



Designation: ~~D3530 – 97 (Reapproved 2008)~~^{ε2} D3530 – 97 (Reapproved 2015)

Standard Test Method for Volatiles Content of Composite Material Prepreg¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D3530; 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.

~~^{ε1} NOTE—This standard was corrected to a single designation standard editorially in October 2013.~~

~~^{ε2} NOTE—The designation of this standard was corrected editorially in November 2013.~~

1. Scope

1.1 This test method covers the determination of the volatiles content, in weight percent of composite material prepregs. This standard focuses on composites with thermosetting resins that tend to lose a few percent of the matrix mass when heated due to loss of both retained water and low molecular weight matrix constituents that volatilize during heating.

1.2 Use of this test method is limited to maximum temperature of circulating air ovens (approximately 300°C).

1.3 Use of this test method is limited to temperatures below which the matrix flows from the reinforcement.

1.4 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as standard.

1.5 *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. Specific precautionary statements are given in Section 8.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*²

[D3878 Terminology for Composite Materials](#)

[E177 Practice for Use of the Terms Precision and Bias in ASTM Test Methods](#)

[E1309 Guide for Identification of Fiber-Reinforced Polymer-Matrix Composite Materials in Databases](#) (Withdrawn 2015)³

2.2 *NFPA Standard:*

[NFPA 86 Standard for Ovens and Furnaces](#)⁴

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—Terminology [D3878](#) defines terms relating to composite materials. Terminology [D883](#) defines terms relating to plastics. Practice [E177](#) defines terms relating to statistics. In the event of a conflict between terms, Terminology [D3878](#) shall have precedence over other documents.

3.1.1 *prepreg, n*—the admixture of fibrous reinforcement and polymeric matrix used to fabricate composite materials. Its form may be sheet, tape, or tow. See Terminology [D3878](#).

3.2 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.2.1 *Volatiles Content, n*—the amount of volatiles present in a prepreg expressed as a weight percent.

3.3 *Symbols:*

3.3.1 M_i —the initial mass of the sample.

3.3.2 M_f —the mass of the sample after oven exposure.

3.3.3 V_c —the weight percent volatiles content.

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee [D30](#) on Composite Materials and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee [D30.03](#) on Constituent/Precursor Properties.

Current edition approved March 1, 2008; Nov. 1, 2015. Published April 2008; December 2015. Originally approved in 1976. Last previous edition approved in 2003; 2008 as D3530/D3530M – 97(2003); (2008)^{ε2}. DOI: 10.1520/D3530-97R08E02; 10.1520/D3530_D3530M-97R15.

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.

⁴ Available from National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02269-9101.

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 Specimens of prepreg are weighed and then exposed to elevated temperature, equal to the nominal cure or consolidation temperature of the material, in an air circulating oven to remove the volatiles. The exposed samples are reweighed and the percent change in weight expressed as volatiles content.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 This test method is used to obtain the volatiles content of composite material prepreg. Knowledge of the volatiles content is useful in developing optimum manufacturing processes.

5.2 The volatiles content is determined after exposure to the nominal cure or consolidation temperature.

6. Interferences

6.1 *Airflow*—The amount of measured volatiles may be increased or decreased by changing the velocity of airflow. Since airflow in most ovens is not linear in each part, a velometer should be used to measure airflow where samples are placed. Samples should be placed only in positions of known airflow so that results may be repeatable. Use of baffles has been found to even airflow between samples.

6.2 *Sample Exposure*—The geometric shape and positioning of the sample have an effect on the measured volatiles content. Samples placed horizontally in a rack will not be exposed to the same amount of airflow as samples hung vertically. A ribbon wound in a 150 mm diameter hoop may give slightly different results than the same ribbon wound in a 50 mm diameter hoop. A thinner sample will be exposed to more airflow at its surface than a thicker sample.

6.3 *Time of Exposure*—For any given temperature, sample placement, and airflow, the sample will lose volatiles at a set initial rate, that decreases over time. After some time period, volatiles lost in the test will approach the true volatiles content of the sample. If the time period is not sufficient to show a true volatiles content of the material, the volatiles content is representative of only the condition of the test.

6.4 *Time of Ambient Exposure*—Volatiles content varies due to prolonged exposure of temperatures exceeding prepreg glass transition temperature or exposure to humidity. This change is associated with matrix crosslinking and change in tack.

7. Apparatus

7.1 *Cutting Blade*—Die cutter that provides fixed specimen area to within a tolerance of 0.5 % is recommended. Single edge blade is acceptable.

7.2 *Cutting Template*—When a die cutter is not used, a cutting template is required. The cutting template shall have grooves within a tolerance of 0.4 mm parallel true position from center line. This allows a 2 % area error.

7.3 *Analytical Balance*—The analytical balance shall be capable of reading to within ± 0.1 mg.

7.4 *Circulating Air Oven*, capable of tolerance within $\pm 3^\circ\text{C}$. Removable baffles should be placed in the oven so that airflow is not directly aimed at the specimen.

7.5 *Rack*, that allows air circulation and from which hooks may be suspended.

7.6 *Timer*, capable of reading 20 ± 1 min.

7.7 *Desiccator*.

8. Hazards

8.1 Some materials contain flammable or toxic solvents as part of the matrix. These materials could build up to dangerous concentrations of vapor in the oven. NFPA 86 provides guidelines on amount of flammable materials that may be safely placed in an oven.

9. Test Specimens

9.1 A minimum of three specimens shall be tested for each sample.

9.2 The specimen size shall be a minimum of 1600 mm^2 by material thickness. Ribbon, braid, and fabric forms that do not drip resin shall be suspended from the rack. Ribbon shall be looped in close proximity so that individual strands are not clumped together. Other forms may be placed horizontally on the rack.

10. Calibration and Standardization

10.1 All measuring equipment shall have certified calibrations that are current at the time of use of the equipment. The calibration documentation shall be available for inspection.