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Standard Test Method for Freezing Point of Aviation Fuels (Automatic Phase Transition Method)¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D5972; 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.

1. Scope*

1.1 This test method covers the determination of the temperature below which solid hydrocarbon crystals form in aviation turbine fuels.

1.2 This test method is designed to cover the temperature range of -80°C to 20°C ; however, 2003 Joint ASTM/IP Interlaboratory Cooperative Test Program mentioned in 12.4 has only demonstrated the test method with fuels having freezing points in the range of -42°C to -60°C .

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 *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.* For specific warning statements, see 7.1, 7.3, and 7.5.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:²

D2386 Test Method for Freezing Point of Aviation Fuels

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions:

3.1.1 *freezing point, n—in aviation fuels*, the fuel temperature at which solid hydrocarbon crystals, formed on cooling, disappear when the temperature of the fuel is allowed to rise under specified conditions of test.

3.2 Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:

3.2.1 *automatic phase transition method, n—in this test method*, the procedures of automatically cooling a liquid aviation fuel specimen until solid hydrocarbon crystals appear, followed by controlled warming and recording of the temperature at which the solid hydrocarbon crystals completely redissolve into the liquid phase.

3.2.2 *Peltier device, n—a solid-state thermoelectric device constructed with dissimilar semiconductor materials, configured in such a way that it will transfer heat to and away from a test specimen dependent on the direction of electric current applied to the device.*

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 A specimen is cooled at a rate of $15^{\circ}\text{C}/\text{min} \pm 5^{\circ}\text{C}/\text{min}$ by a Peltier device while continuously being illuminated by a light source. The specimen is continuously monitored by an array of optical detectors for the first formation of solid hydrocarbon crystals. Once the hydrocarbon crystals are formed, the specimen is then warmed at a rate of $10^{\circ}\text{C}/\text{min} \pm 0.5^{\circ}\text{C}/\text{min}$ until the

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D02 on Petroleum Products, Liquid Fuels, and Lubricants and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D02.07 on Flow Properties.

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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.

*A Summary of Changes section appears at the end of this standard

last hydrocarbon crystals return to the liquid phase. The detectors are sufficient in number to ensure that any solid hydrocarbon crystals are detected. The specimen temperature at which the last hydrocarbon crystals return to the liquid phase is recorded as the freezing point.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 The freezing point of an aviation fuel is the lowest temperature at which the fuel remains free of solid hydrocarbon crystals. These crystals can restrict the flow of fuel through the fuel system of the aircraft. The temperature of the fuel in the aircraft tank normally decreases during flight depending on aircraft speed, altitude, and flight duration. The freezing point of the fuel must always be lower than the minimum operational fuel temperature.

5.2 Petroleum blending operations require precise measurement of the freezing point.

5.3 This test method produces results which have been found to be equivalent to Test Method **D2386** and expresses results to the nearest 0.1 °C, with improved precision over Test Method **D2386**. This test method also eliminates most of the operator time and judgment required by Test Method **D2386**.

5.4 When specification requires Test Method **D2386**, do not substitute this test method or any other test method.

6. Apparatus

6.1 *Automatic Apparatus*³—This apparatus consists of a microprocessor-controlled test chamber that is capable of cooling and heating the test specimen, optically observing the appearance and disappearance of solid hydrocarbon crystals, and recording the temperature of the specimen. A detailed description of the apparatus is provided in **Annex A1**.

6.2 The apparatus shall be equipped with a specimen cup, optical detector array, light source, digital display, Peltier device, and a specimen temperature measuring device.

6.3 The temperature measuring device in the specimen cup shall be capable of measuring the temperature of the test specimen from –80 °C to +20 °C at a resolution of 0.1 °C and accuracy of 0.1 °C.

6.4 The apparatus shall be equipped with fittings to permit the circulation of a liquid medium to remove heat generated by the Peltier device and other electronic components of the apparatus.

6.5 The apparatus shall be equipped with fittings to permit the circulation of purge gas to purge the test chamber containing the specimen cup of any atmospheric moisture.

7. Reagents and Materials

7.1 *n-Octane*—Reagent grade is suitable. (**Warning**—Flammable. Harmful if inhaled. Keep away from heat, sparks, and open flame.)

7.2 *Cooling Medium*—Liquid heat exchange medium to remove the heat generated by the Peltier device and other electronic components from the apparatus.

NOTE 1—Some apparatus are designed to use tap water as a cooling medium to bring the specimen temperature to –60 °C. To achieve cooling of the specimen to –80 °C, provide circulation of the cooling medium at –30 °C or lower to the apparatus. Since water freezes at 0 °C, a commercial or technical grade isopropanol is suitable as the cooling medium. Refer to the manufacturer's operating instructions on the relationship between the cooling medium temperature and the minimum specimen temperature.

7.3 *Purge Gas*—A gas such as air, nitrogen, helium, or argon with a dew point below the lowest temperature attained by the specimen under the conditions of the test. (**Warning**—Compressed gas under high pressure.) (**Warning**—Inert gas can be an asphyxiant when inhaled.)

7.4 *Pipette*, capable of dispensing 0.15 mL ± 0.01 mL of sample.

7.5 *Cotton Swabs*—Plastic- or paper-shaft cotton swabs to clean the specimen cup. (**Warning**—The use of swabs with wooden shafts may damage the mirrored surface of the specimen cup.)

8. Preparation of Apparatus

8.1 Install the analyzer for operation in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

8.2 Turn on the liquid cooling medium and ensure its temperature is appropriate for the specimen being tested in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions (see **Note 1**).

³ The sole source of supply of the Phase Technology Freezing Point Analyzer Model Series 70, 70V, and 70X known to the committee at this time is Phase Technology, No. 135-11960 Hammersmith Way, Richmond, B.C. Canada, V7A 5C9. All the model series previously mentioned have identical test chambers and electronics. The distinction between different model series is the low temperature limit. Refer to manufacturer's product information on the low-temperature limit of various models. 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.