



Standard Test Method for Determination of Total Carbon in Mold Powders by Combustion¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation E2050; 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 (ϵ) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

1. Scope

1.1 This test method covers the determination of total carbon in mold powders in the concentration range from 1 % to 25 %.

NOTE 1—As used in this test method, “percentage” or “%” refers to a mass fraction of the form (wt / wt %) (g/100g).

1.2 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as standard. No other units of measurement are included in this standard.

1.3 This test method has been evaluated in accordance with Practice [E1601](#) and Guide [E1763](#). Unless otherwise noted in the precision and bias section, the lower limit in the scope of each method specifies the lowest analyte content that may be analyzed with acceptable error (defined as a nominal 5 % risk of obtaining a 50 % or larger relative difference in results on the same test sample in two laboratories).

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:²

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee [E01](#) on Analytical Chemistry for Metals, Ores, and Related Materials and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee [E01.02](#) on Ores, Concentrates, and Related Metallurgical Materials.

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² 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.

[E29](#) Practice for Using Significant Digits in Test Data to Determine Conformance with Specifications

[E50](#) Practices for Apparatus, Reagents, and Safety Considerations for Chemical Analysis of Metals, Ores, and Related Materials

[E135](#) Terminology Relating to Analytical Chemistry for Metals, Ores, and Related Materials

[E882](#) Guide for Accountability and Quality Control in the Chemical Analysis Laboratory

[E1019](#) Test Methods for Determination of Carbon, Sulfur, Nitrogen, and Oxygen in Steel, Iron, Nickel, and Cobalt Alloys by Various Combustion and Fusion Techniques

[E1601](#) Practice for Conducting an Interlaboratory Study to Evaluate the Performance of an Analytical Method

[E1763](#) Guide for Interpretation and Use of Results from Interlaboratory Testing of Chemical Analysis Methods

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—For definitions of terms used in this test method, refer to Terminology [E135](#).

3.2 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.2.1 *mold powder, n*—in the continuous-casting of steel, a metallurgical flux used to provide lubrication of the mold, enhance heat transfer at the strand-mold interface, and provide thermal insulation of the liquid metal surface to prevent unwanted solidification.

3.2.1.1 *Discussion*—Key chemical components of these powders are fluorides, the oxides of silicon and calcium, and carbon.

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 Carbon in the test sample is converted in a furnace to a mixture of carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide by combustion in a stream of oxygen. Full conversion of carbon monoxide to carbon dioxide occurs by the passage of sample gases through a catalytic heater assembly. The amount of carbon

TABLE 1 Statistical Information, Carbon Combustion/Infrared Method

Test Material	Number of Laboratories	Carbon Found, %	Minimum SD (S_M , E1601)	Reproducibility SD, (S_g , E1601)	Reproducibility Index (R , E1601)	$R_{rel}\%$
B	7	1.2046	0.00601	0.02960	0.08288	6.88
A	7	3.1219	0.01269	0.04843	0.13559	4.34
C	7	6.5514	0.04774	0.09215	0.25803	3.94
D	7	10.5121	0.05788	0.10579	0.29620	2.82
E	7	15.1121	0.04964	0.14730	0.41244	2.73
F	7	19.7121	0.11949	0.25294	0.70824	3.59
G	7	29.4250	0.38830	0.60179	1.6850	5.73

dioxide is measured by infrared absorption. Any interference from halogens in the sample is eliminated by placement of a halogen trap between the furnace and the analyzer.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 This test method for the determination of total carbon in mold powders is primarily intended to test such materials for compliance with compositional specifications. It is assumed that all who use this test method will be trained analysts capable of performing common laboratory procedures skillfully and safely. It is expected that the work will be performed in a properly equipped laboratory and that proper waste disposal procedures will be followed. Appropriate quality control practices must be followed such as those described in Guide E882.

6. Rounding Calculated Values

6.1 Calculated values shall be rounded in accordance with Practice E29.

7. Interferences

7.1 Halogens, normally present in mold powders as fluoride, will interfere with this test method. A halogen trap, as described in 8.4, must be installed in the measure line between the furnace and analyzer to prevent this interference.

8. Apparatus

8.1 *Combustion-Infrared Absorption Carbon Analyzer*, equipped with a combustion chamber, oxygen carrier stream, halogen trap, catalytic heater assembly, and infrared absorption detector, suitable for the analysis of carbon from 1 % to 25 % in mold powders. Instruments, such as those in Test Methods E1019, which can be shown to give equivalent results may also be used for this test method.

8.2 *Crucibles*—Use ceramic crucibles that meet or exceed the specifications of those recommended by the manufacturer of the instrument.

8.3 *Crucible Tongs*, capable of handling recommended crucibles.

8.4 *Halogen (Fluorine/Chlorine) Trap*³, available from the instrument manufacturer as a kit, consisting of the parts and necessary reagents for assembly. Follow the manufacturer's

instructions for the assembly, installation, use, and proper maintenance of the trap.

8.5 *Metal Scoop*, for dispensing metal chips.

9. Reagents and Materials

9.1 *Iron Chip*, high purity (−6 mesh to +20 mesh).

9.2 *Oxygen*, 99.5 % purity recommended. Other grades of oxygen may be used if low and consistent blank readings are obtained.

9.3 *Tungsten/Tin Accelerator*, high purity.

NOTE 2—Copper chip accelerator (−20 mesh to +30 mesh) may be used in place of Tungsten/Tin.

10. Hazards

10.1 For precautions to be observed in the use of reagents and apparatus in this method, refer to Practices E50 and Test Methods E1019.

10.2 Use care when handling hot crucibles and when operating furnaces to avoid personal injury by either burn or electrical shock.

11. Sampling and Sample Preparation

11.1 *Materials Safety*—Samples must be prepared, stored, and disposed of in accordance with the materials and safety guidelines in Practices E50.

11.2 *Prepared Sample*—Pulverize or grind the laboratory sample until 100 % passes a No. 100 (150- μ m) sieve. Store in a suitable glass or plastic container.

12. Preparation of Apparatus

12.1 Test the furnace and analyzer to ensure the absence of leaks. Prepare the analyzer for operation in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

13. Calibration

13.1 *Calibration Reference Materials*—Tungsten carbide (6.10 % total carbon), NIST SRM 276b, or equivalent; silicon carbide (29.43 % total carbon), NIST SRM 112b, or equivalent (Note 1).

13.2 *Determination of Blank*:

13.2.1 Enter 1.000-g weight into the weight stack, following the instrument manufacturer's recommended procedure.

13.2.2 Add 1.000 $\pm$ 0.005 g of accelerator and 1.000 $\pm$ 0.005 g of iron chip to the crucible.

13.2.3 Place the crucible on the furnace pedestal and analyze in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

13.2.4 Repeat 13.2.1-13.2.3 a minimum of three times.

³ Fluorine/Chlorine Trap Kits, available from the LECO Corp., 3000 Lakeview Avenue, St. Joseph, Michigan 49085, +1-269-982-5497, <http://www.leco.com/>. have been found satisfactory for this purpose. Part number 769-741-HAZ (for older LECO instruments) and Part number 617-249-HAZ (for newer LECO instruments) were available on 01 April 2011.

TABLE 2 Predicted Reproducibility at Various Carbon Contents

Carbon, %	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> _{ref} %
0.5	0.079	15.7
1.0	0.083	8.3
2.0	0.109	5.4
5.0	0.178	3.6
10.0	0.329	3.3
20.0	0.645	3.2

13.2.5 Enter the average blank following the routine outlined in the manufacturer's instruction manual.

13.3 Calibration Procedure:

13.3.1 Weigh approximately 0.25 g of tungsten carbide calibration reference material into a ceramic crucible and enter the weight into the weight stack, following the instrument manufacturer's recommended procedure.

13.3.2 Add 1.000 g ± 0.005 g of accelerator and 1.000 g ± 0.005 g of iron chip to the crucible.

13.3.3 Place the crucible on the furnace pedestal and analyze in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

13.3.4 Repeat 13.3.1-13.3.3 a minimum of three times and calibrate the instrument following the calibration procedure in accordance with the manufacturer's instruction manual.

13.3.5 Verify the calibration by analyzing the calibration reference material again. The obtained value shall agree with the certificate value within the range given by the published uncertainty or it shall agree within the limits of a prediction interval calculated using Eq 1. The prediction interval is defined as the range of values bounded by the analysis value -*p* and the analysis value +*p*. If the prediction interval does not encompass the certified value, determine and correct the cause, and repeat calibration (Note 3). Either acceptance limit criterion is acceptable for routine operation.

NOTE 3—See the instrument manufacturer's instructions concerning the troubleshooting and correcting of errant calibration.

$$p = t \times \left(1 + \frac{1}{\sqrt{n}} \right) \times s \quad (1)$$

where:

p = one-half the prediction interval,

n = number of replicates used in 13.3.4,

t = student's *t* chosen for the 95 % confidence level for *n* replicate measurements (for example: *t* = 4.30 when *n* = 3; 3.18 when *n* = 4; 2.78 when *n* = 5), and

s = standard deviation of *n* replicates in 13.3.4 (Note 4).

NOTE 4—Here, *s* should be comparable to *S_m*, the repeatability standard deviation, given in Table 1. If *s* much greater than *S_m*, there is evidence that the repeatability of the particular instrument is not acceptable for use with this test method. The user should determine and correct the cause, and repeat 13.3.4 through 13.3.5.

13.3.6 Verify linearity of the instrument response by analyzing a silicon carbide certified (29.43 % total carbon) certified reference material. Results should fall within the uncertainties of the certificate value expected tolerance. If not, identify and correct the problem before proceeding with the analysis of samples (Note 1).

14. Procedure

14.1 Assemble the apparatus and condition it in accordance with Section 12.

14.2 Sample Analysis:

14.2.1 Weigh, to the nearest 0.1 mg, an appropriate mass of sample into a ceramic crucible, in accordance with the following:

Carbon, %	Approximate Sample Mass, g
1 - 6	0.25
6 - 10	0.20
10 - 20	0.15
20 - 25	0.075

Enter the sample mass into the mass stack, following the instrument manufacturer's recommended procedure.

14.2.2 Add 1.000 g ± 0.005 g of accelerator and 1.000 g ± 0.005 g of iron chip to the crucible.

14.2.3 Place the crucible on the furnace pedestal and analyze.

14.2.4 Analyze each sample in duplicate, recording each value.

14.2.5 Check instrument calibration (see 13.3.5) after every 2 sets of duplicate sample runs.

15. Calculation

15.1 Most commercially available instruments calculate the total carbon content directly, including corrections for blank and sample weight, so calculations by the analyst are not required. If, however, the analyzer does not compensate for blank and sample values, then use the following formula:

$$\text{Carbon, \%} = \frac{(A - B) \times C}{D} \quad (2)$$

where:

A = DVM reading for sample,

B = DVM reading for blank,

C = weight compensator setting, and

D = sample weight, g.

15.2 Round the results and report to 2 decimal places for values less than 10 % carbon, and to 1 decimal place for values equal to or greater than 10 % carbon. Examples: 4.15 %, 15.6 % (Note 1).

16. Precision and Bias ⁴

16.1 *Precision*—Seven laboratories cooperated in testing this test method. Table 1 summarizes the precision information.

⁴ A research report is available from ASTM International headquarters. Request RR:E01-1029.

TABLE 3 Comparison Between IR and Gravimetric Carbon

Test Material	IR Carbon, %	Gravimetric Carbon, %	IR - Gravimetric Carbon, %
B	1.205	1.30	–0.095
A	3.122	3.17	–0.048
C	6.551	6.57	–0.019
D	10.512	10.51	0.002
E	15.112	15.07	0.042
F	19.712	19.60	0.112

Table 2 displays the reproducibility expected for results at a number of carbon values.

16.2 *Bias*—The accuracy of this test method could not be evaluated because certified reference materials of mold powders were unavailable. **Table 3** compares the means from this test method with results on the same materials by the combustion/gravimetric carbon test method. The differences

show that the combined bias of both test methods does not exceed ± 0.1 % carbon (**Note 1**).

17. Keywords

17.1 carbon; combustion; infrared absorption spectrometry; mold powders

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