



Designation: D7584 – 16 (Reapproved 2021)

Standard Test Method for Evaluating the Resistance of the Surface of Wet Blue and Wet White to the Growth of Fungi in an Environmental Chamber¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D7584; 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 environmental chamber method measures the resistance of the treated Wet Blue and Wet White to the germination of spores and subsequent vegetative growth over a period of four weeks. The test method is useful in estimating the performance of fungicides and should assist in the prediction of storage time of Wet Blue and Wet White before fungal growth begins. The apparatus is designed so it can be easily built or obtained by any interested party and duplicate the natural environment in which Wet Blue and Wet White is inoculated with fungal spores. Spores that germinate on untreated or treated Wet Blue and Wet White can produce fungal growth, resulting in disfigurement or discoloration, or both, of the Wet Blue and Wet White.

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 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.*

1.4 *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

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D31 on Leather and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D31.02 on Wet Blue.

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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.

[D3273 Test Method for Resistance to Growth of Mold on the Surface of Interior Coatings in an Environmental Chamber](#)

[E177 Practice for Use of the Terms Precision and Bias in ASTM Test Methods](#)

[E691 Practice for Conducting an Interlaboratory Study to Determine the Precision of a Test Method](#)

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions:

3.1.1 *fungi*—chemoorganotrophic eukaryotic organisms living mainly under aerobic conditions and generating energy by the oxidation of organic materials.

3.1.2 *mold*—a macroscopic discoloration of the surface of wet blue. Mold also a sign of the presence of microscopic fungal growth in the form of usually clear to white fungal hyphae, spores of various colors, and other structures. Colored spots, probably due to the presence of a colored pigment produced by the fungus, have been observed on the surface of wet blue in places where fungal growth has occurred and then stopped. Fungal structures such as hyphae and spores may be viewed by simply using a 10 \times hand lens.

3.1.3 *Wet Blue*—hide or skin, or split of a hide or skin, tanned with basic chromium sulfate, containing approximately 50 % moisture and an acidic pH.

3.1.4 *Wet White*—hide or skin that has been processed with tanning as the terminal step by using organic or non-organic tanning agents. Chromium or iron containing agents and vegetable extracts will be excluded from use in Wet White.

3.1.5 *Fungi of Importance in the Tannery:*

3.1.5.1 *Filamentous Fungi:*

(1) A wide variety of fungi have been identified in the tannery, but commonly encountered species include *Aspergillus* spp., *Paecilomyces* spp., and *Penicillium* spp.

(2) *Aspergillus niger* produces black spores and *Penicillium luteum* produces yellow-green colored spores.

(3) *Trichoderma viride* produces green spores.

3.1.5.2 *Yeast*—Many yeasts are cream colored, but pigmented ones may also be encountered including *Rhodotorula* spp. which is pigmented red.

3.1.5.3 *Factors Favoring the Growth of Fungi in the Tannery:*

(1) Wet Blue and Wet White contain nutrients beneficial to fungal growth.

(2) Favorable environmental factors include a slightly acidic pH, a high moisture content, and warm temperatures.

(3) Fungal spores are transported by air or on hides and skins into the tannery and distributed within the tannery by physical contact or air currents to favorable substrates for growth including Wet Blue and Wet White.

4. Personal Protective Equipment

4.1 Fungi are opportunistic organisms. For this reason, rubber gloves or powder-free latex examination gloves, safety glasses, and a laboratory coat should be worn whenever handling samples with fungal growth are encountered.

4.2 A dust mask or respirator should be worn whenever the environmental chamber is open or whenever samples with fungal growth are encountered.

4.2.1 *Dust Mask*—Examples, 3M 8210 and 3M 9322 Respirators.

4.2.2 *Half-Mask Respirator*—Equipped with a filter approved 99.97 % efficient against solid or liquid particulates including oil-based particles: For example, the North 7700 Series Half-Mask Respirator equipped with Cartridge PI 00 Filter.

5. Summary of Method of Evaluation

5.1 Wet Blue or Wet White is suspended in a chamber with a warm, moist environment.

5.2 After incubation for seven days, the entire surface area of the grain and flesh sides of the test specimen are examined visually, first one side, for example, the grain side, and then the other, for example, the flesh side, for the presence of fungal growth and rated using a numerical scale from 10 (clean or without any sign of fungal growth) to 0 (completely covered by fungal growth).

5.3 Step B is repeated once per week until ratings have been completed for all samples at 14, 21, and 28 days of environmental chamber exposure.

5.4 After the fourth weekly reading is completed, a report of the results is prepared and delivered to the party requesting the evaluation.

6. Significance and Use

6.1 The environmental chamber method is an accelerated test for determining the resistance of Wet Blue and Wet White to the growth of fungi, the causal agent of mold. See Test Method D3273.^{3,4}

6.2 The environmental chamber method is useful in estimating the performance of fungicides and should assist in the prediction of storage time before fungal growth begins.

³ Didato, Dean T., Bowen, Judith R., and Hurlow, Elton L., *Microorganism Control During Leather Manufacture, Leather Technologists Pocket Book*, Chapter 20, Editor M. K. Leafe, The Society of Leather Technologists and Chemists, Withernsea, East Yorkshire, UK, 1999.

⁴ *Leather Technologists Pocket Book*, The Society of Leather Technologists and Chemists, Withernsea, East Yorkshire, UK, 1999, p. 405.



FIG. 1 Environmental Chamber

6.3 The environmental chamber method duplicates the natural environment in which Wet Blue or Wet White is inoculated with fungal spores and subsequently disfigured or discolored by fungi.

6.4 The environmental chamber method measures the resistance of the treated Wet Blue or Wet White to the germination of spores and subsequent vegetative growth that spreads over the surface of a comparatively large Wet Blue or Wet White specimen over a period of four weeks.

6.5 The environmental chamber can be kept inoculated with fungi representative of those found in tanneries by adding samples of Wet Blue and Wet White with fungal growth from currently operating tanneries.

6.6 Control specimens of Wet Blue and Wet White without fungicide treatment can be added to the chamber periodically to increase levels of fungal growth in the chamber.

6.7 Leaching of fungicide from the test specimen into the agar often causes a zone of inhibition of fungal growth in the Petri dish test, but in the environmental chamber any leaching of fungicide from the test specimen drips into the water contained in the chamber and thus does not cause the types of false readings observed in the Petri dish test.

7. Interferences

7.1 A common interference is contamination of samples by unwanted organisms, for example arthropods—including culture mites and fungus gnats—that enter the environmental chamber on test specimens or from the laboratory environment.

7.1.1 *Culture Mites (Acari including Tyroglyphus and Tarsonemus):*

7.1.1.1 Culture mites invade the environmental chamber eating the fungal hyphae on the test specimens, infecting them with bacteria, and moving from one test specimen to another contaminating them.

7.1.1.2 Mites thrive in environments with high temperature and humidity.

7.1.1.3 Mites are attracted by the odor of fungi and can be also brought into the environmental chamber on the bodies of flies, organic material, soil, and even test specimens.

7.1.1.4 General hygiene and preventive precautions must be taken to control mites, including examining all new materials entering the laboratory and maintaining separate rooms for initial handling of new samples for testing and a clean room to house the environmental chamber.

7.1.2 *Fungus Gnats (Sciaroidea—including the dark winged fungus flies, Sciaridae):*

7.1.2.1 Larvae of fungus gnats are known to live wherever fungi grow.

7.1.2.2 The same general hygiene and preventive precautions that are used to control mites apply to the control of fungus gnats, especially keeping the room containing the environmental chambers clean.

7.1.3 If culture mites or fungus mites become established in an environmental chamber, terminate work in progress, remove all samples and soil, disinfect all hard surfaces, and begin the chamber startup process again.

7.2 Limit the sunlight entering the chamber room and only have room lights on when working in the room to prevent the growth of algae.

8. Apparatus (see Figs. 1 and 2)

8.1 A typical environmental chamber⁵ will have the following components (all measurements rounded to the nearest whole centimeter and may vary in dimensions from one chamber design to another):

8.1.1 The chamber is raised above floor level, made mobile by setting it on a steel platform with casters, and built strong enough to support the weight of the chamber, soil, water, and samples. A typical platform measures 97 cm in length by 66 cm in width and height with steel legs and casters that elevate the chamber an additional 36 cm above the floor.

8.1.2 A rectangular shaped tank is used to contain the water, soil, and samples.

8.1.2.1 A typical tank measures 94 cm in length by 62 cm in width by 62 cm in height with a wall thickness of 1 cm. The tank is built to be watertight. The inside dimensions of the tank are 91 cm in length by 61 cm in width and height. The water level in the bottom of the tank is maintained at a height of 8 to 17 cm.

8.1.2.2 The tank has an offset shoulder at the top rim. This serves to support the chamber cover when in the closed position, to contain water dripping from the chamber cover and to divert the water back to the bottom of the tank without dripping on the Wet Blue or Wet White samples. The rim gives the top of the tank an extended length of 104 cm, an extended width of 72 cm, and a raised outside wall of 3.8 cm in height. The inside of the rim drops 3.6 cm below the surface of the top of the tank to a horizontal shelf measuring 5 cm in width with a curving waterfall that diverts water toward the bottom of the tank.

8.1.3 A rectangular shaped soil tray is used to hold the soil mix and inoculum. See Figs. 3 and 4.

8.1.3.1 The soil tray is seated on top of a table for the purpose of elevating the tray above the level of the water.

8.1.3.2 The dimensions of the soil tray are 82 cm in length by 56 cm in width by 5 cm in height.

8.1.3.3 The bottom of the tray consists of a sheet of corrosion-resistant metal mesh. One layer of plastic or fiberglass screening may be placed over the metal mesh to hold the soil in place if necessary.

8.1.3.4 The primary purpose of the soil tray is to help keep the chamber evenly moist.

8.1.4 A rectangular shaped supporting frame is located near the top of the chamber and serves to hold the rods from which the Wet Blue or Wet White samples hang. See Fig. 5. This particular frame will provide enough rod space to hang 100 or more Wet Blue or Wet White samples. Chambers may be designed to provide space for exposure of greater numbers of samples to suit the needs of the testing laboratory.

⁵ The sole source of supply of the complete chamber known to the committee at this time is Indelco Custom Products, 32 Flicker St., Memphis, TN 38182-0183. 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.