



Designation: **D3233 – 93 (Reapproved 2009)^{ε1} D3233 – 93 (Reapproved 2014)**

Standard Test Methods for Measurement of Extreme Pressure Properties of Fluid Lubricants (Falex Pin and Vee Block Methods)¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D3233; 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.

^{ε1} NOTE—Corrected SI equivalent in 12.1.1 editorially in October 2010.

1. Scope

1.1 These test methods cover two procedures for making a preliminary evaluation of the load-carrying properties of fluid lubricants by means of the Falex Pin and Vee Block Test Machine.

NOTE 1—Additional information can be found in [Appendix X1](#) regarding coefficient of friction, load gage conversions, and load gage calibration curve.

1.2 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.

1.3 *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

[B16/B16M](#) Specification for Free-Cutting Brass Rod, Bar and Shapes for Use in Screw Machines

[D2670](#) Test Method for Measuring Wear Properties of Fluid Lubricants (Falex Pin and Vee Block Method)

[D2783](#) Test Method for Measurement of Extreme-Pressure Properties of Lubricating Fluids (Four-Ball Method)

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.1.1 *actual gage load, n*—the value obtained from the gage while running the test and before any corrections are made.

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¹ These test methods are under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D02 on Petroleum Products, Liquid Fuels, and Lubricants and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D02.L0.11 on Tribological Properties of Industrial Fluids and Lubricates.

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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.

3.1.1.1 *Discussion*—

This gage reading is irrespective of the particular gage used, and corrections are made by comparison to a standard reference.

3.1.2 *direct load, n*—that which is applied linearly, bisecting the angle of the vee block corrected to either the 800 or 3000-lbf gage reference.

3.1.2.1 *Discussion*—

This load is equivalent to the true load times the $\cos 42^\circ$.

3.1.3 *true load, n*—the sum of the applied forces normal to the tangents of contact between the faces of one vee block and the journal pin corrected to the 4500 lbf gage reference line.

3.1.4 *true load failure value, n*—the true load at which the lubricant tested can no longer support the applied load resulting in either test pin or shear pin breakage, or inability to maintain or increase load.

**TABLE 1 Results of Cooperative Tests on Reference Fluids L-XI-1-2-A, B, C, D, E^A
(TEST METHOD A)**

Laboratory	Test	L-XI-1-2-A Fail Load, lbf		L-XI-1-2-B Fail Load, lbf		L-XI-1-2-C Fail Load, lbf		L-XI-1-2-D Fail Load, lbf		L-XI-1-2-E Fail Load, lbf	
		Gage	True	Gage	True	Gage	True	Gage	True	Gage	True
A	1	1200	840	1200	840	4500 +	4100 +	4300	3950	2600	2100
	2	1275	920	1275	920	4500 +	4100 +	4500 +	4100 +	2400	1925
B	1	800	860	1000	1050	4500 +	4250 +	4100	3900	2050	2050
	2	850	900	950	1025	4500 +	4250 +	4300	4100	1950	1950
C	1	725	990	775	1020	4500 +	3200 +	3950	2900	1350	1460
	2	650	910	750	980	4500 +	3200 +	4100	3000	1300	1430
D	1	1400	1050	1100	770	4500 +	3500 +	4500 +	3500 +	2900	2150
	2	1400	1050	1250	900	4500 +	3500 +	4500 +	3500 +	2650	1975
E	1	825	900	1000	1060	4450	4500 +	4100	4475	1825	1970
	2	750	820	925	1000	4450	4500 +	4150	4500	1825	1970
F	1	1000 ^B	920 ^B	1000	800	4500 +	4500 +	3500	4500	1850	1900
	2	990 ^B	910 ^B	1050	850	4500 +	4500 +	2900	3510	1720	1720
G	1	800	900	690	800	4000	4275	3325	3625	1430	1600
	2	700	800	660	750	3750	4000	3150	3450	1500	1675
H	1	700	700	1000	1000	4500 +	4500 +	3750	3750	1900	1900
	2	700	700	1000	1000	4500 +	4500 +	4000	4000	1650	1650
I	1	750	600	1250	1000	4500 +	3750 +	4500 +	3750 +	1750	1450
	2	750	600	1000	800	4500 +	3750 +	4500 +	3750 +	1750	1450
Min Avg			600		775				2950 ^C		1445
Max Avg			1050		1037				4488 ^C		2063
Grand Avg			854		920				3809 ^C		1796
		Repeatability $s = 0.0624$ $r = 0.179$ (TL) ^D				Reproducibility $S = 0.140$ $R = 0.402$ (TL) ^D					

^A Reference fluids used and described in Test Method D2783.

^B Calibration curves shifted.

^C Six laboratories.

^D TL = average true load, lbf, of sample tested.

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3.1.4.1 Discussion—

This value is also referred to as the limit of extreme pressure.

4. Summary of Test Methods

4.1 Both test methods consist of running a rotating steel journal at 290 ± 10 rpm against two stationary V-blocks immersed in the lubricant sample. Load is applied to the V-blocks by a ratchet mechanism. In Test Method A (Note 1), increasing load is applied continuously. In Test Method B (Note 1), load is applied in 250-lbf (1112-N) increments with load maintained constant for 1 min at each load increment. In both methods the load-fail value obtained is the criteria for level of load-carrying properties. Both methods require calibration of the load gage and reporting of test results as true (corrected) loads rather than actual gage loads.

NOTE 2—Test Method A is referred to as the Falex Run-Up Test. Test Method B is referred to as the Falex One-Minute Step Test.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 Evaluations by both test methods differentiate between fluids having low, medium, and high levels of extreme-pressure properties. The user should establish any correlation between results by either method and service performance.

NOTE 3—Relative ratings by both test methods on the reference fluids covered in Table 1 and Table 2 are in good general agreement with four-ball weld-point relative ratings obtained on these same reference fluids, covered in Test Method D2783.

**TABLE 2 Results of Cooperative Tests on Reference Fluids L-XI-1-2-A, B, C, D, E^A
(TEST METHOD B)**

Laboratory	Test	L-XI-1-2-A Fail Load, lbf		L-XI-1-2-B Fail Load, lbf		L-XI-1-2-C Fail Load, lbf		L-XI-1-2-D Fail Load, lbf		L-XI-1-2-E Fail Load, lbf			
		Gage	True	Gage	True	Gage	True	Gage	True	Gage	True		
A	1	1100	750	1400	1000	4150	3750	4350	4000	2750	2250		
	2	1100	750	1400	1000	4350	4000	4150	3750	2200	1750		
B	1	670	750	940	1000	4200	4000	3900	3750	2000	2000		
	2	670	750	670	750	3900	3750	4200	4000	1750	1750		
C	1	520	750	520	750	4100 +	3000 +	4100	3000	1750	1750		
	2	520	750	790	1000	4100 +	3000 +	4100 +	3000 +	1750	1750		
D	1	1600	1250	1080	750	4500 +	3500 +	4500 +	3500 +	3000	2250		
	2	1600	1250	1080	750	4500 +	3500 +	4500 +	3500 +	3300	2500		
E	1	700	750	925	1000	3850	4250	3850	4250	1380	1500		
	2	700	750	925	1000	4150	4500	3650	4000	1850	2000		
F	1	1075 ^B	1000 ^B	950	750	3350	4250	3350	4250	1925	2000		
	2	1075 ^B	1000 ^B	950	750	3500	4500	3050	3750	1560	1500		
G	1	660	750	660	750	3500	3750	3000	3250	1550	1750		
	2	660	750	800	1000	3200	3500	2800	3000	1350	1500		
H	1	750	750	1000	1000	3500	3500	4250	4250	1500	1500		
	2	750	750	1000	1000	4000	4000	4000	4000	1750	1750		
I	1	930	750	910	750	4400	3750	4400 +	3750 +	1800	1500		
	2	930	750	910	750	4400	3750	4400 +	3750 +	1800	1500		
Min Avg			750		750		3625 ^C		3125 ^D		1500		
Max Avg			1250		1000		4375 ^C		4125 ^D		2375		
Grand Avg			833		875		3932 ^C		3837 ^D		1846		
		Repeatability						Reproducibility					
		$s = 0.0624$						$S = 0.137$					
		$r = 0.179 (TL)^E$						$R = 0.391 (TL)^E$					

^A Reference fluids used and described in Test Method D2783.

^B Calibration curves shifted.

^C Seven laboratories.

^D Six laboratories.

^E TL = average true load, lbf, of sample tested.

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6. Apparatus

6.1 *Falex Pin and Vee Block Test Machine*,³ illustrated in Fig. 1, Fig. 2, and Fig. 3, fitted with 4500-lbf (20 000-N) gage or 3000-lbf (13 350-N) gage.

6.2 *Required for Calibration:*

6.2.1 *Allen Screw*, with attached 10-mm Brinnell ball.⁴

6.2.2 *Back-Up Plug*.⁴

6.2.3 *Standard Test Coupon*,⁴ soft, annealed copper, Hb 37–39.

6.2.4 *Brinnell Microscope*, or equivalent.

6.2.5 *Timer*, graduated in seconds and minutes.

6.2.6 *Rule*, steel, 6-in. (approximately 150-mm) long.

7. Reagents and Materials

7.1 *Standard Coined-Blocks*,⁴ $96 \pm 1^\circ$ angle, AISI C-1137 steel, HRC 20 to 24, surface finish 5 to 10 μm . (1.3×10^{-7} to 2.5×10^{-7} m), rms.

7.2 *Standard Test Journals*,⁴ $1/4$ in. (6.35 mm) outside diameter by $1/4$ in. (31.75 mm) long, AISI 3135 steel, HRB 87 to 91 on a ground flat surface, surface finish 5 to 10 μm . (1.3×10^{-7} to 2.5×10^{-7} m) rms.

7.3 *Locking Pins*,⁴ $1/2$ H brass, conforming to Specification B16/B16M.

³ The Falex Pin and Vee Block Test Machine, available from the Falex Corp., 1020 Airpark Dr., Sugar Grove, IL 60554 has been found satisfactory for this purpose. A new model of this machine has been available since 1983. Certain operating procedures are different for this new model. Consult instruction manual of machine for this information.

⁴ Available from Falex Corp., 1020 Airpark Dr., Sugar Grove, IL 60554.

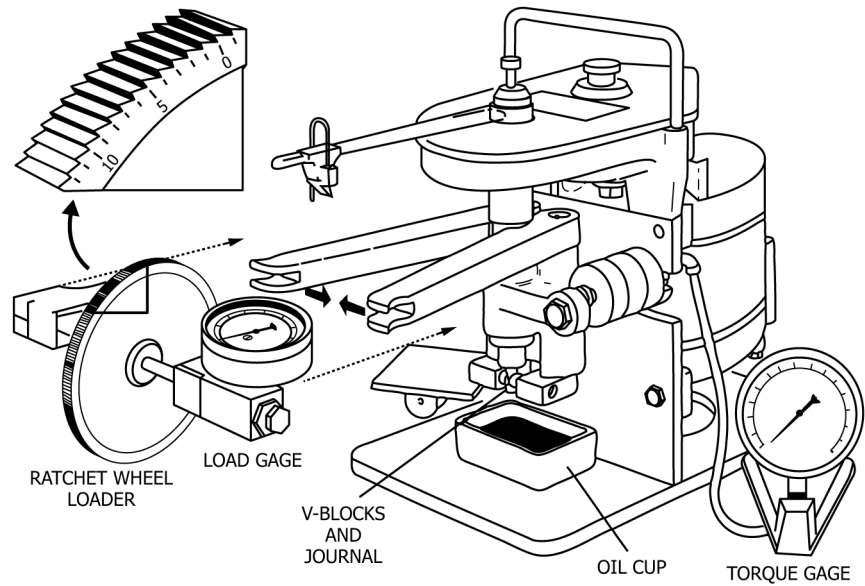


FIG. 1 Schematic Diagram of Failex Standard Pin and Vee Block Test Machine



FIG. 2 Failex Digital Pin and Vee Block Test Machine

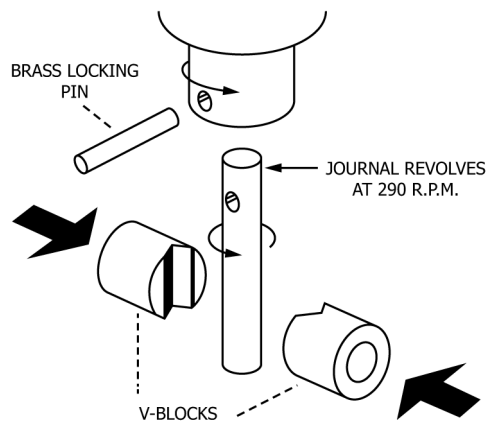


FIG. 3 Exploded View of V-Blocks and Journal Arrangement, Failex Pin and Vee Block Test Machines

7.4 Solvent, safe, nonfilming, nonchlorinated.

NOTE 4—Petroleum distillate and benzene, formerly used as solvents in this method, have been eliminated due to possible toxic effects. Each user should select a solvent that can meet applicable safety standards and still thoroughly clean the parts.

8. Preparation of Apparatus

8.1 *Cleaning:*

8.1.1 Thoroughly clean the V-blocks, test journals, lubricant cup, and supports for V-blocks and test journals by washing, successively, with solvent selected in 7.4. Dry the V-blocks, test journals, lubricant cup, and supports by allowing the final solvent to evaporate in air.

8.1.2 After cleaning, handle the test pieces with care to prevent contamination. Particularly, avoid contact of fingers with mating surfaces of V-blocks and test journals.

8.2 *Assembly:*

8.2.1 Insert the test journal into the test shaft and secure with a new brass locking pin, as shown in Fig. 1 and Fig. 3.

8.2.2 Insert the V-blocks into the recesses of the loading device and swing the V-blocks inward to contact the journal so that the V-grooves are aligned with the journal major axis, as shown in Fig. 1 and Fig. 3.

8.2.3 Place 60 mL of test lubricant in the lubricant cup and raise the cup so that the V-blocks are immersed in the test lubricant. With highly viscous fluids, open the jaws slightly to ensure that the wear surfaces are covered with the lubricant.

8.2.4 Place the automatic loading device, with attached gage, on the jaw arms.

9. Preparation of True Load Calibration Curve

9.1 On log-log paper (K & E467080 or equivalent) draw a straight-line plot of load, pounds-force (newtons) (ordinate), versus indentation diameter, millimetres (abscissa) using the data points shown below. Label this curve “True Load” (Note 5).

Load, lbf (N) (Ordinate)	Diameter, mm (Abscissa)
500 (2224)	2.62
1000 (4450)	3.42
1500 (6672)	4.00
2000 (8896)	4.47

NOTE 5—Fig. 3 shows the true-load calibration curve for the prescribed 4500-lbf (20 000-N) gage, prepared as covered in 9.1. Copies of Fig. 4, 8 by 11 in., are available at a nominal cost from ASTM. Although not originally used in development of these test methods, the 3000-lb direct reading load gage should be satisfactory providing results are corrected and reported with respect to the true load (4500-lbf) reference line. Refer to Test Method D2670 for calibration of 3000-lb load gage.

10. Calibration of Load Gage 4500 lbf (20 000 N)

10.1 Remove the Allen set screw and ½-in. (12.70-mm) ball from the left jaw socket (Fig. 5).

10.2 Insert the special Allen screw with the attached 10-mm Brinnell ball into the working face of the left jaw. Adjust so that the ball projects about 5/32 in. (approximately 4 mm) from the face of the jaw.

10.3 Insert the back-up plug in the counterbore of the right-hand jaw. Adjust so that the plug projects about 1/32 in. (approximately 0.8 mm) from the face.

10.4 Support the standard test coupon so that the upper edge of the coupon is about 3/32 in. (approximately 2.5 mm) below the upper surface of the jaws. Place a steel rule across the face of the jaws. Adjust the Allen screw with the attached 10-mm ball until the face of the jaws are parallel to the steel rule with the test coupon in position for indentation.

10.5 With the test coupon in position for the first impression, place the load gage assembly on the level arms. Remove the slack from the assembly by moving the ratchet wheel by hand.

10.6 Place the loading lever on the ratchet wheel and actuate the motor. Allow the motor to run until the load gage indicates a load of 500 lbf (2224 N). A slight take-up on the ratchet wheel is required to hold the load due to the ball sinking into the test coupon. After a 500-lbf (2224-N) load is obtained, hold for 1 min for the indentation to form.

10.7 Turn off the machine and back off the load until the test coupon is free of the jaws. Advance the test coupon approximately 3/8 in. (approximately 9.5 mm). Additional indentations should be separated by a minimum distance of 2.5 times the diameter of the initial indentation. Check the alignment of the jaws, and repeat the procedure described in 10.6 at gage loads of 1000, 1500, and 2000 lbf (4448, 6672, and 8896 N).

10.8 Remove the load gage assembly and test coupon and measure the diameter of each indentation to 0.01 mm with a microscope. Make three measurements of the indentation diameter, rotating the test coupon to ensure that no two measurements represent the same points. Average the three measurements of each impression and record.

10.9 Plot the four impression readings on the same log-log plot of true load prepared as prescribed in 9.1 and shown as Fig. 4. Draw a straight line through the four impression readings and label the line “Actual Gage Load.”

NOTE 6—Currently, load gages are calibrated at the factory such that the actual 4500-lb gage load is equivalent to true load. Periodic calibrations should

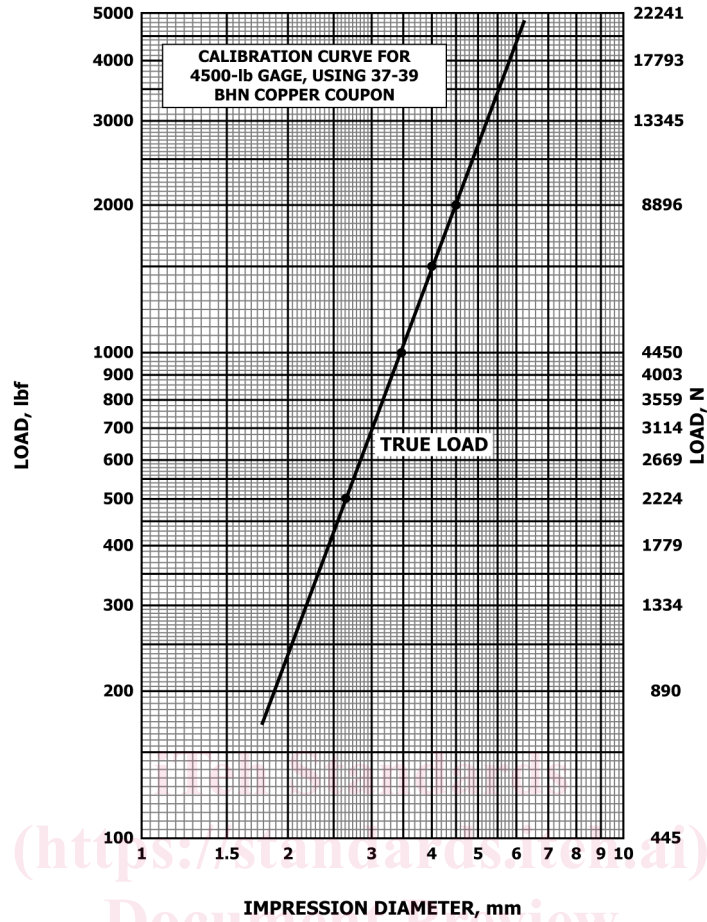


FIG. 4 Calibration Curve for 4500-lb Gage, Using 37-39 HB Copper Coupon

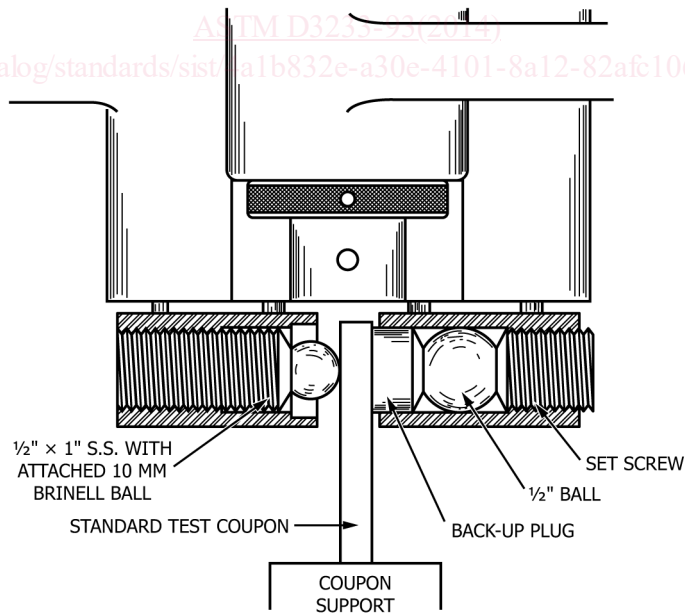


FIG. 5 Schematic Drawing of Calibration Accessories for Falex Pin and Vee Block Test Machines

be made to ensure correct values are being reported for true load.