

INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD

ISO
2578

Second edition
1993-08-01

**Plastics — Determination of
time-temperature limits after prolonged
exposure to heat**

*Plastiques — Détermination des limites temps-températures après
exposition à l'action prolongée de la chaleur*

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Reference number
ISO 2578:1993(E)

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International Organization for Standardization
Case Postale 56 • CH-1211 Genève 20 • Switzerland

Printed in Switzerland

Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

International Standard ISO 2578 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 61, *Plastics*, Sub-Committee SC 6, *Ageing, chemical and environmental resistance*.

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO 2578:1974), of which it constitutes a technical revision.

Annexes A and B form an integral part of this International Standard. Annex C is for information only.

Introduction

During the preparation of this International Standard, account was taken of the contents of IEC 216. Accordingly, the terms and definitions in this International Standard, as well as the procedures described, are in line or identical with those specified in IEC 216.

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Plastics — Determination of time-temperature limits after prolonged exposure to heat

1 Scope

1.1 This International Standard specifies the principles and procedures for evaluating the thermal endurance properties of plastics exposed to elevated temperature for long periods.

1.2 The term thermal endurance is used here to refer to tests made in air, excluding any other influence or stress applied to the test specimens. Thermal endurance properties evaluated in different environments and/or with different stresses applied to the test specimens require different test procedures.

1.3 In this International Standard, the study of the thermal ageing of plastics is based solely on the change in certain properties resulting from a period of exposure to elevated temperature. The properties studied are always measured after the temperature has returned to ambient.

The various properties of plastics change at various rates on thermal ageing. To enable comparisons to be made of the thermal ageing of different plastics, the criteria for judgement depend on the type of property to be studied and its acceptable limiting value.

1.4 In the application of this standard it is assumed that a practically linear relationship exists between the logarithm of the time required to cause the predetermined property change and the reciprocal of the corresponding absolute temperature (Arrhenius Law).

For the plastics tested, no transition, in particular a first-order transition, should occur in the temperature range under study.

2 Normative references

The following standards contain provisions which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this International Standard. At the time of publi-

cation, the editions indicated were valid. All standards are subject to revision, and parties to agreements based on this International Standard are encouraged to investigate the possibility of applying the most recent editions of the standards indicated below. Members of IEC and ISO maintain registers of currently valid International Standards.

ISO 291:1977, *Plastics — Standard atmospheres for conditioning and testing*.

IEC 216-1:1990, *Guide for the determination of thermal endurance properties of electrical insulating materials — Part 1: General guidelines for ageing procedures and evaluation of test results*.

IEC 216-2:1990, *Guide for the determination of thermal endurance properties of electrical insulating materials — Part 2: Choice of the test criteria*.

IEC 216-3-1:1990, *Guide for the determination of thermal endurance properties of electrical insulating materials — Part 3: Instructions for calculating thermal endurance characteristics — Section 1: Calculations using mean values of normally distributed complete data*.

IEC 216-3-3:—,¹⁾ *Guide for the determination of thermal endurance properties of electrical insulating materials — Part 3: Instructions for calculating thermal endurance characteristics — Section 3: Calculations for incomplete data*.

IEC 216-4-1:1990, *Guide for the determination of thermal endurance properties of electrical insulating materials — Part 4: Ageing ovens — Section 1: Single-chamber ovens*.

IEC 216-5:1990, *Guide for the determination of thermal endurance properties of electrical insulating materials — Part 5: Guidelines for the application of thermal endurance characteristics*.

1) To be published. [15B (B.C.) 82]

3 Definitions

For the purposes of this International Standard, the following definitions apply.

3.1 temperature index (TI): Number corresponding to the temperature, in degrees Celsius, derived from the thermal endurance relationship at a given time (normally 20 000 h).

3.2 relative temperature index (RTI): Temperature index of a test material, obtained at the time which corresponds to the known temperature index of a reference material when both materials are subjected to the same ageing and diagnostic procedures in a comparative test.

3.3 halving interval (HIC): Number corresponding to the temperature interval, in degrees Celsius, which expresses the halving of the time to end-point taken at the temperature of the TI or the RTI.

HIC is a measure of the slope of the thermal endurance graph. It is not constant, but varies with temperature even when the thermal endurance relationship is linear. In many practical cases, the error arising from the use of HIC in the temperature range of interest remains within acceptable limits.

3.4 thermal endurance graph (Arrhenius graph): Graph in which the logarithm of time to reach a specified end-point in a thermal endurance test is plotted versus the reciprocal thermodynamic (absolute) test temperature.

3.5 threshold value: Value, corresponding to a percentage of the initial value of the property under investigation, at which the ageing test is stopped and the time to failure is calculated.

NOTES

1 The level of 50 % is often used to determine the threshold value.

2 If a minimum value is required after ageing, it may be agreed between the interested parties to use this minimum value as the threshold value, instead of a percentage of the initial value.

3.6 test-specimen failure time: Time required at the exposure temperature for a specimen to either fail the proof test or reach the threshold value of the characteristic under investigation, whichever is shorter.

4 Principle

4.1 Determination of time to failure

At a chosen temperature, the variations in the numerical value of a chosen characteristic (for example,

a mechanical, optical or electrical property) are determined as a function of time.

The procedure is continued until the relevant threshold value of that characteristic has been reached, resulting in the time to failure at that particular temperature.

Further specimens are exposed at at least two other temperatures and the variations in the relevant characteristic determined. It is recommended to heat-age test specimens at three to four temperatures, and determine the time to failure for each of the temperatures.

4.2 Determination of TI

The times to failure are plotted versus the reciprocal values of the exposure temperatures. The intersection of this curve with the chosen time limit (in general 20 000 h) gives the temperature index sought.

4.3 Use of correlation coefficient

The reliability of the extrapolation of the graph depends on obtaining an acceptable Arrhenius plot, which may not be possible with materials showing behaviour related to a transition phenomenon in the chosen temperature range.

For this purpose the correlation coefficient r is calculated in accordance with annex B. If this calculation results in a value smaller than 0.95 (for three test temperatures; see also IEC 216), an additional test at a different test temperature may improve the linearity of data.

4.4 Determination of RTI

For determination of RTI, the chosen reference plastic, its thermal endurance and the method of determination are of central importance.

The reference plastic shall be of the same type as the tested plastic, and have a history of satisfactory service. It shall have a known temperature index for the property and a threshold value which are the same, or at least reasonably similar to, those to be employed in the RTI test. The TI and HIC of the reference material should also be approximately the same as the values expected for the tested plastic.

Since processing conditions may significantly affect the ageing characteristics of some materials, the sampling, cutting of sheet from the supply roll, cutting of anisotropic material in the same direction, moulding, curing, preconditioning, etc. shall be performed in the same manner for both materials, and the specimens shall be tested in the same thickness.

5 Choice of test

The test chosen shall relate to a characteristic which is likely to be of significance in practice and, wherever possible, use shall be made of test methods specified in International Standards. If the dimensions and/or form of the test specimens are altered by the heat treatment, then only test methods which are independent of these effects may be used.

6 Choice of end-point

For the selection of the end-point, two factors shall be agreed upon:

- a) the period of time for which a time-temperature limit shall be estimated; for general purposes, a period of 20 000 h is recommended;

NOTE 3 Other times (shorter or longer than 20 000 h) may be chosen if necessary.

- b) the acceptable threshold value of the chosen characteristic; this threshold value depends on the conditions of use foreseen.

7 Test specimens

7.1 The dimensions and method of preparation of the test specimens shall be in accordance with the specifications given for the relevant test method.

7.2 For a criterion requiring a destructive test, the minimum total number (n) of test specimens needed depends on

- the number a of test specimens required for one test, according to the test specifications given for the relevant test method;
- the number b of tests necessary to determine the end-point at one exposure temperature;
- the number c of exposure temperatures;
- the number d of specimens needed for the initial test before heat ageing.

Thus the total number of specimens is:

$$n = abc + d$$

For a criterion requiring non-destructive testing, and for each exposure temperature, in most cases a group of five test specimens is adequate.

NOTES

4 When there is a large number of specimens to be tested, it may be possible in certain cases to deviate from

the relevant test specifications and to reduce this number. However, it must be recognized that the precision of the test result depends to a large extent on the number of specimens tested.

5 In contrast, when the individual results are too scattered, an increase in the number of specimens may be necessary in order to obtain satisfactory precision.

6 It is advisable to make an approximate assessment, by means of preliminary tests, of the number and duration of the ageing tests required.

8 Exposure temperatures

8.1 Test specimens shall be exposed at not less than three temperatures, covering a range adequate to establish the time-temperature limit by extrapolation with the required degree of accuracy. The lowest exposure temperature shall be chosen so that the time taken to reach the threshold value is at least 5 000 h. Similarly, the highest temperature shall be chosen so that the time taken to reach the threshold value is not shorter than 100 h. The lowest exposure temperature shall not be more than 25 °C above the anticipated T_l.

8.2 If the temperature limit sought is intended for a time other than 20 000 h (see clause 6, note 3), the lowest exposure temperature shall be chosen so that the time taken to reach the threshold value is at least one-fourth of the time limit chosen for extrapolation.

8.3 Selection of adequate exposure temperatures requires previously determined information on the material under test. If such information is not available, exploratory tests may help in selecting exposure temperatures which are suitable for evaluating the thermal endurance characteristics.

9 Ageing ovens

For heat ageing, ovens shall be used that meet the requirements specified in IEC 216-4, in particular with respect to the temperature tolerances and ventilation rates of air exchange.

10 Procedure

10.1 In addition to the specimens to be exposed to heat-ageing temperatures, an adequate number of test specimens shall be kept separately as a reserve

- for cases in which the accuracy requires heat ageing at an additional temperature;
- as reference specimens.

They shall be stored in an appropriately controlled atmosphere (see ISO 291).