



# Standard Guide for Laboratory Simulation of Corrosion Under Insulation<sup>1</sup>

This standard is issued under the fixed designation G189; 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.

## 1. Scope

1.1 This guide covers the simulation of corrosion under insulation (CUI), including both general and localized attack, on insulated specimens cut from pipe sections exposed to a corrosive environment usually at elevated temperature. It describes a CUI exposure apparatus (hereinafter referred to as a CUI-Cell), preparation of specimens, simulation procedures for isothermal or cyclic temperature, or both, and wet/dry conditions, which are parameters that need to be monitored during the simulation and the classification of simulation type.

1.2 The application of this guide is broad and can incorporate a range of materials, environments and conditions that are beyond the scope of a single test method. The apparatus and procedures contained herein are principally directed at establishing acceptable procedures for CUI simulation for the purposes of evaluating the corrosivity of CUI environments on carbon and low alloy pipe steels, and may possibly be applicable to other materials as well. However, the same or similar procedures can also be utilized for the evaluation of (1) CUI on other metals or alloys, (2) anti-corrosive treatments on metal surfaces, and (3) the potential contribution of thermal insulation and its constituents on CUI. The only requirements are that they can be machined, formed or incorporated into the CUI-Cell pipe configuration as described herein.

1.3 The values stated in inch-pound units are to be regarded as standard. The values given in parentheses are mathematical conversions to SI units that are provided for information only and are not considered standard.

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 appro-*

*priate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

## 2. Referenced Documents

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

- A106/A106M Specification for Seamless Carbon Steel Pipe for High-Temperature Service
- C552 Specification for Cellular Glass Thermal Insulation
- C871 Test Methods for Chemical Analysis of Thermal Insulation Materials for Leachable Chloride, Fluoride, Silicate, and Sodium Ions
- D1193 Specification for Reagent Water
- G1 Practice for Preparing, Cleaning, and Evaluating Corrosion Test Specimens
- G3 Practice for Conventions Applicable to Electrochemical Measurements in Corrosion Testing
- G5 Reference Test Method for Making Potentiodynamic Anodic Polarization Measurements
- G15 Terminology Relating to Corrosion and Corrosion Testing (Withdrawn 2010)<sup>3</sup>
- G31 Guide for Laboratory Immersion Corrosion Testing of Metals
- G46 Guide for Examination and Evaluation of Pitting Corrosion
- G59 Test Method for Conducting Potentiodynamic Polarization Resistance Measurements
- G102 Practice for Calculation of Corrosion Rates and Related Information from Electrochemical Measurements

## 3. Terminology

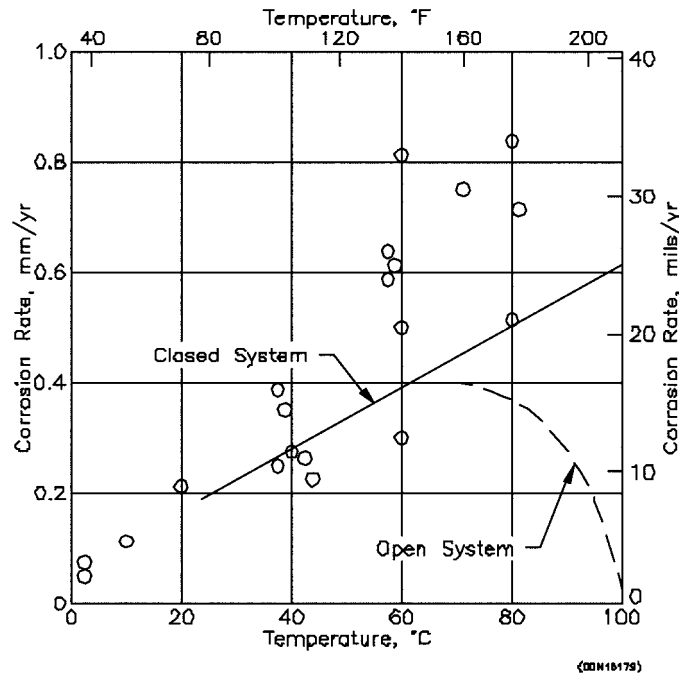
3.1 The terminology used herein, if not specifically defined otherwise, shall be construed to be in accordance with Terminology G15.

<sup>1</sup> This guide is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee G01 on Corrosion of Metals and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee G01.11 on Electrochemical Measurements in Corrosion Testing.

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<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).



NOTE 1—The actual CUI corrosion rates can be in excess of the those obtain in conventional laboratory immersion exposures.  
**FIG. 1 Comparison of Actual Plant CUI Corrosion Rates Measurements (Open Data Points Shown is for Plant CUI) with Laboratory Corrosion Data Obtained in Open and Closed Systems**

3.2 Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:

3.2.1 *corrosion under insulation (CUI)*—the corrosion of steel or other materials under thermal insulation due to the presence of water, oxygen or other corrodants, or combinations thereof.

3.2.2 *control condition*—an exposure condition using a pre-selected environment without the inclusion of inhibitors, protective treatments, or additives to the thermal insulation or exposure environment. It is selected to provide baseline data to which data from other exposure conditions can be compared.

3.2.3 *protection ratio*—ratio of the corrosion rate with the surface treatment or particular insulative material, or both, with that obtained for the control condition.

4. Summary of Guide

4.1 The CUI-Cell consists of three to six ring specimens separated by non-conductive spacers and held together by two blind flanged pipe sections, one on each end. Thermal insulation is placed around one-half of the evaluation section of the cell and sealed providing an annular space to retain a corrosive environment. The other half of the insulation is put in place to have proper heat transfer conditions as a typical insulated pipe section with internal heating. Provisions are given herein to use the specimens as corrosion coupons or electrodes in two separate electrochemical cells. One half of the CUI-Cell can be used to perform a CUI simulation under the control condition while the other can be used to evaluate inhibitors, protective coatings or insulative materials.

4.2 Corrosion measurements can be made using either mass loss data (Procedure A) or electrochemical dynamic polarization resistance methods (Procedure B), or both. This apparatus

can be used to conduct laboratory evaluations under isothermal or cyclic temperature and under wet or wet/dry conditions simulating desired conditions in service. Comparison of the measured corrosion rates from exposures conducted with various surface treatments on steel and/or with various insulative materials with corrosion rates obtained with bare steel under the control condition provides the basis for assessment of protection efficiency. A value of protection efficiency of less than 1.0 indicates reduction in the severity of corrosion relative to the control condition whereas a value greater than 1.0 indicates an increase in the severity of corrosion relative to the control condition.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 The corrosion observed on steel and other materials under thermal insulation is of great concern for many industries including chemical processing, petroleum refining and electric power generation. In most cases, insulation is utilized on piping and vessels to maintain the temperatures of the operating systems for process stabilization and energy conservation. However, these situations can also provide the prerequisites for the occurrence of general or localized corrosion, or both, and in stainless steels, stress corrosion cracking. For example, combined with elevated temperatures, CUI can sometimes result in aqueous corrosion rates for steel that are greater than those found in conventional immersion tests conducted in either open or closed systems (see Fig. 1).<sup>4</sup> This figure shows actual CUI

<sup>4</sup> Ashbaugh, W. G., "Corrosion of Metals Under Insulation," *Process Industries Corrosion*, Ed. B. J. Moniz and W. I. Pollock, ASTM STP 880, West Conshohocken, PA, 1986.

data determined in the field compared with the corrosion data from fully immersed corrosion coupons tests.

5.2 This guide provides a technical basis for laboratory simulation of many of the manifestations of CUI. This is an area where there has been a need for better simulation techniques, but until recently, has eluded many investigators. Much of the available experimental data is based on field and in-plant measurements of remaining wall thickness. Laboratory studies have generally been limited to simple immersion tests for the corrosivity of leachants from thermal insulation on corrosion coupons using techniques similar to those given in Practice G31. The field and inplant tests give an indication of corrosion after the fact and can not be easily utilized for experimental purposes. The use of coupons in laboratory immersion tests can give a general indication of corrosion tendencies. However, in some cases, these procedures are useful in ranking insulative materials in terms of their tendencies to leach corrosive species. However, this immersion technique does not always present an accurate representation of the actual CUI tendencies experienced in the service due to differences in exposure geometry, temperature, cyclic temperatures, or wet/dry conditions in the plant and field environments.

5.3 One of the special aspects of the apparatus and methodologies contained herein are their capabilities to accommodate several aspects critical to successful simulation of the CUI exposure condition. These are: (1) an idealized annular geometry between piping and surrounding thermal insulation, (2) internal heating to produce a hot-wall surface on which CUI can be quantified, (3) introduction of ionic solutions into the annular cavity between the piping and thermal insulation, (4) control of the temperature to produce either isothermal or cyclic temperature conditions, and (5) control of the delivery of the control or solution to produce wet or wet-dry conditions. Other simpler methods can be used to run corrosion evaluations on specimens immersed in various solutions and leachants from thermal insulation. In some cases, these procedures may be acceptable for evaluation of the contribution of various factors on corrosion. However, they do not provide accommodation of the above mentioned factors that may be needed for CUI simulation.

5.4 With the CUI-Cell, the pipe material, insulation and environment can be selected for the desired simulation needed. Therefore, no single standard exposure condition can be defined. The guide is designed to assist in the laboratory simulation of (1) the influence of different insulation materials on CUI that, in some cases, may contain materials or additives, or both, that can accelerate corrosion, (2) the effect of applied or otherwise incorporated inhibitors or protective coatings on reducing the extent and severity of CUI. This guide provides information on CUI in a relatively short time (approximately

72 h) as well as providing a means of assessing variation of corrosion rate with time and environmental conditions.

## 6. Apparatus

6.1 The CUI-Cell<sup>5</sup> can simulate the severity and modality of corrosion that has been described to occur under thermal insulation.<sup>4,6</sup> Initially this cell was developed for the evaluation of various surface treatments to be applied on the external surface of pipe to remediate CUI problems. However, subsequently, this same apparatus has been used successfully to evaluate the influence of various types of thermal insulation on CUI. In the cell, corrosion is intended to occur on the outer surface of ring specimens machined from a selected material. Fig. 2 shows a schematic representation of the CUI-Cell. The components of the cell include the following:

6.1.1 *Blind Flange Sections*—The CUI-Cell consists of two, nominal two-inch diameter pipe sections [that is, two-inch nominal diameter pipe material with a thickness of 0.187 in. (4.75 mm) as shown in Specification A106/A106M, Grade B, or alternative material to match that being evaluated by this simulation]; one for each end of the cell. Each end includes a bolted flange pair consisting of a weldneck, threaded or lap joint flange and a blind flange and attached pipe section. Pipe clamps or other suitable devices can be used to hold the flanged ends and the ring specimens together. Any device is acceptable that provides adequate sealing force between the various sections of the CUI-Cell.

6.1.2 *Ring Specimens*—The CUI-Cell consists of six ring specimens that are separated by nonporous, nonconductive spacers (see Section 7 for more detailed information). The evaluation portion, which includes alternate ring specimens of the intended material and nonconductive rings, is held together by two blind flanged pipe sections on both ends. The two sets of three ring specimens and spacers should be separated by an extra thick, nonconductive ring spacer (dam) at the center of the CUI-cell. This allows for separate corrosion measurements to be made on each set of specimens. For electrochemical measurements, each ring specimen should contain an attachment screw for connection of electrical leads to the potentiostat (Fig. 2). The connections should be made outside of the area exposed to the corrosive environment. The nonconductive spacers should be made from a machinable, temperature resistant, non-conductive material. Machinable polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) resins with high melting points are suitable in most cases for use up to about 400 to 450°F (200 to 230°C).

<sup>5</sup> Abayarathna, D., Ashbaugh, W. G., Kane, R. D., McGowan, N., and Heimann, B., "Measurement of Corrosion Under Insulation and Effectiveness of Protective Coatings," Corrosion/97, Paper No. 266, NACE International, Houston, Texas, March 1997.

<sup>6</sup> Ullrich, O. A., MTI Technical Report No. 7, "Investigation of an Approach for Detection of Corrosion Under Insulation," MTI Project 12, Phase II, Materials Technology Institute of the Chemical Process Industries, March 1982.