



Designation: D7843 – 12

Standard Test Method for Measurement of Lubricant Generated Insoluble Color Bodies in In-Service Turbine Oils using Membrane Patch Colorimetry¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D7843; 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 extracts insoluble contaminants from a sample of in-service turbine oil onto a patch and the color of the membrane patch is analyzed by a spectrophotometer. The results are reported as a ΔE value, within the CIE LAB scale.

1.2 This test method is not appropriate for turbine oils with dyes.

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

[D4057 Practice for Manual Sampling of Petroleum and Petroleum Products](#)

[D4177 Practice for Automatic Sampling of Petroleum and Petroleum Products](#)

[D4378 Practice for In-Service Monitoring of Mineral Turbine Oils for Steam, Gas, and Combined Cycle Turbines](#)

[E177 Practice for Use of the Terms Precision and Bias in ASTM Test Methods](#)

[E284 Terminology of Appearance](#)

[E308 Practice for Computing the Colors of Objects by Using the CIE System](#)

[E691 Practice for Conducting an Interlaboratory Study to Determine the Precision of a Test Method](#)

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions:*

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D02 on Petroleum Products, Liquid Fuels, and Lubricants and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D02.C0.01 on Turbine Oil Monitoring, Problems and Systems.

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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.

3.1.1 *CIELAB color scales, n*—CIE 1976 L^* , a^* , b^* opponent-color scales, in which a^* is positive in the red direction and negative in the green direction; b^* is positive in the yellow direction and negative in the blue direction; and L^* is positive in the lightness direction and negative in the darkness direction. **E308**

3.1.2 *colorimetry, n*—the science of color measurement. **E284**

3.1.3 *in-service oil, n*—lubricating oil that is present in a machine that has been at operating temperature for at least one hour (for example, an engine, gearbox, transformer, or turbine).

3.1.4 *membrane color, n*—a visual rating of particulate on a filter membrane against ASTM Color Standards.

3.1.5 *membrane filter, n*—a porous article of closely controlled pore size through which a liquid is passed to separate matter in suspension.

3.2 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.2.1 *varnish, n*—a thin, hard, lustrous, oil-insoluble deposit, composed primarily of organic residue, and most readily definable by color intensity. It is not easily removed by wiping with a clean, dry, soft, lint-free wiping material and is resistant to saturated solvents. Its color may vary, but it usually appears in gray, brown, or amber hues.

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 Insoluble deposits are extracted from an in-service turbine oil sample using a 47 mm, 0.45-micron membrane nitro-cellulose patch. The color of the patch is then analyzed using a spectrophotometer and the results are reported as a ΔE value in the CIE LAB scale.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 This test can be a guide to end-users on the formation of lubricant-generated, insoluble deposits.

5.2 The results from this test are intended to be used as a condition monitoring trending tool as part of a comprehensive program, as outlined in standards such as Practice [D4378](#).

6. Apparatus

6.1 Variations of apparatus, particularly with respect to filter membranes and vacuum pump setting, can affect the test results significantly.

6.2 When the user of this test method uses an alternate membrane filter, it is incumbent upon them to establish that the alternate filter will give equal results.

6.3 Required Apparatus:

- 6.3.1 Membrane Filter, 47 mm nitro-cellulose, 0.45- μ m.
- 6.3.2 Forceps, smooth-tip.
- 6.3.3 Borosilicate Filter Holder.
- 6.3.4 Borosilicate Filtering Flask.
- 6.3.5 Wash Bottle equipped with 0.22 micron membranes.
- 6.3.6 Vacuum Source, capable of maintaining a vacuum of 71 kPa \pm 5 kPa.
- 6.3.7 Graduated cylinder, 150–200 mL.
- 6.3.8 Beaker, 100–250 mL.
- 6.3.9 Petri dish.
- 6.3.10 Spectrophotometer, with capabilities of analyzing a standard 15 mm target with a 0°/45° measuring geometry, 10° observer, 10 nm spectral intervals minimum resolution, the visible spectral range of 400–700 nm and CIELAB measuring indices.

7. Reagents and Materials

7.1 *Petroleum Spirit* (also known as petroleum ether or IP Petroleum Spirit 40/60) (**Warning**—Extremely flammable. Harmful if inhaled. Vapors are easily ignited by electrostatic discharges, causing flash fire.), having boiling range from 35 to 60°C.

7.2 *Coleman Camp Fuel*—Coleman Fuel is a complex mixture of light hydrocarbons (primarily aliphatic) produced by distillation of petroleum. Carbon number range is C5 to C9, and contains less than 0.001% benzene.

7.3 *Purity of Reagents*—Reagent grade chemicals shall be used in all tests. Unless otherwise indicated, it is intended that all reagents conform to the specifications of the Committee of Analytical Reagents of the American Chemical Society where such specifications are available. Other grades may be used, provided it is first ascertained that the reagent is of sufficiently high purity to permit its use without lessening the accuracy of the determination.

8. Sampling, Test Specimens, and Test Units

8.1 Using either Practice **D4057** (manual sampling) or Practice **D4177** (automatic sampling), obtain a representative sample of at least 60 mL of the material to be tested. The preferred sample container is an amber or other dark colored bottle to minimize potential UV reactions to the sample. Translucent or clear bottles can be used as long as the sample is protected from UV exposure.

8.2 The sample shall be heated to 60–65°C for 23–25 h then stored between 15–25°C, away from UV light for an incubation period of 68–76 hours. Samples that are analyzed prior to this aging period may produce fewer color bodies on the patch; thus, producing a lower ΔE value, and may lower the value of trend analysis.

NOTE 1—Samples can be analyzed in longer or shorter intervals with agreement of the end-user. The level of deposit and as a consequence, the test results may be affected by time duration chosen. It is sometimes suggested to additionally analyze the sample at multiple incubation periods to fully understand the operating system.

9. Procedure

9.1 Preparation of Sample and Materials:

9.1.1 Document the date and time at the beginning of the test.

9.1.2 Vigorously mix the sample for 15 s minimum to resuspend insolubles uniformly. Visually inspect the inside of the bottle for evidence of material adherent to the surface of the bottle before sampling.

NOTE 2—If adherent material cannot be removed from bottle after repeated attempts to vigorously mix, include as comment in the reporting documentation.

9.1.3 Transfer 50 mL \pm 1 mL of sample into clean beaker or Erlenmeyer flask.

9.1.4 Add approximately 50 mL \pm 1 mL of petroleum ether to beaker containing sample.

9.1.5 Stir sample for approximately 30 s to ensure that a complete solution (and complete mixing) is attained.

9.1.6 Pour sample into filter funnel within 1–2 minutes of initial mixing.

9.2 Filtration Process:

9.2.1 Using forceps, mount the filter on the center of the filter holder.

9.2.2 Mount and securely clamp the filter funnel to the filter.

9.2.3 Apply a vacuum and ensure a vacuum of less than 76 kPa is attained and held.

9.2.4 Rinse the beaker twice with a minimum of 35 mL of petroleum ether and pour the rinsing into the filter funnel.

9.2.5 Permit the filtrate to completely flow through.

9.2.6 Carefully, remove the clamp and funnel. Wash any adhering insolubles from the funnel onto the membrane with petroleum ether. Wash the membrane gently, particularly the edges, with petroleum ether from the wash bottle.

NOTE 3—If any of the deposits fails to remain on (or falls off) the dry membrane the test must be repeated.

9.2.7 Carefully release the vacuum.

9.2.8 Remove the clamp and filter holder.

9.2.9 Using forceps carefully remove the filter from the filter holder and place into a clean dry petri-dish. To facilitate handling, the membrane filters might be rested on clean glass rods in the petri-dish.

9.2.10 Dry the membrane by placing it in a low-level heat source free of ignition sources for flammable vapors, or air dry (typically, 3 h) in a dust-free location. Dryness can be estimated by comparing the white color of the outer edge of the test membrane with a new membrane.

9.3 Color Determination of the Membrane Patch:

9.3.1 Standardize the instrument using a patch developed from clean solvent application of the method to establish the background color white.

9.3.2 Follow the standardization procedure defined by the instrument manufacturer.