



Designation: E569/E569M – 13

Standard Practice for Acoustic Emission Monitoring of Structures During Controlled Stimulation¹

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1. Scope*

1.1 This practice provides guidelines for acoustic emission (AE) monitoring of structures, such as pressure vessels, piping systems, or other structures that can be stressed by mechanical or thermal means.

1.2 The basic functions of an AE monitoring system are to detect, locate, and classify emission sources. Other methods of nondestructive testing (NDT) may be used to further evaluate the significance of reported acoustic emission sources.

1.3 *Units*—The values stated in either SI units or inch-pound units are to be regarded 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 standards.

1.4 *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

E543 Specification for Agencies Performing Nondestructive Testing

E650 Guide for Mounting Piezoelectric Acoustic Emission Sensors

E750 Practice for Characterizing Acoustic Emission Instrumentation

E1316 Terminology for Nondestructive Examinations

E2374 Guide for Acoustic Emission System Performance Verification

¹ This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee E07 on Nondestructive Testing and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee E07.04 on Acoustic Emission Method.

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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.

2.2 Other Documents:³

SNT-TC-1A Recommended Practice for Nondestructive Testing Personnel Qualification and Certification

ANSI/ASNT CP-189 Standard for Qualification and Certification of Nondestructive Testing Personnel

2.3 AIA Standard:

NAS-410 Certification and Qualification of Nondestructive Testing Personnel⁴

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—Definitions of terms relating to acoustic emission may be found in Section B of Terminology E1316.

3.2 Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:

3.2.1 *AE activity*—the presence of acoustic emission during an examination.

3.2.2 *active source*—one which exhibits increasing cumulative AE activity with increasing or constant stimulus.

3.2.3 *critically active source*—one which exhibits an increasing rate of change of cumulative AE activity with increasing or constant stimulus.

3.2.4 *AE source intensity*—average energy, counts or amplitude per hit.

3.2.5 *intense source*—one in which the AE source intensity of an active source consistently exceeds, by a specified amount, the average AE source intensity of active sources.

3.2.6 *critically intense source*—one in which the AE source intensity consistently increases with increasing stimulus or with time under constant stimulus.

4. Summary of Practice

4.1 Acoustic emission examination of a structure usually requires application of a mechanical or thermal stimulus. Such stimulation produces changes in the stresses in the structure. During stimulation of a structure, AE from discontinuities (such as cracks and inclusions) and from other areas of stress concentration, or from other acoustic sources (such as leaks,

³ Available from American Society for Nondestructive Testing (ASNT), P.O. Box 28518, 1711 Arlington Ln., Columbus, OH 43228-0518, <http://www.asnt.org>.

⁴ Available from Aerospace Industries Association of America, Inc. (AIA), 1000 Wilson Blvd., Suite 1700, Arlington, VA 22209-3928, <http://www.aia-aerospace.org>.

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

loose parts, and structural motion) can be detected by an instrumentation system, using sensors which, when stimulated by stress waves, generate electrical signals.

4.2 In addition to immediate evaluation of the emissions detected during the application of the stimulus, a permanent record of the number and location of emitting sources and the relative amount of AE detected from each source provides a basis for comparison with sources detected during the examination and during subsequent stimulation.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 Controlled stimulation i.e. the application of mechanical or thermal load, can generate AE from flawed areas of the structure. Sources may include flaw growth, oxide fracture, crack face stiction and release on load application, and crack face rubbing.

5.2 The load range above normal service (peak) load is used to propagate fatigue cracks in the plastically strained region ahead of the crack tip. Crack propagation may not be a reliable source of AE, depending on the alloy and microstructure, the amount (rate) of crack extension, and possibility of brittle fracture in a segment of crack extension.

5.3 Load increases resulting in significant ductile tearing may produce less emission than expected for the amount of crack growth. Processes that result in more brittle cleavage fractures are more detectable and produce more emission for smaller amounts of flaw growth. These include corrosion fatigue and stress corrosion cracking modes of flaw growth, and would also be more likely in cast or welded structures than in fabricated (forged, rolled or extruded) structures. Distributed defect structures such as hydrogen embrittlement, or creep cavitation in high temperature steels may also produce significant emission without evidence of an existing crack-like flaw.

5.4 Application and relaxation of load can produce secondary mechanically-induced emission that is not related to flaw extension. This includes crack face stiction release on loading—usually evidenced by emission at the same rising load value regardless of peak load; or crack face rubbing on load release as the fracture surfaces come back together.

5.5 The load rate can be a significant concern as instrumentation can become saturated with AE activity. The ability to differentiate real data from background noise can be compromised.

5.6 Background noise must be fully investigated and minimized before any AE monitoring can begin.

6. Basis of Application

6.1 The following items are subject to contractual agreement between the parties using or referencing this practice.

6.2 Personnel Qualification

6.2.1 If specified in the contractual agreement, personnel performing examinations to this standard shall be qualified in accordance with a nationally and internationally recognized NDT personnel qualification practice or standard such as ANSI/ASNT CP-189, SNT-TC-1A, NAS-410, or a similar document and certified by the employer or certifying agency,

as applicable. The practice or standard used and its applicable revision shall be identified in the contractual agreement between the using parties.

6.3 *Qualification of Nondestructive Testing Agencies*—If specified in the contractual agreement, NDT agencies shall be qualified and evaluated as described in Practice E543. The applicable edition of Practice E543 shall be specified in the contractual agreement.

6.4 *Timing of Examination*—The timing of the examination shall be in accordance with a contractual agreement or with an established internal procedure.

6.5 *Extent of Examination*—Many applications will require an arrangement of sensors such that all areas of the structure are monitored. In other applications, only a portion of the structure may require monitoring.

6.6 *Reporting Criteria/Acceptance*—Reporting criteria for the examination results shall be in accordance with Sections 11, 12, and 13.

6.7 *Reexamination of Repaired/Reworked Items*—Reexamination of repaired/reworked items is not addressed in this standard and if required shall be specified in a contractual agreement.

7. Examination Preparation

7.1 Before the examination begins, make the following preparations for AE monitoring:

7.1.1 Determine the type, number, and placement of sensors. This requires knowledge of both material and physical characteristics of the structure and the features of the instrumentation. This determination is also dependent upon the required precision and accuracy of the examination.

7.1.2 Establish communications between the control point for the application of the stimulus and the AE examination control center.

7.1.3 Provide a means for continuously recording a measure of the stimulus.

7.1.4 Identify potential sources of extraneous acoustic noise, such as vibration, friction, and fluid flow. Such sources may require acoustic isolation or control, in order not to mask valid acoustic emissions.

7.1.5 Attach the sensors; both the couplant and sensing device must be compatible with the surface conditions and the composition of the structural material being examined (see Guide E650).

7.1.6 Verify the AE monitoring system in accordance with Section 9 and Guide E2374.

8. Safety Precautions

8.1 When examining vessels, ambient temperature should not be below the ductile-brittle transition temperature of the pressure vessel construction material.

9. Calibration and Verification

9.1 Annual calibration and verification of pressure transducer, AE sensors, preamplifiers (if applicable), signal processor (particularly the signal processor time reference),