



# Standard Test Method for Core Shear Properties of Sandwich Constructions by Beam Flexure<sup>1</sup>

This standard is issued under the fixed designation C393/C393M; 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 reappraisal. A superscript epsilon ( $\epsilon$ ) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reappraisal.

*This standard has been approved for use by agencies of the Department of Defense.*

<sup>ε1</sup> NOTE—Sections 7 and 11 were editorially corrected in February 2012.

## 1. Scope

1.1 This test method covers determination of the core shear properties of flat sandwich constructions subjected to flexure in such a manner that the applied moments produce curvature of the sandwich facing planes. Permissible core material forms include those with continuous bonding surfaces (such as balsa wood and foams) as well as those with discontinuous bonding surfaces (such as honeycomb).

1.2 The values stated in either SI units or inch-pound units are to be regarded separately as standard. The values stated in each system may not be exact equivalents; therefore, each system shall be used independently of the other. Combining values from the two systems may result in non-conformance with the standard.

1.2.1 Within the text the inch-pound units are shown in brackets.

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

## 2. Referenced Documents

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

- C273 Test Method for Shear Properties of Sandwich Core Materials
- C274 Terminology of Structural Sandwich Constructions
- D883 Terminology Relating to Plastics
- D3878 Terminology for Composite Materials

<sup>1</sup> This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D30 on Composite Materials and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D30.09 on Sandwich Construction.

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<sup>2</sup> 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.

- D5229/D5229M Test Method for Moisture Absorption Properties and Equilibrium Conditioning of Polymer Matrix Composite Materials
- D7249/D7249M Test Method for Facing Properties of Sandwich Constructions by Long Beam Flexure
- D7250/D7250M Practice for Determining Sandwich Beam Flexural and Shear Stiffness
- E4 Practices for Force Verification of Testing Machines
- E6 Terminology Relating to Methods of Mechanical Testing
- E122 Practice for Calculating Sample Size to Estimate, With Specified Precision, the Average for a Characteristic of a Lot or Process
- E177 Practice for Use of the Terms Precision and Bias in ASTM Test Methods
- E456 Terminology Relating to Quality and Statistics
- E1309 Guide for Identification of Fiber-Reinforced Polymer-Matrix Composite Materials in Databases
- E1434 Guide for Recording Mechanical Test Data of Fiber-Reinforced Composite Materials in Databases

## 3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—Terminology D3878 defines terms relating to high-modulus fibers and their composites. Terminology C274 defines terms relating to structural sandwich constructions. Terminology D883 defines terms relating to plastics. Terminology E6 defines terms relating to mechanical testing. Terminology E456 and Practice E177 define terms relating to statistics. In the event of a conflict between terms, Terminology D3878 shall have precedence over the other terminologies.

### 3.2 Symbols:

$b$  = specimen width

$c$  = core thickness

$CV$  = coefficient of variation statistic of a sample population for a given property (in percent)

$d$  = sandwich total thickness

$D^{F,nom}$  = effective sandwich flexural stiffness

$E_f$  = effective facing chord modulus

$\epsilon$  = measuring strain in facing

$F^u$  = facing ultimate strength (tensile or compressive)

$F_c$  = core compression allowable strength  
 $F_s$  = core shear allowable strength  
 $F_s^{ult}$  = core shear ultimate strength  
 $F_s^{yield}$  = core shear yield strength  
 $k$  = core shear strength factor to ensure core failure  
 $L$  = length of loading span  
 $S$  = length of support span  
 $l_{pad}$  = length of loading pad  
 $n$  = number of specimens  
 $P$  = applied force  
 $P_{max}$  = maximum force carried by test specimen before failure  
 $F_Z^{ftu}$  = ultimate flatwise tensile strength  
 $P_{max}$  = maximum force carried by test specimen before failure  
 $S_{n-1}$  = standard deviation statistic of a sample population for a given property  
 $\sigma$  = facing stress or strength  
 $t$  = facing thickness  
 $x_1$  = test result for an individual specimen from the sample population for a given property  
 $\bar{x}$  = mean or average (estimate of mean) of a sample population for a given property

#### 4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 This test method consists of subjecting a beam of sandwich construction to a bending moment normal to the plane of the sandwich. Force versus deflection measurements are recorded.

4.2 The only acceptable failure modes are core shear or core-to-facing bond. Failure of the sandwich facing preceding failure of the core or core-to-facing bond is not an acceptable failure mode. Use Test Method [D7249/D7249M](#) to determine facing strength.

#### 5. Significance and Use

5.1 Flexure tests on flat sandwich construction may be conducted to determine the sandwich flexural stiffness, the core shear strength and shear modulus, or the facings compressive and tensile strengths. Tests to evaluate core shear strength may also be used to evaluate core-to-facing bonds.

5.2 This test method is limited to obtaining the core shear strength or core-to-facing shear strength and the stiffness of the sandwich beam, and to obtaining load-deflection data for use in calculating sandwich beam flexural and shear stiffness using Practice [D7250/D7250M](#).

NOTE 1—Core shear strength and shear modulus are best determined in accordance with Test Method [C273](#) provided bare core material is available.

5.3 Facing strength is best determined in accordance with Test Method [D7249/D7249M](#).

5.4 Practice [D7250/D7250M](#) covers the determination of sandwich flexural and shear stiffness and core shear modulus using calculations involving measured deflections of sandwich flexure specimens.

5.5 This test method can be used to produce core shear strength and core-to-facing shear strength data for structural design allowables, material specifications, and research and

development applications; it may also be used as a quality control test for bonded sandwich panels.

5.6 Factors that influence the shear strength and shall therefore be reported include the following: facing material, core material, adhesive material, methods of material fabrication, core geometry (cell size), core density, adhesive thickness, specimen geometry, specimen preparation, specimen conditioning, environment of testing, specimen alignment, loading procedure, speed of testing, and adhesive void content. Further, core-to-facing strength may be different between precured/bonded and co-cured facings in sandwich panels with the same core and facing material.

NOTE 2—Concentrated loads on beams with thin facings and low density cores can produce results that are difficult to interpret, especially close to the failure point. Wider load pads with rubber pads may assist in distributing the loads.

#### 6. Interferences

6.1 *Material and Specimen Preparation*—Poor material fabrication practices and damage induced by improper specimen machining are known causes of high data scatter in composites and sandwich structures in general. A specific material factor that affects sandwich cores is variability in core density. Important aspects of sandwich core specimen preparation that contribute to data scatter include the existence of joints, voids or other core discontinuities, out-of-plane curvature, and surface roughness.

6.2 *Geometry*—Specific geometric factors that affect core shear strength include core orthotropy (that is, ribbon versus transverse direction for honeycomb core materials) and core cell geometry.

6.3 *Environment*—Results are affected by the environmental conditions under which specimens are conditioned, as well as the conditions under which the tests are conducted. Specimens tested in various environments can exhibit significant differences in both strength behavior and failure mode. Critical environments must be assessed independently for each specific combination of core material, facing material, and core-to-facing interfacial adhesive (if used) that is tested.

6.4 *Core Material*—If the core material has insufficient shear or compressive strength, it is possible that the core may locally crush at or near the loading points, thereby resulting in facing failure due to local stresses. In other cases, facing failure can cause local core crushing. When there is both facing and core failure in the vicinity of one of the loading points it can be difficult to determine the failure sequence in a post-mortem inspection of the specimen as the failed specimens look very similar for both sequences. For some core materials, the shear strength is a function of the direction that the core is oriented relative to the length of the specimen.

#### 7. Apparatus

7.1 *Micrometers and Calipers*—A micrometer having a flat anvil interface, or a caliper of suitable size, shall be used. The instrument(s) shall have an accuracy of  $\pm 0.025$  mm [ $\pm 0.001$  in.] for thickness measurement, and an accuracy of  $\pm 0.254$  mm [ $\pm 0.010$  in.] for length and width measurement.

NOTE 3—The accuracies given above are based on achieving measurements that are within 1 % of the sample length, width and thickness.

7.2 Loading Fixtures—The loading fixture shall consist of either a 3-point or 4-point loading configuration with two support bars that span the specimen width located below the specimen, and one or two loading bars that span the specimen width located on the top of the specimen (Fig. 1). The force shall be applied vertically through the loading bar(s), with the support bars fixed in place in the test machine.

7.2.1 Standard Configuration—The standard loading fixture shall be a 3-point configuration and shall have the centerlines of the support bars separated by a distance of 150 mm [6.0 in.].

7.2.2 Non-Standard Configurations—All other loading fixture configurations are considered non-standard, and details of the fixture geometry shall be documented in the test report. Fig. 3 shows a typical 4-point short beam test fixture. Non-standard 3- and 4-point loading configurations have been retained within this standard (a) for historical continuity with previous versions of Test Method C393, (b) because some sandwich panel

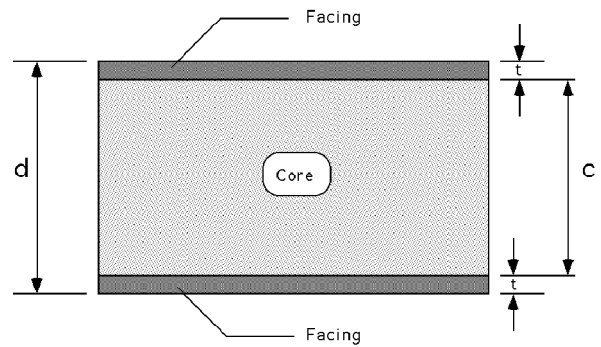


FIG. 2 Sandwich Panel Thickness Dimensions

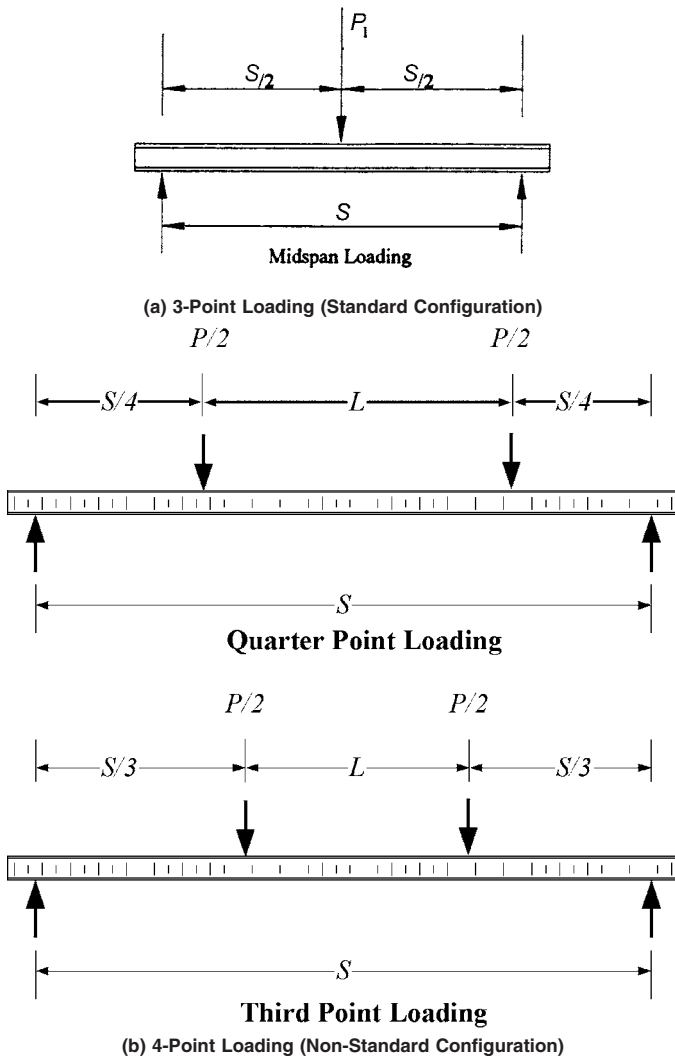


FIG. 1 Loading Configurations

	Configuration	Support Span (S)	Load Span (L)
Standard	3-Point (Mid-Span)	150 mm [6.0 in.]	0.0
Non-Standard	4-Point (Quarter-Span)	S	S/2
	4-Point (Third-Span)	S	S/3

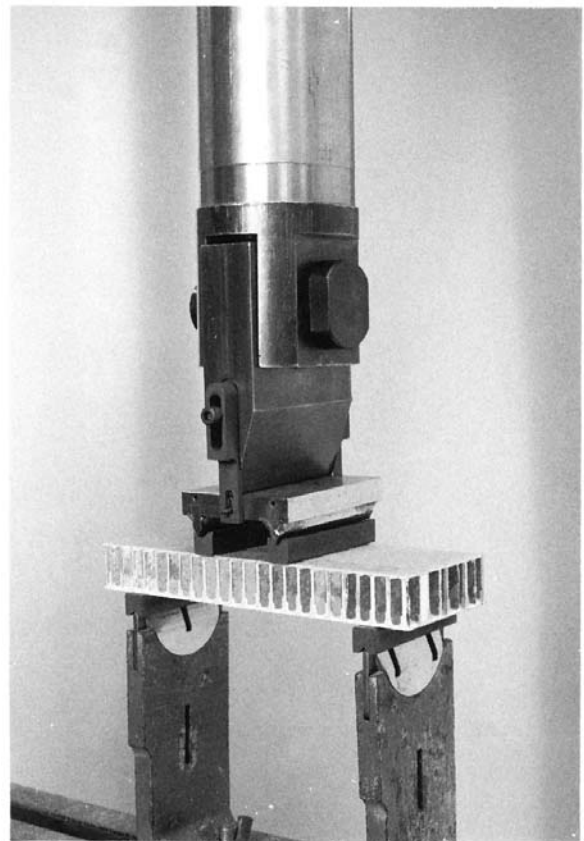


FIG. 3 Short Beam—4-Point (Third-Span) Short Beam Loading Configuration

designs require the use of non-standard loading configurations to achieve core or bond failure modes, and (c) load-deflection data from non-standard configurations may be used with Practice D7250/D7250M to obtain sandwich beam flexural and shear stiffnesses.

7.2.3 Support and Loading Bars—The bars shall be designed to allow free rotation of the specimen at the loading and support points. The bars shall have sufficient stiffness to avoid significant deflection of the bars under load; any obvious bowing of the bars or any gaps occurring between the bars and the test specimen during loading shall be considered significant deflection. The recommended configuration has a 25 mm [1.0 in.] wide flat steel loading block to contact the specimen (through rubber pressure pads) and is loaded via either a