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**Plastics — Determination of melting  
behaviour (melting temperature or  
melting range) of semi-crystalline  
polymers by capillary tube and  
polarizing-microscope methods**

*Plastiques — Détermination du comportement à la fusion  
(température de fusion ou plage de températures de fusion) des  
polymères semi-cristallins par méthodes du tube capillaire et du  
microscope polarisant*

ISO 3146:2022

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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see [www.iso.org/patents](http://www.iso.org/patents)).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see [www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html).

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 61, *Plastics*, Subcommittee SC 5, *Physical-chemical properties*, in collaboration with the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) Technical Committee CEN/TC 249, *Plastics*, in accordance with the Agreement on technical cooperation between ISO and CEN (Vienna Agreement).

This fourth edition cancels and replaces the third edition (ISO 3146:2000), which has been technically revised. It also incorporates the Technical Corrigendum ISO 3146:2000/Cor 1:2002.

The main changes compared to the previous edition are as follows:

- the specifications of the apparatus and measurement procedure have been revised;
- the table of calibration standards has been revised by adding further entries, synonyms and CAS numbers of organic chemicals, correcting errors and modifying melting temperatures according to added references.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at [www.iso.org/members.html](http://www.iso.org/members.html).

## Introduction

The melting behaviour of a crystalline or semi-crystalline polymer is a structure-sensitive property.

In polymers, a sharp melting point, such as is observed for low molecular mass substances, usually does not occur; instead, a melting temperature range is observed on heating, from the first change of shape of the solid particles to the transformation into a highly viscous or viscoelastic liquid, with accompanying disappearance of the crystalline phase. The melting range depends upon a number of parameters, such as molecular mass, molecular mass distribution, per cent crystallinity, and thermodynamic properties.

The melting range can also depend on experimental parameters such as previous thermal history of the specimen, heating or cooling rate, etc. The lower or upper limit of the melting range, or its average value, is sometimes conventionally referred to as the “melting temperature”.

The melting temperatures determined by different methods can differ by several kelvins for above reasons.

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# Plastics — Determination of melting behaviour (melting temperature or melting range) of semi-crystalline polymers by capillary tube and polarizing-microscope methods

## 1 Scope

This document specifies two methods for evaluating the melting behaviour of semi-crystalline polymers.

### a) Method A: Capillary tube

This method is based on the changes in shape of the polymer. It is applicable to all semi-crystalline polymers and their compounds.

NOTE 1 Method A can also be useful for the evaluation of the softening of non-crystalline solids.

### b) Method B: Polarizing microscope

This method is based on changes in the optical properties of the polymer. It is applicable to polymers containing a birefringent crystalline phase. It might not be suitable for plastics compounds containing pigments and/or other additives which can interfere with the birefringence of the polymeric crystalline zone.

NOTE 2 Another method applicable to semi-crystalline polymers is described in ISO 11357-3.

## 2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 291, *Plastics — Standard atmospheres for conditioning and testing*

ISO 472, *Plastics — Vocabulary*

## 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 472 and the following apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <https://www.electropedia.org/>

### 3.1

#### melting range

temperature range over which crystalline or semi-crystalline polymers lose their crystalline characteristics or particulate shape when heated

Note 1 to entry: The “melting temperatures” determined by methods A and B are specified in 4.1 and 5.1.

## 4 Method A — Capillary tube

### 4.1 Principle

A test sample is heated at a controlled rate, and the temperature of the sample measured at the first visible change in shape and again at the disappearance of the last remnants of the crystalline phase.

The first temperature is taken as the melting temperature of the sample, while the range between the two temperatures describes its melting range.

NOTE This method can be used for non-crystalline materials where required by the relevant specifications or by agreement between the interested parties.

### 4.2 Apparatus (see Figure 1)

#### 4.2.1 Melting apparatus, consisting of the following items:

- a) cylindrical metal block, the upper part of which is hollow and forms a chamber;
- b) metal plug, with two or more holes, allowing a thermometer and one or more capillary tubes to be mounted in the metal block;
- c) heating system for the metal block equipped with a suitable temperature control device;
- d) four windows of heat-resistant glass on the lateral walls of the chamber, diametrically disposed at right angles to each other. In front of one of these windows an eyepiece is mounted for observing the capillary tube. The other three windows are used for illuminating the inside of the enclosure by means of lamps.

NOTE Other suitable types of melting apparatus can be used, provided that they give the same results.

#### 4.2.2 Capillary tube, of heat-resistant glass, closed at one end.

The maximum external diameter should preferably be 1,8 mm.

#### 4.2.3 Calibrated thermometer, graduated in divisions of 0,1 °C. The thermometer bulb shall be positioned in such a way that heat dispersion in the apparatus is not impeded.

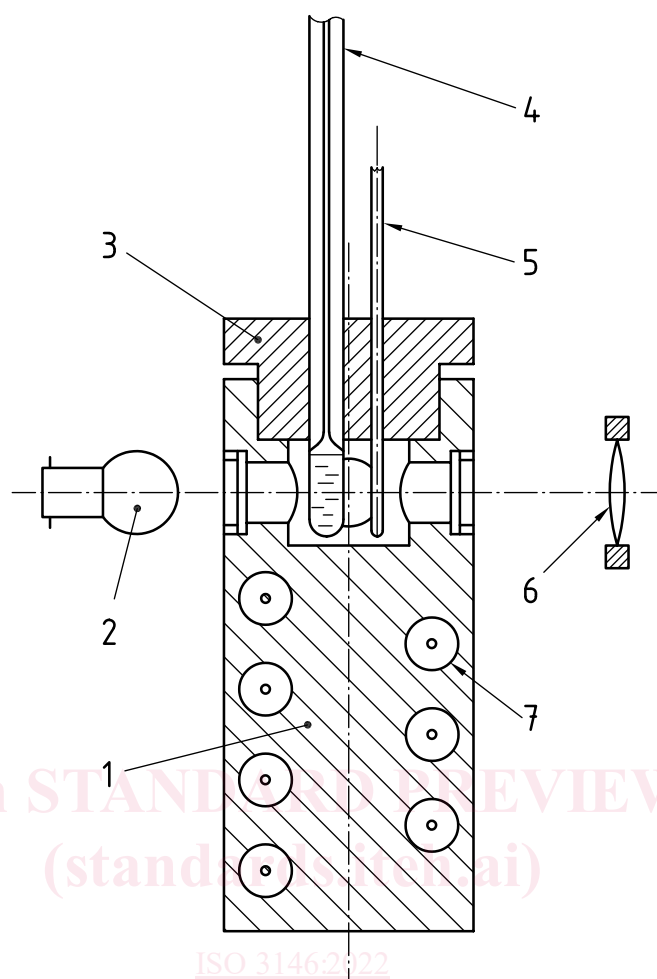
NOTE Other suitable temperature-measuring devices can be used.

### 4.3 Test samples

#### 4.3.1 General

The test samples used shall be representative of the material to be tested.



**Key**

- 1 metal heating block
- 2 lamp
- 3 metal plug
- 4 thermometer
- 5 capillary
- 6 eyepiece
- 7 electrical resistance

**Figure 1 — Apparatus for method A**

#### 4.3.2 Characteristics

Powder of particle size up to 100  $\mu\text{m}$  or cut pieces of film of thickness 10  $\mu\text{m}$  to 20  $\mu\text{m}$  should preferably be used.

Comparison tests shall be carried out on test samples of the same or similar particle size, or of similar thickness in the case of layers or films.

#### 4.3.3 Conditioning

If not otherwise specified or agreed between the interested parties, the test sample shall be conditioned at  $(23 \pm 2) ^\circ\text{C}$  and a relative humidity of  $(50 \pm 5) \%$  for 3 h in accordance with ISO 291 prior to the measurement.

## 4.4 Procedure

### 4.4.1 Calibration

Periodically calibrate the thermometer with reagent grade or certified chemicals over the temperature range used for the test.

Chemicals recommended for calibration purposes are listed in [Table 1](#).

**Table 1 — Calibration standards**

Chemical		CAS Number	Melting temperature <sup>a</sup> °C
IUPAC Name	Synonym		
Gallium		7440-55-3	29,76 <sup>[2]</sup>
Phenyl 2-hydroxybenzoate	Phenyl salicylate	118-55-8	41,79 <sup>[2]</sup>
5-Methyl-2-(propan-2-yl)cyclohexan-1-ol	L-Menthol (-)-Menthol 5-Methyl-2-isopropylcyclohexanol, [1R-(1 $\alpha$ ,2 $\beta$ ,5 $\alpha$ )]-	2216-51-5	43 <sup>[3]</sup>
1-Methyl-4-nitrobenzene	4-Nitrotoluene	99-99-0	51,61 <sup>[2]</sup>
(E)-Diphenyldiazene	trans-Azobenzene	17082-12-1	67,88 <sup>[3]</sup>
1,1'-Biphenyl	Biphenyl Phenyl benzene	92-52-4	68,93 <sup>[2]</sup>
Quinolin-8-ol 8-Quinolol	8-Hydroxyquinoline Hydroxybenzopyridine	148-24-3	75,5 <sup>[3]</sup>
Naphthalene Bicyclo[4.4.0]deca-1,3,5,7,9-pentaene		91-20-3	80,23 <sup>[2]</sup>
Diphenylethanedione 1,2-Diphenylethane-1,2-dione	Benzil Dibenzoyl Diphenylglyoxal	134-81-6	94,85 <sup>[2]</sup>
N-Phenylethanamide	Acetanilide (N-Phenylacetamid)	103-84-4	114,34 <sup>[2]</sup>
Benzoic acid Benzenecarboxylic acid	Carboxybenzene Phenylmethanoic acid	65-85-0	122,35 <sup>[2]</sup>
N-(4-Ethoxyphenyl)acetamid	Phenacetin p-Acetophenetidin	62-44-2	137,5 <sup>[3]</sup>
2,2-Diphenylacetic acid	Diphenylacetic acid 2,2-diphenylethanoic acid	117-34-0	147,19 <sup>[2]</sup>
1,6-Hexanedioic acid	Adipic acid Butane-1,4-dicarboxylic acid	124-04-9	152,5 <sup>[3]</sup>
Indium		7440-74-6	156,60 <sup>[2]</sup>
4-Amino benzene sulfonamide	Sulfanilamide	63-74-1	165,5 <sup>[3]</sup>
1,4-Benzene-1,4-diol	Hydroquinone Quinol 1,4-Dihydroxy benzene	123-31-9	172,5 <sup>[3]</sup>
4-Methoxybenzoic acid	p-Anisic acid	100-09-4	183,28 <sup>[2]</sup>

<sup>a</sup> The temperatures indicated refer to the normal melting point of pure chemicals; preferably, the value of the actual melting point for the standard materials used should be certified by the supplier.