



Designation: D8278 – 20

Standard Specification for Digital Contact Thermometers for Test Methods Measuring Flow Properties of Fuels and Lubricants¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D8278; 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 specification establishes criteria for digital contact thermometers (DCT) for use in test methods that measure flow properties of materials within the scope of Committee D02. The DCT criteria are based on the design and sensing characteristics of the liquid-in-glass thermometers that are used successfully in Committee D02 test methods.

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

- D97 Test Method for Pour Point of Petroleum Products
- D445 Test Method for Kinematic Viscosity of Transparent and Opaque Liquids (and Calculation of Dynamic Viscosity)
- D2162 Practice for Basic Calibration of Master Viscometers and Viscosity Oil Standards
- D2500 Test Method for Cloud Point of Petroleum Products and Liquid Fuels

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D02 on Petroleum Products, Liquid Fuels, and Lubricants and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D02.07 on Flow Properties.

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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.

- D2983 Test Method for Low-Temperature Viscosity of Automatic Transmission Fluids, Hydraulic Fluids, and Lubricants using a Rotational Viscometer
 - D3829 Test Method for Predicting the Borderline Pumping Temperature of Engine Oil
 - D4539 Test Method for Filterability of Diesel Fuels by Low-Temperature Flow Test (LTFT)
 - D4684 Test Method for Determination of Yield Stress and Apparent Viscosity of Engine Oils at Low Temperature
 - D5481 Test Method for Measuring Apparent Viscosity at High-Temperature and High-Shear Rate by Multicell Capillary Viscometer
 - D5853 Test Method for Pour Point of Crude Oils
 - D6371 Test Method for Cold Filter Plugging Point of Diesel and Heating Fuels
 - D6821 Test Method for Low Temperature Viscosity of Drive Line Lubricants in a Constant Shear Stress Viscometer
 - D6896 Test Method for Determination of Yield Stress and Apparent Viscosity of Used Engine Oils at Low Temperature
 - D7279 Test Method for Kinematic Viscosity of Transparent and Opaque Liquids by Automated Houillon Viscometer
 - D7962 Practice for Determination of Minimum Immersion Depth and Assessment of Temperature Sensor Measurement Drift
 - D8210 Test Method for Automatic Determination of Low-Temperature Viscosity of Automatic Transmission Fluids, Hydraulic Fluids, and Lubricants Using a Rotational Viscometer
 - E177 Practice for Use of the Terms Precision and Bias in ASTM Test Methods
 - E563 Practice for Preparation and Use of an Ice-Point Bath as a Reference Temperature
 - E644 Test Methods for Testing Industrial Resistance Thermometers
 - E1750 Guide for Use of Water Triple Point Cells
 - E2877 Guide for Digital Contact Thermometers
- ### 2.2 ISO Standard:³
- ISO 17025 General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories

³ Available from American National Standards Institute (ANSI), 25 W. 43rd St., 4th Floor, New York, NY 10036, <http://www.ansi.org>.

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

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions:

3.1.1 *accuracy, n*—the closeness of agreement between a test result and an accepted reference value. **E177**

3.1.2 *digital contact thermometer (DCT), n*—an electronic device consisting of a digital display and associated temperature sensing probe.

3.1.2.1 *Discussion*—This device consists of a temperature sensor connected to a measuring instrument; this instrument measures the temperature-dependent quantity of the sensor, computes the temperature from the measured quantity, and provides a digital output. This digital output goes to a digital display and/or recording device that may be internal or external to the device.

3.1.2.2 *Discussion*—The devices are often referred to as a “digital thermometers,” however the term includes devices that sense temperature by means other than being in physical contact with the media.

3.1.2.3 *Discussion*—PET is an acronym for portable electronic thermometers, a subset of digital contact thermometers (DCT).

3.1.3 *DCT immersion depth, n*—depth that a DCT sensor is immersed in a uniform temperature environment, such that further immersion does not produce a change in indicated temperature greater than the specified tolerance.

3.1.3.1 *Discussion*—This is a DCT probe characteristic and establishes a baseline immersion for the probe. This is separate and distinct from how the probe is located in a test method. The use and positioning of a DCT probe in a test method is to be described in the test method.

3.2 Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:

3.2.1 *range-of-use, n*—a subset of the nominal DCT temperature range.

3.2.1.1 *Discussion*—This is the temperature range over which a particular DCT is to be used. For example, if a DCT is to be used for viscosity measurements as 40 °C and 100 °C, then its “range-of-use” is 60 °C.

4. Summary

4.1 This specification sets the criteria for digital contact thermometers (DCT) used in measuring flow properties of fuels and lubricants. The DCT criteria were selected so that DCT temperature measurements would be essentially the same as those measured using a liquid-in-glass (LiG) thermometer. For some of the noted test methods, the temperature of a small static sample volume is measured, thus, the difference in thermal conductivity between the different types of devices will have an impact on measurement equivalence.

4.2 The DCT temperature sensing elements noted in this specification are platinum resistance temperature (PRT) detectors or thermistors whose sheath or enclosure is in direct contact with the substance being measured and are referred to as a digital contact thermometers. Both PRTs and thermistors are members of a group referred to as resistance temperature detectors (RTD) as their resistance is a function of temperature.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 The DCTs meeting the indicated requirements have been found to be suitable for replacing the liquid-in-glass thermometers in the noted test methods. The criteria are based on key elements of liquid-in-glass (LiG) thermometers, such as bulb length, immersion depth, measurement precision, and thermometer positioning. The prescribed dimensions for sensor length, immersion depth, and sheath diameter are critical variables when measuring the temperature of small static samples due to differences in temperature probe thermal conductivity. Therefore, a DCT that is suitable for use in a stirred constant temperature bath will likely result in temperature measurement errors when used to measure the temperature of small static sample volumes.

6. DCT Criteria

6.1 The DCT requirements shown in **Table 1** are for various temperature measurement applications used in Subcommittee D02.07 test methods and reference in the test method. The DCT response time requirements are shown in **Table 2** with the procedure for determining a probe’s response time in **6.4**.

NOTE 1—DCT with a PRT element that is a suspended wire, such as those used in a SPRT, are extremely sensitive to mechanical shock which usually will alter its calibration. Other PRT sensing element designs such as thin film and mandrel wrapped wire can be sensitive to vibrations which alter their calibration or result in failure.

6.1.1 When considering the use of a DCT criteria in **Table 1** for test methods other than those noted, careful consideration must be given to the DCT probe’s placement in the new application versus its placement in the media, bath, or sample of the noted method. The metal construction of DCT probes can have a significant impact on measured value when compared to a liquid-in-glass thermometer in a similar environment due to its greater thermal conductivity. Each of the DCT criteria in the table were developed for the indicated method’s unique test environment. Other factors can impact the ability of a DCT to mimic the temperature measurement of a LiG thermometer. When a DCT probe is immersed in the sample, its immersion depth and ratio of probe volume to sample volume will have an impact on the measured value. Thus the smaller the probe diameter the smaller the impact on sample temperature.

NOTE 2—The DCT’s electronics are typically limited to an environment of 0 °C to 35 °C. A DCT’s temperature limits can be found in its manual or in the manufacturer’s specifications.

6.2 *DCT Probe Immersion Depth*—This criteria quantifies the length of the DCT probe above the tip that needs to be covered by the material being measured in order to obtain an accurate temperature measurement. Immersing the probe in a material by less than its minimum immersion depth can result in temperature measurements that significantly differ from actual temperature. The error is dependent on the temperature difference between the material being measured and surrounding (ambient) temperature. A test method will set the immersion requirements for the DCT probe.

6.3 *Measurement Drift*—The drift in calibration should be checked periodically and at least yearly. This can be accomplished using Practice **D7962**, Practice **E563**, Test Methods