



Designation: ~~D4218 – 96 (Reapproved 2008)~~ **D4218 – 15**

Standard Test Method for Determination of Carbon Black Content in Polyethylene Compounds By the Muffle-Furnace Technique¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D4218; 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 black polyethylene compounds containing channel or furnace black. It is not applicable to thermal black.

1.2 This test method is not suitable for plastics that char on pyrolysis and should not be attempted for plastics that generate corrosive fumes on pyrolysis.

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

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.* Specific hazard statements are given in Section 7.

NOTE 1—There is no similar or equivalent ISO known ISO equivalent to this standard.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*²

[D883 Terminology Relating to Plastics](#)

[D1603 Test Method for Carbon Black Content in Olefin Plastics](#)

[D2741 Test Method for Susceptibility of Polyethylene Bottles to Soot Accumulation](#) (Withdrawn 2011)³

[E691 Practice for Conducting an Interlaboratory Study to Determine the Precision of a Test Method](#)

[IEEE/ASTM SI-10 Standard for Use of the International System of Units \(SI\): The Modern Metric System](#)

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—For definitions of plastics terms used in this test method, see Terminology [D883](#).

3.2 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.2.1 *channel black*—those carbon blacks produced by a process that operates in an open system in which a multitude of small diffusion flames burn in air and carbon is deposited on cooled surfaces.

3.2.2 *furnace black*—those carbon blacks produced using the principle of continuous oxidative combustion in closed systems.

3.2.3 *thermal black*—those carbon blacks based on a process that uses thermal decomposition in the absence of oxygen and operates in a closed system. Particles grow very slowly and can become very large and filamentous structures.

3.3 *Symbols*—Units and symbols used in this test method are those recommended in Practice [IEEE/ASTM SI-10](#).

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 Black polyethylene compound contained in a disposable aluminum weighing dish is pyrolyzed in a muffle furnace for a short period. During the pyrolysis of the polymer, the air in the muffle furnace becomes oxygen-deficient to prevent the combustion of the residual carbon black. Any soot, as defined in Test Method [D2741](#), produced by the initial combustion of the gases is consumed before the carbon black itself.

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee [D20](#) on Plastics and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee [D20.70](#) on Analytical Methods (Section D20.70.01).

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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 The last approved version of this historical standard is referenced on www.astm.org.

4.2 After cooling and weighing for residual carbon black, the dish and contents ~~may be~~ are reinserted into the muffle furnace to determine ash content and the results used to determine true carbon black content. This ~~should be~~ is done only if the compound is suspected of containing mineral fillers as well as carbon black.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 This test method is capable of yielding duplicate test data, in 20 min or less, for a simple carbon black content determination.

5.2 This test method is suitable for manufacturing quality control, technical service, and research work.

5.3 For referee requirements, the number of replicate measurements is increased. Alternatively, a control sample of known carbon black content is tested with the unknown sample.

5.4 Test Method **D1603** is available for referee ~~testing should the involved parties so desire~~ testing.

6. Apparatus

6.1 *Fume Hood or Vent Hood.*

6.2 *Muffle Furnace*, approximately 100 mm in the three internal dimensions. Furnaces with larger internal dimensions have been found to be unsuitable. The seal at the door must be free of gaping cracks or chips that will allow air into the furnace. A muffle furnace with bare heating wires on the floor of the furnace must not be used without additional electrical safety precautions.

6.3 *Screen, 20-Mesh*, approximately 120 by 100 mm. Fold down approximately 10 mm of the long dimension to provide a raised platform to fit inside the muffle furnace.

6.4 *Thermocouple-Probe Temperature Controller or Equivalent*—This ~~may be~~ is an integral part of newer muffle furnaces or ~~may be~~ is purchased separately to provide improved control on older furnaces.

6.5 *Desiccator* (for example, 255 mm), with alumina or equivalent desiccant.

6.6 *Laboratory Interval Timer*, with alarm.

6.7 *Disposable Aluminum Weighing Dish*—Dishes with crimped sides and tabs on the rim are satisfactory.

6.8 *Long Tongs or Tweezers* (250 to 300 mm).

6.9 *Analytical Balance*, capable of measuring to 0.1 mg.

7. Hazards

7.1 Do not use a muffle furnace with bare heating elements on the floor of the furnace. Take steps to make the furnace electrically safe.

7.2 Do not attempt to test plastics that evolve corrosive fumes on pyrolysis.

7.3 Do not open the muffle furnace door during the test. Opening the door while fumes are being emitted from the door seal will cause ignition of the fumes.

7.4 This test must be conducted in a fume hood or under a vent hood to remove the resulting fumes.

8. Sample and Test Specimen

8.1 Samples ~~may originate~~ are obtained from the ~~manufacturer's~~ manufacturer's or ~~purchaser's~~ purchaser's sampling regimens or from a specifically identified part.

8.2 The test specimens ~~may be~~ are in the form of granules or pieces cut from an article such as pipe, jacket, film, ~~moulding,~~ molding, etc. Soiled articles must be washed, and printed articles, such as films, are wiped clean with a suitable solvent.

9. Conditioning

9.1 Conditioning is unnecessary.

10. Procedure

10.1 Place the muffle furnace in a fume hood or under a vent hood.

10.2 Set the controller indicator to 600°C and let it stabilize from 600 to 610°C.

10.3 Mark an aluminum weighing dish with an identifying impression on the tab.

10.4 Place the dish on the screen in the muffle furnace and burn off the surface oil for 2 min, as indicated by timer.

10.5 Transfer the dish to the desiccator and let it cool for at least 2 min.

10.6 Weigh the dish accurately on the analytical balance. Record the results as W_1 .

10.7 Add about 1 g of specimen and reweigh the dish and contents accurately. Record the results as W_2 .