



Standard Guide for Reconstitution of Irradiated Charpy-Sized Specimens¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This guide covers procedures for the reconstitution of ferritic pressure boundary steels used in nuclear power plant applications, Type A Charpy (Test Methods **E 23**) specimens and specimens suitable for testing in three point bending in accordance with Test Methods **E 1921** or **E 1820**. Materials from irradiation programs (principally broken specimens) are reconstituted by welding end tabs of similar material onto remachined specimen sections that were unaffected by the initial test. Guidelines are given for the selection of suitable specimen halves and end tab materials, for dimensional control, and for avoidance of overheating the notch area. A comprehensive overview of the reconstitution methodologies can be found in Ref (1).²

1.2 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as the standard. The values given in parentheses are for information only.

1.3 *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:³

E 23 Test Methods for Notched Bar Impact Testing of Metallic Materials

E 185 Practice for Design of Surveillance Programs for Light-Water Moderated Nuclear Power Reactor Vessels

E 220 Test Method for Calibration of Thermocouples By Comparison Techniques

E 1820 Test Method for Measurement of Fracture Toughness

E 1921 Test Method for Determination of Reference Temperature, T_o , for Ferritic Steels in the Transition Range

E 2215 Practice for Evaluation of Surveillance Capsules from Light-Water Moderated Nuclear Power Reactor Vessels

3. Significance and Use

3.1 Practice **E 185** defines the minimum requirements for light-water reactor surveillance program Charpy V-notch specimens and Practice **E 2215** describes the evaluation of test specimens from surveillance capsules. It may be desirable to extend the original surveillance program beyond available specimens for plant aging management issues, such as plant license renewal, to better define existing data, or to determine fracture toughness of a material when no standard fracture toughness test specimens are available. The ability to reconstitute the broken halves of existing specimens can provide such data.

3.2 Charpy-sized specimens are typically machined from virgin material, that is, material not previously mechanically tested. There are occasions that exist when either (1) no full size specimen blanks are available or (2) the material available with the desired history (such as having been subjected to irradiation) is not sufficient for the machining of full-size specimens, or both.

3.3 An approach to this problem, which is addressed in this guide, is to fabricate new specimens using the broken halves of previously irradiated and tested specimens or other material irradiated for this purpose. In this guide, the central segment of each new specimen utilizes a broken half of a previously tested specimen and end tabs that are welded to the central segment, or the central section may simply be a piece of virgin material shorter than a Charpy-sized specimen. While specifically addressing reconstitution of irradiated pressure vessel steel, this guide can also provide guidance for reconstitution of Charpy-sized specimens for other situations involving material availability.

4. Reconstitution Technique

4.1 Welding Process:

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² The boldface numbers in parentheses refer to the list of references at the end of this standard.

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.

4.1.1 Any welding process may be chosen, provided that the heat input and dimensional constraints, as given in this guide, can be achieved. Work to date has indicated successful results with stud welding (2), electron beam welding (3,4), and projection welding (5).

4.2 Specimen Preparation:

4.2.1 The specimen insert used for reconstitution and its orientation shall be identified such that it can be traced to the original specimen. Fig. 1 illustrates the components of the reconstituted specimen and defines several terms used in the following discussion. The *central test section* of the insert lies between the heat-affected zones (HAZ) created by the reconstitution welds. Within this central test section, the temperature during reconstitution welding shall not exceed the irradiation temperature in a 10-mm region centered about the notch.

4.2.2 Each end face of the specimen insert and the selected extension tabs shall be prepared as required by the particular welding method selected.

4.2.3 If comparable data between the original and reconstituted tests are required, then the orientation of the reconstituted specimen and the original specimen must be identical.

4.2.4 The strength and the material type of the end tabs should be similar to the specimen insert. This can be important, especially in the case of irradiated (highly hardened) materials. Strength or hardness and material type for the end tabs and central insert shall be documented. Differences within a defined range were shown not to influence the test results (6). The use of oversized tabs and subsequent machining is permitted.

4.2.5 It is important to ensure that the plastic deformation beneath the notch, produced when the reconstituted specimen is tested, will occur entirely within previously undeformed material in the central test section. The following guidelines are provided to meet this objective:

4.2.5.1 To ensure that the specimen insert volume, subjected to plastic deformation during the subsequent testing, is free of prior plastic deformation, sufficient material shall be removed from the fractured end of the broken specimen half. Some

plastic deformation on either end of the original insert can be accepted if it is outside the central 10 mm (0.40 in.) portion.

4.2.5.2 The minimum length of the specimen insert shall be 18.0 mm (0.56 in.) unless the conditions stipulated in 4.2.5.3 are fulfilled.

4.2.5.3 This dimensional requirement of 18 mm is based on Charpy impact specimens tested on the upper shelf (where the plastic zone is maximum) and fabricated with the stud welding reconstitution technique (where heat input and HAZ sizes are maximum). Reconstituted specimens tested in the lower transition range or on the lower shelf in accordance with Test Methods E 23 and reconstituted precracked specimens tested in accordance with Test Method E 1921 will have much smaller plastic zones. Other reconstitution techniques, such as electron beam welding, produce HAZs smaller than stud welding. Therefore, this dimensional requirement may be relaxed, if it can be experimentally or analytically shown that the plastic deformation zone in subsequent testing will not extend into the heat affected zones produced by reconstitution and the requirement of 4.4.1 is met (see Fig. 1). Test programs have shown acceptable Charpy results using shorter inserts (7-9).

4.2.6 Many weld specimens contain base material and HAZ. Therefore, care shall be taken such that the heat-affected zone of an original weld is not contained in the central test section of the reconstituted specimen (see Fig. 1). HAZ specimens can be used as an additional source of weld or base material for inserts. In an inhomogeneous specimen insert, which contains base or weld material and HAZ, only the target test material shall be contained in the central 10 mm (0.40 in.) portion.

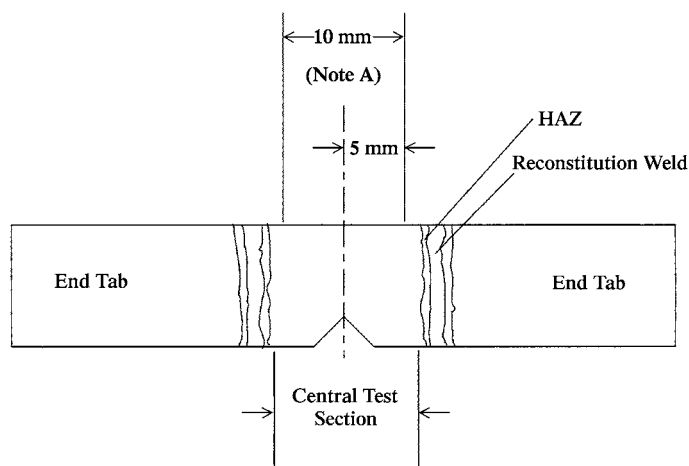
4.3 Fixturing—The fixture design will depend upon the type of welding process chosen for the welding operation. A successful design will maintain dimensional control, minimize heat input to the central test section, and satisfy design constraints associated with remote handling.

4.4 Heat Input:

4.4.1 To preclude irradiation damage annealing, heat input during welding shall be controlled such that no part of the volume of the central 10-mm (0.40-in.) portion of the reconstituted Charpy-sized specimen exceeds the prior metal irradiation temperature at any time during welding (see Fig. 1). This requirement can be relaxed if it can be shown that the plastic deformation zone in subsequent testing will not extend past the zone where irradiation temperature is exceeded.

4.4.2 To demonstrate that the temperature requirement of 4.4.1 is met for a given selection of welding parameters, temperature records shall be made daily, using thermocouples, during welding a set of Charpy-sized specimens. Such a demonstration is preferably made on dummy inserts with thermocouples that are welded or soldered in the mid-thickness of the dummy insert. If surface thermocouples are used, then a surface-to-center temperature correction must be made and the basis of the correction documented. A comprehensive overview of the important issues in temperature measurements can be found in Ref (10).

4.4.3 Thermocouples used in maximum temperature determination shall be calibrated in accordance with Test Method E 220.



NOTE A—No plastic deformation from previous testing is permitted in the central test section. Temperature during welding in the 10-mm central test section shall not exceed the irradiation temperature.

FIG. 1 Schematic of a Reconstituted Charpy Specimen

4.5 Dimensional Requirements—Dimensional control of reconstituted specimens shall be in accordance with the subsequent test method (Test Method E 23, E 1820, or E 1921). If the user of this guide is unable to produce specimens that meet the applicable test method dimensional requirements, then the user shall justify using specimens with dimensions exceeding the test method requirements. All deviations from the test method shall be documented and reported with the data. Ref (6) describes a study on the effects of some dimensional deviations.

4.6 Safety Precautions—The reconstitution procedures generally involve handling irradiated specimen materials, and the user of this guide is responsible for establishing appropriate safety practices, which is outside the scope of this guide.

5. Qualification of Reconstitution Technique

5.1 The welding process and fixture design shall be qualified prior to reconstituting specimens of interest, using materials of known impact properties. It shall be demonstrated during qualification that the following acceptance criteria have been achieved:

5.1.1 The temperature of the central 10-mm (0.40-in.) portion of the specimen shall not exceed, at any time during the welding process, a temperature that affects its metallurgical condition unless it can be shown that the plastic deformation zone in subsequent testing will not extend past the zone where the metallurgical condition has been affected. In the case of irradiated specimens, the prior irradiation temperature must not be exceeded in the central 10-mm portion of the specimen.

5.1.2 The welding procedure shall routinely produce weld quality such that fracture is at the notch of the reconstituted specimen and not in the reconstitution weldment. Examples of a weld qualification methodology can be found in Ref (11).

5.1.3 The reconstitution technique shall yield properties (41-J and 68-J transition temperature and upper shelf energy or reference temperature, T_0 , or fracture toughness, as appropriate) equivalent to those of original testing. It is recommended that the reconstituted specimens for technique qualification be tested at temperatures identical to the original test temperatures so that data can be directly compared.

5.1.4 The material used for reconstitution qualification shall be selected such that the properties of this material encompass the properties of the material of interest.

6. Documentation

6.1 *Specimen Reconstitution Record*:

6.1.1 Test material, test material strength or hardness, origin, location, and orientation.

6.1.2 Reconstituted specimen identity.

6.1.3 Irradiation temperature and fast neutron fluence ($E > 1.0$ MeV).

6.1.4 Welding process parameters.

6.1.5 Extension tab material and strength or hardness.

6.1.6 Statement of conformance with dimensional control to the subsequent test method (Test Method E 23, E 1820 or E 1921).

6.2 *Additional Documentation*—The following information shall be available by reference to a suitable document.

6.2.1 *Process Qualification Information*:

6.2.1.1 Identities and nominal impact energies or K_{Jc} of the qualification specimens.

6.2.1.2 Test temperature of the qualification specimens.

6.2.1.3 Impact energy, lateral expansion, and fracture appearance, or K_{Jc} , of the qualification specimens as appropriate.

6.2.1.4 Comparison of original and reconstituted Charpy curves or comparison of the reference temperatures of the original and reconstituted specimens.

6.2.2 *Heat Input Monitoring*:

6.2.2.1 Type of temperature measurement equipment.

6.2.2.2 Number of temperature measurements and locations.

6.2.2.3 Details of temperature recording during the welding cycles.

6.2.2.4 Precision and bias of the temperature measuring system.

6.2.2.5 Fixturing details.

6.2.3 *Welding Procedure*.

7. Keywords

7.1 Charpy; impact energy; fracture toughness; nuclear pressure vessel surveillance; reconstitution; welding process

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