



Designation: D823 – 18 (Reapproved 2022)

Standard Practices for Producing Films of Uniform Thickness of Paint, Coatings and Related Products on Test Panels¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D823; 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 Five practices are given for preparing films of uniform thickness of coatings on test panels. These practices are:

Practice A—Automated Spray Machine Application

Practice B—Motor-Driven Dip Coater Application

Practice C—Motor-Driven Blade Film Application

Practice D—Hand-Held Spray Gun Application

Practice E—Hand-Held Blade Film Application

1.2 The use of wire-wound drawdown bars as described in Practice [D4147](#) may also be an appropriate method for producing films of uniform coating thickness.

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

1.4 *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.*

1.5 *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

[D609 Practice for Preparation of Cold-Rolled Steel Panels for Testing Paint, Varnish, Conversion Coatings, and](#)

¹ These practices are under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee [D01](#) on Paint and Related Coatings, Materials, and Applications and are the direct responsibility of Subcommittee [D01.23](#) on Physical Properties of Applied Paint Films.

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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.

Related Coating Products

[D1005 Test Method for Measurement of Dry-Film Thickness of Organic Coatings Using Micrometers](#)

[D1212 Test Methods for Measurement of Wet Film Thickness of Organic Coatings](#)

[D3924 Specification for Standard Environment for Conditioning and Testing Paint, Varnish, Lacquer, and Related Materials](#)

[D4147 Practice for Applying Coil Coatings Using Wire-Wound Drawdown Bars](#)

[D4285 Test Method for Indicating Oil or Water in Compressed Air](#)

[D4414 Practice for Measurement of Wet Film Thickness by Notch Gages](#)

[D7091 Practice for Nondestructive Measurement of Dry Film Thickness of Nonmagnetic Coatings Applied to Ferrous Metals and Nonmagnetic, Nonconductive Coatings Applied to Non-Ferrous Metals](#)

PRACTICE A—AUTOMATED SPRAY MACHINE APPLICATION

3. Summary of Practices

3.1 A liquid material is applied to a test panel by means of an automated spray machine consisting of a mounted spray gun and a panel holder. This machine can (1) move the panel holder, with test panel, at a uniform speed through the atomized spray produced by a fixed spray gun, or (2) it can move the gun, with atomized spray, at a uniform speed past the test panel(s) mounted on a fixed panel holder. A machine equipped with a programmable system can index the spray gun vertically for multiple passes and for multiple coats with selective time delay.

3.2 The thickness of coating applied is controlled by the traverse speed of the panel or gun, the fluid delivery rate of the gun, the spray gun tip size, the viscosity of the material, and the amount of nonvolatile matter in the material.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 This practice should be used for those coatings that are designed for spray applications of objects in the factory or in

the field. It is particularly important that it be used in the evaluation of metallic coatings for appearance properties, such as gloss and color.

4.2 Coatings applied by this test method may exhibit a slight orange-peel or spray wave.

5. Apparatus

5.1 *Test Panels*, of any clean, planar rigid substrate with a uniform surface of a size that can be accommodated by the panel holder of the automated spray machine.

5.1.1 When steel panels are used, they should be prepared in accordance with the appropriate method in Practice **D609**.

5.2 *Automated Spray Machine*, equipped with a panel holder and a mounting for a spray gun. The machine shall be designed to move the panel holder at a uniform speed past the fixed gun mount or designed to move the gun mount at a uniform speed past the fixed panel holder. The panel holder or the gun mount traverse speed shall be adjustable from 7.5 to 30 m (25 to 100 ft)/min. Examples of automated spray machines are shown in **Fig. 1**.

NOTE 1—Some automated spray machines provide additional features that can improve the uniformity of film preparation. Some examples are: a z-bar panel holder; indexing of the panel holder at right angles to the gun to provide uniform lapping; and automatic control of number of passes, time between passes, and lapping distance.

5.3 *Spray Gun*, any that will provide a uniform fan-type spray pattern at least 150 mm (6 in.) in width is satisfactory. The gun may be triggered manually or automatically.

5.4 *Air Pressure Gage*, covering the range of 0 to 690 kPa (0 to 100 psi).

5.5 *Air Pressure Regulator*.

5.6 *Air Supply*, water and oil-free, under pressure.

6. Preparation of Apparatus

6.1 Mount the spray gun on the automated spray machine. Connect the air line hose from the regulator to the air pressure gage which in turn is connected to the air inlet of the spray gun.

6.2 Set the gun so that its tip is at the desired distance from the test panel surface, usually in the range from 200 to 300 mm (8 to 12 in.).

6.3 With the gun trigger fully open, adjust the air regulator to provide the desired reading on the air pressure gage.

NOTE 2—A suitable air pressure is usually from 275 to 520 kPa (40 to 75 psi).

6.4 Set the automated spray machine controls to provide the desired traverse speed of the panel holder or the gun mount, whichever is pertinent to the type of machine being used.

NOTE 3—Suitable traverse speeds for automotive coatings usually range from 17.5 to 22.5 m/min (700 to 900 in./min).

7. Procedure

7.1 If compressed air is used to atomize the coating, verify that the air is clean and dry according to Test Method **D4285**.

7.2 If recommended by the coating manufacturer, strain the material to be sprayed into the container to be used with the

spray gun. Reduce the material to a viscosity suitable for spraying using the coating manufacturer's recommended thinner.

7.3 Connect the container to the gun and test the spray gun operation while stationary, for correct spray pattern and uniformity by allowing a momentary spray to be deposited on a piece of paper placed in the panel position. Adjust the air pressure, material flow, and spray fan width controls until the desired pattern and uniformity are obtained. Further refinements may be made in the spray pattern by modifying the air pressure, and the type and amount of thinner.

NOTE 4—The width of the spray pattern should be considerably wider than the width of the test panel to assure spray uniformity on the test panel.

7.4 Place a test panel on the panel holder and start the machine. Operate the spray gun so that it will begin spraying a few inches before the test panel enters the spray pattern and continue spraying a few inches after the test panel leaves the spray pattern.

7.5 Measure the wet film thickness in accordance with Test Methods **D1212** or Practice **D4414**. Additional passes may be made until the desired wet film thickness has been achieved.

7.6 Remove the coated panel and bake, force-dry, or air-dry it, in accordance with its type, in a vertical position in a dust-free atmosphere (if required), as described in Specification **D3924**.

7.7 Measure the dry film thickness of the coating in accordance with Test Methods **D1005** or Practice **D7091**, whichever is appropriate.

8. Report

8.1 Report the following information:

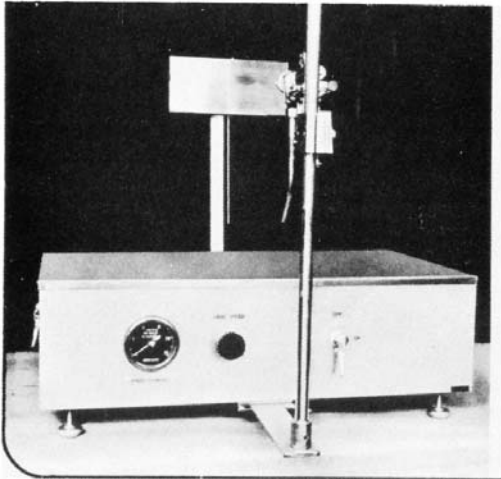
- 8.1.1 Type of coating material,
- 8.1.2 Type and amount of thinner added as a percentage by weight or volume of the total mixed coating, if applicable,
- 8.1.3 Temperature of coating material,
- 8.1.4 Wet film thickness,
- 8.1.5 Distance of test panel from gun tip,
- 8.1.6 Type of spray gun and spray tip size,
- 8.1.7 Air pressure,
- 8.1.8 Number of spray passes,
- 8.1.9 Traverse speed,
- 8.1.10 Air temperature, relative humidity and temperature of test panel at time of application, and
- 8.1.11 Mean and range of dry film thickness values obtained.

PRACTICE B—MOTOR-DRIVEN DIP COATER APPLICATION

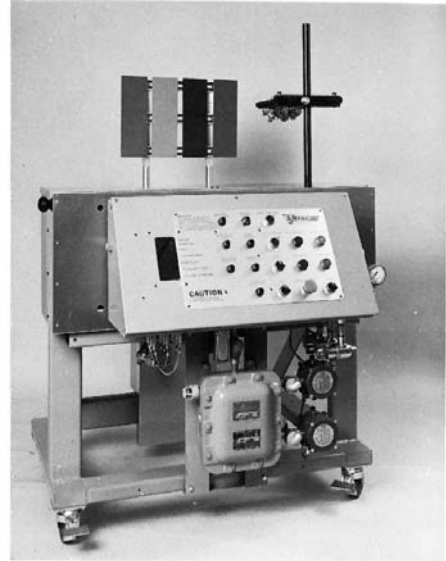
9. Summary of Practice

9.1 A motor-driven device is employed to withdraw the test panel from a container of the coating material at a desired uniform rate.

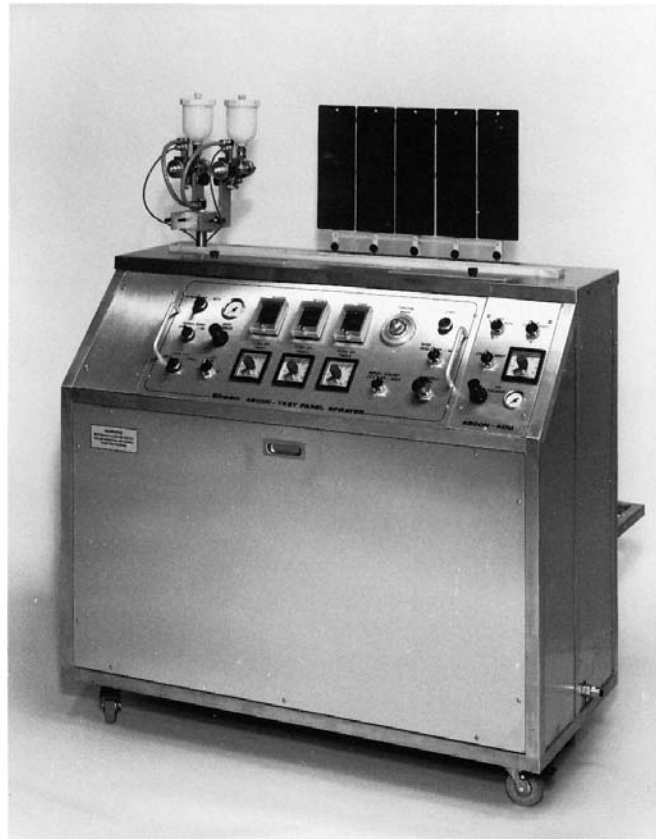
9.2 The wet film thickness of the applied coating is influenced by many variables including, but not limited to the speed



(a) Fixed Gun, Traveling Panel Machine



(b) Fixed Panel, Traveling Gun Machine



(c) Fixed Panel Programmable Indexing Traveling Gun Machine

FIG. 1 Automatic Spray Machines, Practice A