



Designation: **D5230—12 D5230 – 12a**

Standard Test Method for Carbon Black—Automated Individual Pellet Hardness¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This test method covers a procedure for measuring individual pellet hardness of carbon black by the automated pellet hardness tester.²

1.2 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as the standard. The values in parentheses are for information only.

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:*³

[D1511 Test Method for Carbon Black—Pellet Size Distribution](#)

[D1799 Practice for Carbon Black—Sampling Packaged Shipments](#)

[D1900 Practice for Carbon Black—Sampling Bulk Shipments](#)

[D4483 Practice for Evaluating Precision for Test Method Standards in the Rubber and Carbon Black Manufacturing Industries](#)

[E11 Specification for Woven Wire Test Sieve Cloth and Test Sieves](#)

3. Summary of Test Method

3.1 A sample of carbon black is passed through two sieves to isolate a fraction of uniform size. The most spherical pellets from this portion are selected and placed into the tester. The individual pellets are pressed against a platen with a load cell for measuring force. As pressure is applied the pellet will either break with a rapid force reduction or the pellet will simply compress. The individual pellet hardness is the maximum force prior to a force reduction of at least 3 cN or the maximum force required to compress the pellet to 90 %, whichever comes first.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 Individual pellet hardness is related to several carbon black characteristics. Among these are mass strength and attrition. The subsequent level of dispersion obtained in some mixed compounds containing the carbon black may be affected by pellet hardness. Acceptable pellet hardness must be agreed to by the user and the producer.

5. Apparatus

5.1 *Automated Pellet Hardness Tester*,² capable of achieving an absolute measuring accuracy of ± 2 cN (2 gf) for the force measurement and ± 0.1 mm for the diameter measurement and a relative accuracy of ± 0.5 cN (0.5 gf) for the force measurement and 0.02 mm for the diameter measurement and consisting of the following major components and characteristics.

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee [D24](#) on Carbon Black and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee [D24.51](#) on Carbon Black Pellet Properties.

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² The sole source of supply of the Concarb Titan Automated Pellet Hardness Tester known to the committee at this time is Jaron Technologies LLC, 2338 Duncan, Pampa, TX 79065, E-mail: <http://www.jarontech.com>. The HITEC IPHT is available from HITEC Luxembourg, 5 rue de L' Eglise, L-1458, Luxembourg, E-mail: info@hitec.lu, <http://www.hitec.lu/>. If you are aware of alternative suppliers, please provide this information to ASTM International Headquarters. Your comments will receive careful consideration at a meeting of the responsible technical committee,¹ which you may attend.

³ 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.

5.1.1 A means for automatic loading of a pellet on the transport platen for transporting the pellet so as to contact the second platen with a minimum force. Typically one platen contains a force measuring device. The required force to detect the contact shall not exceed 2 cN (2 gf),

5.1.2 A means for applying the force at a constant rate,

5.1.3 A means for transporting the pellet so to minimize its movement during the application of force.

5.1.4 A means for measuring the diameter of the individual pellet under test as measured along the axis of the application of force.

5.1.5 A control device for directing the instrument through the test cycle that includes crushing the pellet under controlled conditions, measuring and storing the results of the initial diameter and crush force determinations, cleaning the fragments from the platen surfaces, and starting the next cycle.

5.1.6 An algorithm for determining the individual test end point (determination) as the maximum observed force prior to the first occurrence of either a specified reduction in diameter or a specified reduction in force from the maximum force observed,

5.1.7 A program for calculating for a specified number of pellets the data as requested in Section 9, and

5.1.8 A means for identifying, viewing, printing, and storing the data in an ASCII file.

5.2 *Mechanical Sieve Shaker*, conforming to Test Method **D1511**.

5.3 *Sieves*, U.S. Standard No. 12 (1700 μm) and No. 14 (1400 μm) conforming to Specification **E11** shall be used to test grades of black that can be segregated in a $-12/+14$ fraction. For grades of black that are too small to be retained on a No. 14 sieve, i.e., acetylene and thermal blacks, it is acceptable to test with U.S. Standard No. 16 (1180 μm) and No. 18 (1000 μm) sieves.

5.4 *Bottom-Receiver Pan and Top-Sieve Cover*.

~~5.5 *Special Pellet Selection Tray*,⁴ (shallow container), flat and approximately 300 mm (12 in.) long.~~

6. Sampling

6.1 Take samples in accordance with Practice **D1799** or Practice **D1900**.

7. Calibration

7.1 Calibrate force and diameter measurement following the manufacturer's instructions.

7.2 *Instrument Parameters:*

7.2.1 Crush diameter, 0.90. A reduction of the pellet diameter to 90 % of the original value is one of two end point criteria.

7.2.2 Force drop. A decrease of 3 cN (3gf) from the maximum force observed is one of two end point criteria.

7.2.3 Rate of piston movement during crush, 0.125 mm/s.

7.2.4 Number of pellets tested; normal applications, 20 pellets, critical applications, 50 pellets. Critical applications are determined by agreement between customer and supplier.

7.2.5 The following ranges of acceptable pellet diameters were established to minimize the number of pellets rejected due to instrument variation and non-spherical pellets.

7.2.5.1 For a $-12/+14$ fraction, 1.31–1.93 mm.

7.2.5.2 For a $-16/+18$ fraction, 0.80–1.44 mm.

8. Procedure

8.1 Prepare a sample of carbon black as follows:

8.1.1 Stack the sieves in the following order from bottom to top: bottom receiver pan, No. 14, and No. 12.

NOTE 1—It is permissible to use multiples of sieve stacks to screen several samples simultaneously.

8.1.2 Stack the No. 12 above the No. 14 sieve, or to test smaller pellet blacks, stack the No. 16 above the No. 18 sieve with the receiver pan on the bottom.

8.1.3 Transfer the sample to the No. 12 screen, install the cover and transfer the assembly to the mechanical shaker.

8.1.4 Allow the sieve assembly to shake for 60 s with the hammer operating.

8.2 Remove the assembly from the shaking device. Select a sufficiently large sample from the pellets retained on the bottom sieve. The sample size required for testing depends on the apparatus that is used.

8.3 Conduct the test following the instructions in the equipment operation manual.

9. Report

9.1 Report the following information:

9.1.1 Proper identification of the sample,

9.1.2 Average value in centinewtons (gram force) rounded to the nearest millinewton (nearest 0.1 g force),

9.1.3 Maximum value in centinewtons (gram force) rounded to a whole number

9.1.4 Number of pellets tested, and