with Respect To a Test Parameter

E1328 Terminology Relating to Photovoltaic Solar Energy Conversion

G173 Tables for Reference Solar Spectral Irradiances: Direct Normal and Hemispherical on 37 Tilted Surface

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee E44 on Solar, Geothermal and Other Alternative Energy Sources and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee E44.09 on Photovoltaic Electric Power Conversion.

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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. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—Definitions of terms used in this test method may be found in Terminology E772 and in Terminology E1328.

3.2 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.2.1 *cell temperature, °C, n* —the temperature of the semiconductor junction of a photovoltaic cell.

3.2.2 *junction temperature, n* —synonym for **cell temperature**.

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3.2.2 *test light source, n* —~~a source of radiant energy used for the secondary reference cell calibration.~~ —a source of radiant energy used for the secondary reference cell calibration, either natural sunlight or a solar simulator.

3.3 *Symbols:*

3.3.1 The following symbols and units are used in this test method:

C —calibration constant, Am^2W^{-1} ,

E —irradiance, Wm^{-2} ,

E_t —total irradiance, Wm^{-2} ,

I —current, A,

I_p —primary reference cell short-circuit current, A,

I_s —secondary reference cell short-circuit current, A,

I_{sc} —*short-circuit current*, A,

L —collimator length, m,

M —spectral mismatch parameter,

n —total number of data points,

r —collimator receiving aperture radius, m,

R —collimator opening aperture radius, m,

R_a —absolute spectral response, AW^{-1} ,

R_r —relative spectral response,

S —standard deviation,

T —temperature, °C,

α —temperature coefficient of reference cell, $^{\circ}\text{C}^{-1}$,

θ_o —*collimator opening angle*, °, and

λ —wavelength, nm or μm .

3.3.2 Symbolic quantities that are functions of wavelength appear as $X(\lambda)$.

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 The calibration of a secondary photovoltaic reference cell consists of measuring the short-circuit current of the cell under natural or simulated sunlight using a primary reference cell to measure the incident irradiance. In addition to the short-circuit current, the relative spectral response of the cell to be calibrated and the relative spectral irradiance of the light source must be determined. Errors in the short-circuit current due to the spectral irradiance of the light source and the spectral response of the primary reference cell are then corrected by dividing the short-circuit current by the spectral mismatch parameter. Also, if the temperature of the cell is not $25 \pm 1^{\circ}\text{C}$, the temperature coefficient for the short-circuit current is needed. The list of necessary test methods is as follows:

4.1.1 The spectral response of the cell to be calibrated is determined in accordance with Test Methods E1021.

4.1.2 The cell's short-circuit current temperature coefficient is determined experimentally by measuring short-circuit current at various temperatures and computing the temperature coefficient.

4.1.3 Linearity of short-circuit current versus irradiance is determined in accordance with Test Method E1143.

4.1.4 The relative spectral distribution of the light source is determined using a spectral irradiance measurement instrument as specified in Test Method E973.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 The electrical output of photovoltaic devices is dependent on the spectral content of the source illumination and its intensity. To make accurate measurements of the performance of photovoltaic devices under a variety of light sources, it is necessary to account for the error in the short-circuit current that occurs if the relative spectral response of the primary reference cell is not identical to the spectral response of the cell to be calibrated. A similar error occurs if the spectral irradiance distribution of the test light source is not identical to the desired reference spectral irradiance distribution. These errors are accounted for by the spectral mismatch parameter M (Test Method E973), a quantitative measure of the error in the short-circuit current measurement. It is the intent of this test method to provide a recognized procedure for calibrating, characterizing, and reporting the calibration data for secondary photovoltaic reference cells.

5.2 A secondary reference cell is calibrated to the same reference spectral irradiance distribution as the primary reference cell used during the calibration. Primary reference cells can be calibrated by use of Test Method E1125 or Test Method E1039.

NOTE 1—No standards for calibration of reference cells to the extraterrestrial spectral irradiance distribution presently exist.