



Designation: D2168 – 10 (Reapproved 2018)

Standard Practices for Calibration of Laboratory Mechanical-Rammer Soil Compactors¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D2168; 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 These practices for the calibration of mechanical soil compactors are for use in checking and adjusting mechanical devices used in laboratory compacting of soil and soil-aggregate in accordance with Test Methods [D698](#), [D1557](#), Practice [D6026](#), and other methods of a similar nature that might specify these practices. Calibration for use with one practice does not qualify the equipment for use with another practice.

1.2 The weight of the mechanical rammer is adjusted as described in [5.4](#) and [6.5](#) in order to provide for the mechanical compactor to produce the same result as the manual compactor.

1.3 Two alternative procedures are provided as follows:

		Section
Practice A	Calibration based on the compaction of a selected soil sample	5
Practice B	Calibration based on the deformation of a standard lead cylinder	6

1.4 If a mechanical compactor is calibrated in accordance with the requirements of either Practice A or Practice B, it is not necessary for the mechanical compactor to meet the requirements of the other practice.

1.5 The values stated in inch-pound units are to be regarded as the standard. The values given in parentheses are for information only.

1.5.1 It is common practice in the engineering profession to concurrently use pounds to represent both a unit of mass (lbm) and a force (lbf). This implicitly combines two separate systems of units; that is, the absolute system and the gravitational system. It is scientifically undesirable to combine the use of two separate sets of inch-pound units within a single standard. This standard has been written using the gravitational system of units when dealing with the inch-pound system. In this system, the pound (lbf) represents a unit of force (weight).

¹ These practices are under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee [D18](#) on Soil and Rock and are the direct responsibility of Subcommittee [D18.03](#) on Texture, Plasticity and Density Characteristics of Soils.

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However, the use of balances or scales recording pounds of mass (lbm) or the recording of density in lbm/ft^3 shall not be regarded as a nonconformance with this standard.

1.6 *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.*

1.7 *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

- [D653 Terminology Relating to Soil, Rock, and Contained Fluids](#)
- [D698 Test Methods for Laboratory Compaction Characteristics of Soil Using Standard Effort \(12,400 ft-lbf/ft³ \(600 kN-m/m³\)\)](#)
- [D1557 Test Methods for Laboratory Compaction Characteristics of Soil Using Modified Effort \(56,000 ft-lbf/ft³ \(2,700 kN-m/m³\)\)](#)
- [D2487 Practice for Classification of Soils for Engineering Purposes \(Unified Soil Classification System\)](#)
- [D3740 Practice for Minimum Requirements for Agencies Engaged in Testing and/or Inspection of Soil and Rock as Used in Engineering Design and Construction](#)
- [D6026 Practice for Using Significant Digits in Geotechnical Data](#)
- [E11 Specification for Woven Wire Test Sieve Cloth and Test Sieves](#)
- [E145 Specification for Gravity-Convection and Forced-Ventilation Ovens](#)

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

3. Significance and Use

3.1 Mechanical compactors are commonly used to replace the hand compactors required for Test Methods **D698** and **D1557** in cases where it is necessary to increase production.

3.2 The design of mechanical compactors is such that it is necessary to have a calibration process that goes beyond determining the mass and drop of the hammer.

NOTE 1—The quality of the result produced by this standard is dependent on the competence of the personnel performing it, and the suitability of the equipment and facilities used. Agencies that meet the criteria in Practice **D3740** are generally considered capable of competent and objective testing/sampling/inspection/and the like. Users of this standard are cautioned that compliance with Practice **D3740** does not in itself assure reliable results. Reliable results depend on many factors; Practice **D3740** provides a means of evaluating some of those factors.

4. Apparatus

4.1 For Practice A, in addition to the apparatus requirements specified in Test Methods **D698** and **D1557**, the following is required:

4.1.1 *Drying Oven*—Thermostatically controlled oven, preferably of the forced-draft type, meeting the requirements for Specification **E145** and capable of maintaining a uniform temperature of $140 \pm 5^\circ\text{F}$ ($60 \pm 3^\circ\text{C}$) throughout the drying chamber.

4.2 For Practice B, in addition to the apparatus requirements specified in Test Methods **D698** and **D1557**, the following are required:

4.2.1 *Lead Deformation Apparatus*—A lead deformation apparatus consisting of an anvil, guide collar, and striking pin, as shown in **Fig. 1**.

4.2.2 *Micrometer*—A one-inch (25-mm) outside micrometer or caliper reading to 0.001 in. (0.02 mm), for determining the length of the lead cylinders. As an alternative, a one-inch (25-mm) dial comparator reading to 0.001 in. (0.02 mm) may be used to determine either the length of the lead cylinder, or of the complete lead deformation apparatus assembly. To measure the complete assembly, a dial comparator with a minimum opening of 2 in. (50 mm) is required (see **Fig. 2**).

NOTE 2—The use of vernier calipers is not recommended since the vernier calipers can produce erroneous readings if not zeroed correctly, or if the vernier caliper is not of high quality.

4.2.3 *Guide Sleeve Pedestal*—A guide sleeve pedestal for use with guide sleeves used to control the drop of the manual rammers in Test Methods **D698** and **D1557** (see **Fig. 3**).

4.2.4 *Test Cylinders*—A supply of commercially pure lead test cylinders having individual weights such that the lightest cylinder is within 0.06 g of the heaviest, each having a length of 0.675 ± 0.005 in. (17.1 ± 0.1 mm) and a diameter of 0.310 ± 0.002 in. (7.87 ± 0.05 mm).³ A minimum of ten test cylinders is required for the calibration of one mechanical compactor. However, depending on circumstances, as many as 100 test cylinders may be required.

³ The sole source of supply of the lead test cylinders known to the committee at this time is Hornady Manufacturing Co., P.O. Box 1848, Grand Island, Nebr. 68801 in lots of 500. If you are aware of alternative suppliers, please provide this information to ASTM International Headquarters. Your comments will receive careful consideration at a meeting of the responsible technical committee,¹ which you may attend.

5. Procedure—Practice A

5.1 Evaluate the mechanical and manual compactors for evidence of wear, malfunction, and need of servicing and adjustment. Clean, adjust, and lubricate the compactors so as to meet all requirements of the manufacturer, and the applicable method under which they will be used and for which the mechanical compactor is to be calibrated. Operate the compactor for a minimum of 25 drops to cause friction in the parts to become constant, allowing the rammer to fall on soil or other soft material.

NOTE 3—In order to provide satisfactory results, mechanical compactors must be in excellent working condition. Improper operation of the raising and release mechanisms can introduce serious errors.

5.2 Obtain approximately 50 lb (23 kg) of soil classified as CL in accordance with Classification **D2487**. If excessive moisture is present, dry the soil until it becomes friable. Drying may be in air or by use of a drying apparatus such that the temperature of the sample does not exceed 140°F (60°C). Pass the soil through a No. 4 (4.75-mm) sieve conforming to the requirements of Specification **E11**. Discard any material remaining on the sieve, and thoroughly blend the material passing the sieve until it is uniform. The material shall then be prepared for compaction in accordance with either Methods **D698** or **D1557** as appropriate for the mechanical compactor being calibrated.

NOTE 4—The amount of soil used will vary greatly depending on the number of water content unit mass determinations required.

5.3 Using the soil prepared in accordance with **5.2**, determine optimum moisture and maximum dry unit weight by Method A of either Test Methods **D698** or **D1557** or whichever method is appropriate for the mechanical compactor being calibrated. Prepare one curve using the mechanical compactor and another using the manual compactor. Record the values of γ_{max} , the maximum dry unit weight obtained with the manual compactor, and γ'_{max} , the maximum dry unit weight obtained with the mechanical compactor.

5.4 Determine W , the percentage difference of maximum dry unit weight values for a single set of data (see Section **7**). If the absolute value of W is equal to or less than 2.0, the mechanical compactor is satisfactory for immediate use. If the absolute value of W is greater than 2.0, then obtain two additional sets of data. Use the same soil sample, prepared in accordance with **5.2**, that was used previously. Determine W , the average percentage difference of maximum dry unit mass values for three sets of data (see Section **7**). If the absolute value of W is equal to or less than 2.0, the mechanical compactor is satisfactory for immediate use. If the absolute value of \bar{W} is greater than 2.0, then adjust the rammer mass of the mechanical compactor in accordance with **5.5**. Then secure three new values of γ'_{max} and compute a new value of \bar{W} . Repeat this procedure until the absolute value of \bar{W} is equal to or less than 2.0.

5.5 Make changes in the weight of the mechanical hammer with due consideration to good workmanship. Makeshift modifications that could affect the operation of the mechanical compactor are not permitted. The maximum permissible variation in the weight of the mechanical hammer as the result of