



Designation: ~~E2347 – 11~~ E2347 – 16

Standard Test Method for Indentation Softening Temperature by Thermomechanical Analysis¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation E2347; 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 is applicable to materials that soften upon heating to a modulus less than 6.0 MPa. This test method describes the determination of the temperature at which the specific modulus of either 6.65 (Method A) or 33.3 MPa (Method B) (equivalent to Test Method [D1525](#)) of a test specimen is realized by indentation measurement using a thermomechanical analyzer as the test specimen is heated. This temperature is identified as the indentation softening temperature. The test may be performed over the temperature range of ambient to ~~300°C~~300°C.

NOTE 1—This test method is intended to provide results similar to those of Test Method [D1525](#) but is performed on a thermomechanical analyzer using a smaller diameter indenting probe. Equivalence of results to those obtained by Test Method [D1525](#) has been demonstrated on a limited number of materials. Until the user demonstrates equivalence, the results of this Test Method shall be considered to be independent and unrelated to those of Test Method [D1525](#).

1.2 This test method is not recommended for ethyl cellulose, poly (vinyl chloride), poly (vinylidene chloride) and other materials having a large measurement imprecision (see Test Method [D1525](#) and [5.3](#) and Section [14](#)).

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

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

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.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*²

[D1525](#) Test Method for Vicat Softening Temperature of Plastics

[E473](#) Terminology Relating to Thermal Analysis and Rheology

[E1142](#) Terminology Relating to Thermophysical Properties

[E1363](#) Test Method for Temperature Calibration of Thermomechanical Analyzers

[E2113](#) Test Method for Length Change Calibration of Thermomechanical Analyzers

[E2206](#) Test Method for Force Calibration of Thermomechanical Analyzers

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions:*

3.1.1 Specific technical terms used in this ~~standard~~ test method are defined in Terminologies [E473](#) and [E1142](#): including *Celsius*, *complex modulus*, *modulus*, *strain*, *stress*, *storage modulus*, *thermal analysis*, and *thermomechanical analysis*.

3.1.2 *penetration softening temperature*, [$^{\circ}\text{C}$],*n*—the temperature at which a test specimen has a modulus of either 6.65 or 33.3 MPa as measured in penetration.

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 The modulus of a material may be determined by the indentation (penetration) of a circular, flat tipped probe. The relationship between modulus of a material (stress divided by strain) and penetration depth is given by:

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee [E37](#) on Thermal Measurements and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee [E37.10](#) on Fundamental, Statistical and Mechanical Properties.

Current edition approved ~~April 1, 2014~~ April 1, 2016. Published ~~May 2014~~ April 2016. Originally approved in 2004. Last previous edition approved in ~~2005~~ 2011 as ~~E2347 – 05~~ E2347 – 11. DOI: ~~10.1520/E2347-11~~ 10.1520/E2347-16.

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~~ standards Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

$$E = 3F / (4Dd) \tag{1}$$

where:

- E = modulus, MPa,
- F = force, N,
- D = diameter of a circular, flat tipped probe, mm, and
- d = penetration depth, mm.

NOTE 2—Note the identity Pa = N / m².

4.2 Some materials soften upon heating. For such materials, the modulus may be determined by penetration as the sample is heated. This test method identifies the temperature at which the modulus of the specimen is determined to be 6.65 MPa (Method A) or 33.3 MPa (Method B).

4.3 Specifically, a test specimen is tested in penetration using a circular, flat tipped probe. A known stress is applied to the center of a test specimen as it is heated at a constant rate from ambient temperature to the upper temperature limit for the material. The penetration (that is, deflection) of the test specimen is recorded as a function of temperature. The temperature at which the modulus of the specimen is determined to be 6.65 MPa (Method A) or 33.3 MPa (Method B) is determined to be the penetration softening temperature.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 Data obtained by this test method shall not be used to predict the behavior of materials at elevated temperatures except in applications in which the conditions of time, temperature, method of loading, and stress are similar to those specified in the test.

5.2 This standard test method is particularly suited for quality control and development work. The data are not intended for use in design or predicting endurance at elevated temperatures.

5.3 Ruggedness testing indicates that some materials, such as poly (vinyl chloride) exhibit substantially greater imprecision than that described in Section 14 for “well behaved” materials.

6. Apparatus

6.1 A thermomechanical analyzer consisting of:

6.1.1 *Rigid Specimen Holder*, of inert, low expansivity material ($\leq \pm 1 (\leq 1 \mu\text{m m}^{-1} \text{ } ^\circ\text{C}^{-1})$) to center the specimen in the furnace and to fix the specimen to mechanical ground.

6.1.2 *Rigid Penetration Probe*, of inert, low expansivity material ($\leq \pm 1 (\leq 1 \mu\text{m m}^{-1} \text{ } ^\circ\text{C}^{-1})$) that contacts the specimen with an applied compression force (see Fig. 1). The tip shall be 0.1 to 1.0 mm in diameter, free of burrs and be perpendicular to the axis of the probe. The tip shall protrude at least 0.1 mm from the end of the probe.

6.1.3 *Deflection Sensing Element*, having a linear output over a minimum range of 5 mm to measure the displacement of the rigid penetration probe (see 6.1.2) to within $\pm 0.1 \mu\text{m}$.

6.1.4 *Programmable Force Transducer*, to generate a constant force ($\pm 2.5\%$) ($\pm 2.5\%$) between 0.05 and 1.0 N that is applied to the specimen through the rigid penetration probe (see 6.1.2).

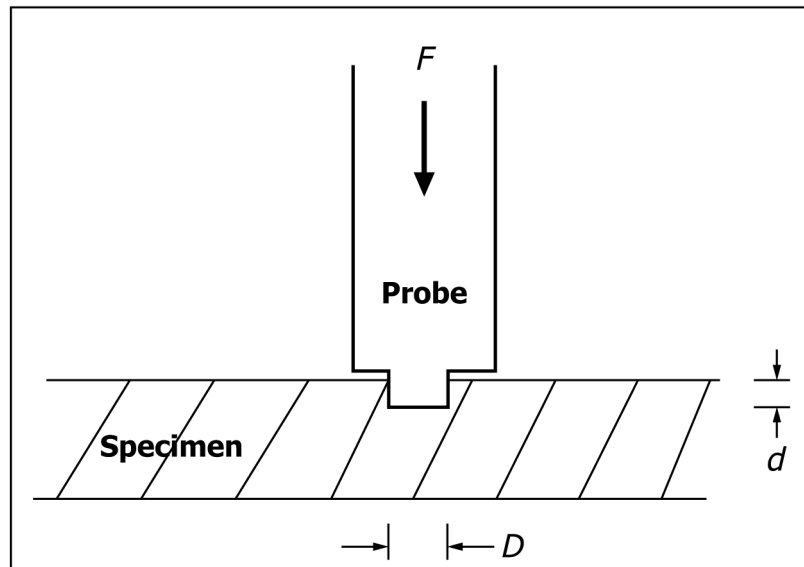


FIG. 1 Penetration Probe

NOTE 3—Other forces may be used but shall be reported.

6.1.5 *Temperature Sensor*, that can be positioned reproducibly in close proximity to the specimen to measure its temperature over the range of 25 to 300 °C ~~300 °C~~ to ± 0.1 °C ~~0.1 °C~~.

6.1.6 *Temperature Programmer and Furnace*, capable of temperature programming the test specimen from ambient to 300 °C ~~300 °C~~ at a linear rate of at least 2.0 ± 0.2 °C/min ~~0.2 °C/min~~.

6.1.7 *Means of Providing a Specimen Environment*, of inert gas at a purge rate of 50 mL/min $\pm 5\%$ ~~5 %~~.

NOTE 4—Typically, inert purge gas that inhibits specimen oxidation are 99.9+ % pure nitrogen, helium or argon. Dry gases are recommended for all experiments unless the effect of moisture is part of the study.

6.1.8 *Data Collection Device*, to provide a means of acquiring, storing, and displaying measured or calculated signals, or both. The minimum output signals required are a change in linear dimension to a sensitivity of ± 0.1 mm, and temperature to a sensitivity of ± 1 ~~um~~ μm .

6.1.9 *Calipers, Micrometer*, or other length measuring device capable of a length measurement of up to 2 mm with a precision of ± 1 μm .

7. Hazards

7.1 Toxic or corrosive effluents, or both, may be released when heating some materials and could be harmful to personnel and to apparatus.

8. Sampling, Test Specimens, and Test Units

8.1 Because the specimen size is small, care shall be taken to ensure that each specimen is homogeneous and representative of the sample as a whole.

8.2 The specimen may be cut from sheets, plates or molded shapes, or may be molded to the desired finished dimensions.

8.3 A typical test specimen is a rectangle ~~7–8 × 7–8~~ 7 to 8×7 to 8 mm or a circle ~~7–8~~ 7 to 8 mm in diameter with a thickness of 1 to 3 mm.

8.4 This ~~standard~~ test method assumes that the material is isotropic. Should specimens be anisotropic, such as in reinforced composites, the direction of the reinforcing agent shall be reported relative to the compression (specimen) dimensions.

9. Preparation of Apparatus

9.1 Perform any setup or calibration procedures recommended by the apparatus manufacturer in the operations manual.

10. Calibration and Standardization

10.1 Calibrate the temperature display of the apparatus according to Test Method **E1363** using a heating rate of 2.0 ± 0.2 °C/min ~~0.2 °C/min~~.

10.2 Calibrate the deflection display of the apparatus according to Test Method **E2113**.

10.3 Calibrate the mechanism for applying force to the test specimen according to Test Method **E2206**.

11. Procedure

11.1 Measure the diameter of the circular penetration tip of the penetration probe to ± 1 μm and record this value as D .

11.2 *Method A:*

11.2.1 Set the value of Force (F) at 0.15 ± 0.004 N.

11.2.2 Proceed with steps ~~11.3.2—11.3.4~~ **11.3.2** to **11.3.4.6**.

11.3 *Method B:*

11.3.1 Set the value of Force (F) to 0.75 ± 0.01 N.

11.3.2 *Perform Scouting Experiment:*

11.3.2.1 Using **Eq 2** and an estimated value of $d_o = 0$, estimate the deflection (d_d) to be used as the experimental endpoint to three significant figures.

11.3.2.2 Center the test specimen on the stage with a surface perpendicular to the loading nose of the penetration probe.

11.3.2.3 Load the penetration probe onto the center of the test specimen with the force determined in **11.2.1** (Method A) or **11.3.1** (Method B). Set the deflection signal to zero at ambient temperature.

11.3.2.4 Heat the test specimen at 2.0 ± 0.2 °C ~~0.2 °C~~ min^{-1} from ambient temperature until the deflection d' (determined in **11.3.2.1**) is obtained while recording specimen deflection and temperature. Once the deflection value is achieved, terminate the temperature program and remove the load from the test specimen. Cool the apparatus to ambient temperature.

11.3.2.5 Record the temperature at the deflection value d' as the estimated indentation softening temperature (T).

11.3.2.6 For ease of interpretation, record the thermal curve with penetration displayed on the Y -axis and temperature on the X -axis as illustrated in **Fig. 2**.