



Standard Test Method for Density, Relative Density, and API Gravity of Crude Petroleum and Liquid Petroleum Products by Thermohydrometer Method¹

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1. Scope*

1.1 This test method covers the determination, using a glass thermohydrometer in conjunction with a series of calculations, of the density, relative density, or API gravity of crude petroleum, petroleum products, or mixtures of petroleum and nonpetroleum products normally handled as liquids and having a Reid vapor pressures of 101.325 kPa (14.696 psi) or less. Values are determined at existing temperatures and corrected to 15°C or 60°F by means of a series of calculations and international standard tables.

1.2 The initial thermohydrometer readings obtained are uncorrected hydrometer readings and not density measurements. Readings are measured on a thermohydrometer at either the reference temperature or at another convenient temperature, and readings are corrected for the meniscus effect, the thermal glass expansion effect, alternate calibration temperature effects and to the reference temperature by means of calculations and Adjunct to D1250, Guide for Use of the Petroleum Measurement Tables (API MPMS Chapter 11.1).

1.3 Readings determined as density, relative density, or API gravity can be converted to equivalent values in the other units or alternate reference temperatures by means of Interconversion Procedures or Adjunct to D1250, Guide for Use of the Petroleum Measurement Tables (API MPMS Chapter 11.1), or both, or tables as applicable.

1.4 The initial thermohydrometer reading shall be recorded before performing any calculations. The calculations required in Section 7-9 shall be applied to the initial thermohydrometer reading with observations and results reported as required by Section 8-11 prior to use in a subsequent calculation procedure (measurement ticket calculation, meter factor calculation, or base prover volume determination).

1.5 Annex A1 contains a procedure for verifying or certifying the equipment of this test method.

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

1.7 *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

D1250 [Guide for Use of the Petroleum Measurement Tables](#)

D1298 [Test Method for Density, Relative Density \(Specific Gravity\), or API Gravity of Crude Petroleum and Liquid Petroleum Products by Hydrometer Method \(API MPMS Chapter 9.1\)](#)

D4057 [Practice for Manual Sampling of Petroleum and Petroleum Products \(API MPMS Chapter 8.1\)](#)

D4177 [Practice for Automatic Sampling of Petroleum and Petroleum Products \(API MPMS Chapter 8.2\)](#)

D5854 [Practice for Mixing and Handling of Liquid Samples of Petroleum and Petroleum Products \(API MPMS Chapter 8.3\)](#)

D6300 [Practice for Determination of Precision and Bias Data for Use in Test Methods for Petroleum Products and Lubricants](#)

E100 [Specification for ASTM Hydrometers](#)

2.2 API Standards:³

[MPMS Chapter 8.1 Practice for Manual Sampling of Petroleum and Petroleum Products](#)

[MPMS Chapter 8.2 Practice for Automatic Sampling of Petroleum and Petroleum Products](#)

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D02 on Petroleum Products and Lubricants and the API Committee on Petroleum Measurement, and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D02.02.09 on Density Determination (API MPMS Chapter 9.0).

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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 Available from American Petroleum Institute (API), 1220 L. St., NW, Washington, DC 20005-4070, www.api.org.

*A Summary of Changes section appears at the end of this standard.

MPMS Chapter 8.3 Practice for Mixing and Handling of Liquid Samples of Petroleum and Petroleum Products (ASTM Practice D5854)

MPMS Chapter 9.1 Hydrometer Test Method for Density, Relative Density (Specific Gravity) or API Gravity of Crude Petroleum and Liquid Petroleum Products (ASTM Test Method D1298)

MPMS Chapter 11.1–2004, including Addendum 1–2007 Temperature and Pressure Volume Correction Factors for Generalized Crude Oils, Refined Products, and Lubricating Oils

2.3 *ASTM Adjuncts:*

Adjunct to D1250, Guide for Use of the Petroleum Measurement Tables (API *MPMS* Chapter 11.1)⁴

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.1.1 *API gravity* ($^{\circ}$ API), *n*—a special function of relative density 60/60°F, represented by:

$$^{\circ}\text{API} = [141.5 / (\text{relative density } 60/60^{\circ}\text{F})] - 131.5 \quad (1)$$

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3.1.1.1 *Discussion*—No statement of reference temperature is required, as 60°F is included in the definition.

3.1.2 *density, n*—the mass of liquid per unit volume at 15°C and 101.325 kPa with the standard unit of measurement being kilograms per cubic metre (kg/m³).

3.1.2.1 *Discussion*—Other reference temperatures, such as 20°C, may be used for some products or in some locations. Less preferred units of measurement, for example, kg/L or g/mL, are still in use.

3.1.3 *observed values, n*—hydrometer readings observed at a temperature other than the defined reference temperature.

3.1.3.1 *Discussion*—These values are only hydrometer readings and not density, relative density, or API gravity at the temperature.

3.1.4 *relative density, n*—the ratio of the mass of a given volume of liquid at a specific temperature to the mass of an equal volume of pure water at the same or different temperature. Both reference temperatures shall be explicitly stated.

3.1.4.1 *Discussion*—Common reference temperatures include 15/15°C, 60/60°F, 20/20°C, and 20/4°C. The historic term specific gravity may still be found.

3.1.5 *thermohydrometer, n*—a glass hydrometer with a self-contained thermometer.

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 The density or API gravity, after temperature equilibrium has been reached, is read by observing the freely floating thermohydrometer and noting the graduation nearest to the apparent intersection of the horizontal plane surface of the liquid with the vertical scale of the hydrometer after temperature equilibrium has been reached. The observed thermohydrometer reading is reduced to the reference temperature value by means of the Petroleum Measurement Tables (the appropriate adjunct to Guide D1250/API *MPMS* Chapter 11.1) and observed temperature from the enclosed thermometer.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 Density and API gravity are used in custody transfer quantity calculations and to satisfy transportation, storage, and regulatory requirements. Accurate determination of density or API gravity of crude petroleum and liquid petroleum products is necessary for the conversion of measured volumes to volumes at the standard temperatures of 15°C or 60°F.

5.2 Density and API gravity are also factors that indicate the quality of crude petroleum. Crude petroleum prices are frequently posted against values in kg/m³ or in degrees API. However, this property of petroleum is an uncertain indication of its quality unless correlated with other properties.

5.3 *Field of Application*—Because the thermohydrometer incorporates both the hydrometer and thermometer in one device, it is more applicable in field operations for determining density or API gravity of crude petroleum and other liquid petroleum products. The procedure is convenient for gathering main trunk pipelines and other field applications where limited laboratory facilities are available. The thermohydrometer method may have limitations in some petroleum density determinations. When this is the case, other methods such as Test Method D1298 (API *MPMS* Chapter 9.1) may be used.

5.4 This procedure is suitable for determining the density, relative density, or API gravity of low viscosity, transparent or opaque liquids, or both. This procedure, when used for opaque liquids, requires the use of a meniscus correction (see 7.29.2). Additionally for both transparent and opaque fluids the readings shall be corrected for the thermal glass expansion effect and alternate calibration temperature effects before correcting to the reference temperature. This procedure can also be used for viscous liquids by allowing sufficient time for the thermohydrometer to reach temperature equilibrium.

6. Apparatus

6.1 *Glass Thermohydrometers*, as specified in Specification E100 (shown in Fig. 1), and graduated in:

⁴ Available from ASTM International Headquarters. Order Adjunct No. [ADJD1250CD](#). Original adjunct produced in 2004.

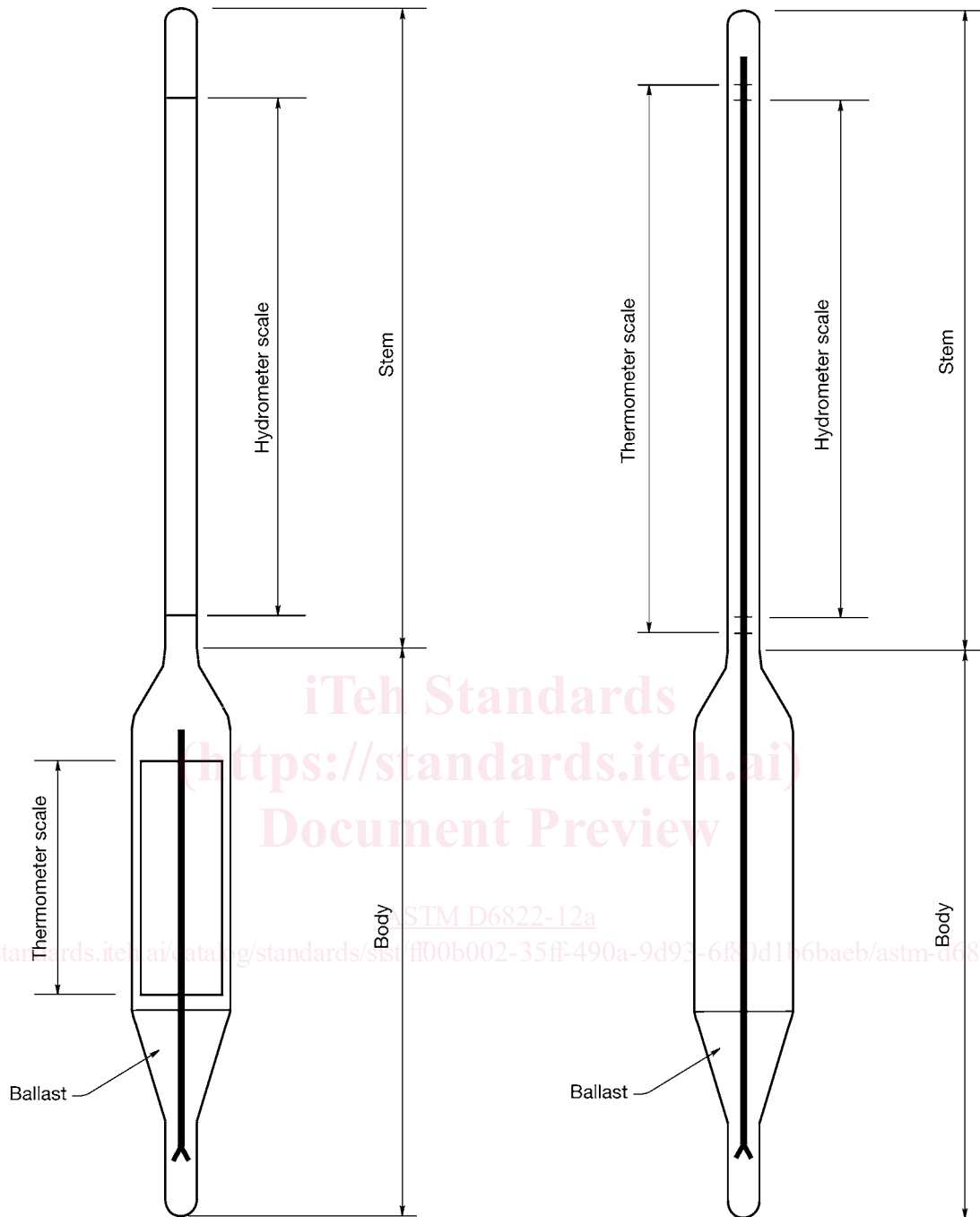


FIG. 1 Typical Thermohydrometer Designs

6.1.1 Kilograms/cubic metre (kg/m^3) and degrees Celsius for density hydrometers, as shown in Table 1.

6.1.2 Degrees API ($^{\circ}\text{API}$) and degrees Fahrenheit for hydrometers measuring in API Gravity, as shown in Table 2.

6.1.3 The user should ascertain that the instruments used for this procedure conform to the requirements set out above with respect to materials, dimensions, and scale errors. In cases where the instrument is provided with a calibration certificate issued by a recognized standardizing body, the instrument is classed as certified and the appropriate corrections for the meniscus effect, the thermal glass expansion effect, and alternative calibration temperature effects shall be applied to the observed readings prior to corrections. Instruments that satisfy the requirements of this test method, but are not provided with a recognized calibration certificate, are classed as uncertified and the appropriate corrections for the meniscus effect, the thermal glass expansion effect, and alternative calibration temperature effects shall be applied to the observed readings prior to corrections.

6.2 *Hydrometer Cylinders*, clear glass, plastic, or metal. For convenience of pouring, the cylinder may have a pouring lip. The inside diameter shall be at least 25 mm (1 in.) greater than the outside diameter of the thermohydrometer used. The height of the cylinder shall be such that the bottom of the thermohydrometer clears the bottom of the cylinder by at least 25 mm (1 in.) when suspended in the sample test portion.

TABLE 1 Density Thermohydrometers

ASTM Hydrometer No.	Density, Range, kg/m ³
300H	600 to 650
301H	650 to 700
302H	700 to 750
303H	750 to 800
304H	800 to 850
305H	850 to 900
306H	900 to 950
307H	950 to 1000
308H	1000 to 1050
309H	1050 to 1100
Hydrometer	
Total length, mm	374 to 387
Body diameter, mm	18 to 25
Stem diameter, mm, min	4.0
Hydrometer Scale	
Standard temperature, °C	15
Subdivisions, kg/m ³	0.5
Short intermediate lines at, kg/m ³	1
Long intermediate lines at, kg/m ³	5
Main (numbered) lines at, kg/m ³	10
Scale error at any point not to exceed, kg/m ³	0.5
Length of nominal scale, mm	125 to 145
Scale extension beyond nominal range limits, kg/m ³	2.5
Thermometer Scale	
Range, °C	
Designation L	-20 to +65
Designation M	0 to +85
Designation H	+20 to +105
Immersion	total
Subdivisions, °C	1.0
Intermediate lines at, °C	5
Main (numbered) lines at, °C	10
Scale error at any point not to exceed, °C	1.0
Scale length, mm	80 to 100

6.2.1 For field testing, a sample thief of suitable dimensions may be more convenient than a hydrometer cylinder. The liquid level shall be level with the top of the thief.

6.3 *Temperature Bath*, to control temperature close to the bulk hydrocarbon temperature or to control temperature close to the reference temperature of 15°C or 60°F.

7. Sampling

7.1 Unless otherwise specified, samples of non-volatile petroleum and petroleum products shall be taken by the procedures described in Practices D4057 (API *MPMS* Chapter 8.1) and D4177 (API *MPMS* Chapter 8.2).

7.2 Samples of volatile crude petroleum or petroleum products are preferably taken by Practice D4177 (API *MPMS* Chapter 8.2), using a variable volume (floating piston) sample receiver to minimize any loss of light components which may affect the accuracy of the density measurement. In the absence of this facility, extreme care shall be taken to minimize these losses, including the transfer of the sample to a chilled container immediately after sampling.

7.3 *Sample Mixing*—May be necessary to obtain a test portion representative of the bulk sample to be tested, but precautions shall be taken to maintain the integrity of the sample during this operation. Mixing of volatile crude petroleum or petroleum products containing water or sediments, or both, or the heating of waxy volatile crude petroleum or petroleum products may result in the loss of light components. The following sections (7.3.1 to 7.3.4) will give some guidance on sample integrity maintenance.

7.3.1 *Volatile Crude Petroleum and Petroleum Products Having an RVP Greater than 50 kPa*—Mix the sample in its original closed container in order to minimize the loss of light components.

NOTE 1—Mixing volatile samples in open containers will lead to loss of light components and consequently affect the value of the density obtained.

7.3.2 *Waxy Crude Petroleum*—If the petroleum has an expected pour point above 10°C, or a cloud point or WAT above 15°C, warm the sample to a temperature that is sufficient for ensuring the material is fluid enough to provide adequate mixing without excessively heating the material that would otherwise compromise the integrity of the sample. Samples heated to 9°C above its pour point, or 3°C above its cloud point or WAT have been found to be suitable temperatures to warm samples prior to mixing. Whenever possible, mix the sample in its original closed container in order to minimize the loss of light components.

7.3.3 *Waxy Distillate*—Warm the sample to a temperature that is sufficient for ensuring the material is fluid enough to provide adequate mixing without excessively heating the material that would otherwise compromise the integrity of the sample. Samples heated to 3°C above its cloud point or WAT have been found to be suitable temperatures to warm samples prior to mixing.

TABLE 2 API Gravity Thermohydrometers

NOTE—For petroleum products and other liquids of similar surface tensions (33 dynes/cm or less).

Thermometer Scale in Body		Thermometer Scale in Stem	
ASTM Hydrometer No.	Nominal API Gravity Range, degrees	ASTM Hydrometer No.	Nominal API Gravity Range, degrees
41H-66	15 to 23	71H-62	-1 to +11
42H-66	22 to 30	72H-62	9 to 21
43H-66	29 to 37	73H-62	19 to 31
44H-66	36 to 44	74H-62	29 to 41
45H-66	43 to 51		
51H-62	-1 to +11		
52H-62	9 to 21		
53H-62	19 to 31		
54H-62	29 to 41		
55H-62	39 to 51		
56H-62	49 to 61		
57H-62	59 to 71		
58H-62	69 to 81		
59H-62	79 to 91		
60H-62	89 to 101		

Hydrometer			
	Thermometer Scale in Body		Thermometer Scale in Stem
Total length, mm	374 to 387		374 to 387
Body diameter, mm	18 to 25		23 to 27
Stem diameter, mm, min	4.0		6.0

Hydrometer Scale	
Standard temperature, °F	60
Subdivisions, °API	0.1
Intermediate lines at, °API	0.5
Main (numbered) lines at, °API	1.0
Scale error at any point not to exceed, °API	0.1
Length of nominal scale, mm	125 to 145

Thermometer Scale		
	Thermometer Scale in Body	Thermometer Scale in Stem
Range, °F ^A		
Designation L	0 to 150	
Designation M	30 to 180	30 to 220
Designation H	60 to 220	
Immersion	Total	Total
Subdivisions, °F	2	2
Intermediate lines at, °F	10	10
Main (numbered) lines at, °F	20	20
Scale error at any point not to exceed, °F	1	1
Scale length, mm	80 to 110	105 to 145

^A Indication of the thermometer range is made by the use of the listed designation used as a suffix to the ASTM hydrometer number. For example, 54HL is an instrument with an API gravity range of 29 to 41°API and a thermometer range of 0 to 150°F. An instrument with the same gravity range but a thermometer range of 60 to 220°F would be designated 54HH. The number 57HM would identify an instrument with an API gravity range of 59 to 71°API and a thermometer range of 30 to 180°F.

7.3.4 Residual Fuel Oils—Heat the sample to the test temperature prior to mixing (see 8.1.1 and Note 4).

7.4 Additional information on the mixing and handling of liquid samples will be found in Practice D5854/API MPMS Chapter 8.3.

8. Apparatus Verification or Certification

8.1 Hydrometers and thermometers shall be verified in accordance with the procedures in Annex A1.

9. Procedure

7.1

9.1 Effect of Test Temperature :

9.1.1 The density or API gravity determined by the thermohydrometer method is most accurate at or near the reference temperature of 15°C or 60°F. Other temperatures within the range of the enclosed thermometer may be used, if consistent with the type of sample and the necessary limiting conditions shown in Table 3.

9.1.2 Bring the sample to the test temperature which shall be such that the sample is sufficiently fluid but not as high as to cause the loss of light components, or so low as to result in the appearance of wax in the test portion.

TABLE 3 Limiting Conditions and Test Temperatures

Sample Type	Initial Boiling Point	Other Limits	Test Temperature
Volatile	120°C (250°F) or lower		Cool in original closed container to 18°C (65°F) or lower
Volatile and viscous	120°C (250°F) or lower	Viscosity too high at 18°C (65°F)	Heat to minimum temperature to obtain sufficient fluidity
Non-volatile	Above 120°C (250°F)		Use any temperature between –18°C and 90°C (0 and 195°F) as convenient
Mixture with non-petroleum products	...		Test at 15 ± 0.2°C or 60 ± 0.5°F

~~NOTE 1—The 2—~~The volume and density, the relative density, and the API corrections in the volume correction procedures are based on the average expansions of a number of typical materials. Since the same coefficients were used in compiling each set of tables, corrections made over the same temperature interval minimize errors arising from possible differences between the coefficient of the material under test and the standard coefficients. This effect becomes more important as temperatures diverge from the reference temperature.

~~NOTE 2—The 3—~~The hydrometer reading is obtained at a temperature appropriate to the physic-chemical characteristics of the material under test. This temperature is preferably close to the reference temperature, or when the value is used in conjunction with bulk oil measurements, within 3°C of the bulk temperature (see 5.3).

~~7.1.3~~9.1.3 For crude petroleum, bring the sample close to the reference temperature or, if wax is present, to 9°C above its pour point or 3°C above its cloud point, whichever is higher.

~~7.1.4~~9.1.4 If the test temperature is significantly different from the reference temperature of 15°C or 60°F, the expansion or contraction of the glass may affect the calibration of the thermohydrometer. A hydrometer correction factor (*HYC*) ~~may be applied to the measured density value to provide a corrected reading.~~

~~7.1.5~~ Convert the thermohydrometer scale reading to base density, if necessary, as follows: ~~—) may be applied to the measured density value to provide a corrected reading.~~

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