Designation: E83 – 10a

Standard Practice for Verification and Classification of Extensometer Systems[1]

This standard is issued under the fixed designation E83; 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.

This standard has been approved for use by agencies of the Department of Defense.

1. Scope

1.1 This practice covers procedures for the verification and classification of extensometer systems, but it is not intended to be a complete purchase specification. The practice is applicable only to instruments that indicate or record values that are proportional to changes in length corresponding to either tensile or compressive strain. Extensometer systems are classified on the basis of the magnitude of their errors.

1.2 Because strain is a dimensionless quantity, this document can be used for extensometers based on either SI or US customary units of displacement.

NOTE 1—Bonded resistance strain gauges directly bonded to a specimen cannot be calibrated or verified with the apparatus described in this practice for the verification of extensometers having definite gauge points. (See procedures as described in Test Methods E251.)

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:*[2]

E6 Terminology Relating to Methods of Mechanical Testing

E21 Test Methods for Elevated Temperature Tension Tests of Metallic Materials

E251 Test Methods for Performance Characteristics of Metallic Bonded Resistance Strain Gauges

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions:* In addition to the terms listed, see Terminology E6.

3.1.1 *calibration*—a determination of the calibration factor for a system using established procedures.

3.1.2 *calibration factor*—the factor by which the change in extensometer reading must be multiplied to obtain the equivalent strain.

3.1.2.1 *Discussion*—For any extensometer, the calibration factor is equal to the ratio of change in length to the product of the gauge length and the change in the extensometer reading. For direct-reading extensometers the calibration factor is unity.

3.1.3 *compressometer*—a specialized extensometer used for sensing negative or compressive strain.

3.1.4 *deflectometer*—a specialized extensometer used for sensing of extension or motion, usually without reference to a specific gauge length.

3.1.5 *error, in extensometer systems*—the value obtained by subtracting the correct value of the strain from the indicated value given by the extensometer system.

3.1.6 *extensometer, n*—a device for sensing strain.

3.1.7 *extensometer systems*—a system for sensing and indicating strain.

3.1.7.1 *Discussion*—The system will normally include an extensometer, conditioning electronics and auxiliary device (recorder, digital readout, computer, etc.). However, completely self-contained mechanical devices are permitted. An extensometer system may be one of three types.

3.1.8 *Type 1 extensometer system, n*—an extensometer system which both defines gauge length and senses extension, for example, a clip-on strain gauge type with conditioning electronics.

3.1.9 *Type 2 extensometer system, n*—an extensometer which senses extension and the gauge length is defined by specimen geometry or specimen features such as ridges or notches.

3.1.9.1 *Discussion*—A Type 2 extensometer is used where the extensometer gauge length is determined by features on the specimen, for example, ridges, notches, or overall height (in case of compression test piece). The precision associated with gauge length setting for a Type 2 extensometer should be specified in relevant test method or product standard. The position readout on a testing machine is not recommended for use in a Type 2 extensometer system.

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[1] This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee E28 on Mechanical Testing and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee E28.01 on Calibration of Mechanical Testing Machines and Apparatus.

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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.

3.1.10 *Type 3 extensometer system, n*—an extensometer system which intrinsically senses strain (ratiometric principle), for example, video camera system.

3.1.11 *gauge length (L), n*—the original length of that portion of the specimen over which strain or change of length is determined.

3.1.11.1 *Discussion*—If the device is used for sensing extension or motion, and gauge length is predetermined by the specimen geometry or specific test method, then only resolution and strain error for a specified gauge length should determine the class of extensometer system.

3.1.12 *resolution of the strain indicator*—the smallest change in strain that can be estimated or ascertained on the strain indicating apparatus of the testing system, at any applied strain.

3.1.13 *resolution of the digital type strain indicators (numeric displays, printouts, and so forth)*—the resolution is the smallest change in strain that can be displayed on the strain indicator (may be a single digit or a combination of digits) at any applied strain.

3.1.13.1 *Discussion*—If the strain indication, for either type of strain indicator, fluctuates more than twice the resolution, as described in 3.1.12 or 3.1.13, the resolution expressed as a strain shall be equal to one-half the range of fluctuation.

3.1.14 *verification*—a determination that a system meets the requirements of a given classification after calibration according to established procedures.

3.1.15 *verification apparatus*—a device for verifying extensometer systems.

3.1.15.1 *Discussion*—This device is used to simulate the change in length experienced by a test specimen as a result of the applied force. The extensometer may either be attached directly to the mechanism or interfaced with it in a manner similar to normal operation (that is, possibly without contact for some optical extensometers).

4. Verification Apparatus

4.1 The apparatus for verifying extensometer systems shall provide a means for applying controlled displacements to a simulated specimen and for measuring these displacements accurately. It may consist of a rigid frame, suitable coaxial spindles, or other fixtures to accommodate the extensometer being verified, a mechanism for moving one spindle or fixture axially with respect to the other, and a means for measuring accurately the change in length so produced,[3] or any other device or mechanism that will accomplish the purpose equally well. The mechanism provided for moving one spindle relative to the other shall permit sensitive adjustments. The changes in length shall be measured, for example, by means of an interferometer, calibrated standard gauge blocks and an indicator, a calibrated micrometer screw, or a calibrated laser measurement system. If standard gauge blocks and an indicator, or a micrometer screw, are used, they shall be calibrated and their limits of accuracy and sensitivity stated. The errors of the verification apparatus shall not exceed one third of the permissible error of the extensometer.

4.2 The verification apparatus shall be calibrated at intervals not to exceed two years.

NOTE 2—He-Ne laser interferometer measurement systems based on the 0.633 μm wavelength line are considered to be primary-based displacement standards and do not require recalibration.[4]

4.3 If the verification apparatus is to be used to verify extensometers used for bidirectional tests, the errors of the verification apparatus should be measured in both directions of travel so as to include any backlash present.

5. Verification Procedure for Extensometer Systems

5.1 *General Requirements*—The verification of an extensometer system should not be done unless the components of the system are in good working condition. Thoroughly inspect all parts associated with smooth operation of the instrument to ensure there are no excessively worn components. Repair or replace parts as necessary. Remove any dirt particles which may have accumulated through normal use of the instrument. Verification of the system shall be performed whenever parts are interchanged or replaced.

5.1.1 The verification of an extensometer system refers to a specific extensometer used with a specific readout device. Unless it can be demonstrated that autographic extensometers and recorders of a given type may be used interchangeably without introducing errors that would affect the classification of the extensometer, the extensometer shall be calibrated with the readout device with which it is to be used.

5.1.2 Prior to the initial verification, the extensometer should be calibrated according to the manufacturer's instructions or established procedures. The calibration procedure may include adjustment of span or determination of calibration factor, or both.

5.2 *Gauge Length Measurement Method*—Measure the gauge length of self-setting instruments by either the direct or indirect method.

NOTE 3—The following is an example of an indirect method. Set the extensometer to its starting position and mount it on a soft rod of the typical specimen size or diameter. After the extensometer is removed, measure the distance between the marks left by the gauge points (or knife edges). If there are four or more gauge points, take the average of the individual lengths as the gauge length. The differences between individual measurements shall not exceed the tolerance given for the class of extensometer. If there are two gauge points (or knife edges), but on opposite sides of the specimen, attach the extensometer twice rotating it 180° with respect to the rod. Take the average of the lengths thus established on each side of the rod as the gauge length.

5.2.1 Make two measurements of the gauge length. Determine and record the error from each measurement, which is the difference between the measured gauge length and the specified gauge length, expressed as a percent of the specified gauge length.

5.2.2 For extensometer devices that do not have a self-setting gauge length during use, such as deflectometers and

[3] A review of some past, current, and possible future methods for calibrating strain measuring devices is given in the paper by Watson, R. B., "Calibration Techniques for Extensometry: Possible Standards of Strain Measurement," *Journal of Testing and Evaluation*, JTEVA, Vol. 21, No. 6, November 1993, pp. 515–521.

[4] A letter from NIST (National Institute of Standards and Technology) has been filed at ASTM International Headquarters and may be obtained by requesting Research Report RR: E28-1013.

some high-temperature tensile or creep extensometers, verification run errors should be calculated using the gauge length for which the device is used. Separate classifications should be established for each gauge length or range used.

5.2.3 Some extensometers have the capability to measure the gauge length set by or chosen by the user. If this measurement is used in the calculation of strain, then it is the inherent measurement accuracy that is the important factor rather than the error between the chosen length and the actual.

NOTE 4—An example of an extensometer that is described by 5.2.3 is an optical extensometer that measures the position of "flags" attached to the test specimen. The flags are positioned at the approximate required gauge length and the instrument measures the position of the flags (the actual gauge length) before and after the specimen is stressed. Although this kind of device usually has a stated accuracy of gauge length, it must be verified by either direct or indirect methods at the appropriate gauge lengths.

5.3 *Position of Extensometer*—Carefully position the extensometer on or interface it to the verification device in the same manner as it is normally used for typical specimens. For extensometers that attach directly to the specimen, the verification device should allow attachment to pieces that are similar to the specimen on which the extensometer will be attached.

5.4 *Temperature Control*—Verify the extensometer at approximately the same temperature at which it will be used. Allow sufficient time for the verification device and extensometer to reach satisfactory temperature stability. Maintain temperature stability by excluding drafts throughout the subsequent verification. Record the temperature during each verification run.

NOTE 5—Extensometers used for high-temperature testing may be verified at ambient temperature to insure proper operation, but fixtures should be designed to verify performance at the actual test temperature. This is especially true with optical extensometers which may be adversely affected by air density changes associated with thermal gradients and turbulence, environmental chamber windows, or specimen changes due to the environment. See Appendix X2.

5.5 *Method of Reading*—Read the instrument or, in the case of an autographic extensometer, measure the record in the same manner as during use.

5.5.1 For extensometer with dial micrometers or digital readouts, the readings shall be recorded. Extensometers that use autographic methods shall have their charts read and recorded using a suitable measuring device, such as a vernier or dial caliper. The use of an optical magnifying device is recommended when reading and measuring autographic records.

NOTE 6—When autographic extensometer systems are used, care should be taken to minimize errors introduced by variances in the graph paper. These errors can be due to dimensional changes from reproduction or humidity changes. Direct measurement of the trace soon after it was made eliminates the graph paper errors and is desirable for systems verification.

NOTE 7—If an extensometer is equipped with a dial micrometer, it may be necessary to lightly tap the dial micrometer to minimize the effects of friction and to ensure that the most stable and reproducible readings are obtained. If the dial micrometer is tapped during the verification procedure, include this information in the report.

5.6 *Zero Adjustment*—After temperature stability has been achieved, displace the verification device (with extensometer in the test position) to a slightly negative value and return to zero. If the reading does not return to zero, adjust and repeat the procedure until the reading does return to zero.

5.7 *Number of Readings*—For any strain range, verify the extensometer system by applying at least five displacement values, not including zero, at least two times, with the difference between any two successive displacement applications being no greater than one-third the difference between the selected maximum and minimum displacements.

5.7.1 Extensometers need not be verified beyond the range over which they will be used. Multi-range (multi-magnification) extensometers shall be verified for each range to be used.

NOTE 8—If the connection between the gauge points attached to the specimen and the indicating device is made through geared wheels or micrometer screws, relatively large periodic errors may exist which might not be disclosed by this overall procedure. For such extensometers it may be necessary to take additional readings within one turn of any geared wheel, micrometer screw, or the travel of one tooth of any meshing gear.

5.7.2 When it is desired to establish the range of an extensometer system designed to automatically select or extend ranges below 10 % of full scale without the influence of the operator, the number of readings shall depend on how many overlapping decades are in the range. Extensometer readings should be chosen starting with the minimum reading and are grouped in overlapping decades such that the maximum reading on one decade is the minimum on the next decade. There are to be at least five strain applications per decade, unless the maximum, or the minimum strain on the range is reached before completing the decade. Strain (displacements) in each decade are to be approximately 1:1, 2:1, 4:1, 7:1, and 10:1, starting with the minimum strain in each decade.

5.7.2.1 In no case should the distance between two successive strains (displacements) within a decade differ by more than one-third the difference between the minimum and maximum strains in that decade. Strains in the second successive run are to be approximately the same as those of the first run. Report all percent values of accuracy, and report the indicator resolution at least once per decade.

5.7.3 *Lower Limit Criteria*—as indicated in Table 1, all verified strain readings must have a resolution at least one-half the allowable error, that is, the resolution is a limiting factor to determine a lower limit of the range. The lowest verified strain reading must be at least 100 times the indicator resolution. Extensometer results used below the lowest verified strain reading may not comply with the error limit specified by this standard practice.

NOTE 9—*Example:* For an extensometer with a gauge length of 1 in. and 50 % strain, the full scale displacement value is 0.5 in. If the machine (system) resolution is 0.00005 in., which meets the criteria for the B1 class, the lower limit (verification range) would be 0.00005 in. x 100 = 0.005 in., or 0.5 % strain. The suitable verification points for a single range extensometer system would be in percent strain 0.5, 1.0, 2.0, 3.5, 5, 10, 20, 35, and 50. (See for single range system Fig. X1.1 and Fig. X1.2 for multirange.)

5.8 *Number of Runs*—Take at least two complete sets of extensometer readings for the same changes of length. After the first run, an operation that simulates normal operation should be used to check repeatability. An extensometer that