



Designation: C1581/C1581M – 16

Standard Test Method for Determining Age at Cracking and Induced Tensile Stress Characteristics of Mortar and Concrete under Restrained Shrinkage¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation C1581/C1581M; 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 reappraisal. A superscript epsilon (ϵ) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reappraisal.

1. Scope*

1.1 This test method covers the laboratory determination of the age at cracking and induced tensile stress characteristics of mortar or concrete specimens under restrained shrinkage. The procedure can be used to determine the effects of variations in the proportions and material properties of mortar or concrete on cracking due to both drying shrinkage and deformations caused by autogenous shrinkage and heat of hydration.

1.2 This test method is not intended for expansive materials.

1.3 The values stated in either SI units or inch-pound units are to be regarded separately as standard. The values stated in each system may not be exact equivalents; therefore, each system shall be used independently of the other. Combining values from the two systems may result in non-conformance with 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 to determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.* (**Warning**—Fresh hydraulic cementitious mixtures are caustic and may cause chemical burns to skin and tissue upon prolonged exposure.²)

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards*:³

[C33/C33M Specification for Concrete Aggregates](#)

[C125 Terminology Relating to Concrete and Concrete Aggregates](#)

[C138/C138M Test Method for Density \(Unit Weight\), Yield, and Air Content \(Gravimetric\) of Concrete](#)

[C143/C143M Test Method for Slump of Hydraulic-Cement Concrete](#)

[C150/C150M Specification for Portland Cement](#)

[C171 Specification for Sheet Materials for Curing Concrete](#)

[C192/C192M Practice for Making and Curing Concrete Test Specimens in the Laboratory](#)

[C387/C387M Specification for Packaged, Dry, Combined Materials for Concrete and High Strength Mortar](#)

[C595/C595M Specification for Blended Hydraulic Cements](#)

[C1157/C1157M Performance Specification for Hydraulic Cement](#)

[C1437 Test Method for Flow of Hydraulic Cement Mortar](#)

[F441/F441M Specification for Chlorinated Poly\(Vinyl Chloride\) \(CPVC\) Plastic Pipe, Schedules 40 and 80](#)

2.2 *ASME Standards*:⁴

[B 46.1 Surface Texture \(Surface Roughness, Waviness and Lay\)](#)

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*:

3.1.1 For definitions of terms used in this test method, refer to Terminology [C125](#).

3.2 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard*:

3.2.1 *age at cracking, n*—the age of each test specimen, measured from the time of casting, when a sudden decrease in strain occurs.

3.2.2 *net strain, n*—the value corresponding to the difference between the strain in the steel ring at each recorded time and the initial strain.

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 A sample of freshly mixed mortar or concrete is compacted in a circular mold around an instrumented steel ring. The compressive strain developed in the steel ring caused by shrinkage of the mortar or concrete specimen is measured from

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² Section on Safety Precautions, *Manual of Aggregate and Concrete Testing*, *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 04.02.

³ 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.

⁴ Available from American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), ASME International Headquarters, Three Park Ave., New York, NY 10016-5990, <http://www.asme.org>.

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

the time of casting (1-6).⁵ Cracking of the test specimen is indicated by a sudden decrease in the steel ring strain. The age at cracking and the rate of tensile stress development in the test specimen are indicators of the material's resistance to cracking under restrained shrinkage.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 This test method is for relative comparison of materials and is not intended to determine the age at cracking of mortar or concrete in any specific type of structure, configuration, or exposure.

5.2 This test method is applicable to mixtures with aggregates of 13-mm [0.5-in.] maximum nominal size or less.

5.3 This test method is useful for determining the relative likelihood of early-age cracking of different cementitious mixtures and for aiding in the selection of cement-based materials that are less likely to crack under restrained shrinkage. Actual cracking tendency in service depends on many variables including type of structure, degree of restraint, rate of property development, construction and curing methods, and environmental conditions.

5.4 This test method can be used to determine the relative effects of material variations on induced tensile stresses and cracking potential. These variations can include, but are not limited to, aggregate source, aggregate gradation, cement type, cement content, water content, supplementary cementing materials, or chemical admixtures.

5.5 For materials that have not cracked during the test, the rate of tensile stress development at the time the test is terminated provides a basis for comparison of the materials.

6. Apparatus

6.1 *Steel ring*—Structural steel pipe with a wall thickness of 13 ± 1 mm [0.50 ± 0.05 in.], an outside diameter of 330 ± 3 mm [13.0 ± 0.12 in.] and a height of 150 ± 6 mm [6.0 ± 0.25 in.] (see Fig. 1). Machine the inner and outer faces to produce smooth surfaces with a texture of 1.6 micrometres [63 micro-inches] or finer, as defined in ASME B 46.1.

6.2 *Strain gages*—As a minimum, use two electrical resistance strain gages to monitor the strain development in the steel ring. Each strain gage shall be wired in a quarter-bridge configuration (that is, one leg of a full Wheatstone bridge). See Note 1 for additional information.

6.3 *Data acquisition system*—The data acquisition system shall be compatible with the strain instrumentation and automatically record each strain gage independently. The resolution of the system shall be ± 0.0000005 m/m [in./in.]. The system shall be capable of recording strain data at intervals not to exceed 30 minutes.

NOTE 1—Use of a precision resistor, to balance the leg of the bridge, a strain conditioner input module, to complete the other half of the bridge, and a 16-channel interface board has been found to adequately provide the required resolution of the system.

⁵ The boldface numbers in parenthesis refer to the list of references at the end of this test method.

6.4 *Base*—Epoxy-coated plywood or other non-absorptive and non-reactive surface.

6.5 *Outer ring*—Use one of the following alternative materials as the outer ring.

6.5.1 *PVC pipe*—Schedule 80-18 PVC pipe, in accordance with Specification F441/F441M, with a 405 ± 3 -mm [16.0 ± 0.12 -in.] inside diameter and 150 ± 6 -mm [6.0 ± 0.25 -in.] height (see Fig. 1).

6.5.2 *Steel outer ring*—3-mm [0.125-in.] thick steel sheeting formed to obtain a 405 ± 3 -mm [16.0 ± 0.12 -in.] inside diameter and 150 ± 6 -mm [6.0 ± 0.25 -in.] height.

6.5.3 *Other materials*—Other suitable non-absorptive and non-reactive materials formed to obtain a 405 ± 3 -mm [16.0 ± 0.12 -in.] inside diameter and 150 ± 6 -mm [6.0 ± 0.25 -in.] height.

6.6 *Testing environment*—Store the specimens in an environmentally controlled room with constant air temperature of 23.0 ± 2.0 °C [73.5 ± 3.5 °F] and relative humidity of 50 ± 4 %.

7. Materials and Mixing

7.1 Materials:

7.1.1 *Cement*—Cement shall conform to Specifications C150/C150M, C595/C595M, or C1157/C1157M.

7.1.2 *Aggregates*—Aggregates shall conform to Specification C33/C33M. The maximum nominal size of the coarse aggregate shall be 13 mm [0.5 in.] or less.

7.2 Mixing:

7.2.1 *Concrete mixtures*—Machine mix the concrete as prescribed in Practice C192/C192M.

7.2.2 *Mortar mixtures*—Mix the mortar as prescribed in Specification C387/C387M.

8. Properties of Fresh Mixtures

8.1 *Concrete mixtures*—Samples of freshly mixed concrete shall be tested in accordance with the following methods:

8.1.1 *Density (unit weight) and air content*—Test Method C138/C138M.

8.1.2 *Slump*—Test Method C143/C143M.

8.2 *Mortar mixtures*—Samples of freshly mixed mortar shall be tested in accordance with the following methods:

8.2.1 *Density*—Specification C387/C387M.

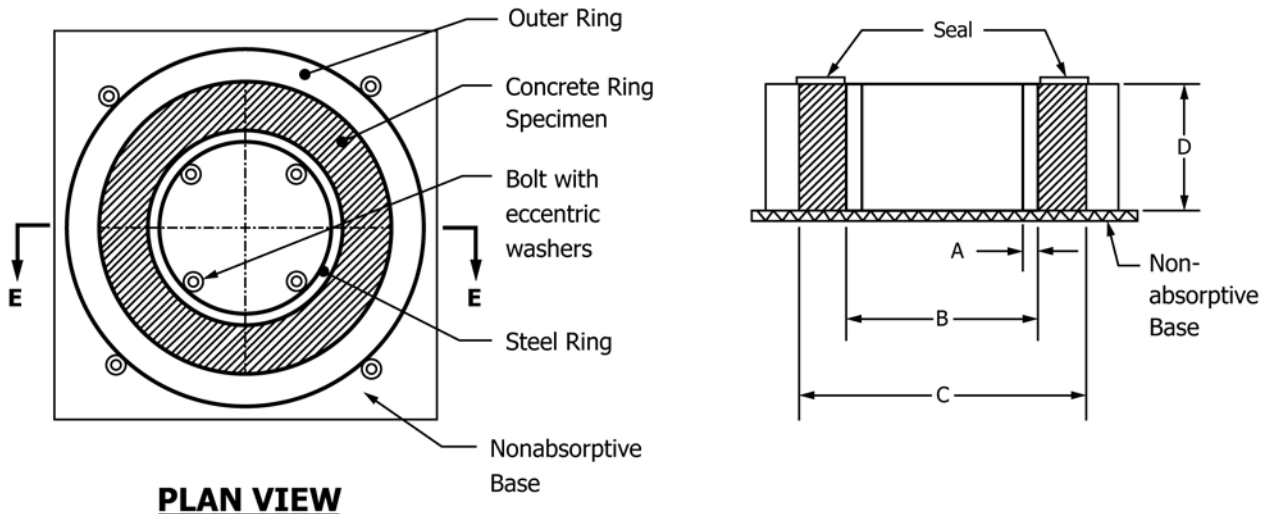
8.2.2 *Flow*—Test Method C1437.

9. Specimen Fabrication and Test Setup

9.1 Bond two strain gages at midheight locations on the interior surface of the steel ring along a diameter; that is, mount the second gage diametrically opposite the first gage. Orient the gages to measure strain in the circumferential direction. Follow the manufacturer's procedures for mounting and waterproofing the gages on the steel ring and connecting leadwires to the strain gage tabs.

9.2 *Test specimen mold*—The test specimen mold consists of a base, an inner steel ring and an outer ring.

9.2.1 Fabricate a base for each test specimen as described in Section 6.4. The top surface of each base shall minimize frictional restraint of the specimen.



PLAN VIEW

SECTION E - E

Figure Dimensions	SI Units	Inch-Pound Units
A	13 ± 1 mm	0.50 ± 0.05 in.
B	330 ± 3 mm	13.0 ± 0.12 in.
C	405 ± 3 mm	16.0 ± 0.12 in.
D	150 ± 6 mm	6.0 ± 0.25 in.

Notes:

1. Not to scale.
2. Bolts with eccentric washers for securing steel ring and outer ring to the base during casting of the test specimen (8 required).

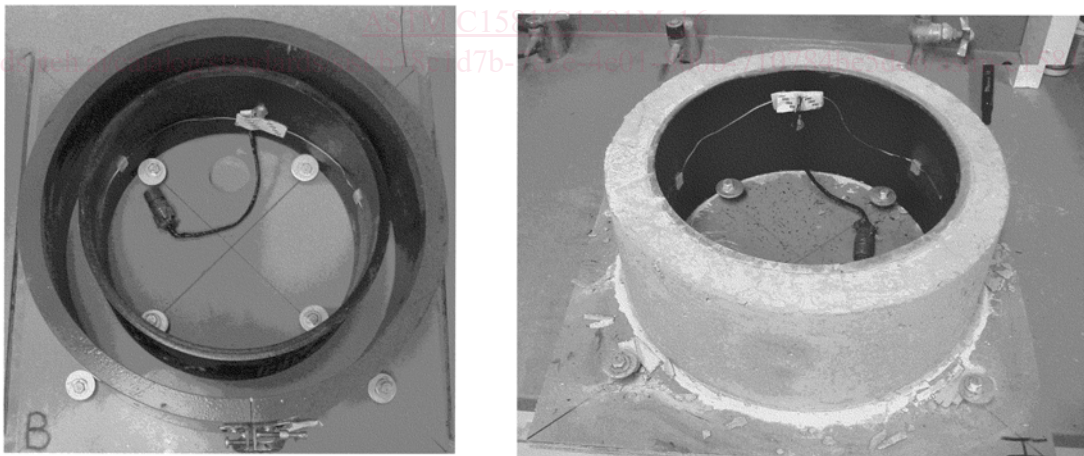


FIG. 1 Test specimen dimensions (top), specimen mold (bottom left), and specimen (bottom right).

NOTE 2—Use of an epoxy coating or a Mylar sheet covering has been found to provide a suitable surface between the test specimen and the base.

9.2.2 Secure the steel ring to the base before casting using bolts with eccentric washers (see Fig. 1).

9.2.2.1 Coat the outer surface of the steel ring with a release agent.

9.2.3 Coat the inner surface of the outer ring with a release agent.