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## Fibre-reinforced plastic composites — Determination of compressive properties in the in-plane direction

*Composites plastiques renforcés de fibres — Détermination des  
caractéristiques en compression dans le plan*

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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO document should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

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This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 61, *Plastics*, Subcommittee SC 13, *Composites and reinforcement fibres*, in collaboration with the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) Technical Committee CEN/TC 249, *Plastics*, in accordance with the Agreement on technical cooperation between ISO and CEN (Vienna Agreement).

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO 14126:1999), which has been technically revised.

The main changes are as follows:

- a new normative [Annex A](#), alignment of specimen and loading train, has been added and subsequent annexes have been renumbered;
- [Annex B](#), specimen preparation, is now normative to emphasise the importance of producing good quality specimens;
- two new informative [Annexes F](#) and [G](#) have been added.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at [www.iso.org/members.html](http://www.iso.org/members.html).

## Introduction

This document, originally published in 1999, was based on ISO 8515<sup>[1]</sup> with the scope extended from glass-fibre reinforcement to include all fibre-reinforced plastic composites, such as composites based on carbon and aramid fibres. Other source documents consulted included ASTM D 3410<sup>[2]</sup>, SACMA SRM1<sup>[3]</sup>, prEN 2850<sup>[4]</sup>, CRAG 400<sup>[5]</sup>, DIN 65380<sup>[6]</sup> and JIS K7076<sup>[7]</sup>. Several different types of anti-buckling fixtures/loading jigs, different materials and different specimen sizes are covered by these source documents, although all are parallel-sided coupons. New or modified geometry support jigs are still being developed, for example in JIS K7018<sup>[8]</sup>.

This document harmonizes and rationalizes the current situation by:

- a) concentrating on the quality of the test by limiting the maximum bending strain allowable (i.e. 10 % between 10 % and 90 % of the maximum load, as recommended by ASTM), so that an axial-load case can be assumed;
- b) standardizing on two related specimen designs, one principally for aerospace type unidirectional pre-impregnated materials (i.e. Type A) and one for other materials/formats (i.e. Types B1/B2). The chosen specimen design can be used with different loading fixtures;
- c) defining acceptable failure criteria (e.g. avoiding within grip failures);
- d) including an equation for determining the specimen minimum thickness to avoid Euler buckling proposed by ASTM for harmonization purposes (taken from ASTM D 3410<sup>[2]</sup> in a modified form);
- e) allowing any design of support/loading fixture to be used that meets the above bending requirements, using different principles of loading (i.e. essentially shear and combined loading);
- f) ensuring that the test specimen and loading/support fixture are well aligned (see [Annex A](#));
- g) concentrating on the quality of specimen preparation (see [Annex B](#));
- h) including guidance on the use of digital image correlation (DIC) for strain and bending measurements (see [Annex G](#));

NOTE 1 Compression properties measured in the through-thickness direction (direction 3 in [Figure 1](#)) are covered by ISO 20975-1<sup>[9]</sup>.

NOTE 2 Compression properties of rigid plastics having only unaligned short (<7,5 mm) fibres or no fibre content [rather than long (>7,5 mm) discontinuous or continuous fibres] is covered by ISO 604<sup>[10]</sup>.

# Fibre-reinforced plastic composites — Determination of compressive properties in the in-plane direction

## 1 Scope

**1.1** This document specifies methods for determining the compressive properties, in directions parallel to the plane of lamination, of fibre-reinforced plastic composites, based on thermosetting or thermoplastic matrices. The compressive properties are of interest for specifications and quality-control purposes. The test specimens are machined from a flat test plate, or from suitable finished or semi-finished products.

**1.2** Two loading methods and two types of specimen are described.

The loading methods are:

- Method 1: provides shear loading of the specimen (gauge length unsupported)
- Method 2: provides combined loading of the specimen (gauge length unsupported)

**NOTE** For tabbed specimens loaded using method 2, load is transferred through a combination of end-loading and shear-loading through the tabs.

The specimen designs are:

- Type A specimen: rectangular cross-section, fixed thickness, end-tabbed (mainly for aerospace style prepregates (~ 0,125 mm ply thickness))
- Type B specimen: rectangular cross-section, range of thicknesses, untabbed or end-tabbed, two specimen sizes are available (B1 and B2).

The Type A specimen is used for unidirectionally or biaxially reinforced materials tested in the fibre direction, where the fibres are normally either aligned continuous or aligned long (>7,5 mm) discontinuous. The Type B1 and B2 specimens are used for multi-directional aligned; mat, fabric and other multi-directionally reinforced materials where the fibre structure is more complex and/or coarser.

**1.3** This document gives criteria for checking that the combination of test method and specimen design result in valid failures. It is noted that alternative test method/specimen combinations will not necessarily give the same result.

**1.4** The methods specify required dimensions for the specimen. Tests carried out on specimens of other dimensions, or on specimens that are prepared under different conditions, can produce results that are not comparable. Other factors, such as the speed of testing, the support fixture used and the conditioning of the specimens, can influence the results.

## 2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 291, *Plastics — Standard atmospheres for conditioning and testing*

ISO 1268 (all parts), *Fibre-reinforced plastics — Methods of producing test plate*

ISO 2602, *Statistical interpretation of test results — Estimation of the mean — Confidence interval*

ISO 7500-1, *Metallic materials — Calibration and verification of static uniaxial testing machines — Part 1: Tension/compression testing machines — Calibration and verification of the force-measuring system*

ISO 9513, *Metallic materials — Calibration of extensometer systems used in uniaxial testing*

ISO 23788, *Metallic materials — Verification of the alignment of fatigue testing machines*

ASTM E 1012, *Standard practice for verification of testing frame and specimen alignment under tensile and compressive axial force application*

### 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminology databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <https://www.electropedia.org/>

#### 3.1 compressive stress

$\sigma_c$   
compressive force experienced by the test specimen, at a particular time, divided by the initial cross-sectional area of the parallel-sided portion of the specimen

Note 1 to entry: It is expressed in megapascals.

#### 3.2 compressive strength compressive failure stress

$\sigma_{cM}$   
maximum compressive stress (3.1) sustained by the specimen

Note 1 to entry: It is expressed in megapascals.

#### 3.3 compressive strain

$\epsilon_c$   
decrease in length per unit length of the original gauge length

Note 1 to entry: It is expressed as a dimensionless ratio or in percent.

#### 3.4 compressive failure strain

$\epsilon_{cM}$   
longitudinal compressive strain at the compressive failure stress

Note 1 to entry: It is expressed as a dimensionless ratio or in percent.

#### 3.5 modulus of elasticity in compression chord modulus

$E_c$   
stress difference ( $\sigma''$  minus  $\sigma'$ ) divided by the corresponding strain difference ( $\epsilon''$  (= 0,002 5) minus  $\epsilon'$  (= 0,000 5))

Note 1 to entry: It is expressed in megapascals.

Note 2 to entry: See 10.2.

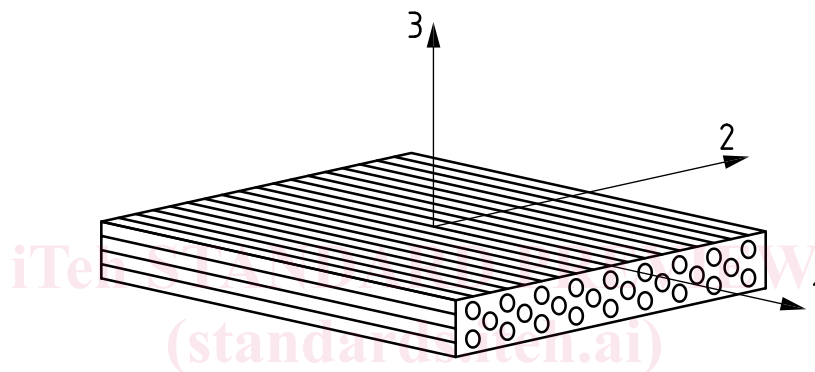


### 3.6 specimen coordinate axes 1, 2, 3

orthogonal coordinate axes for material with the fibres preferentially aligned in one direction within a planar laminate.

Note 1 to entry: See [Figure 1](#). The directions, in the plane of the laminate, parallel to the fibre axes is specified as the "1"-direction and the direction perpendicular to the fibre axes the "2"-direction. For other materials, the "1"-direction is normally specified in terms of a feature associated with the production process, such as the long or warp direction for a continuous-sheet or fabric process. The "2"-direction is again perpendicular, in the plane, to the "1" direction. The direction perpendicular to the plane is the "3" direction. Results for specimens cut parallel to the "1"-direction are identified by the subscript "11" (e.g.  $E_{c11}$ ). Similarly, results for specimens cut parallel to the "2"-direction are identified by the subscript "22" (e.g.  $E_{c22}$ ).

Note 2 to entry: The "1"-direction is also referred to as the 0° or longitudinal direction, and the "2"-direction as the 90° or transverse direction. More generally, the X, Y and Z (through-thickness) coordinate system for any material can be equated to the "1"-, "2"- and "3"-directions.



**Figure 1 — Unidirectionally reinforced composite plate element showing symmetry axes**

### 3.7 gauge length

$L_0$

initial distance between the gauge marks on the central part of the test specimen

Note 1 to entry: It is expressed in millimetres (mm).

### 3.8 thickness

$h$

smaller initial dimension of the rectangular cross-section in the central part of a test specimen

Note 1 to entry: It is expressed in millimetres (mm).

### 3.9 width

$b$

larger initial dimension of the rectangular cross-section in the central part of a test specimen

Note 1 to entry: It is expressed in millimetres (mm).

## 4 Principle

An axial force is applied to the unsupported gauge length of a rectangular specimen held in an anti-buckling loading/support fixture, while the applied load and strain in this gauge length area are monitored. The test method concentrates on the quality of the axial deformation experienced by the specimen. Any loading fixture can be used, provided specimen failure occurs below a 10 % bending

strain in the specimen (between 10 % and 90 % of the maximum load); and fails in the prescribed manner and location.

The compressive load is applied to the specimen:

- by shear loading through end tabs (Method 1);
- by a combined loading mode through direct specimen end loading and shear loading through the support fixture using a tabbed specimen (Method 2).

NOTE 1 The test results obtained by these methods using different specimen designs/sizes and different loading fixtures are not necessarily comparable.

NOTE 2 End-loading is not covered by this document as the fixture in Method B of EN 2850<sup>[4]</sup> for end-loading (c.f. modified ASTM D695<sup>[11]</sup>) is not suitable for the standard Type A or B specimens. End loading is, in many cases, a sufficient and simple method for determination of compressive modulus but is very limited for ultimate strength determination.

NOTE 3 Each of these methods shows specific advantages and disadvantages. For example, shear loading is not adapted for very thick laminates, because it causes strain distributions over the laminate thickness caused by shear strains and the tabs can shear off at high forces. Combined loading overcomes several of the problems described before and can also be used for higher laminate thicknesses. The disadvantage is the need for supplementary machining of the specimen ends to ensure parallelism and squareness tolerances are met when using end-tabbed specimens.

## 5 Apparatus

### 5.1 Test machine

#### 5.1.1 General

The test machine shall be in accordance with ISO 7500-1 and ISO 9513, and meet the specifications given in 5.1.2 to 5.1.3. The test machine should be kept in good condition and worn parts (e.g. threads, grip faces) replaced. The test machine, gauge specimen and loading/support fixture alignment on the machine axis shall be checked regularly or after any part of the loading train is moved/reassembled using the procedures given in Annex A.

#### 5.1.2 Speed of testing

The test machine shall be capable of maintaining the required speed of testing (see 9.5).

#### 5.1.3 Load measurement

The force measurement system shall conform with class 1 as specified in ISO 7500-1 (i.e. error for indicated load shall not exceed  $\pm 1$  % of the true value). Suitable data recording equipment (data-loggers) shall be used to record the load values throughout the tests.

### 5.2 Strain measurement

Strain shall be determined by means of strain gauges, mechanical extensometers, or optical extensometers, [including digital image correlation (DIC)] meeting the requirement that the error for the indicated strain shall not exceed  $\pm 1$  % (see ISO 9513). Strain shall be measured on both faces of the specimens to determine the degree of bending or on the sides (narrow face) of specimens if using DIC (see Annex G). Strain gauge elements for type A and B1 specimens shall be less than 3 mm in length. B2 specimens will accommodate longer strain gauges (e.g.  $\geq 10$  mm).

The gauges, the surface preparation and the bonding agents used shall be chosen to give acceptable performance with the material being tested, and suitable continuous strain recording equipment (data-logger/computer) shall be used.

NOTE Full-field strain measurements, as obtained by DIC, provide evidence for the “repeat structure” of the reinforcement<sup>[12]</sup> and therefore informs the choice of strain gauge length (i.e. larger gauge length than the size of any repeated “reinforcement structure” which causes local non-uniformity of the strain field).

### 5.3 Micrometer

A micrometer, caliper or equivalent, reading to less than or equal to 0,01 mm shall be used to determine the thickness  $h$  and width  $b$  of the test specimen.

For thickness measurements, callipers shall have faces appropriate to the surface being measured (i.e. flat face for flat, cut or polished surfaces and hemisphere face for other surfaces) of ~6 mm diameter in both cases.

### 5.4 Loading fixtures

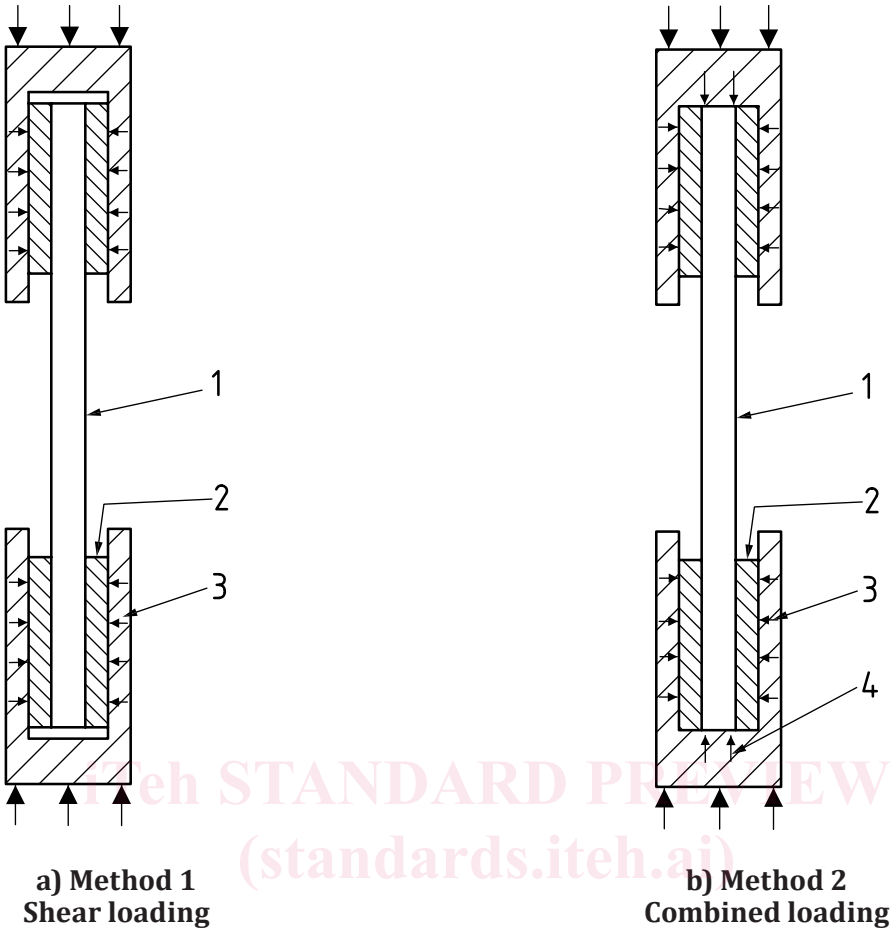
#### 5.4.1 General

Support/loading fixtures appropriate to the loading method chosen shall be used. The fixture shall load the specimen so that the requirement on allowable specimen bending given in 9.8 is met. The main requirement of the fixture design for all loading methods is the alignment (initial and throughout the test) of the loading train and of the specimen when loaded in the fixture are maintained, so that buckling is avoided. Procedures for obtaining satisfactory alignment of the loading train are given in Annex A. The fixture used shall be fully identified and described in the test report.

#### 5.4.2 Method 1: Shear loading

The load is applied to the specimen by shear through the faces of the specimen end tabs. The load is applied through flat wedge or vee action grips, as shown diagrammatically in Figure 2 a). Aligned hydraulic grips in aligned test machines are also acceptable. A schematic diagram of a compression fixture for shear loading is given in Figure 3.

NOTE A Method 1 fixture in common use is shown in Annex C (i.e. ASTM D 3410: method B<sup>[2]</sup> (known as ITTRI that uses flat “back” wedge grips). An early design of this loading method known as Celanese (using cone-shaped “back” wedge grips) is no longer included in ASTM D3410<sup>[2]</sup>.



**Key**

- 1 specimen
- 2 end tabs
- 3 shear loading
- 4 end loading

**Figure 2 — Schematic of load condition for the alternative methods**