



Designation: C39/C39M – 18

Standard Test Method for Compressive Strength of Cylindrical Concrete Specimens¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation C39/C39M; 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 U.S. Department of Defense.

1. Scope*

1.1 This test method covers determination of compressive strength of cylindrical concrete specimens such as molded cylinders and drilled cores. It is limited to concrete having a density in excess of 800 kg/m³ [50 lb/ft³].

1.2 The values stated in either SI units or inch-pound units are to be regarded separately as standard. The inch-pound units are shown in brackets. The values stated in each system may not be exact equivalents; therefore, each system shall be used independently of the other. Combining values from the two systems may result in non-conformance with the standard.

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, health, and environmental practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.* (Warning—Means should be provided to contain concrete fragments during sudden rupture of specimens. Tendency for sudden rupture increases with increasing concrete strength and it is more likely when the testing machine is relatively flexible. The safety precautions given in the **Manual** are recommended.)

1.4 The text of this standard references notes which provide explanatory material. These notes shall not be considered as requirements of the standard.

1.5 *This international standard was developed in accordance with internationally recognized principles on standardization established in the Decision on Principles for the Development of International Standards, Guides and Recommendations issued by the World Trade Organization Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Committee.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*²

- C31/C31M Practice for Making and Curing Concrete Test Specimens in the Field
- C42/C42M Test Method for Obtaining and Testing Drilled Cores and Sawed Beams of Concrete
- C125 Terminology Relating to Concrete and Concrete Aggregates
- C192/C192M Practice for Making and Curing Concrete Test Specimens in the Laboratory
- C617/C617M Practice for Capping Cylindrical Concrete Specimens
- C670 Practice for Preparing Precision and Bias Statements for Test Methods for Construction Materials
- C873/C873M Test Method for Compressive Strength of Concrete Cylinders Cast in Place in Cylindrical Molds
- C943 Practice for Making Test Cylinders and Prisms for Determining Strength and Density of Preplaced-Aggregate Concrete in the Laboratory
- C1077 Practice for Agencies Testing Concrete and Concrete Aggregates for Use in Construction and Criteria for Testing Agency Evaluation
- C1176/C1176M Practice for Making Roller-Compacted Concrete in Cylinder Molds Using a Vibrating Table
- C1231/C1231M Practice for Use of Unbonded Caps in Determination of Compressive Strength of Hardened Cylindrical Concrete Specimens
- C1435/C1435M Practice for Molding Roller-Compacted Concrete in Cylinder Molds Using a Vibrating Hammer
- C1604/C1604M Test Method for Obtaining and Testing Drilled Cores of Shotcrete
- E4 Practices for Force Verification of Testing Machines
- E18 Test Methods for Rockwell Hardness of Metallic Materials

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee C09 on Concrete and Concrete Aggregates and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee C09.61 on Testing for Strength.

Current edition approved Jan. 1, 2018. Published February 2018. Originally approved in 1921. Last previous edition approved in 2017 as C39/C39M – 17b. DOI: 10.1520/C0039_C0039M-18.

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.

*A Summary of Changes section appears at the end of this standard

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C943, C1176/C1176M, C1231/C1231M, and C1435/C1435M, and Test Methods C42/C42M, C873/C873M, and C1604/C1604M.

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—For definitions of terms used in this practice, refer to Terminology **C125**.

3.2 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.2.1 *bearing block, n*—steel piece to distribute the load from the testing machine to the specimen.

3.2.2 *lower bearing block, n*—steel piece placed under the specimen to distribute the load from the testing machine to the specimen.

3.2.2.1 *Discussion*—The lower bearing block provides a readily machinable surface for maintaining the specified bearing surface. The lower bearing block may also be used to adapt the testing machine to various specimen heights. The lower bearing block is also referred to as *bottom block, plain block, and false platen*.

3.2.3 *platen, n*—primary bearing surface of the testing machine.

3.2.3.1 *Discussion*—The platen is also referred to as the testing machine *table*.

3.2.4 *spacer, n*—steel piece used to elevate the lower bearing block to accommodate test specimens of various heights.

3.2.4.1 *Discussion*—Spacers are not required to have hardened bearing faces because spacers are not in direct contact with the specimen or the retainers of unbonded caps.

3.2.5 *upper bearing block, n*—steel assembly suspended above the specimen that is capable of tilting to bear uniformly on the top of the specimen.

3.2.5.1 *Discussion*—The upper bearing block is also referred to as the *spherically seated block* and the *suspended block*.

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 This test method consists of applying a compressive axial load to molded cylinders or cores at a rate which is within a prescribed range until failure occurs. The compressive strength of the specimen is calculated by dividing the maximum load attained during the test by the cross-sectional area of the specimen.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 Care must be exercised in the interpretation of the significance of compressive strength determinations by this test method since strength is not a fundamental or intrinsic property of concrete made from given materials. Values obtained will depend on the size and shape of the specimen, batching, mixing procedures, the methods of sampling, molding, and fabrication and the age, temperature, and moisture conditions during curing.

5.2 This test method is used to determine compressive strength of cylindrical specimens prepared and cured in accordance with Practices **C31/C31M, C192/C192M, C617/C617M,**

5.3 The results of this test method are used as a basis for quality control of concrete proportioning, mixing, and placing operations; determination of compliance with specifications; control for evaluating effectiveness of admixtures; and similar uses.

5.4 The individual who tests concrete cylinders for acceptance testing shall meet the concrete laboratory technician requirements of Practice **C1077**, including an examination requiring performance demonstration that is evaluated by an independent examiner.

NOTE 1—Certification equivalent to the minimum guidelines for ACI Concrete Laboratory Technician, Level I or ACI Concrete Strength Testing Technician will satisfy this requirement.

6. Apparatus

6.1 *Testing Machine*—The testing machine shall be of a type having sufficient capacity and capable of providing the rates of loading prescribed in **8.5**.

6.1.1 Verify the accuracy of the testing machine in accordance with Practices **E4**, except that the verified loading range shall be as required in **6.4**. Verification is required:

6.1.1.1 Within 13 months of the last calibration,

6.1.1.2 On original installation or immediately after relocation,

6.1.1.3 Immediately after making repairs or adjustments that affect the operation of the force applying system or the values displayed on the load indicating system, except for zero adjustments that compensate for the mass of bearing blocks or specimen, or both, or

6.1.1.4 Whenever there is reason to suspect the accuracy of the indicated loads.

6.1.2 *Design*—The design of the machine must include the following features:

6.1.2.1 The machine must be power operated and must apply the load continuously rather than intermittently, and without shock. If it has only one loading rate (meeting the requirements of **8.5**), it must be provided with a supplemental means for loading at a rate suitable for verification. This supplemental means of loading may be power or hand operated.

6.1.2.2 The space provided for test specimens shall be large enough to accommodate, in a readable position, an elastic calibration device which is of sufficient capacity to cover the potential loading range of the testing machine and which complies with the requirements of Practice **E74**.

NOTE 2—The types of elastic calibration devices most generally available and most commonly used for this purpose are the circular proving ring or load cell.

6.1.3 *Accuracy*—The accuracy of the testing machine shall be in accordance with the following provisions:

6.1.3.1 The percentage of error for the loads within the proposed range of use of the testing machine shall not exceed ± 1.0 % of the indicated load.

6.1.3.2 The accuracy of the testing machine shall be verified by applying five test loads in four approximately equal increments in ascending order. The difference between any two successive test loads shall not exceed one third of the difference between the maximum and minimum test loads.

6.1.3.3 The test load as indicated by the testing machine and the applied load computed from the readings of the verification device shall be recorded at each test point. Calculate the error, E , and the percentage of error, E_p , for each point from these data as follows:

$$E = A - B \quad (1)$$

$$E_p = 100(A - B)/B$$

where:

A = load, kN [lbf] indicated by the machine being verified, and

B = applied load, kN [lbf] as determined by the calibrating device.

6.1.3.4 The report on the verification of a testing machine shall state within what loading range it was found to conform to specification requirements rather than reporting a blanket acceptance or rejection. In no case shall the loading range be stated as including loads below the value which is 100 times the smallest change of load estimable on the load-indicating mechanism of the testing machine or loads within that portion of the range below 10 % of the maximum range capacity.

6.1.3.5 In no case shall the loading range be stated as including loads outside the range of loads applied during the verification test.

6.1.3.6 The indicated load of a testing machine shall not be corrected either by calculation or by the use of a calibration diagram to obtain values within the required permissible variation.

6.2 *Bearing Blocks*—The upper and lower bearing blocks shall conform to the following requirements:

6.2.1 Bearing blocks shall be steel with hardened bearing faces (**Note 3**).

6.2.2 Bearing faces shall have dimensions at least 3 % greater than the nominal diameter of the specimen.

6.2.3 Except for the inscribed concentric circles described in 6.2.4.7, the bearing faces shall not depart from a plane by more than 0.02 mm [0.001 in.] along any 150 mm [6 in.] length for bearing blocks with a diameter of 150 mm [6 in.] or larger, or by more than 0.02 mm [0.001 in.] in any direction of smaller bearing blocks. New bearing blocks shall be manufactured within one half of this tolerance.

NOTE 3—It is desirable that the bearing faces of bearing blocks have a Rockwell hardness at least 55 HRC as determined by Test Methods E18.

NOTE 4—Square bearing faces are permissible for the bearing blocks.

6.2.4 *Upper Bearing Block*—The upper bearing block shall conform to the following requirements:

6.2.4.1 The upper bearing block shall be spherically seated and the center of the sphere shall coincide with the center of the bearing face within ± 5 % of the radius of the sphere.

6.2.4.2 The ball and the socket shall be designed so that the steel in the contact area does not permanently deform when loaded to the capacity of the testing machine.

NOTE 5—The preferred contact area is in the form of a ring (described as *preferred bearing area*) as shown in Fig. 1.

6.2.4.3 Provision shall be made for holding the upper bearing block in the socket. The design shall be such that the bearing face can be rotated and tilted at least 4° in any direction.

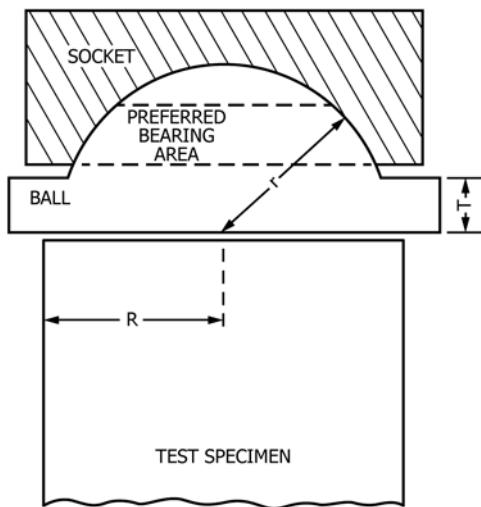
6.2.4.4 If the upper bearing block is a two-piece design composed of a spherical portion and a bearing plate, a mechanical means shall be provided to ensure that the spherical portion is fixed and centered on the bearing plate.

6.2.4.5 The diameter of the sphere shall be at least 75 % of the nominal diameter of the specimen. If the diameter of the sphere is smaller than the diameter of the specimen, the portion of the bearing face extending beyond the sphere shall have a thickness not less than the difference between the radius of the sphere and radius of the specimen (see Fig. 1). The least dimension of the bearing face shall be at least as great as the diameter of the sphere.

6.2.4.6 The dimensions of the bearing face of the upper bearing block shall not exceed the following values:

Nominal Diameter of Specimen, mm [in.]	Maximum Diameter of Round Bearing Face, mm [in.]	Maximum Dimensions of Square Bearing Face, mm [in.]
50 [2]	105 [4]	105 by 105 [4 by 4]
75 [3]	130 [5]	130 by 130 [5 by 5]
100 [4]	165 [6.5]	165 by 165 [6.5 by 6.5]
150 [6]	255 [10]	255 by 255 [10 by 10]
200 [8]	280 [11]	280 by 280 [11 by 11]

6.2.4.7 If the diameter of the bearing face of the upper bearing block exceeds the nominal diameter of the specimen by more than 13 mm [0.5 in.], concentric circles not more than 0.8 mm [0.03 in.] deep and not more than 1 mm [0.04 in.] wide shall be inscribed on the face of upper bearing block to facilitate proper centering.



$$T \geq R - r$$

r = radius of spherical portion of upper bearing block

R = nominal radius of specimen

T = thickness of upper bearing block extending beyond the sphere

FIG. 1 Schematic Sketch of Typical Upper Bearing Block