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# Standard Practice for Agencies Testing Concrete and Concrete Aggregates for Use in Construction and Criteria for Testing Agency Evaluation<sup>1</sup>

This standard is issued under the fixed designation C1077; 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 ( $\epsilon$ ) 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 practice identifies and defines the duties, responsibilities, and minimum technical requirements of testing agency personnel and the minimum technical requirements for equipment utilized in testing concrete and concrete aggregates for use in construction.

1.2 This practice provides criteria for the evaluation of the capability of a testing agency to perform designated ASTM test methods on concrete and concrete aggregates. It can be used by an evaluation authority in the inspection or accreditation of a testing agency or by other parties to determine if the agency is qualified to conduct the specified tests.

NOTE 1—Specification E329 provides criteria for the evaluation of agencies that perform the inspection of concrete during placement.

1.3 This practice provides criteria for Inspection Bodies and Accreditation Bodies that provide services for evaluation of testing agencies in accordance with this practice.

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.*

## 2. Referenced Documents

### 2.1 ASTM Standards:<sup>2</sup>

- C31/C31M Practice for Making and Curing Concrete Test Specimens in the Field
- C39/C39M Test Method for Compressive Strength of Cylindrical Concrete Specimens

<sup>1</sup> This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee C09 on Concrete and Concrete Aggregates and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee C09.98 on Evaluation of Laboratories.

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<sup>2</sup> 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.

- C78/C78M Test Method for Flexural Strength of Concrete (Using Simple Beam with Third-Point Loading)
- C117 Test Method for Materials Finer than 75- $\mu$ m (No. 200) Sieve in Mineral Aggregates by Washing
- C125 Terminology Relating to Concrete and Concrete Aggregates
- C127 Test Method for Relative Density (Specific Gravity) and Absorption of Coarse Aggregate
- C128 Test Method for Relative Density (Specific Gravity) and Absorption of Fine Aggregate
- C136/C136M Test Method for Sieve Analysis of Fine and Coarse 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
- C172/C172M Practice for Sampling Freshly Mixed Concrete
- C173/C173M Test Method for Air Content of Freshly Mixed Concrete by the Volumetric Method
- C231/C231M Test Method for Air Content of Freshly Mixed Concrete by the Pressure Method
- C617/C617M Practice for Capping Cylindrical Concrete Specimens
- C802 Practice for Conducting an Interlaboratory Test Program to Determine the Precision of Test Methods for Construction Materials
- C1064/C1064M Test Method for Temperature of Freshly Mixed Hydraulic-Cement Concrete
- C1231/C1231M Practice for Use of Unbonded Caps in Determination of Compressive Strength of Hardened Cylindrical Concrete Specimens
- D75/D75M Practice for Sampling Aggregates
- D2419 Test Method for Sand Equivalent Value of Soils and Fine Aggregate
- E4 Practices for Force Verification of Testing Machines
- E11 Specification for Woven Wire Test Sieve Cloth and Test Sieves
- E329 Specification for Agencies Engaged in Construction Inspection, Testing, or Special Inspection

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

E1301 Guide for Proficiency Testing by Interlaboratory Comparisons (Withdrawn 2012)<sup>3</sup>

2.2 ACI Standards:

ACI 214-77 Recommended Practice for Evaluation of Strength Test Results of Concrete<sup>4</sup>

2.3 ISO Standards:

ISO 17011 Conformity Assessment—General Requirements For Accreditation Bodies Accrediting Conformity Assessment Bodies<sup>5</sup>

### 3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions:

3.1.1 For definitions of terms used in this practice, refer to Terminology C125.

3.2 Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:

3.2.1 *evaluation authority, n*—an independent entity, apart from the testing agency being evaluated, that has the capability to provide an unbiased evaluation of the technical activities of concrete and concrete aggregates testing agencies in accordance with Annex A1 or Annex A2.

3.2.1.1 *Discussion*—Two acceptable methods of evaluation are inspection and accreditation, and these evaluations are offered by many evaluation authorities. An inspection is an evaluation of equipment and procedures based on the Test Methods and Procedures section, along with a review of the quality system. An inspection report is the final step in the process for an inspection agency. The testing agency being evaluated performs corrective actions for any deficiencies noted, and these corrections are to be placed with the other inspection documentation as part of the permanent record of the inspection. An accreditation agency uses the results of the inspection report or the results of their own onsite assessment as one phase of the accreditation process. As a separate phase, the accreditation agency also reviews the testing agency's corrective actions for the deficiencies noted and issues a certificate of accreditation once all of the deficiencies have been corrected. There is no universally accepted evaluation authority in the construction materials testing field; therefore, testing agencies should give careful consideration when selecting an evaluation authority to gain the most benefit from the evaluation. In most cases, a testing agency will select an evaluation authority as a result of requirements in a project specification, or contract, or in response to local codes, or other industry requirements. In those circumstances, the requirements will stipulate the acceptable evaluation authorities. If there are no specific requirements and the evaluation is in anticipation of future work or to compete with other local testing agencies, then the agency should contact the organization(s) most likely to use their services for a list of acceptable evaluation authorities. A list of evaluation authorities is provided in the Qualification of Personnel and Laboratory Evalu-

ation section of the Manual of Aggregate and Concrete Testing.<sup>6</sup> The list is merely a collection of organizations willing to provide this service and is not an endorsement of any particular organization. Other organizations may also be available to provide this service.

3.2.2 *external technical services, n*—those services required by a testing agency that are provided by another organization.

3.2.3 *quality systems, n*—those internal procedures and practices that an agency utilizes to ensure continued compliance with applicable testing standards for concrete and concrete aggregates.

3.2.4 *testing agency, n*—organization that measures, examines, performs tests, or otherwise determines the characteristics or performance of materials or products. This includes organizations that offer commercial testing services, an in-house quality control function, an academic institution, or any other organization providing the required testing services, whether performed in the laboratory or in the field.

### 4. Significance and Use

4.1 The testing and inspection of concrete and concrete aggregates are important elements in obtaining quality construction. A testing agency providing these services shall be selected with care.

4.2 A testing agency shall be deemed qualified to perform and report the results of its tests if the agency meets the requirements of this practice. The testing agency services shall be provided under the technical direction of a registered professional engineer.

4.3 This practice establishes essential characteristics pertaining to the organization, personnel, facilities, and quality systems of the testing agency. This practice may be supplemented by more specific criteria and requirements for particular projects.

### 5. Organization

5.1 The following information shall be readily available for review:

5.1.1 Description of the organization, including:

5.1.1.1 Complete legal name and address of the main office and each testing agency location,

5.1.1.2 Names and positions of the principal officers and the responsible, registered professional engineer in charge, and

5.1.1.3 Description of the testing agency management structure.

5.1.2 Listing of the relevant technical services offered, and

5.1.3 All external technical services normally utilized.

5.2 The testing agency shall designate an individual with access to management who has the responsibility of seeing that procedures required in this document are being carried out.

### 6. Personnel Qualifications

6.1 Information shall be made available to substantiate personnel qualifications as follows:

<sup>6</sup> Manual of Aggregate and Concrete Testing, *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 04.02.

<sup>3</sup> The last approved version of this historical standard is referenced on [www.astm.org](http://www.astm.org).

<sup>4</sup> Available from American Concrete Institute (ACI), P.O. Box 9094, Farmington Hills, MI 48333-9094, <http://www.aci-int.org>.

<sup>5</sup> Available from International Organization for Standardization (ISO), 1, ch. de la Voie-Creuse, Case postale 56, CH-1211, Geneva 20, Switzerland, <http://www.iso.ch>.

6.1.1 All relevant testing services shall be provided under the full-time technical direction of a licensed professional engineer with at least 5 years experience in construction materials testing.

6.1.2 Laboratory and field supervisors shall meet the following requirements:

6.1.2.1 Possess at least 3 years relevant experience.

6.1.2.2 Shall be certified in the relevant tests required of the personnel they are supervising, as outlined in 6.1.3.

6.1.3 Personnel performing laboratory and field testing shall possess current certification(s) that includes a written and performance examination for each relevant standard identified in 6.1.3.1, 6.1.3.2, and 6.1.3.3 and shall conform to the requirements identified in 6.1.4.

6.1.3.1 Concrete laboratory testing certification(s) shall include the following standards: Test Method C39/C39M and Practice C617/C617M or C1231/C1231M. Test Method C78/C78M is also considered a relevant test if it is included on the agency's list of technical services.

6.1.3.2 Aggregate laboratory testing certification(s) shall include the following standards: Test Methods C117, C127, C128, and C136/C136M.

6.1.3.3 Concrete field testing certification(s) shall include the following standards: Practices C31/C31M and C172/C172M, and Test Methods C138/C138M, C143/C143M, C173/C173M, C231/C231M, and C1064/C1064M.

6.1.4 The certification program shall meet the following criteria:

6.1.4.1 The written examination shall be of sufficient length and detail to cover the test method or practice, including, as applicable: the significance of the test or practice, sampling, specimen preparation, procedure, calculations, and reporting of results,

6.1.4.2 The performance examination shall include a demonstration of the test method or practice, to document the individual's ability to correctly perform the procedure in accordance with the standard, and

6.1.4.3 The written and performance examinations shall include all relevant test methods that are listed in the section above for the type of individual being certified.

NOTE 2—A list of certification programs is provided in the Qualification of Personnel and Laboratory Evaluation section of the Manual of Aggregate and Concrete Testing.<sup>6</sup> The list is merely a collection of certification programs and is not an endorsement of any particular program. Other programs may also be available.

6.1.4.4 The certification body shall establish the period of certification but not to exceed five years.

6.1.4.5 The period for which the certification is valid shall be clearly and prominently stated on any documents that attest to the certification(s) held by the individual.

## 7. Test Methods and Procedures

7.1 The testing agency shall be capable of performing the required ASTM test methods, guides, or practices in 7.2 and may request additional evaluation for the optional methods in 7.3 to the extent that those services are provided by the agency.

7.2 *Required Test Methods and Practices:*

7.2.1 *For Agencies Testing Concrete:*

7.2.1.1 *Sampling*, Practice C172/C172M,

7.2.1.2 *Slump*, Test Method C143/C143M,

7.2.1.3 *Unit Weight, Yield, and Air Content*, Test Method C138/C138M,

7.2.1.4 *Air Content*, Test Method C173/C173M (volumetric method), or Test Method C231/C231M (pressure method), or both.

7.2.1.5 *Temperature*, Test Method C1064/C1064M,

7.2.1.6 *Making and Curing Test Specimens*, Practice C31/C31M,

7.2.1.7 *Compressive Strength*, Test Method C39/C39M,

7.2.1.8 *Capping Cylinders*, Practice C617/C617M or Practice C1231/C1231M.

7.2.2 *For Agencies Testing Concrete Aggregates:*

7.2.2.1 *Sieve Analysis*, Test Method C136/C136M,

7.2.2.2 *Material Finer Than 75- $\mu$ m (No. 200) Sieve*, Test Method C117, and

7.2.2.3 *Specific Gravity and Absorption*, Test Method C127 (Coarse Aggregate) and Test Method C128 (Fine Aggregate).

7.3 *Optional Test Methods or Practices:*

7.3.1 Some testing agencies conduct other tests on concrete and concrete aggregates in addition to those listed in The *Required Test Methods and Practices* Section. These optional test methods and practices could include any of the test methods or practices developed by Committee C09 and contained in volume 04.02, as well as other related standards such as Practice D75/D75M and Test Method D2419. The agency shall have evidence of proper facilities, equipment, and trained personnel to comply with the applicable test method or practice, if it is included in the scope of services as defined by the agency. The agency and the evaluation authority will mutually agree upon which optional test methods or practices will be included in the agency's evaluation. The evaluation authority shall then select which of the optional test methods or practices offered by the agency need to be demonstrated by the personnel.

7.4 The testing agency shall use the latest version of each referenced method within one year of its publication unless an earlier version of the standard is required by the client.

7.5 Testing agency personnel shall have convenient access to applicable standards.

## 8. Facilities, Equipment, and Supplemental Procedures

8.1 *General*—The testing agency shall have facilities and equipment conforming to the requirements of the applicable test method. This section contains equipment requirements and procedures that clarify certain provisions of the test methods.

8.2 *Procedures Related to Required Test Methods*—In addition to standard test method requirements, the conditions listed in 8.3 and 8.4 shall be met.

8.3 *For Agencies Testing Concrete:*

8.3.1 *Compressive Strength Testing Machines*, shall conform to the applicable requirements of Test Method C39/C39M.

8.4 *For Agencies Testing Concrete Aggregates:*



8.4.1 *Sieve Accuracy*—Verification of sieve accuracy shall be performed at least annually on each sieve used in the test for sieve analysis (Test Methods **C117** and **C136/C136M**). Any one of the following three methods of verification is acceptable. Each method of sieve verification shall include an inspection of the sieve cloth for punctures or obvious defects.

8.4.1.1 Verification of each sieve used according to the procedures prescribed in the Annex of Specification **E11**.

8.4.1.2 A comparison of the results of a split sample sieved on different sieve sets. Results shall be verified for single operator precision to be within the acceptable range of two results stated in the test method.

8.4.1.3 Participation in the sieve analysis test in an aggregate proficiency sample program, as described in the Quality Systems section. Results shall be verified for multilaboratory precision to be within the acceptable range of two results stated in the test method.

8.4.2 *Mechanical Sieve Shaker*—When mechanical sieving devices are used, the period of mechanical agitation shall be checked at least annually for adequacy of sieving as described in Test Method **C136/C136M**. Mechanical agitation periods shall be established for each different type of aggregate tested.

NOTE 3—Different types of aggregate refer to shape and composition, not supplier. For example, agitation periods for elongated materials may need to be extended, while softer materials that break down easily may require a shorter period to minimize alteration of the particle size distribution.

8.4.3 *Relative Density (Specific Gravity) and Absorption Tests*—When performing the procedures of Test Methods **C127** and **C128**, duplicate tests shall be made at least once every 6 months. Results shall be verified for single operator precision within the tolerance stated in the respective test method. Participation in a proficiency sample program with relative density (specific gravity) and absorption testing is an acceptable alternative.

8.4.4 Balances or scales for all concrete and aggregate tests shall be calibrated annually.

#### 8.5 *Procedures Related to Optional Test Methods:*

8.5.1 If the applicable test method requires equipment calibration and does not specify a frequency, then the testing agency shall establish a frequency in its quality assurance program and conform thereto.

8.5.2 In the event that the testing agency borrows or rents equipment to perform an optional test method, the agency shall be able to document that it obtained the appropriate equipment and that the equipment was calibrated, standardized, or verified.

8.6 All equipment listed in this section shall be calibrated or verified before being placed in service. Equipment not in operating condition or out of tolerance shall be marked as such and taken out of service until corrected.

### 9. Testing Agency Records and Reports

9.1 The testing agency shall maintain a system of records that permits verification of any issued report.

9.2 The records of the testing agency shall contain the following information:

9.2.1 Standard operating procedures for the following:

9.2.1.1 Identification of the test sample,

9.2.1.2 Transfer of the sample from the field to the testing facility, and

9.2.1.3 Recording of test results.

9.2.2 Calibrations or verifications of equipment required by the test method for all of the tests offered in the scope of the testing agency's services. The records shall include:

9.2.2.1 The identification of the specific piece of equipment,

9.2.2.2 The identification of the equipment used to perform the calibration or verification,

9.2.2.3 The name of the individual who performed the calibration or verification,

9.2.2.4 The date the calibration or verification was performed,

9.2.2.5 The quantity measured by the equipment (such as length, force, or mass), and

9.2.2.6 The associated accuracy of the measurement or a comparison of the measured quantity with the associated allowable tolerances, as necessary to verify that the equipment complies with the requirements in the relevant standards. Where additional calibration or verification requirements have been listed in the *Facilities, Equipment, and Supplemental Procedures* Section, this information shall also be included in the records.

9.2.3 Records on testing agency personnel that document work experience, education, on-the-job training, and methods used to ensure continued competence in performing the required test methods,

9.2.4 Audits and inspections by outside agencies and all reports or certifications, with applicable dates, of any evaluation or accreditations issued by any evaluating authorities,

9.2.5 The testing agency shall retain results of participation in proficiency sample programs, including data sheets, summary reports and, if low proficiency sample ratings are received, a record of the agency's investigation into the reason for the low ratings and corrective action taken.

9.2.6 Current standard test methods and other pertinent reference material in a library,

9.2.7 Identification of the person performing the field and laboratory tests, and

9.2.8 Documents that establish the traceability to an acceptable reference standard or a national standard for load cells, proving rings, thermometers, test weights, and test equipment used for verification or calibration of testing equipment.

9.3 Agency test reports shall accurately and clearly present the specified test results and all pertinent data.

9.4 Test reports shall include the following information:

9.4.1 Name and address of the testing agency,

9.4.2 Identification of the report and the date issued,

9.4.3 Name of the client,

9.4.4 Project identification,

9.4.5 Sample identification,

9.4.6 Identification of the standard test method used, a notation of all known deviations from the test method, and all requirements of the test method that were not performed by the testing agency (**Note 5**),