



Designation: D36/D36M – 12

Standard Test Method for Softening Point of Bitumen (Ring-and-Ball Apparatus)¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D36/D36M; 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 the determination of the softening point of bitumen in the range from 30 to 157°C [86 to 315°F] using the ring-and-ball apparatus immersed in distilled water [30 to 80°C] or USP glycerin (above 80 to 157°C).

1.2 The values stated in either SI units or inch-pound units are to be regarded separately as standard. The values stated in each system may not be exact equivalents; therefore, each system shall be used independently of the other. Combining values from the two systems may result in non-conformance with the standard.

1.3 *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

C670 Practice for Preparing Precision and Bias Statements for Test Methods for Construction Materials

D92 Test Method for Flash and Fire Points by Cleveland Open Cup Tester

D140 Practice for Sampling Bituminous Materials

D3461 Test Method for Softening Point of Asphalt and Pitch (Mettler Cup-and-Ball Method)

E1 Specification for ASTM Liquid-in-Glass Thermometers

3. Summary of Test Method

3.1 Two horizontal disks of bitumen, cast in shouldered brass rings, are heated at a controlled rate in a liquid bath while each supports a steel ball. The softening point is reported as the

mean of the temperatures at which the two disks soften enough to allow each ball, enveloped in bitumen, to fall a distance of 25 mm [1.0 in.].

4. Significance and Use

4.1 Bitumens are viscoelastic materials without sharply defined melting points; they gradually become softer and less viscous as the temperature rises. For this reason, softening points must be determined by an arbitrary and closely defined method if results are to be reproducible.

4.2 The softening point is useful in the classification of bitumens, as one element in establishing the uniformity of shipments or sources of supply, and is indicative of the tendency of the material to flow at elevated temperatures encountered in service.

5. Apparatus

5.1 *Rings*—Two square-shouldered brass rings conforming to the dimensions shown in Fig. 1(a).

5.2 *Pouring Plate*—A flat, smooth, brass plate approximately 50 by 75 mm [2 by 3 in.].

5.3 *Balls*—Two steel balls, 9.5 mm [$\frac{3}{8}$ in.] in diameter, each having a mass of 3.50 ± 0.05 g.

5.4 *Ball-Centering Guides*—Two brass guides for centering the steel balls, one for each ring, conforming to the general shape and dimensions shown in Fig. 1 (b).

5.5 *Bath*—A glass vessel, capable of being heated, not less than 85 mm in inside diameter and not less than 120 mm in depth from the bottom of the flare.

NOTE 1—An 800-mL, low-form Griffin beaker of heat-resistant glass meets this requirement.

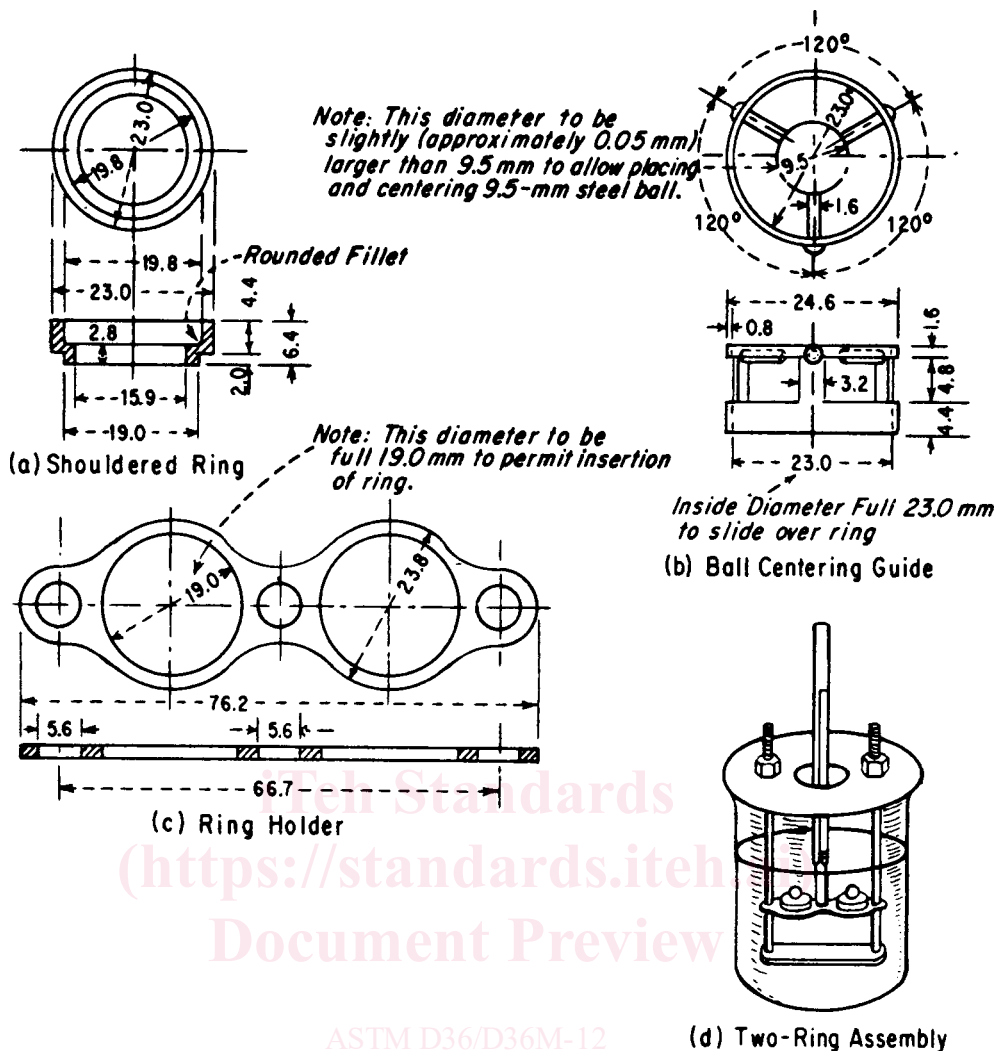
5.6 *Ring Holder and Assembly*—A brass holder designed to support the two rings in a horizontal position, conforming to the shape and dimensions shown in Fig. 1 (c), supported in the assembly illustrated in Fig. 1 (d). The bottom of the shouldered rings in the ring holder shall be 25 mm [1.0 in.] above the upper surface of the bottom plate, and the lower surface of the bottom plate shall be 16 ± 3 mm [$\frac{5}{8} \pm \frac{1}{8}$ in.] from the bottom of the bath.

5.7 *Thermometers:*

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D08 on Roofing and Waterproofing and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D08.03 on Surfacing and Bituminous Materials for Membrane Waterproofing and Built-up Roofing.

Current edition approved May 1, 2012. Published June 2012. Originally approved in 1962. Last previous edition approved in 2009 as D36–09. DOI: 10.1520/D0036_D0036M-12.

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.



NOTE 1—All dimensions are in millimetres (± 0.3 mm except where noted).
FIG. 1 Shouldered Ring, Ball-Centering Guide, Ring Holder, and Assembly of Apparatus Showing Two Rings

5.7.1 An ASTM Low Softening Point Thermometer, having a range from -2 to $+80^{\circ}\text{C}$ or 30 to 180°F , and conforming to the requirements for Thermometer 15C or 15F as prescribed in Specification E1. As an alternative, any other thermometric device used shall be at least: (1) of equal accuracy to that of the thermometer specified in Specification E1, (2) capable of indicating temperature to within 1°C [2°F], and (3) stable to within 1°C [2°F] for the duration of the exposure.

5.7.2 An ASTM High Softening Point Thermometer, having a range from 30 to 200°C or 85 to 392°F , and conforming to the requirements for Thermometer 16C or 16F as prescribed in Specification E1. As an alternative, any other thermometric device used shall be at least: (1) of equal accuracy to that of the thermometer specified in Specification E1, (2) capable of indicating temperature to within 1°C [2°F], and (3) stable to within 1°C [2°F] for the duration of the exposure.

5.7.3 The appropriate thermometer shall be suspended in the assembly as shown in Fig. 1 (d) so that the bottom of the bulb is level with the bottom of the rings and within 13 mm [0.5 in.] of the rings, but not touching them or the ring holder. Substitution of other thermometers shall not be permitted. As

an alternative, any other thermometric device used shall be at least: (1) of equal accuracy to that of the thermometer specified in Specification E1, (2) capable of indicating temperature to within 0.5°C [1.0°F], and (3) stable to within 0.5°C [1.0°F] for the duration of the exposure.

6. Reagents and Materials

6.1 Bath Liquids:

6.1.1 Freshly Boiled Distilled Water.

NOTE 2—The use of freshly boiled distilled water is essential to avoid trapping air bubbles on the surface of the specimen which may affect the results.

6.1.2 *USP Glycerin*. (**Warning**—Glycerin has a flash point of 160°C [320°F] in accordance with Test Method D92.)

6.2 Release Agents:

6.2.1 To prevent adhesion of bitumen to the pouring plate when casting disks, the surface of the brass pouring plate may be thinly coated just before use with silicone oil or grease, a mixture of glycerin and dextrin, talc, or china clay. (**Warning**—Isolate silicones from other bituminous testing