
**Protective clothing for firefighters —
Physiological impact —**

**Part 1:
Measurement of coupled heat and
moisture transfer with the sweating
torso**

*Vêtements de protection pour sapeurs-pompiers — Impact
physiologique —*

*Partie 1: Mesurage du transfert de masse et de la chaleur couplé de
chaleur et d'humidité à l'aide du torse transpirant*

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Contents

Page

Foreword	v
Introduction	vi
1 Scope	1
2 Normative references	1
3 Terms and definitions	1
4 Symbols and abbreviations	4
5 Apparatus	4
5.1 Sweating torso	5
5.1.1 General	5
5.1.2 Heated cylinder	6
5.1.3 Thermal guard sections	6
5.1.4 Heating and temperature control	6
5.1.5 Temperature measurement	6
5.1.6 Simulation of perspiration	6
5.1.7 Wicking layer	6
5.1.8 Balance torso weight	7
5.2 Computer, control system and data acquisition	7
5.2.1 General	7
5.2.2 Computer and measurement software	7
5.2.3 Control system	7
5.2.4 Data acquisition	7
5.2.5 Measurement control options	7
5.3 Climatic chamber	8
5.3.1 General	8
5.3.2 Climatic chamber sensors	8
5.4 Fan system	8
5.5 Sweat water supply	8
5.5.1 Gravimetric sweat water control system	9
5.6 Simulation of air layers	10
6 Sampling and test specimens	11
6.1 General	11
6.1.1 Size of samples	11
6.1.2 Type of test specimen	11
6.1.3 Garment/ensemble specification	11
6.2 Number of test specimens	11
7 Specimen preparation	11
7.1 Pre-treatment	12
7.2 Conditioning	12
8 Measurement procedure	12
8.1 Test preparation	12
8.1.1 Preparation of climatic chamber	12
8.1.2 Wind speed	12
8.2 Specimen testing	13
8.2.1 General	13
8.2.2 Dressing the torso	14
8.2.3 Recording specimen identification and test observations	14
8.2.4 Starting the test	14
8.2.5 Calculated values	15
9 Test report	18
9.1 General	18
9.2 Specimen identification	18

9.3	Experiment conditions.....	18
9.4	Calculated results.....	18
10	Maintenance and calibration.....	19
10.1	Maintenance.....	19
10.1.1	Sweat water tank.....	19
10.1.2	Valve checks.....	19
10.2	Calibration.....	19
10.2.1	General.....	19
10.2.2	Correction value for thermal resistance, R_{ct0} (torso).....	19
10.2.3	Wicking layer.....	19
10.2.4	torso temperature sensors.....	20
10.2.5	torso heating power.....	20
10.2.6	torso sweat rate.....	20
10.2.7	Environmental conditions.....	20
10.3	Experiments with a standard fabric (optional).....	20
Annex A (informative) torso size and materials definition.....		21
Annex B (informative) Calibration.....		25
Annex C (informative) Example of data evaluation.....		27
Annex D (informative) Sample check list.....		31
Annex E (informative) Validation of the measurement device.....		32
Annex F (informative) Example Matlab code.....		33
Bibliography.....		37


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<https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/iso/264318b2-e569-4c82-8cb6-84b4d5f0efd9/iso-18640-1-2018>

Foreword

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This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 94, *Personal safety*, Subcommittee SC 14, *Firefighters PPE*.

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Introduction

The main functions of protective clothing are protection against hazards and maintenance of health and comfort for the wearer. Furthermore, protective clothing against heat and flame prevents the wearer from health risks or even life threatening heat stress in extreme environmental conditions. Today's standards provide requirements for the protective properties of protective clothing against heat and flame. However, the higher the protective properties of such clothing, the less the heat originating from the human body is dissipated. Firefighters reach metabolic rates above 500 W/m² during their work[5][6]. Thereof 75-85 % is released as heat[7], which has to be dissipated from the human body by thermo-regulative processes to avoid an increase in body core temperature. If heat dissipation is not restricted, the human body is able to maintain its temperature in the range of 36,5 °C to 37,5 °C (normothermia)[8]. However, in harsh environmental conditions and/or in situations of restricted heat dissipation due to protective clothing the human body is not able to maintain body core temperature within normothermia and suffers from heat stress. The working performance is gradually reduced and any further increases in body core temperature can become life threatening[16]. To reduce the risk of heat stress during high intensity physical activities, protective clothing should additionally be assessed with regard to its impact on human thermoregulation and heat stress.

Different approaches exist for the assessment of thermo-physiological impact. On the one hand, established standard parameters such as water vapour resistance, R_{et} , and thermal insulation, R_{ct} , of fabric samples are considered with regard to thermo-regulative impact. However, these parameters do not fully reflect the real impact of protective clothing; for example, moisture management properties and the combined effect of heat and moisture transfer are not considered. On the other hand, human subject trials reveal real thermo-physiological responses for a specific environmental condition and protective clothing ensemble. However, the outcome of this methodology does not only refer to the intrinsic properties of material samples but are influenced also by the design of the clothing and trapped air layers within the clothing. Furthermore, human subject trials are very time consuming and expensive, constricted by ethical guidelines and provide findings related to the collective of participants included. Thus, reproducibility between laboratories might be limited. The use of thermal manikins overcomes the limitations for human subject trials. As for human subject trials, full body manikins provide findings on ready-made protective garments including design and fit. Hence, the attribution to intrinsic material properties remains difficult.

A methodology referring to intrinsic clothing properties and taking into account combined heat and moisture transfer is the Sweating torso[9][10]. Sweating torso device is an upright standing heated cylinder, representing the surface of a human trunk, with the ability for perspiration[11]. The clothing sample is investigated by wrapping specimens around the sweating torso. Three phases are run to measure dry thermal insulation, dry and wet heat transfer and drying properties. Findings from the Sweating torso have been validated with standard methodologies, such as sweating guarded hotplate, and were shown to be highly reproducible[11]. Furthermore, validation studies have been conducted to relate human thermos-physiological measurements to Sweating torso findings under realistic environmental conditions and activities for firefighters. Based on this knowledge, guidelines are provided for intrinsic textile properties based on thermo-physiological responses. In addition to the standard procedure described above, the impact of more complex protective clothing systems including underwear, air gaps and/or design features is investigated optionally applying the same experimental protocol described in this document.