



Designation: C516 – 08 (Reapproved 2013)^{e1}

Standard Specification for Vermiculite Loose Fill Thermal Insulation¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation C516; 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.

This standard has been approved for use by agencies of the U.S. Department of Defense.

^{e1} NOTE—11.1, 12.1, 12.2.2, and Table 3 were editorially corrected in April 2014.

1. Scope

1.1 This specification covers the composition and physical properties of expanded or exfoliated vermiculite loose fill insulation. The specification also includes the testing procedures by which the acceptability of the material shall be determined. These testing procedures deal primarily with material performance in the temperature range associated with the thermal envelope of buildings; however, the commercially usable temperature range for this insulation is from -119 to 850°F (-84 to 454°C). For specialized applications, refer to manufacturer's instructions.

1.2 The specification also covers the composition and properties of vermiculite that has been surface-treated to produce water repellency for installations.

1.3 When the installation or use of thermal insulation materials, accessories, and systems may pose safety or health problems, the manufacturer shall provide the user with appropriate current information regarding any known problems associated with the recommended use of the company's products, and shall also recommend protective measures to be employed in their safe utilization.

1.4 The values stated in inch-pound units are to be regarded as standard. The values given in parentheses are mathematical conversions to SI units that are provided for information only and are not considered standard.

1.5 The following safety hazards caveat pertains only to the test methods portion, Section 9, of this specification: *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.* For specific hazard statements, see Section 12.

¹ This specification is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee C16 on Thermal Insulation and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee C16.23 on Blanket and Loose Fill Insulation.

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2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:²

- C136 Test Method for Sieve Analysis of Fine and Coarse Aggregates
- C168 Terminology Relating to Thermal Insulation
- C177 Test Method for Steady-State Heat Flux Measurements and Thermal Transmission Properties by Means of the Guarded-Hot-Plate Apparatus
- C390 Practice for Sampling and Acceptance of Thermal Insulation Lots
- C518 Test Method for Steady-State Thermal Transmission Properties by Means of the Heat Flow Meter Apparatus
- C520 Test Methods for Density of Granular Loose Fill Insulations
- E84 Test Method for Surface Burning Characteristics of Building Materials
- E136 Test Method for Behavior of Materials in a Vertical Tube Furnace at 750°C

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—Refer to Terminology C168 for definitions relating to insulation.

4. Classification

4.1 Vermiculite insulation is classified by type and grade designations, as follows:

4.1.1 *Type I*—Product that results from the expanding or exfoliating of natural vermiculite ore by grading and heating to meet the requirements of this specification.

4.1.2 *Type II*—Expanded vermiculite that has been surface-treated to produce water repellency and limit absorption of moisture from both liquid and vapor phase.

4.1.3 Grade designations established by range of particle size distribution and bulk density are shown in Table 1 and Table 2.

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.

TABLE 1 Density Specifications

Grade Designation	Bulk Density, lb/ft ³ (kg/m ³)	
	min	max
0—Premium	3.0 (48)	5.0 (80)
1—Large	3.7 (59)	5.5 (88)
2—Medium	4.0 (64)	6.0 (96)
3—Fine	4.5 (72)	7.0 (112)
4—Super Fine	5.5 (88)	8.0 (128)

5. Ordering Information

5.1 All purchase orders shall designate both type and grade of insulation desired. If type designation is omitted, Type I will be furnished. The type and grade classifications in this specification differ from the classifications in earlier issues. Purchasers referencing this specification shall include the date of issue.

6. Materials and Manufacture

6.1 Vermiculite is a micaceous mineral which is mined and processed to produce a high-purity concentrate. The concentrate, in the form of flakes of varying size and thickness weighing 55 lb/ft³ (880 kg/m³), is expanded in high-temperature furnaces to densities in the range from 3.0 to 8.0 lb/ft³ (48 to 128 kg/m³). As a naturally occurring mineral, it is classifiable as an elementary building material. It is noncombustible as determined by Test Method E136. Material shall pass combustion test criteria of Test Method E136.

7. Physical Requirements

7.1 The physical requirements listed in this section are defined as Inspection Requirements (see Practice C390, section 5.1.2). The insulation shall conform to the following requirements:

	Type I	Type II
Bulk density, lb/ft ³ (kg/m ³)	See Table 1	See Table 1
Grading (particle size)	See Table 2	See Table 2
Water properties, max g wicked in 5 min	N.A.	3

7.2 The physical properties listed in this section of the specification are defined as Qualification Requirements (see Practice C390, section 5.1.1). The insulation shall conform to the following requirements:

	See Table 3	
Thermal resistance, °F·h·ft ² /Btu (K·m ² /W)		
Moisture absorption, max, % by weight/14 days	3.5	3.5
Combustibility	No flaming, glowing, or smoking	
Surface-burning characteristics (Test Method E84):		
Flame spread, max	0	0
Smoke developed, max	0	0
Water properties, min, mL of water repelled	N.A.	175

8. Sampling

8.1 For purposes of standard tests, sampling shall be in accordance with Practice C390.

9. Test Methods

9.1 The physical properties, as enumerated in Section 7, shall be determined in accordance with the following methods:

9.1.1 *Bulk Density*—Test Methods C520, Method A.

9.1.2 *Grading*—Test Method C136, except that when a mechanical sieving device is used, the sieving time shall be 5 min and the test specimen shall be 50 g of material.

9.1.3 *Thermal Resistance*—Tests for thermal resistance may be made in accordance with Test Methods C177 or C518. Test at the design density. The thermal resistance of the various types shall not be lower than the values listed in Table 3, except that the average thermal resistance of any four specimens may fall up to 5 % below the value in the table. Determine the thermal resistance (*R*-value) at mean temperature of 75°F (24°C) and 40°F (4°C), at design density and in accordance with the current editions of Test Methods C177 or C518. Report the direction of heat flow. Thermal resistance at other mean temperatures may be determined if required.

9.1.4 *Water Vapor Sorption*—The test specimen shall be a sample of approximately 50 g. Loose fill the sample and level into a sample holder 9 by 9 by 5 in. (228 by 228 by 127 mm) deep.

9.1.4.1 Condition with minimum air movement across the sample surface. Condition at 50 ± 2 % relative humidity and 120 ± 5°F (48.9 ± 3°C) to constant weight and record. State the density of the sample conditioned to constant weight in the report of results.

9.1.4.2 Increase the relative humidity to 90 ± 2 % relative humidity and 120 ± 5°F (48.9 ± 3°C) for 14 days. Determine the weight gain after 14 days of exposure.

9.1.4.3 Calculate the percent weight gain after 14 days of exposure to the elevated humidity.

9.1.4.4 *Precision and Bias*—This test establishes a typical property of vermiculite. It is an inherent characteristic. It is only intended to indicate absorption under high humidity conditions which are known to be characteristic of its usual insulation end use.

9.1.5 *Water Repellency (Type II Only)*—Determine the water repellency of Type II vermiculite insulation in accordance with the following procedure:

9.1.5.1 *Apparatus*—(a) Rigid plastic tube 50 mm inside diameter by 300 mm long with a 150-μm (100-mesh) screen covering firmly fastened or adhered to the bottom. The tube shall be marked at 400 mL from the screen-covered end. (b) No. 15 rubber stopper. (c) 250-mL graduated cylinder. (d) 500-mL beaker.

9.1.5.2 *Sample Preparation*—Spoon a representative sample into the test cylinder to a level slightly above the 400-mL mark. Compact it by dropping the tube from a height of approximately 75 mm on a large rubber stopper (No. 15 recommended) for a total of ten drops. As the sample compacts to a level below the 400-mL mark, add additional material so that after the tenth drop, the level of the sample is within 3 mL of the 400-mL mark.

9.1.5.3 *Procedure*—With the tube supported in a vertical position and a beaker positioned under the tube, rapidly pour 250 mL of cold tap water onto the vermiculite. Take care while pouring, that the stream hits the middle of the surface of the bed of vermiculite and does not merely slide down the side of the test cylinder. Allow the water to drain through the bed of vermiculite for exactly 3 min. Tilt the tube at approximately