



Designation: **A976 – 03 (Reapproved 2008) A976 – 13**

Standard Classification of Insulating Coatings for Electrical Steels by Composition, Relative Insulating Ability and Application¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation A976; 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 document classifies insulating coatings for electrical steels according to their composition, relative insulating ability, and functionality. The purpose of this classification is to assist users of insulating coatings by providing general information about the chemical nature and use of the coatings, as well as to provide important data concerning limits to their use, that is, relative insulating ability, punchability, temperature stability, weldability, and fabricability. Specific surface insulation resistivity values for each coating are not included in this classification. The user is referred to the flat-rolled electrical steel specifications noted in 1.2 should more detailed information concerning surface insulation resistivity values be required.

1.2 This classification is to be used in conjunction with the various specifications for flat-rolled electrical steels under the jurisdiction of Committee A06, including Specifications **A345**, **A677**, **A683**, **A726**, **A840**, and **A876**. However, in those instances in which the coating descriptions and characteristics differ between this classification and any of the specifications, this classification shall supersede the specification.

1.3 The values stated in customary (cgs-emu and inch-pound) units are to be regarded as standard. The values given in parentheses are mathematical conversions to SI units which are provided for information only and are not considered standard.

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

A340 Terminology of Symbols and Definitions Relating to Magnetic Testing

A345 Specification for Flat-Rolled Electrical Steels for Magnetic Applications

A677 Specification for Nonoriented Electrical Steel Fully Processed Types

A683 Specification for Nonoriented Electrical Steel, Semiprocessed Types

A717/A717M Test Method for Surface Insulation Resistivity of Single-Strip Specimens

A726 Specification for Cold-Rolled Magnetic Lamination Quality Steel, Semiprocessed Types

A840 Specification for Fully Processed Magnetic Lamination Steel (Withdrawn 2011)³

A876 Specification for Flat-Rolled, Grain-Oriented, Silicon-Iron, Electrical Steel, Fully Processed Types

A937/A937M Test Method for Determining Interlaminar Resistance of Insulating Coatings Using Two Adjacent Test Surfaces

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:

3.1.1 *interlaminar resistance, n*—the average resistance of two adjacent insulating surfaces in contact with each other, in accordance with Test Method **A937/A937M**.

3.1.2 *stress-relief anneal, n*—heat treatment that improves the magnetic properties of electrical steel by relieving internal stresses which are introduced during fabrication of magnetic cores.

¹ This classification is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee **A06** on Magnetic Properties and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee **A06.02** on Material Specifications.

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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 The last approved version of this historical standard is referenced on www.astm.org.

3.1.3 *surface insulation resistivity, n*— the effective resistivity of a single insulating layer tested between applied bare metal contacts and the base metal of the insulated test specimen, in accordance with Test Method [A717/A717M](#).

3.2 Definitions for other terms and symbols used in this specification are defined in Terminology [A340](#).

4. Significance and Use

4.1 This classification establishes categories of insulating coatings based on their chemical nature, relative insulating ability, and typical applications. These categories describe general physical and chemical characteristics of the coatings that are useful in making broad estimates of their insulating ability and suitability for various applications.

5. Basis of Classification

5.1 The insulating coatings are categorized according to general composition, relative insulating ability, and functionality ([Table 1](#)). The purpose of this classification is to create a nomenclature for the various coating types. It is not the intent of this classification to specify coating requirements. Specific properties required by coating users should be negotiated with the steel producer.

5.2 To reduce confusion regarding the various categories of coatings, this classification follows the “C” type of designation initially used by the American Iron and Steel Institute for describing insulating coatings.⁴ The “C” is included in the coating designation because insulating coatings for electrical steels have been historically referred to as “coreplate” coatings. This classification includes new coatings and test methods not included in the most recent edition of the AISI classification. Note that the electrical steel committee of the AISI is no longer active, and the 1983 edition of the coating classification document was the last edition of the coating classification to be published.⁵

6. Test Methods

6.1 The surface insulation resistivity of an insulating layer may be measured using Test Methods [A717/A717M](#). In this test method, ten metallic contacts of fixed area are applied to one of the surfaces of the test specimen, and electrical contact is made with the base metal by two drills ([Fig. 1](#) and [Fig. 2](#)). The effectiveness of the coating (surface insulation) then is indicated by a measurement of the average electrical current flowing between the contacts and the base metal under specified applied voltage. This current value often is referred to as the “Franklin Current” and may be used directly as an indicator of the quality of the insulation. Specifically, a Franklin Current of zero corresponds to a perfect insulator. A Franklin Current of 1 ampere corresponds to a perfect conductor. If desired, an apparent surface insulation resistivity value for the insulating layer may be calculated as follows:

$$R_i = 6.45 \left\{ \left(\frac{1}{I} \right) - 1 \right\} \text{ in } \Omega\text{-cm}^2/\text{lamination} \quad (1)$$

ASTM or

$$R_i = 645 \left\{ \left(\frac{1}{I} \right) - 1 \right\} \text{ in } \Omega\text{-mm}^2/\text{lamination} \quad (2)$$

where:

R_i = surface insulation resistivity of test sample (two surfaces in series) in $\Omega\text{-cm}^2/\text{lamination}$ or $\Omega\text{-mm}^2/\text{lamination}$ and
 I = ammeter reading in A (also known as Franklin Current).

Note that this test method often is referred to as the Franklin test. The Franklin test is a widely used method for evaluating the effectiveness of surface insulation on electrical steels.

6.2 The average resistance of two adjacent insulating surfaces in contact with each other, interlaminar resistance, may be measured using Test Method [A937/A937M](#). Because the interlaminar resistance is influenced by coating-to-coating contact, this test method is particularly useful for providing an estimate of the interlaminar resistance in a stacked or wound core in which coated surfaces are in contact with each other. Furthermore, this test method is particularly useful for electrical steels coated with insulating coatings having surface insulation resistivities in excess of $300 \Omega\text{-cm}^2$ ($30 \text{ k}\Omega\text{-mm}^2$) (that is, less than 0.02 A when measured according to Test Method [A717/A717M](#)). In this Two-Surface test method, intimate physical contact of these surfaces is achieved by means of test heads that force a defined surface area into contact under a specified pressure. For the interlaminar resistance measurement, electrical contact is established between the test specimen and a constant direct current source using metallic contacts. The tester uses two sets of metallic contacts, which penetrate the exposed test surfaces into the base metal, to form a four-probe configuration ([Fig. 3](#)). A continuous electrical path is formed between the contacts and the constant current source when the metallic contacts penetrate through the coating on the exposed test surfaces to the underlying base metal. When current flows in the circuit, the dc voltage developed in the circuit is measured with a voltmeter. The resistance of the insulation is then determined by Ohm’s law.

⁴ *Steel Products Manual on Flat-Rolled Electrical Steel*, American Iron and Steel Institute, 1101 17th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036-4700, January 1983.

⁵ Loudermilk, D. S. and Murphy, R. A., “Overview of Technology of Insulating Coatings for Grain-Oriented and Nonoriented Electrical Steels,” Fifteenth Annual Conference on Properties and Applications of Magnetic Materials, Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago, IL, May 1996.