



Standard Test Method for Impact Testing for Shipping Containers and Systems¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This test method covers two procedures for conducting impact tests on loaded containers or shipping units (pallet loads), as follows:

1.1.1 *Procedure A*, to test the ability of a container or shipping unit to withstand impacts, and

1.1.2 *Procedure B*, to test the ability of a container or shipping unit or interior packing, or both, to provide protection to the contents, when subjected to impacts.

1.2 Either of these two procedures may be used to evaluate different designs of containers of the same size and carrying the same load. These procedures are suitable for testing various types of containers such as boxes, crates, barrels, drums, kegs, bags, sacks, or pails made of various materials or combinations of materials and for shipping units such as pallet loads or palletized units.

1.3 The procedures described in this test method are particularly suitable for testing large or heavily loaded containers.

1.4 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.

1.5 *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 and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.* Specific precautionary statements are given in **Note 1** and Section 7.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*²

D 996 Terminology of Packaging and Distribution Environments

D 4003 Test Methods for Programmable Horizontal Impact Test for Shipping Containers and Systems

D 4332 Practice for Conditioning Containers, Packages, or Packaging Components for Testing

D 5277 Test Method for Performing Programmed Horizontal Impacts Using an Inclined Impact Tester

E 122 Practice for Calculating Sample Size to Estimate, With Specified Precision, the Average for a Characteristic of a Lot or Process

2.2 *ISO Standard:*

ISO 2244 Horizontal Impact Test (Horizontal or Incline Plane Test: Pendulum Test)³

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—For definitions of terms applicable to this test method see Terminology **D 996**.

3.2 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.2.1 *hazard*—removable solid object of any size or shape placed on an impact surface (backstop) so as to contact a test specimen at any desired location during the impact of the specimen into the impact surface (backstop).

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 An apparatus having a guided carriage capable of holding a test container or shipping unit impacts into a rigid impact surface (backstop) with or without hazards at a predetermined impact velocity. When testing the ability of a container or shipping unit to withstand impact (Procedure A) multiple tests with the same impact velocity or increasing impact velocities may be conducted until failure occurs. When testing the ability of the container, shipping unit, or interior packing, or combination thereof, to provide protection to the contents (Procedure B), a predetermined number of impacts, at predetermined velocities, are applied and the container(s) and contents are then inspected.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 The impact test has been found useful in laboratory simulation of impacts such as those encountered in manual and mechanical handling and transportation. The impact test simulates some types of shocks that could occur in the handling of packages or shipping units and helps evaluate the ability of the package to protect the contents against these shocks. The test

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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.

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



may also permit observation of progressive failure of a package and damage to the contents.

5.2 The test results within a given laboratory using this test method may be useful for evaluating and comparing packages. However, because of the variability of test machines that have been used in the past, especially the impact surface (backstop), it has been found that interlaboratory correlation of test results has been poor.

5.3 These procedures are not intended to simulate rail car coupling environment. Refer to Test Method [D 4003](#) and Test Methods [D 5277](#).

5.4 This test method fulfills the requirement of [ISO 2244](#).

NOTE 1—[ISO 2244](#) may not meet the requirements for this test method.

6. Apparatus

6.1 *Testing Machine:*

6.1.1 The test machine shall consist of a guided test carriage with a flat test specimen mounting surface and an impact surface (backstop) with the plane of the face perpendicular within ± 30 min ($\frac{1}{2}^\circ$) to the direction of movement of the carriage at impact.

6.1.2 There shall be an impact surface (backstop) that is integral with a solid mass at least 50 times the maximum mass of the test specimen. The impact surface firmly attached to the mass, shall be a steel plate not less than $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (13 mm) thick. The impact surface (backstop) must have dimensions greater than those of the impacting surface of the test specimen to permit full contact with the shipping container.

NOTE 2—The purpose of the apparatus is to provide an impact surface (backstop) and mass that will improve interlaboratory correlation of test results and the accuracy of tests between laboratories. The test can be conducted on apparatus that does not meet the requirements of [6.1.2](#), provided it is clearly stated in [14.1.1](#).

6.1.3 The test machine shall provide some means of moving the test carriage to obtain the desired impact velocity. This may be the result of mechanical or pneumatic means, gravity through the use of a 10° (nominal) incline, or a pendulum device.

NOTE 3—Depending upon the configuration of the test machine there may be other forces acting before, during, or after the impact that may affect the test results.

6.1.4 The test machine should preferably have a means of preventing multiple impacts.

6.1.5 The test carriage shall provide surface friction such that the test specimen does not move during the period from rest to impact, but will move freely upon impact.

6.1.6 The impact surface (backstop) may, if desired, be equipped with hazards that can be so placed as to contact the container at the time of impact at any desired position between top and bottom edges of the container. The dimensions, material, and location of the interposed hazard should be carefully specified.

6.2 *Instrumentation:*

6.2.1 Instrumentation that may be an optical or mechanical timing device is required to measure the carriage impact velocity to an accuracy of $\pm 2\%$ of the actual value. When testing is within a laboratory and for comparative purposes only, instrumentation is optional.

7. Safety Precautions

7.1 The procedures given in this test method may produce severe mechanical responses in the test specimen. Therefore, operating personnel must remain alert to potential hazards and take necessary precautions for their safety. The test area should be cleared prior to each test. Stop the test immediately if a dangerous condition should develop. The testing of hazardous materials or products may require special precautions that must be observed. Safety equipment may be required and its use must be understood before starting the test.

8. Sampling

8.1 The number of test specimens depends on the desired degree of precision and the availability of specimens. Practice [E 122](#) provides guidance on the choice of sample size. It is recommended that at least three representative test specimens be used.

9. Test Specimens

9.1 When the specimen is being tested by Procedure A to determine the ability of the container or shipping unit to withstand impact stresses, either the actual contents or a dummy load simulating such contents can be used. When the specimen is being tested by Procedure B to determine the ability of the container or shipping unit or interior packing, or both, to provide protection to the contents, actual contents shall be used. For both procedures closing, strapping, or sealing should be the same as will be used in actual shipment.

NOTE 4—Certain contents or ingredients of the objects under test may be replaced by inert materials of approximately the same weight and characteristics.

9.2 *Identification of Members*—See [Annex A1](#).

10. Calibration

10.1 Calibrate the impact carriage so that the desired impact velocity ($\pm 5\%$) may be achieved.

10.2 Make the calibration using the carriage with a load simulating actual contents equivalent to the package/product's weight. Measure the velocity of the carriage just before impact.

11. Conditioning

11.1 It is recommended that atmospheres for conditioning be selected from those shown in Practice [D 4332](#). Unless otherwise specified, precondition and condition fiberboard and other paperboard containers in accordance with the standard atmosphere specified in Practice [D 4332](#).

12. Procedure

12.1 *Procedure A:*

12.1.1 *Testing of the Ability of a Container to Withstand Impacts*—Place the container or shipping unit to be tested on the carriage with the face or edge that is to receive the impact located projecting 2 in. (51 mm) beyond the impacting end of the carriage.

12.1.2 If it is desired to concentrate the impact at any particular position on the test specimen, attach an optional hazard to the impact surface (backstop) in the desired position