



Standard Specification for Tungsten-Rhenium Alloy Thermocouple Wire¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This specification covers the requirements for bare, solid conductor, tungsten and rhenium alloy thermoelements having diameters of 0.127 mm (0.005 in.) to 0.508 mm (0.020 in.) supplied in matched pairs. These thermoelements shall be suitable for use either in bead-insulated, bare-wire thermocouples, or in compacted metal-sheathed, ceramic insulated thermocouple material or assemblies.

1.2 This specification covers the thermocouple combinations of tungsten-3 % rhenium versus tungsten-25 % rhenium (W3Re/W25Re) and tungsten-5 % rhenium versus tungsten-26 % rhenium (W5Re/W26Re; Type C). All information applies to both combinations unless otherwise noted.

1.3 It is recognized that the alloys described are refractory and are not suitable for use at high temperatures in oxidizing atmospheres. All tests and processes described herein must be performed under conditions that are non-reactive to tungsten-rhenium alloys.

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

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:²

- E 8 Test Methods for Tension Testing of Metallic Materials
- E 207 Test Method for Thermal EMF Test of Single Thermoelement Materials by Comparison with a Reference Thermoelement of Similar EMF-Temperature Properties
- E 220 Test Method for Calibration of Thermocouples By Comparison Techniques
- E 230 Specification and Temperature-Electromotive Force (EMF) Tables for Standardized Thermocouples
- E 344 Terminology Relating to Thermometry and Hydrometry
- E 452 Test Method for Calibration of Refractory Metal

¹ This specification is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee E20 on Temperature Measurement and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee E20.04 on Thermocouples.

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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.

Thermocouples Using a Radiation Thermometer
E 988 Temperature-Electromotive Force (EMF) Tables for Tungsten-Rhenium Thermocouples
E 1751 Guide for Temperature Electromotive Force (EMF) Tables for Non-Letter Designated Thermocouple Combinations

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions:

3.1.1 For definitions used in this standard, see Terminology E 344.

3.2 Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:

3.2.1 *dope, vt*—in this specification, to add potassium, silicon and aluminum compounds or other volatile substances to the alloy powders during the preparation to produce a ductile wire. See NASA CR-72884.³

3.2.1.1 *Discussion*—Some alloy powders are doped.

3.2.2 *lot, n*—a quantity of wire processed or heat treated as a single continuous length and identified uniquely.

4. Ordering Information

4.1 A purchase order for thermocouple material conforming to this specification shall specify the following:

4.1.1 *Thermocouple Wire Composition*—May be W3Re/W25Re or W5Re/W26Re.

4.1.2 *Wire Size*—Specify size with each order.

4.1.3 *Wire Length*—Specify total amount of each wire and minimum continuous length.

4.1.4 *Thermocouple Calibration*—Calibration will be in accordance with Section 5.1.4 unless otherwise specified.

4.1.5 *Supplementary Requirements*—See the Supplementary Requirements section of this specification.

4.1.6 *Instructions for Spooling, Packaging, and Labeling*—Packaging will be in accordance with Section 10 unless otherwise specified.

4.1.7 *Tests and Certifications Required from the Processor*—Certification will be in accordance with Section 9 unless otherwise specified.

5. Materials and Manufacture

5.1 Thermocouple Wire:

³ NASA CR-72884, "Some Studies on Behavior of W-Re Thermocouple Materials at High Temperatures." Available from National Aeronautics and Space Administration, 400 Maryland Ave. S.W., Washington, DC 20546.

5.1.1 *General*—The thermoelements shall be tungsten-3 % rhenium and tungsten-25 % rhenium or tungsten-5 % rhenium and tungsten-26 % rhenium (Type C), as indicated on the purchase order.

5.1.2 *Physical:*

5.1.2.1 The diameter of each wire shall be within ± 0.01 mm (0.0005 in.) of the ordered size for 0.5 mm (0.02 in.) diameter wire and smaller. The diameter of each wire shall be uniform end-to-end to within 0.01 mm (0.0005 in.) for 0.5 mm (0.02 in.) diameter wire and smaller.

5.1.2.2 The wires shall be solid, round, smooth and be free of weld joints, slivers, kinks, pits or nicks exceeding 5 % of diameter.

5.1.2.3 The wire surface shall be uniformly clean and free of discoloration.

5.1.2.4 Mechanical or optical methods may be used to verify the requirements of 5.1.2.1, 5.1.2.2, and 5.1.2.3.

5.1.3 *Mechanical:*

5.1.3.1 The wires shall withstand, at a temperature of 20 to 35 °C (68 to 95 °F), wrapping five turns around a mandrel five times the diameter of the wire without breaking or splitting.

5.1.3.2 The tests shall be made on at least one specimen from each end of each lot of wire.

5.1.4 *Thermoelectric:*

5.1.4.1 The emf versus temperature characteristics of the matched thermoelements shall be determined using procedures described in Test Methods E 207, E 220 or E 452.

5.1.4.2 The emf versus temperature relationship of the matched pair of thermoelements shall comply with the values shown in Guide E 1751 for W3Re/W25Re or Specification E 230 for Type C (W5Re/W26Re).

5.1.4.3 The initial calibration tolerance shall be in accordance with Table 1 (W3Re/W25Re) or Specification E 230 (W5Re/W26Re), as appropriate.

5.2 *Composition:*

5.2.1 *Positive thermoelement:*

5.2.1.1 The positive thermoelement for the W3Re/W25Re combination shall have a nominal composition of 97 % tungsten and 3 % rhenium.

5.2.1.2 The positive thermoelement for the W5Re/W26Re combination shall have a nominal composition of 95 % tungsten and 5 % rhenium.

5.2.1.3 The positive thermoelement shall be doped to provide desirable grain structure and workability and maintain ductility after high temperature use.

5.2.2 *Negative thermoelement:*

5.2.2.1 The negative thermoelement for the W3Re/W25Re combination shall have a nominal composition of 75 % tungsten and 25 % rhenium.

5.2.2.2 The negative thermoelement for the W5Re/W26Re combination shall have a nominal composition of 74 % tungsten and 26 % rhenium.

6. Lot Identification

6.1 Thermocouple wires, test results and certifications shall be identified by manufacturer's lot number.

7. Lot Designation

7.1 A vendor who purchases wire from processors for repackaging and resale shall supply, for each spool, the wire processor's name, lot number and certification to the customer.

8. Extension Wires

8.1 Due to the high cost of tungsten-rhenium alloys, to difficulties encountered in obtaining long continuous lengths of these alloys and to inherent problems in applications where ductility is important, many users find it advantageous to use compensating extension wires made of base metal alloys.

8.2 Information on upper temperature limits and the suppliers guaranteed limits of error for currently available compensating extension wires for W3Re/W25Re can be found in Table 2. Information on upper temperature limits and the suppliers guaranteed limits of error for currently available compensating extension wires for W5Re/W26Re can be found in Specification E 230.

9. Certification

9.1 The processor shall supply a certificate with each order stating the wire composition, size, lot identification and calibration information.

10. Packaging and Package Marking

10.1 Wires typically will be supplied on spools of a nominal 100 mm (4 in.) diameter core and boxed individually, unless

TABLE 1 Initial Calibration Tolerances and Suggested Temperature Range for W3Re/W25Re Thermocouples^A

Thermocouple Type	Temperature Range		Initial Calibration Tolerance	
	°C	°F	°C (whichever is greater)	°F
W3Re/W25Re	0 to 2315 °C	32 to 4200	± 4.4 or 1 %	Note 3

^A Caution—Users should be aware that certain characteristics of thermocouple materials including calibration may change in time with use; consequently, test results obtained at time of manufacture may not necessarily apply throughout an extended period of use.

NOTE 1—Initial calibration tolerances in this table apply to new thermocouple wire, normally in the size range of 0.127 mm (0.005 in.) to 0.508 (0.020 in.) mm in diameter (No. 36 to 24 AWG) and used at temperatures not exceeding the suggested upper temperatures of Table 1. If used at higher temperatures these initial calibration tolerances may not apply.

NOTE 2—Initial calibration tolerances apply to new wire as delivered to the user and do not allow for calibration drift during use. The magnitude of such changes depends on such factors as wire size, temperature, time of exposure and environment.

NOTE 3—The °F tolerance is 1.8 times larger than the °C tolerance at the equivalent °C temperature. Note particularly that the percentage tolerance only applies to the temperature that is expressed in °C.

NOTE 4—Tables 1 and 2 describe suggested upper temperature limits for the thermocouple and extension wires. These limits apply to protected thermocouples, that is, thermocouples in atmospheres that are non-reactive to the alloys being used.

**TABLE 2 Initial Calibration Tolerances and Suggested Temperature Ranges for Type W3Re/W25Re Thermocouple Compensating Extension Wires**

Designation	Temperature Range		Standard Tolerance
	°C	°F	
300P(+) / 300N(-) ^A	0 to 330	32 to 625	±0.125mV
203(+) / 225(-) ^B	0 to 260	32 to 500	±0.110 mV

^A 97.7Ni Bal Cr, Al, and Si versus 96Ni, 4W; U.S. Patent 3,502,510 assigned to Engelhard Industries.

^B 90Ni, 10Cr versus 98Ni, 2Cr; Designation of Hoskins Mfg.

otherwise requested. Each spool shall be marked to identify the wire composition, diameter, quantity, processor's name, spool designation and customers purchase order number in a manner to identify the pair of wires to be used to form a thermocouple meeting the calibration requirement.

11. Keywords

11.1 rhenium; thermocouple; thermoelement; tungsten

SUPPLEMENTARY REQUIREMENTS

The following supplementary requirements shall apply only when specified by the purchaser in the purchase order or contract.

S1. Mechanical

S1.1 The wires shall have an elongation measured at a temperature in the range of 20 to 35 °C (68 to 95 °F) of at least 12 % as measured over a 50 mm (2 in.) gauge length.

S1.2 Elongation shall be determined in accordance with Test Methods E 8 using a rate of 0.2 mm/mm/min. (0.2 in./in./min.) maximum and a 50 mm (2 in.) gauge length.

S1.3 The tests shall be made on at least one specimen from each end of each lot of wire.

S2. Thermoelectric

S2.1 The wires shall be thermoelectrically homogeneous so that when joined to form a thermocouple whose measuring junction and reference junction are held at constant temperatures, any short-term (less than 1 h) change in the temperature profile along the wire within the range from 0 to 1000 °C (32 to 1832 °F) will not produce a change in the thermocouple output signal of more than 100 µV.

S3. Electrical

S3.1 A dc resistance measurement may be used to verify mechanical integrity of tungsten-rhenium alloy wires having

diameters of 0.125 mm (0.005 in.) or larger. Defects cited in 5.1.2.2 can cause high local resistance in tungsten alloy wires.

S3.2 A dc resistance measurement at 20 °C (68 °F) shall be made on an accurately measured reference length of each thermoelement using an instrument and range to yield ±1 % accuracy to derive a resistance per meter or foot. The wire size of the reference length and test pieces of known, practical lengths should be within 0.005 mm (0.0002 in.) of each other.

S3.3 The resistance measurement taken according to 12.3.2 shall be compared to the dc resistance measurements of each measured full length of wire.

S3.4 The full length resistance per unit length (ohms per meter or foot) of each of the test lengths shall be within 10 % of the value obtained from the reference length.

NOTE S1—The resistivity of W25Re and that of W26Re is more than double that of either W3Re or W5Re, and all of these alloys have high temperature coefficients of resistance.

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