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Standard Test Method for Pressure Calibration of Thermal Analyzers¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This test method describes the calibration or performance confirmation of the electronic pressure signals from thermal analysis apparatus.

1.2 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as standard. No other units of measurement are included in this standard.

1.3 There is no ISO standard equivalent to this test method.

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

D5483 Test Method for Oxidation Induction Time of Lubricating Greases by Pressure Differential Scanning Calorimetry

D6186 Test Method for Oxidation Induction Time of Lubricating Oils by Pressure Differential Scanning Calorimetry (PDSC)

D5720 Practice for Static Calibration of Electronic Transducer-Based Pressure Measurement Systems for Geotechnical Purposes

D5885 Test Method for Oxidative Induction Time of Polyolefin Geosynthetics by High-Pressure Differential Scanning Calorimetry

E473 Terminology Relating to Thermal Analysis and Rheology

E537 Test Method for The Thermal Stability of Chemicals by Differential Scanning Calorimetry

E1142 Terminology Relating to Thermophysical Properties

E1782 Test Method for Determining Vapor Pressure by Thermal Analysis

E1858 Test Method for Determining Oxidation Induction Time of Hydrocarbons by Differential Scanning Calorimetry

E2009 Test Methods for Oxidation Onset Temperature of Hydrocarbons by Differential Scanning Calorimetry

E2161 Terminology Relating to Performance Validation in Thermal Analysis

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions:*

3.1.1 The technical terms used in this test method are defined in Terminologies **E473**, **E1142**, and **E2161**, including calibration, Celsius, differential scanning calorimetry, high pressure, linearity, oxidative induction time, thermal analysis, and vapor pressure.

3.2 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.2.1 *absolute pressure, n*—pressure measured relative to zero pressure corresponding to empty space.

3.2.1.1 *Discussion*—Absolute pressure is atmospheric pressure plus gage pressure.

3.2.2 *atmospheric pressure, n*—the pressure due to the weight of the atmosphere.

3.2.2.1 *Discussion*—Atmospheric pressure varies with elevation above sea level, acceleration due to gravity and weather conditions. Standard atmospheric pressure is 101.325 kPa.

3.2.3 *barometer, n*—an instrument for measuring atmospheric pressure.

3.2.4 *gage pressure, n*—pressure measured relative to atmospheric pressure.

3.2.4.1 *Discussion*—Zero gage pressure is equal to atmospheric pressure. Gage pressure is the difference between absolute pressure and atmospheric pressure.

3.2.5 *pressure, n*—the force exerted to a surface per unit area.

3.2.6 *vacuum, n*—pressure less than atmospheric pressure.

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 The pressure (vacuum) signal generated by a thermal analyzer is compared to a gage whose performance is known

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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.

and traceable to a national metrology institute. The thermal analyzer may be said to be in conformance if the performance is within established limits. Alternately, the pressure signal may be calibrated using a two-point calibration method.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 Most thermal analysis experiments are conducted under ambient pressure conditions using isothermal or temperature time rate of change conditions where time or temperature is the independent parameter. Some experiments, however, are conducted under reduced or elevated pressure conditions where pressure is an independent experimental parameter (Test Method [E537](#)). Oxidation Induction Times (Test Methods [D5483](#), [D5885](#), [D6186](#), and [E1858](#)), Oxidation Onset Temperature (Test Method [E2009](#)), and the Vapor Pressure (Test Method [E1782](#)) are other examples of experiments conducted under elevated or reduced pressure (vacuum) conditions. Since in these cases pressure is an independent variable, the measurement system for this parameter shall be calibrated to ensure interlaboratory reproducibility.

5.2 The dependence of experimental results on pressure is usually logarithmic rather than linear.

6. Apparatus

6.1 *Reference pressure gage* with a range 1.2 times the maximum value to be calibrated readable to within 0.1 % of the full range and performance of which has been verified using standards and procedures traceable to a national metrology institute (such as the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)).

NOTE 1—To ensure an accurate pressure measurement, the reference pressure gage shall be placed as close as practical to the thermal analysis apparatus to be calibrated and connected to the thermal analysis apparatus with large diameter tubing such as 6.3 mm or larger especially for vacuum testing. Ensure that there is no gas flow in the connection (for example, due to leaking) to provide a static pressure measurement.

NOTE 2—Additional information on pressure gages may be found in Practice [D5720](#).

6.2 A *source of pressurized inert gas*, typically nitrogen, with a pressure regulator, capable of adjusting the pressure supplied to the apparatus from zero to 100 % of the gage pressure range to be calibrated, commonly 7 MPa.

NOTE 3—Since the calibration is performed under static flow conditions, the pressurizing gas delivery system to the thermal analysis apparatus should be of small diameter (such as 1.6 mm diameter tubing) for safety considerations.

NOTE 4—Do not use a reactive gas such as oxygen unless all apparatus, tubing and test gage have been cleaned and are rated for oxygen service.

6.3 The thermal analysis apparatus for which the pressure calibration is to be performed.

6.4 *Barometer* capable of measuring atmospheric pressure readable to ± 0.01 kPa (0.1 mm Hg).

7. Hazards

7.1 This test poses risks associated with high pressure operation. The thermal analysis apparatus, connecting tubing and measurement gages shall be designed to contain pressures in excess of two times the maximum allowable working

pressure. Pressure relief shall be provided at pressures no greater than 1.2 times the maximum allowable working pressure.

8. Preparation of Apparatus

8.1 Assemble the apparatus so that the calibration pressure gage is connected in parallel with the pressure transducer of the apparatus. That is, the instrument transducer and the calibration gage shall see the same static pressure (see [Fig. 1](#)). Equilibrate the thermal analysis apparatus pressure container, reference pressure gage and instrument transducer at ambient temperature.

9. Calibration

9.1 Perform any pressure signal calibration procedures recommended by the manufacturer of the thermal analyzer as described in the Operator's Manual.

10. Procedure

10.1 Electronic pressure signals associated with thermal analysis apparatus measure gage pressure relative to atmospheric pressure. However, absolute pressure is most often required for thermal analysis experiments. Absolute pressure is the sum of gage pressure and atmospheric pressure. So knowledge of atmospheric pressure is required to obtain absolute pressure.

10.2 Using a laboratory barometer, measure and record the atmospheric pressure (P_{atm}) within one hour of the pressure calibration in steps [10.4 – 10.6](#).

NOTE 5—Should a laboratory barometer be unavailable, local pressure may often be obtained by contacting the local weather service. This approach is not suitable for laboratories operating under negative gage pressure.

10.3 Assemble the instrument to be calibrated, the reference pressure gage and the source of the pressurized gas according to schematic [Fig. 1](#).

10.4 With the thermal analysis exhaust valve open to atmospheric and the source valve shut off (see [Fig. 1](#)), set the thermal analysis instrument indicated pressure to zero gage pressure.

10.5 Close the thermal analyzer exhaust valve, open the source of pressurized gas, and slowly increase the pressure regulator until the reference pressure gage reads the maximum pressure to be calibrated (often 7.00 MPa). Record this value as P_2 .

NOTE 6—Other calibration pressures may be used but shall be reported.

10.6 Record the indicated pressure on the thermal analyzer pressure measuring signal (or gage) as P_3 .

10.7 Calculate the calibration constant (S) using [Eq 2](#).

10.8 Using the value of S from [10.7](#), calculate the percent conformity (C) using [Eq 4](#) or a table of percent conformity values (see [11.4.1](#))

11. Calculation

11.1 For the purpose of these procedures, it is assumed that the relationship between observed pressure (P_o) and the actual pressure (P) is linear and governed by [Eq 1](#):