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Standard Specification for Vacuum Insulation Panels¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This specification covers the general requirements for Vacuum Insulation Panels (VIP). These panels have been used wherever high thermal resistance is desired in confined space applications, such as transportation, equipment, and appliances.

1.2 Vacuum panels typically exhibit an edge effect due to differences between panel core and panel barrier thermal properties. This specification applies to composite panels whose center-of-panel apparent thermal resistivities (sec. 3.2.3) typically range from 87 to 870 m-K/W at 24°C mean, and whose intended service temperature boundaries range from –70 to 480°C.

1.3 The specification applies to panels encompassing evacuated space with: some means of preventing panel collapse due to atmospheric pressure, some means of reducing radiation heat transfer, and some means of reducing the mean free path of the remaining gas molecules.

1.4 ~~Limitations~~ Limitations:

1.4.1 The specification is intended for evacuated planar composites; it does not apply to non-planar evacuated self-supporting structures, such as containers or bottles with evacuated walls.

1.4.2 The specification describes the thermal performance considerations in the use of these insulations. Because this market is still developing, discrete classes of products have not yet been defined and standard performance values are not yet available.

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

1.6 *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 specifications and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use. For*

NOTE 1—For specific safety considerations see Annex A1.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:²

C165 Test Method for Measuring Compressive Properties of Thermal Insulations

C168 Terminology Relating to Thermal Insulation

C177 Test Method for Steady-State Heat Flux Measurements and Thermal Transmission Properties by Means of the Guarded-Hot-Plate Apparatus

C203 Test Methods for Breaking Load and Flexural Properties of Block-Type Thermal Insulation

C390 Practice for Sampling and Acceptance of Thermal Insulation Lots

C480 Test Method for Flexure Creep of Sandwich Constructions

C518 Test Method for Steady-State Thermal Transmission Properties by Means of the Heat Flow Meter Apparatus

C740 Practice for Evacuated Reflective Insulation In Cryogenic Service

C1045 Practice for Calculating Thermal Transmission Properties Under Steady-State Conditions

C1055 Guide for Heated System Surface Conditions that Produce Contact Burn Injuries

C1058 Practice for Selecting Temperatures for Evaluating and Reporting Thermal Properties of Thermal Insulation

C1114 Test Method for Steady-State Thermal Transmission Properties by Means of the Thin-Heater Apparatus

C1136 Specification for Flexible, Low Permeance Vapor Retarders for Thermal Insulation

C1363 Test Method for Thermal Performance of Building Materials and Envelope Assemblies by Means of a Hot Box Apparatus

¹ This specification is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee C16 on Thermal Insulation and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee C16.22 on Organic and Nonhomogeneous Inorganic Thermal Insulations.

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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.

C1667 Test Method for Using Heat Flow Meter Apparatus to Measure the Center-of-Panel Thermal Resistivity of Vacuum Panels

D999 Test Methods for Vibration Testing of Shipping Containers

D1434 Test Method for Determining Gas Permeability Characteristics of Plastic Film and Sheet

D2221 Test Method for Creep Properties of Package Cushioning Materials

D2126 Test Method for Response of Rigid Cellular Plastics to Thermal and Humid Aging

D3103 Test Method for Thermal Insulation Performance of Distribution Packages

D3763 Test Method for High Speed Puncture Properties of Plastics Using Load and Displacement Sensors

D4169 Practice for Performance Testing of Shipping Containers and Systems

E493 Test Methods for Leaks Using the Mass Spectrometer Leak Detector in the Inside-Out Testing Mode

F88 Test Method for Seal Strength of Flexible Barrier Materials

2.2 Other Standards:

ISO 8318 Packaging - Complete, Filled Transport Packages - Vibration Tests Using a Sinusoidal Variable Frequency³

IEC68-2-6, Part 2, Test F, Vibration, Basic Environmental Testing Procedures⁴

TAPPI T803 Puncture Test of Containerboard⁵

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions—Terminology C168 applies to terms used in this specification.

3.2 Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:

3.2.1 adsorbent—a component of some VIP designs, comprising a chemical or physical scavenger for gas molecules.

3.2.2 center-of-panel—a small area located at the center of the largest planar surface of the panel, equidistant from each pair of opposite edges of that surface.

3.2.3 center-of-panel apparent thermal resistivity—the thermal performance of vacuum panels includes an edge effect due to some heat flow through the panel barrier and this shunting of heat around the panel becomes more prevalent with greater panel barrier thermal conductivity, as shown in Fig. 1. For panels larger than a minimum size (as described in 11.4.1), the center-of-panel apparent thermal resistivity is the intrinsic core thermal resistivity of the VIP. This center-of-panel measurement is used for quality control, compliance verification, and to calculate the effective thermal performance of a panel. The effective thermal performance of a panel will vary with the size and shape of the panel.

3.2.3.1 Discussion—Apparent thermal resistivity, the inverse of apparent thermal conductivity, is used when discussing the center-of-panel thermal behavior and this value is independent of the panel thickness.

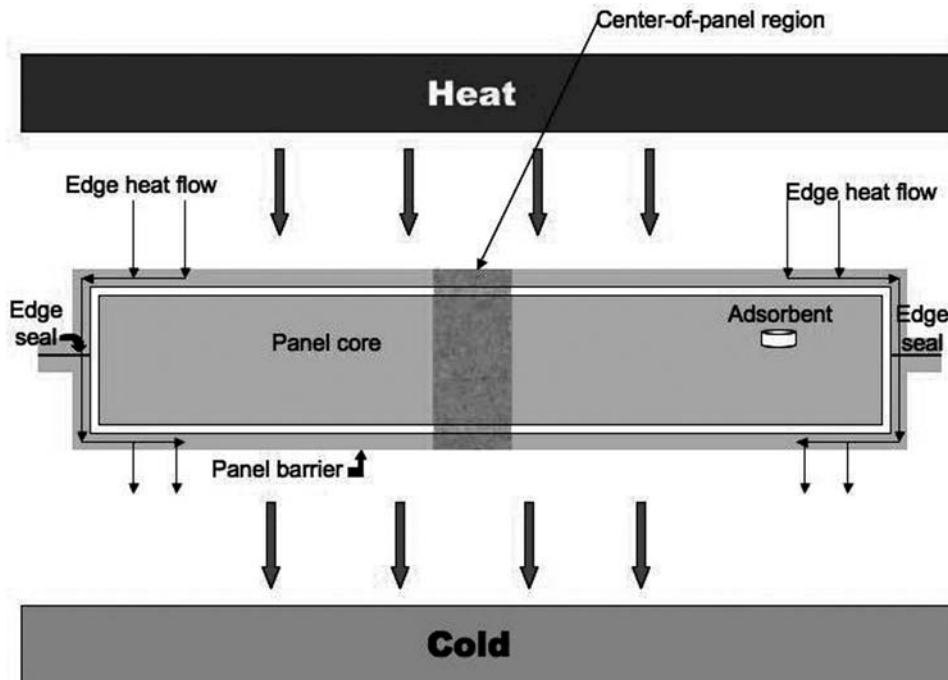


FIG. 1 Side View of a Vacuum Insulation Panel Showing Edge Heat Flow and the Center-of-Panel Region

3.2.4 *edge seal*—any joint between two pieces of panel barrier material.

3.2.5 *effective thermal resistance (Effective R-value)*—this value reflects the total panel resistance to heat flow, considering heat flow through the evacuated region and through the panel barrier.

3.2.5.1 *Discussion*—Depending on the thermal conductivity and thickness of the panel barrier and the size of the panel, the effective thermal resistance of the panel over the edge to edge area may be significantly less than the thermal resistance measured or calculated at the center of the panel. The effective thermal resistance will also depend on the temperatures imposed on the two faces of the panel.

3.2.5.2 *Discussion*—Thermal resistance, the inverse of thermal conductance, is used when discussing the effective thermal performance of the panel. This value includes the effect of the actual panel dimensions, including the panel thickness.

3.2.6 *effective thermal resistance after puncture*—this value represents the effective thermal resistance of the panel in the event of a total panel barrier failure (complete loss of vacuum). The edge effect is still present after a puncture.

3.2.7 *evacuated or vacuum insulations*—insulation systems whose gas phase thermal conductivity portion of the overall apparent thermal conductivity has been significantly reduced by reduction of the internal gas pressure. The level of vacuum will depend on properties of the composite panel materials, and the desired effective thermal conductivity.⁶

3.2.8 *panel barrier*—the material that envelops the evacuated volume and is used to separate the evacuated volume from the environment and to provide a long term barrier to gas and vapor diffusion.

3.2.9 *panel core*—the material placed within the evacuated volume in order to perform one or more of the following functions: prevent panel collapse due to atmospheric pressure, reduce radiation heat transfer, and establish interstitial spaces that are smaller in dimension than (or near to), the mean free path length of the remaining gas molecules. The thermal conductivity of the panel core, or λ_{core} , is defined as the thermal conductivity of the core material under the same vacuum that would occur within a panel, but without the panel barrier material. This is the thermal conductivity that would be measured in the center of an infinitely large panel.

3.2.10 *service life*—The period of time over which the center-of-panel thermal conductivity meets the definition of a superinsulation. A standard-condition service life is defined as that period of time over which the center-of-panel thermal conductivity meets the definition of a superinsulation under standard conditions of 24°C and 50 % relative humidity.

3.2.10.1 *Discussion*—The thermal resistance of a VIP degrades with time due to residual outgassing of VIP materials and gas diffusion through the panel barrier and edge seals. Both of these processes are affected by the service environment, most importantly by the service temperature and humidity in the surrounding air. The service life in hotter or more humid conditions may be shorter; conversely drier or colder environmental conditions can extend the life of the panel.

3.2.11 *superinsulation*—insulation systems whose center-of-panel thermal resistivity exceeds 87 m · K/W measured at 24°C mean.

3.3 *Symbols and Units*—The symbols used in this test method have the following significance:

3.3.1 A = area, m².

3.3.2 B = outgassing coefficient of panel barrier, Pa·l/(h^(1-β)).

3.3.3 C = outgassing coefficient of panel filler, Pa·l/(h^(1-α)).

3.3.4 d_g = density of the gas at standard temperature and pressure, kg/m³.

3.3.5 g = outgassing rate, Pa·l/h.

3.3.6 = *specific outgassing rate*, Pa·l/h · cm².

3.3.7 G = adsorbent capacity, Pa·m³.

3.3.8

3.3.9 k = gas permeation rate, m³/h.

3.3.10 = *gas permeance*, m/h · Pa.

3.3.11 M = molecular weight, kg/mole.

3.3.12

3.3.13 P = pressure, Pa.

3.3.14 p = gas permeance, m/h·Pa.

3.3.15

3.3.16 Q = volumetric flow rate, m³/h

3.3.17 R = ideal gas constant, 8.315 J/g·mole · K.

3.3.18

3.3.19 T = temperature, K.

3.3.20

3.3.21 V = internal VIP free volume, m³.

3.3.22

3.3.23 α = outgassing exponent of filler.

3.3.24 β = outgassing exponent of panel barrier.

⁶ For further discussion on heat flow mechanisms in evacuated insulations, see Practice C740 .

3.3.16 = *outgassing exponent*.

3.3.12 ρ_o = density, kg/m³.

3.3.13 τ = time, h.

3.3.17

3.3.14 *Subscripts:*

3.3.17.1

3.3.14.1 *e* = environmental.

3.3.17.2 *f* = flange.

3.3.17.3

3.3.14.2 *i* = refers to a specific gas, that is, P_i is the partial pressure of the i^{th} gas.

3.3.17.4

3.3.14.3 *init* = initial.

3.3.17.5 *s* = surface.

3.3.14.4 *u* = limiting (after long time).

3.3.14.5 *0* = value after one h or value at standard temperature and pressure.

4. Ordering Information

4.1 Orders shall include the following information:

4.1.1 Title, designation, and year of issue of this specification,

4.1.2 Product name,

4.1.3 Panel size and effective R-value required,

4.1.4 Service environmental parameters: maximum temperature, average temperature, maximum relative humidity, average relative humidity,

4.1.5 Required service life,

4.1.6 Tolerance if other than specified,

4.1.7 Quantity of material,

4.1.8 Special requirements for inspection or testing, or both,

4.1.9 If packaging is other than specified,

4.1.10 If marking is other than specified,

4.1.11 Special installation instructions if applicable,

4.1.12 Required compressive resistance,

4.1.13 Required effective thermal resistance after puncture,

4.1.14 Any required fire characteristics,

4.1.15 Required creep characteristics,

4.1.16 Required edge seal strength, and

4.1.17 Required dimensional stability at service environmental conditions.

5. Materials and Manufacture

5.1 *Panel Composite Design*—The panel shall consist of a gas barrier layer(s), as described in 5.2, and an evacuated core material or system as described in 5.3. See Fig. 1. An engineered quantity of gas adsorbent is optional. It is not necessary that the panel design be symmetrical, depending upon end-use requirements.

5.2 *Panel Barrier Composition*—The panel barrier consists of one or more layers of materials whose primary functions are to control gas diffusion to the core, and to provide mechanical protection. Candidate panel barrier materials include metallic, organic, inorganic or a combination thereof depending on the level of vacuum required, the desired service life, and the intended service temperature regimes. Panel barrier materials are selected to prevent outgassing, or at least to give off only those gases or vapors which can be conveniently adsorbed.

5.3 *Panel Core Composition*—The core shall comprise a system of cells, microspheres, powders, fibers, aerogels, or laminates, whose chemical composition shall be organic, inorganic, or metallic. Within the reticular portion of the core, subsystems such as honeycomb or integral wall systems are allowed.

NOTE 1—The function of the core composition or system is typically twofold: it reduces the radiative, solid, and gaseous heat transfer contributions to overall heat transfer, and it can provide a structural complement to the panel barriers. Core systems or densities will therefore vary for different anticipated end-uses and service temperature regimes.

6. Physical and Mechanical Properties

6.1 *Compressive Resistance*—The required compressive resistance shall be specified by the purchaser according to the application.

6.2 *Effective Thermal Resistance (effective R-value)*—Table 1 defines standard conditions and information that must be reported with the effective thermal resistance.

NOTE 2—Because the effective thermal resistance is affected by many variables, manufacturers may also provide thermal resistance data at other

**TABLE 1 Standard Effective Thermal Resistance Report
Conditions and Related Information Requirements for New
Vacuum Insulation Panels**

Panel Dimensions
Maximum use temperature
Maximum use humidity at 24°C
Projected standard-condition service life
Initial effective thermal resistance at 24°C and 50 % relative humidity

conditions. In addition to temperature, temperature gradient, and thickness effects, size and shape may have a significant impact on the effective thermal resistance of superinsulation panels, depending on the thermal conductivity of the panel barrier relative to that of the core. The effective thermal resistance can also be affected by temporary temperature excursions that could occur during panel installation, as discussed further in Appendix X2.

6.3 *Effective Thermal Resistance After Puncture*—This value represents the effective thermal resistance of the panel in the event of a panel barrier failure (that is, after the panel internal volume has reached ambient pressure) and shall be reported by the supplier.

6.4 *Fire Characteristics*—The fire properties of the vacuum insulation panel shall be addressed through fire test requirements that are specific to the end use.

6.5 *Creep Characteristics*—The creep properties of a VIP will determine its shape and thickness in an application where the VIP is subjected to an externally applied constant stress. This stress can be caused by the environmental temperature as well as by a mechanical load. The creep properties are important because the shape and thickness of the VIP directly affect its thermal performance. The required creep properties shall be specified by the purchaser according to the application.

6.6 *Panel Barrier Permeance*—The panel barrier permeance is required for the VIP Service Life calculations. The panel barrier permeance shall be measured and reported for individual gases of interest.

NOTE 3—The panel barrier permeance may also be affected by the service environment.

6.7 *Dimensional Stability at Service Conditions*—The maximum allowable change in panel dimensions caused by the change from ambient to service environmental conditions shall be specified by the purchaser.

7. Dimensions and Tolerances

7.1 *Dimensions*—The dimensions shall be as agreed upon by the purchaser and supplier.

7.2 *Tolerances*—Tolerances shall be as agreed upon by the purchaser and supplier.

8. Workmanship and Finish

8.1 The insulation shall have no defects that adversely affect its service qualities and ability to be installed.

9. Sampling

9.1 Quality control records shall be maintained by the manufacturer, and will usually suffice in the relationship between the purchaser and the manufacturer. If they mutually agree to accept lots on the basis of quality control records, no further sampling is required.

9.2 Any alternate sampling procedure shall be agreed upon between the purchaser and the manufacturer.

10. Qualification Requirements

10.1 For the purpose of initial material or product qualification, insulation shall meet the physical and mechanical properties of Section 6.

10.2 Acceptance qualification for lots and shipments of qualified product shall be agreed upon by purchaser and supplier.

11. Test Methods

11.1 Properties of the insulation shall be determined in accordance with the following methods.

11.2 *Compressive Resistance*—Test Method C165 or another method acceptable to both the purchaser and supplier shall be used.

11.3 *Panel Barrier Permeance*—The panel barrier permeance for each gas of interest shall be measured using Test Method D1434, the method described in Appendix X3, or another method acceptable to both the purchaser and supplier. The effects of service temperature and humidity, any temperature excursion(s), and the chemical environment on the panel barrier permeance shall be considered.

11.4 *Thermal Performance:*

11.4.1 *Center-of-Panel Thermal Resistivity*—The center-of-panel thermal resistivity is a measured value that is used to approximate the thermal resistivity of the evacuated core region. Use Test Methods C177, C518, or C1114 in conjunction with Test Method C1667 and Practice C1045 to evaluate center-of-panel heat transfer properties. In the event of dispute, Test Method C177 shall be the referee method. Temperature differences shall be selected from Practice C1058. The mean test temperature shall be selected according to the standard reporting temperatures shown in Table 1. The mean thermal resistivity of the center-of-panel tested shall not be less than the manufacturer's stated values.

~~NOTE 4—Due 5—Due~~ to low thermal diffusivity of some superinsulation, it may be necessary to increase the time required to reach steady-state heat flow in thermal resistance tests.

~~NOTE 5—For 6—For~~ a sufficiently large panel, the flow through the panel barrier will be a relatively small portion of the flow measured at the center of panel, so that thermal conductivity measurements made at the center of the panel will represent the conductivity of the panel core region within an adequate margin of error. The center-of-panel thermal resistivity is often used, along with information about the panel barrier material and panel geometry, to calculate the effective panel thermal resistance.

~~NOTE 6—The 7—The~~ center-of-panel measurement can be used for quality control purposes. If panels are tested two weeks after manufacture as a part of quality-control program, this measurement will expose any panels with gross leaks.

11.4.1.1 The minimum panel size for this test is determined by the thermal conductivity of the panel barrier, the thickness of the panel barrier, the thermal conductivity of the core, and the size of the heat flux transducer or guarded hot plate surface used to make the measurement. Test Method C1667 provides a fuller discussion of the relationship between these factors.

11.4.1.2 Another method to determine the core conductivity uses an array of heat flux transducers in the heat flow meter apparatus. These measurements can be analyzed using a thermal modeling program to calculate the thermal resistivity of the filler or the magnitude of the thermal bridging through the panel barrier (1).⁷

11.4.1.3 If Test Method C1363 is used to measure the effective panel thermal resistance of the full size panel, the center-of-panel thermal resistivity measurement is not required. However, if numerical models are used to predict the effective thermal performance for panels of other sizes, the center-of-panel thermal resistivity shall be measured.

11.4.2 *Effective Thermal Resistance* :

11.4.2.1 The effective thermal resistance differs significantly from the product of the center-of-panel resistivity and the thickness, and this system characteristic must take into account the details of the overall VIP design as well as its installation. The effective thermal resistance will vary over long periods of time. Therefore standard reporting conditions have been specified in Table 1. This issue is discussed further in 11.6.

11.4.2.2 Determine the effective thermal resistance of a full-size panel using either of the following two approaches:

11.4.2.2.1 Measure the effective thermal resistance using a calorimetric technique as described in Ref. (2), or Test Method C1363. In both cases the appropriate modeling corrections described in Ref. (3) shall be applied. The test temperatures shall be selected from Practice C1058. The mean test temperature shall be selected according to the standard reporting temperatures shown in Table 1.

11.4.2.2.2 Calculate the effective thermal resistance of a full-size panel by the use of finite element analysis, as described in Ref (1). For this analysis, the center-of-panel (or core) thermal conductivity and that of the panel barrier material shall be known.

11.4.2.3 A round-robin test examined the consistency of the various mathematical models used to calculate effective thermal resistance (10).

11.5 *Effective Thermal Performance after Puncture*—The panel barrier shall be punctured with a hole at least 6 mm in diameter and the panel interior shall be exposed to atmospheric pressure for at least seven days. Then the effective thermal resistance shall be measured as described in 11.4.2. The mean thermal resistance of the material tested shall not be less than the manufacturer's stated values.

11.6 *Service Life*—The actual service life of a vacuum insulation panel is determined in large part by: the panel design and materials, the service environment, and the minimum acceptable thermal resistance. The standard-condition service life is defined as the period of time for which the panel will provide superinsulation performance in an environment of 24°C and 50 % relative humidity. In making this determination, the manufacturer shall consider, at the stated standard environmental conditions, the following: the outgassing of the filler material, the outgassing and permeability of the panel barrier material, the permeability of the edge seals, and the performance of any adsorbent materials contained within the panel. The expected decrease in thermal resistance that occurs as the vacuum insulation panel ages shall be measured or computed from the relationship between thermal resistance and internal VIP pressure (for the appropriate mixture of gasses).

~~NOTE 7—The 8—The~~ actual service life of a vacuum insulation panel can be shorter or longer than the standard-condition service life, depending on the service environment and the minimum required thermal resistance. Appendix X1 contains useful information about this complex issue.

11.7 *Creep Properties*—Test Methods C480 or D2221 or another method acceptable to both the purchaser and supplier shall be used.

11.8 *Dimensional Stability at Service Conditions*—Test Method D2126 shall be used.

11.9 *Other Tests*—Other test are appropriate for specific applications as discussed further in Appendix X3.

12. Inspection

12.1 Unless otherwise specified, ~~Test Method Practice~~ C390 shall govern the sampling and acceptance of material for conformance to inspection requirements. Exceptions to these requirements shall be stated in the purchase agreement.

13. Rejection and Resubmittal

13.1 Failure to conform to the requirements in this specification shall constitute cause for rejection. Report rejection to the manufacturer or supplier promptly and in writing.

⁷ The boldface numbers given in parentheses refer to a list of references at the end of the text.