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Standard Guide for Proficiency Test Program for Fabrics¹

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^{ε1} NOTE—Section 3 was updated editorially in September 2011 in accordance with the D13 Terminology policy.

INTRODUCTION

Proficiency testing is the use of interlaboratory test comparisons to determine the performance of individual laboratories for specific tests and to monitor the consistency and comparability of a laboratory's test data.

Participation in proficiency testing programs provides laboratories with an objective means of assessing and demonstrating the reliability of the data they are producing. Although there are several types of proficiency testing programs, they all share the common feature of the comparison of test results obtained by two or more laboratories.

One of the main uses of proficiency testing programs is to assess laboratories' ability to perform tests competently. This will involve the preparation of the test specimens, calibrating or validating the testing equipment, performing the tests and reporting the data.

Bodies assessing the technical competence of testing laboratories normally require or expect satisfactory participation in proficiency testing as evidence of a laboratory's ability to produce reliable test results.

1. Scope

1.1 This guide outlines the Proficiency Test Program for Fabrics. Elements for planning the proficiency test program, selecting the sample fabrics to be used, the testing protocol, and the calculations for the data to be reported are included in this practice.

1.2 The planning of the proficiency test program requires a general knowledge of testing of textile fabrics and statistical principles included in the analysis of the data.

1.3 This guide is designed to meet the quality systems proficiency and competence requirements of participating laboratories. This program is not accredited to any international standard.

1.4 The instructions in this guide follow the logic of full scale laboratory tests as described in Practice D2904 and Guide E1301, except with this new guide placing its emphasis on proficiency testing.

1.5 Procedures given in this guide are applicable to methods based on the measurement of discrete measurement data and grades or scores.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards*:²

- D123 Terminology Relating to Textiles
- D737 Test Method for Air Permeability of Textile Fabrics
- D1230 Test Method for Flammability of Apparel Textiles (Withdrawn 2010)³
- D2261 Test Method for Tearing Strength of Fabrics by the Tongue (Single Rip) Procedure (Constant-Rate-of-Extension Tensile Testing Machine)
- D2904 Practice for Interlaboratory Testing of a Textile Test Method that Produces Normally Distributed Data (Withdrawn 2008)³
- D2906 Practice for Statements on Precision and Bias for Textiles (Withdrawn 2008)³
- D3775 Test Method for Warp (End) and Filling (Pick) Count of Woven Fabrics

¹ This guide is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D13 on Textiles and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D13.60 on Fabric Test Methods, Specific.

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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 The last approved version of this historical standard is referenced on www.astm.org.

- [D5034 Test Method for Breaking Strength and Elongation of Textile Fabrics \(Grab Test\)](#)
- [D5035 Test Method for Breaking Force and Elongation of Textile Fabrics \(Strip Method\)](#)
- [D6545 Test Method for Flammability of Textiles Used in Children's Sleepwear](#)
- [E1301 Guide for Proficiency Testing by Interlaboratory Comparisons \(Withdrawn 2012\)³](#)

3. Terminology

3.1 The following terms are relevant to this standard: accuracy, *of a test method*; batch sample; bias, *in statistics*; calibrate; precision; precision, *under conditions of between-laboratory precision*; proficiency testing; program coordinator; repeatability, *in statistics*; reproducibility, *in statistics*; sample; specimen; test result; testing laboratory.

3.2 For definitions of textile and statistical terms used in this practice, and discussions of their use, refer to Terminology [D123](#) and appropriate textbooks on statistics.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 Proficiency testing is a means of securing estimates of the variability of results obtained by different laboratories testing homogeneous materials taken from batch samples when following procedures prescribed in a specific test method.

4.1.1 For the purpose of this guide, homogeneous materials are considered to be laboratory samples cut from the same batch sample (roll or garment lot) and selected at random for the participant laboratories.

4.2 This proficiency test program is to be considered a full-scale interlaboratory test, in which a reasonably large number of laboratories participate by testing a series of materials using one or more operators per laboratory and report the data for analysis.

4.2.1 For the purposes of this guide, Full Scale Laboratory Test is defined in Practice [D2904](#). This is not to be confused with the full scale testing terminology and definitions which appear in other test methods, such as flammability, that describe the size of the specimens being tested.

4.3 The statistical data generated by this practice provide information needed to exhibit participation in a formal proficiency test study.

4.4 All data are submitted to the program coordinator at ASTM Headquarters for the preparation and distribution of the proficiency testing program reports. All laboratory data are confidential with no disclosure of lab identity except for each participant's own laboratory. Published reports contain all laboratory test data (coded), statistical analysis of test data, charts plotting test results versus lab code, and other information.

5. Materials to be Used in Study

5.1 *Mechanical Testing Program*—Three types of materials are to be included in the study. The materials shall be described as light, medium and heavy as defined by the breaking strengths. The materials to be used for this study shall be selected by the Subcommittee D13.93 with assistance from

participant laboratories and pertinent subcommittees. An accredited laboratory selected by the Subcommittee D13.93 shall act as host and maintain these materials. The host laboratory shall not be held responsible for the performance of the test materials at the participant laboratories.

5.2 *Flammability Test Program*—At least seven types of fabrics are to be available for the study, not all of which will be used at the same time. The materials shall be described by fiber type, construction type (woven, knit, nonwoven), surface characteristics and fabric weight as defined by the flammability characteristics. The fabrics to be used for this study shall be selected by the Subcommittee D13.93. An accredited laboratory selected by the Subcommittee D13.93 shall act as the host and maintain these fabrics. The host laboratory shall not be held responsible for the performance of the materials at the participant laboratories.

6. Distribution of Test Materials

6.1 The proficiency test program is designed for the test materials to be distributed at a minimum two times each calendar year—February and August. Each participating laboratory shall apply through ASTM Headquarters for inclusion in the program.

6.2 The materials will be distributed by having the host laboratory cut fabric samples from each batch roll or garment lot. The samples will be identified, labeled and mailed to each participating laboratory. ASTM Headquarters will provide detailed instruction sheets and mailing labels to the host laboratory.

6.3 Instructions for testing, recording data and return; forms and fabric samples will be mailed together as instructed.

7. Selection of Test Methods

7.1 *For Mechanical Testing*—The test methods shall be selected and monitored by the Subcommittee D13.93. The protocol of this guide may not include the entire scope of methods used for testing fabric, but will include at least one mechanical test from the fields used to define woven fabric properties such as construction, air permeability and strength. Other methods may be added or deleted as directed by D13.93 with input from ASTM staff, participating laboratories, and pertinent Sub-Committee.

7.1.1 The methods to be used for this guide are as follows:

- [D737](#) Air Permeability of Textile Fabrics
- [D2261](#) Tearing Strength By Tongue Method (CRE Type Instrument)
- [D3775](#) Fabric Count of Woven Fabric
- [D5034](#) Breaking Strength and Elongation of Textile Fabrics (Grab Test)
- [D5035](#) Breaking Strength and Elongation of Textile Fabrics (Strip Test)

7.2 *For Flammability Testing*—The test methods shall be selected and monitored by the subcommittee D13.93. The protocol of this guide may not include the entire scope of methods used for testing fabrics, but will include at least one flammability test from the fields used to define characteristics of the end use product.

NOTE 1—D13.52 is preparing two additional testing protocols to be used in conjunction with the flammability tests. The criteria are being