



# Standard Terminology Relating to Wood and Wood-Based Products<sup>1</sup>

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D9; 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 ( $\epsilon$ ) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

## INTRODUCTION

The definitions contained herein constitute a lexicon of terms of general interest. Definitions in more specialized wood product or process use will be found in other standards. These include Practice [D245](#), Terminology [D907](#), Terminology [D1038](#), Nomenclature [D1165](#), Terminology [D1554](#), Terminology [F547](#), Practice [D2555](#), and Terminology [C274](#).

### 1. Scope

1.1 This terminology covers a repository of definitions essential for the business of Committee D07.

1.2 The following criteria shall be followed by Subcommittee D07.91 in selecting terms and associated definitions for inclusion in this terminology.

1.2.1 Terms and associated definitions shall be selected if they are in general use in the conduct of the standards over which D07 has jurisdiction.

1.2.2 Terms and associated definitions in general industrial or technical use that are not unique to wood or wood-based products are not included.

1.2.3 Terms and associated definitions that are unique to a single D07 standard and defined therein or generally understood or adequately defined in other readily available sources may not be included in this terminology.

1.3 When a term is used in an ASTM document for which Committee D07 is responsible, it is included in this terminology only when judged an essential term by Subcommittee D07.91.

1.4 A definition is a single sentence with additional information included in discussion notes.

1.5 Terms and definitions shall be reviewed every 5 years; the year of last review is appended.

<sup>1</sup> This terminology is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D07 on Wood and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D07.91 on Terminology and Editorial.

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### 2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards*:<sup>2</sup>

- [C274 Terminology of Structural Sandwich Constructions](#)
- [D143 Test Methods for Small Clear Specimens of Timber](#)
- [D245 Practice for Establishing Structural Grades and Related Allowable Properties for Visually Graded Lumber](#)
- [D907 Terminology of Adhesives](#)
- [D1038 Terminology Relating to Veneer and Plywood](#)
- [D1165 Nomenclature of Commercial Hardwoods and Softwoods](#)
- [D1554 Terminology Relating to Wood-Base Fiber and Particle Panel Materials](#)
- [D2016 Methods of Test for Moisture Content of Wood \(Withdrawn 1987\)](#)<sup>3</sup>
- [D2555 Practice for Establishing Clear Wood Strength Values](#)
- [F547 Terminology of Nails for Use with Wood and Wood-Base Materials](#)

### 3. Terminology

**allowable properties**—mechanical properties of materials as prepared for design use.

DISCUSSION—Allowable properties of wood are identified with stress-grade descriptions and reflect the orthotropic structure of wood. Often considered synonymous with allowable unit stresses, working stresses, and design stresses.

<sup>2</sup> For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, [www.astm.org](http://www.astm.org), or contact ASTM Customer Service at [service@astm.org](mailto:service@astm.org). For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

<sup>3</sup> The last approved version of this historical standard is referenced on [www.astm.org](http://www.astm.org).

**American Softwood Lumber Standard**—a voluntary product standard of the U.S. Department of Commerce which serves as a basis for the preparation and revision of industry-sponsored grading rules for lumber.

**American standard lumber**—lumber conforming to the basic provisions of the American Softwood Lumber Standard.

**annual ring**—the growth layer produced by the tree in a single growth year, including earlywood and latewood.

**bark pocket**—the layer of a tree outside the cambium comprising the inner bark and the outer bark.

*bark product*—an opening between annual growth rings that contains bark.

DISCUSSION—Bark pockets appear as dark streaks on radial surfaces and as rounded areas on tangential surfaces.

*inner bark*—the layer of living bark (phloem) that separates the outer bark from the cambium and which in the living tree generally is moist and soft.

*outer bark*—the layer of dead bark outside the inner bark, forming the exterior surface of the tree stem.

DISCUSSION—The outer bark frequently is corky and dry.

**basic stress (archaic)**—the term once used for an allowable property for clear, straight-grained lumber.

**batten**—a narrow strip of lumber for covering the adjoining edges of roofing or siding, often designated as “batts.”

**board foot**—a unit of measurement represented by a board 1 ft long, 1 ft wide, and 1 in. thick (abbreviation: ft. b.m., bd. ft., fmb).

DISCUSSION—In finished or surfaced lumber, the board-foot measure is based on the nominal size. In practice, the working unit is 1000 board feet (abbreviation: M bd. ft., M B.M., M B.F).

**board measure**—a unit of measurement of the volume in board feet of logs or lumber (abbreviation: B.M.).

*boards*—see **lumber**.

**bole**—the stem or trunk of a tree of size sufficient to yield lumber, veneer, or poles.

**bolt**—(1) a short section of a tree trunk or limb;  
(2) a short log of a length suitable for peeling in a lathe for veneer; and  
(3) a short portion of a log prepared for production of shingles, staves, etc.

**bow**—the distortion of a piece of lumber in which there is a deviation in a direction perpendicular to the flat face from a straight line from end to end of the piece.

**brashness**—a condition that causes some pieces of wood to be relatively low in shock resistance for the species and, when broken in bending, to fail abruptly without splintering at comparatively small deflections.

**built-up timbers**—an assembly made by joining layers of lumber together with mechanical fastenings so the grain of all laminations is essentially parallel.

**burl**—(1) a hard, woody outgrowth on a tree, more or less rounded in form, usually resulting from the entwined growth of a cluster of adventitious buds; and

(2) in wood or veneer, a localized severe distortion of the grain generally rounded in outline, usually resulting from overgrowth of dead branch stubs, varying from ½ in. to several inches in diameter; frequently includes one or more clusters of several small contiguous conical protuberances, each usually having a core of pith but no appreciable amount of end grain (in tangential view) surrounding it.

**cambium**—the layer of cells that lies between the inner bark and the wood of a tree, that repeatedly subdivides to form new wood and bark cells.

**cant**—a log that has been slabbed on one or more sides, usually with the intention of resawing at right angles to the widest sawn face.

**casehardening**—a condition of stress and set in wood due to drying in which outer fibers are under compressive stress and inner fibers under tensile stress, a condition that often exists during subsequent processing.

DISCUSSION—In commerce, the term often connotes a degree of severity regarded as detrimental in use.

**cell**—a general term for the minute units of wood structure having distinct cell walls and cell cavities including wood fibers, vessel segments, and other elements of diverse structure and function.

**cellulose**—the carbohydrate that is the principal constituent of wood and forms the structural framework of the wood cells.

**characteristic**—a distinguishing feature or trait; in grading lumber and other wood products, a feature in or on the wood which by its nature, extent, and frequency of occurrence determines the grade or level of quality.

**characteristic size**—the standard dimensions of the piece at which the characteristic value is calculated.

**characteristic value**—the structural property estimate, typically a population mean, median, or tolerance limit value estimated from the test data that is representative of the population being sampled.

DISCUSSION—Test data is typically adjusted to standardized conditions of temperature, moisture content, and characteristic size.

**check**—a separation of the wood along the fiber direction that usually extends across the rings of annual growth, commonly resulting from stresses set up in wood during seasoning.

*end check*—a seasoning check occurring on the end of a board or other piece of wood.

*heart check*—a check that extends across the growth layers in one or more directions from the pith toward, but not to, the surface of a piece of wood; a synonym is *pith check*.

*pith check*—see *heart check*.

*roller check*—a crack in the wood structure caused by a piece of cupped lumber being flattened between machine rollers.

*star check*—a heart check in which the separation extends in more than one direction from the pith.

*surface check*—a check occurring on the surface of a piece of wood, usually on the tangential face not extending through the piece.

*through check*—a check that extends through a piece of wood, or from a surface to the opposite or to an adjoining surface.

**chips**—small fragments of wood chopped or broken by cuts such as by a planer, chipper, mechanical hog, hammermill.

**clear**—free of defects or imperfections.

*coarse grain*—see **grain**.

**collapse**—the flattening of single cells or rows of cells during the drying or pressure treatment of wood, characterized by a caved-in or corrugated appearance.

**composite wood beam**—a laminar construction comprising a combination of wood and other simple or complex materials assembled and intimately fixed in relation to each other so as to use the properties of each to attain specific structural advantage of the whole assembly.

**compression failure**—deformation of the wood fibers resulting from excessive compression along the grain either in direct end compression or in bending.

DISCUSSION—It may develop in standing trees due to bending by wind or snow or to internal longitudinal stresses developed in growth, or it may result from stresses imposed after the tree is cut. In surfaced lumber, compression failures appear as fine wrinkles across the face of the piece.

**compression parallel to grain**—compression, endwise (parallel to the grain).

DISCUSSION—The imposition of a compressive stress that acts in a direction parallel to the grain of the wood, as in a column.

**compression perpendicular to grain**—compression, sidewise (perpendicular to the grain).

DISCUSSION—The imposition of a compressive stress that acts in a direction approximately perpendicular to the grain of the wood.

**compression wood**—abnormal wood formed typically on the lower side of branches and inclined trunks of softwood trees.

DISCUSSION—Compression wood is identified by its relatively wide annual rings, usually eccentric, relatively large amount of latewood, sometimes more than 50 % of the width of the annual rings in which it occurs, and its lack of demarcation between earlywood and latewood in the same annual rings. Compression wood shrinks excessively lengthwise, as compared with normal wood.

**conifer**—a tree belonging to the order *Coniferae*, usually evergreen, with cones and needle-shaped or scalelike leaves, and producing wood known commercially as “softwood.”

**crook**—a distortion of a piece of lumber in which there is a deviation in a direction perpendicular to the edge from a straight line from end to end of the piece.

**cross break**—a separation of the wood cells across the grain.

DISCUSSION—Such breaks may be due to internal stress resulting from unequal longitudinal shrinkage or external forces.

*cross grain*—see **grain**.

**cross section**—a section of a stem, board, or other piece of wood taken at right angles to its longitudinal axis.

**crosscut**—to cut a board, timber, or log generally transverse to the direction of the fibers; a synonym is “buck.”

**cup**—a distortion of a board in which there is a deviation flatwise from a straight line across the width of the board.

**decay**—decomposition of wood substance caused by action of wood-destroying fungi, resulting in softening, loss of strength and weight, and often in change of texture and color.

*advanced (or typical) decay*—the older stage of decay in which the destruction is readily recognized because the wood has become punky, soft and spongy, stringy, ring-shaked, pitted, or crumbly.

DISCUSSION—Decided discoloration or bleaching of the rotted wood is often apparent.

*incipient decay*—the early stage of decay that has not proceeded far enough to soften or otherwise perceptibly impair the hardness of the wood.

DISCUSSION—It may be accompanied by a slight discoloration or bleaching of the wood.

*pocket rot*—advanced decay that appears in the form of a hole, pocket, or area of soft rot usually surrounded by apparently sound wood.

**defect**—any irregularity or imperfection in a tree, log, piece, product, or lumber that reduces the volume of sound wood or lowers its durability, strength, or utility value.

**degrade, n**—a reduction in quality of lumber, logs, or other wood products due to processing.

**dense**—(1) term used in stress grading of certain softwood species to signify a high specific gravity; and (2) a visual estimate of high specific gravity.

DISCUSSION—To be classified as dense, the softwood species shall average on one end or the other of each piece, not less than six annual rings per inch and one-third or more latewood. Pieces not less than four rings per inch shall be accepted as dense if they average one-half or more latewood.

**depth factor**—the factor included in deriving the allowable bending stress for rectangular members which takes into account the somewhat lower unit strength developed in larger members as compared to smaller members; archaic terminology more correctly termed **size factor**.

**depth of beam**—that dimension of the beam that is perpendicular to the span and parallel to the direction in which the load is applied.

**diffuse porous wood**—certain hardwoods in which the pores exhibit little or no variation in size or distribution throughout the growth ring, only decreasing slightly in size, gradually toward the outer border of the ring.

**dimensional stabilization**—treatment of wood to reduce swelling and shrinking caused by changes in its moisture content.