



Designation: D3954 – 15

Standard Test Method for Dropping Point of Waxes¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D3954; 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 covers the determination of the ASTM dropping point for waxes.

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 *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
D566 Test Method for Dropping Point of Lubricating Grease

3. Summary of Test Method

3.1 In this test method, the dropping point is defined as the temperature at which the wax suspended in a cylindrical cup, with a 2.8-mm diameter hole in the bottom, flows downward a distance of 19 mm to interrupt a light beam as the sample is heated at a constant rate in air.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 Waxes do not go through a sharp solid-liquid phase change when heated and therefore do not have a true melting point. As the temperature rises, waxes gradually soften or become less viscous. For this reason, the determination of the softening point must be made by an arbitrary but closely defined method if test values are to be reproducible.

4.2 This test is useful in determining the consistency of waxes, and as one element in establishing the uniformity of shipments or source of supply.

4.3 This test method has been found suitable for all types of waxes including paraffin, microcrystalline polyethylene, and natural waxes.

5. Apparatus

5.1 Suitable apparatus that meets the requirements of 5.1.1, 5.1.2, and 5.1.3 can be used to determine dropping points by this test method. Instruments are available commercially³ consisting of a control unit with a digital temperature recorder, matched furnace, sample cartridges, and accessories. The control unit automatically maintains the furnace temperature and controls the heating rate with a precision of 0.1°C. The dropping point is automatically recorded, and the furnace heating program is turned off when the sample interrupts the light beam and triggers the photocell detector.

5.1.1 *Control Unit*—This unit shall provide a continuous linear temperature control from 25 to 250°C at a 2°C/min rate. A digital readout shall record the softening point with an accuracy of 0.1°C.

5.1.2 *Furnace Unit*—This unit shall be capable of heating a sample cup assembly as described in 5.1.3 at 2°C ± 0.3°C/min linear rate from 25 to 250°C. It shall include a sensing system capable of detecting the softening point with an accuracy of 0.1°C.

5.1.3 *Sample Cup Assembly*—A chromium-plated brass cup conforming to the dimensions shown in Test Method D566. It shall be placed in an assembly so that the sample flows down a distance of 19 mm to interrupt a light beam to cause digital display of the softening point.

6. Preparation of Sample

6.1 For waxes heat the sample to 15 to 20°C above its melting point to form a pourable liquid. Place the sample cups on glass slides and pour the melted sample into the cup to a level even with the upper rim of the cup. Allow the sample to stand at room temperature for 2 h before running.

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D21 on Polishes and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D21.02 on Raw Materials

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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 To the knowledge of the committee at this time, the only instruments which satisfy the requirements of 5.1.1, 5.1.2, and 5.1.3 are Mettler-Toledo model DP70 and model DP90 fitted with FP83HT sample cup. These are available from Mettler-Toledo, LLC, 1900 Polaris Parkway, Columbus, OH 43240, www.mt.com. If you are aware of alternative suppliers, please provide this information to ASTM International Headquarters. Your comments will receive careful consideration at a meeting of the responsible technical committee,¹ which you may attend.