



Standard Test Method for Sieve Analysis of Fine and Coarse Aggregates¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation C 136; 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 (ϵ) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

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

1. Scope*

1.1 This test method covers the determination of the particle size distribution of fine and coarse aggregates by sieving.

1.2 Some specifications for aggregates which reference this method contain grading requirements including both coarse and fine fractions. Instructions are included for sieve analysis of such aggregates.

1.3 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as the standard. The values in parentheses are provided for information purposes only. Specification E 11 designates the size of sieve frames with inch units as standard, but in this test method the frame size is designated in SI units exactly equivalent to the inch units.

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

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:

C 117 Test Method for Materials Finer Than 75- μ m (No. 200) Sieve in Mineral Aggregates by Washing²

C 125 Terminology Relating to Concrete and Concrete Aggregates²

C 670 Practice for Preparing Precision and Bias Statements for Test Methods for Construction Materials²

C 702 Practice for Reducing Field Samples of Aggregate to Testing Size²

D 75 Practice for Sampling Aggregates³

E 11 Specification for Wire-Cloth and Sieves for Testing Purposes⁴

2.2 AASHTO Standard:

AASHTO No. T 27 Sieve Analysis of Fine and Coarse Aggregates⁵

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—For definitions of terms used in this standard, refer to Terminology C 125.

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 A sample of dry aggregate of known mass is separated through a series of sieves of progressively smaller openings for determination of particle size distribution.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 This test method is used primarily to determine the grading of materials proposed for use as aggregates or being used as aggregates. The results are used to determine compliance of the particle size distribution with applicable specification requirements and to provide necessary data for control of the production of various aggregate products and mixtures containing aggregates. The data may also be useful in developing relationships concerning porosity and packing.

5.2 Accurate determination of material finer than the 75- μ m (No. 200) sieve cannot be achieved by use of this method alone. Test Method C 117 for material finer than 75- μ m sieve by washing should be employed.

6. Apparatus

6.1 *Balances*—Balances or scales used in testing fine and coarse aggregate shall have readability and accuracy as follows:

6.1.1 For fine aggregate, readable to 0.1 g and accurate to 0.1 g or 0.1 % of the test load, whichever is greater, at any point within the range of use.

6.1.2 For coarse aggregate, or mixtures of fine and coarse aggregate, readable and accurate to 0.5 g or 0.1 % of the test load, whichever is greater, at any point within the range of use.

6.2 *Sieves*—The sieve cloth shall be mounted on substantial frames constructed in a manner that will prevent loss of material during sieving. The sieve cloth and standard sieve

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee C09 on Concrete and Concrete Aggregates and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee C09.20 on Normal Weight Aggregates.

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² *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 04.02.

³ *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 04.03.

⁴ *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 14.02.

⁵ Available from American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, 444 North Capitol St. N.W., Suite 225, Washington, DC 20001.

*A Summary of Changes section appears at the end of this standard.

frames shall conform to the requirements of Specification E 11. Nonstandard sieve frames shall conform to the requirements of Specification E 11 as applicable.

NOTE 1—It is recommended that sieves mounted in frames larger than standard 203.2-mm (8 in.) diameter be used for testing coarse aggregate to reduce the possibility of overloading the sieves. See 8.3.

6.3 Mechanical Sieve Shaker—A mechanical sieving device, if used, shall create motion of the sieves to cause the particles to bounce, tumble, or otherwise turn so as to present different orientations to the sieving surface. The sieving action shall be such that the criterion for adequacy of sieving described in 8.4 is met in a reasonable time period.

NOTE 2—Use of a mechanical sieve shaker is recommended when the size of the sample is 20 kg or greater, and may be used for smaller samples, including fine aggregate. Excessive time (more than approximately 10 min) to achieve adequate sieving may result in degradation of the sample. The same mechanical sieve shaker may not be practical for all sizes of samples, since the large sieving area needed for practical sieving of a large nominal size coarse aggregate very likely could result in loss of a portion of the sample if used for a small sample of coarse aggregate or fine aggregate.

6.4 Oven—An oven of appropriate size capable of maintaining a uniform temperature of $110 \pm 5^\circ\text{C}$ ($230 \pm 9^\circ\text{F}$).

7. Sampling

7.1 Sample the aggregate in accordance with Practice D 75. The size of the field sample shall be the quantity shown in Practice D 75 or four times the quantity required in 7.4 and 7.5 (except as modified in 7.6), whichever is greater.

7.2 Thoroughly mix the sample and reduce it to an amount suitable for testing using the applicable procedures described in Practice C 702. The sample for test shall be approximately the quantity desired when dry and shall be the end result of the reduction. Reduction to an exact predetermined quantity shall not be permitted.

NOTE 3—Where sieve analysis, including determination of material finer than the 75- μm sieve, is the only testing proposed, the size of the sample may be reduced in the field to avoid shipping excessive quantities of extra material to the laboratory.

7.3 Fine Aggregate—The size of the test sample, after drying, shall be 300 g minimum.

7.4 Coarse Aggregate—The size of the test sample of coarse aggregate shall conform with the following:

Nominal Maximum Size, Square Openings, mm (in.)	Test Sample Size, min, kg (lb)
9.5 (3/8)	1 (2)
12.5 (1/2)	2 (4)
19.0 (3/4)	5 (11)
25.0 (1)	10 (22)
37.5 (1 1/2)	15 (33)
50 (2)	20 (44)
63 (2 1/2)	35 (77)
75 (3)	60 (130)
90 (3 1/2)	100 (220)
100 (4)	150 (330)
125 (5)	300 (660)

7.5 Coarse and Fine Aggregate Mixtures—The size of the test sample of coarse and fine aggregate mixtures shall be the same as for coarse aggregate in 7.4.

7.6 Samples of Large Size Coarse Aggregate—The size of sample required for aggregate with 50-mm nominal maximum

size or larger is such as to preclude convenient sample reduction and testing as a unit except with large mechanical splitters and sieve shakers. As an option when such equipment is not available, instead of combining and mixing sample increments and then reducing the field sample to testing size, conduct the sieve analysis on a number of approximately equal sample increments such that the total mass tested conforms to the requirement of 7.4.

7.7 In the event that the amount of material finer than the 75- μm (No. 200) sieve is to be determined by Test Method C 117, proceed as follows:

7.7.1 For aggregates with a nominal maximum size of 12.5 mm (1/2 in.) or less, use the same test sample for testing by Test Method C 117 and this method. First test the sample in accordance with Test Method C 117 through the final drying operation, then dry sieve the sample as stipulated in 8.2-8.7 of this method.

7.7.2 For aggregates with a nominal maximum size greater than 12.5 mm (1/2 in.), a single test sample may be used as described in 7.7.1, or separate test samples may be used for Test Method C 117 and this method.

7.7.3 Where the specifications require determination of the total amount of material finer than the 75- μm sieve by washing and dry sieving, use the procedure described in 7.7.1.

8. Procedure

8.1 Dry the sample to constant mass at a temperature of $110 \pm 5^\circ\text{C}$ ($230 \pm 9^\circ\text{F}$).

NOTE 4—For control purposes, particularly where rapid results are desired, it is generally not necessary to dry coarse aggregate for the sieve analysis test. The results are little affected by the moisture content unless: (1) the nominal maximum size is smaller than about 12.5 mm (1/2 in.); (2) the coarse aggregate contains appreciable material finer than 4.75 mm (No. 4); or (3) the coarse aggregate is highly absorptive (a lightweight aggregate, for example). Also, samples may be dried at the higher temperatures associated with the use of hot plates without affecting results, provided steam escapes without generating pressures sufficient to fracture the particles, and temperatures are not so great as to cause chemical breakdown of the aggregate.

8.2 Select sieves with suitable openings to furnish the information required by the specifications covering the material to be tested. Use additional sieves as desired or necessary to provide other information, such as fineness modulus, or to regulate the amount of material on a sieve. Nest the sieves in order of decreasing size of opening from top to bottom and place the sample on the top sieve. Agitate the sieves by hand or by mechanical apparatus for a sufficient period, established by trial or checked by measurement on the actual test sample, to meet the criterion for adequacy or sieving described in 8.4.

8.3 Limit the quantity of material on a given sieve so that all particles have opportunity to reach sieve openings a number of times during the sieving operation. For sieves with openings smaller than 4.75-mm (No. 4), the quantity retained on any sieve at the completion of the sieving operation shall not exceed 7 kg/m² of sieving surface area (Note 5). For sieves with openings 4.75 mm (No. 4) and larger, the quantity retained in kg shall not exceed the product of $2.5 \times$ (sieve opening, mm \times (effective sieving area, m²)). This quantity is shown in Table 1 for five sieve-frame dimensions in common

TABLE 1 Maximum Allowable Quantity of Material Retained on a Sieve, kg

Sieve Opening Size, mm	Nominal Dimensions of Sieve ^A				
	203.2-mm dia ^B	254-mm dia ^B	304.8-mm dia ^B	350 by 350 mm	372 by 580 mm
	Sieving Area, m ²				
	0.0285	0.0457	0.0670	0.1225	0.2158
125	c	c	c	c	67.4
100	c	c	c	30.6	53.9
90	c	c	15.1	27.6	48.5
75	c	8.6	12.6	23.0	40.5
63	c	7.2	10.6	19.3	34.0
50	3.6	5.7	8.4	15.3	27.0
37.5	2.7	4.3	6.3	11.5	20.2
25.0	1.8	2.9	4.2	7.7	13.5
19.0	1.4	2.2	3.2	5.8	10.2
12.5	0.89	1.4	2.1	3.8	6.7
9.5	0.67	1.1	1.6	2.9	5.1
4.75	0.33	0.54	0.80	1.5	2.6

^A Sieve frame dimensions in inch units: 8.0-in. diameter; 10.0-in. diameter, 12.0-in. diameter; 13.8 by 13.8 in. (14 by 14 in. nominal); 14.6 by 22.8 in. (16 by 24 in. nominal).

^B The sieve area for round sieve frames is based on an effective diameter 12.7 mm (½ in.) less than the nominal frame diameter, because Specification E 11 permits the sealer between the sieve cloth and the frame to extend 6.35 mm (¼ in.) over the sieve cloth. Thus the effective sieving diameter for a 203.2-mm (8.0-in.) diameter sieve frame is 190.5 mm (7.5 in.). Some manufacturers of sieves may not infringe on the sieve cloth by the full 6.35 mm (¼ in.).

^C Sieves indicated have less than five full openings and should not be used for sieve testing except as provided in 8.6.

use. In no case shall the quantity retained be so great as to cause permanent deformation of the sieve cloth.

8.3.1 Prevent an overload of material on an individual sieve by one of the following methods:

8.3.1.1 Insert an additional sieve with opening size intermediate between the sieve that may be overloaded and the sieve immediately above that sieve in the original set of sieves.

8.3.1.2 Split the sample into two or more portions, sieving each portion individually. Combine the masses of the several portions retained on a specific sieve before calculating the percentage of the sample on the sieve.

8.3.1.3 Use sieves having a larger frame size and providing greater sieving area.

NOTE 5—The 7 kg/m² amounts to 200 g for the usual 203.2-mm (8-in.) diameter sieve (with effective sieving surface diameter of 190.5 mm (7.5 in.)).

8.4 Continue sieving for a sufficient period and in such manner that, after completion, not more than 1 % by mass of the material retained on any individual sieve will pass that sieve during 1 min of continuous hand sieving performed as follows: Hold the individual sieve, provided with a snug-fitting pan and cover, in a slightly inclined position in one hand. Strike the side of the sieve sharply and with an upward motion against the heel of the other hand at the rate of about 150 times per minute, turn the sieve about one sixth of a revolution at intervals of about 25 strokes. In determining sufficiency of sieving for sizes larger than the 4.75-mm (No. 4) sieve, limit the material on the sieve to a single layer of particles. If the size of the mounted testing sieves makes the described sieving motion impractical, use 203-mm (8 in.) diameter sieves to verify the sufficiency of sieving.

8.5 In the case of coarse and fine aggregate mixtures, the portion of the sample finer than the 4.75-mm (No. 4) sieve may be distributed among two or more sets of sieves to prevent overloading of individual sieves.

8.5.1 Alternatively, the portion finer than the 4.75-mm (No. 4) sieve may be reduced in size using a mechanical splitter according to Practice C 702. If this procedure is followed, compute the mass of each size increment of the original sample as follows:

$$A = \frac{W_1}{W_2} \times B \quad (1)$$

where:

A = mass of size increment on total sample basis,

W_1 = mass of fraction finer than 4.75-mm (No. 4) sieve in total sample,

W_2 = mass of reduced portion of material finer than 4.75-mm (No. 4) sieve actually sieved, and

B = mass of size increment in reduced portion sieved.

8.6 Unless a mechanical sieve shaker is used, hand sieve particles larger than 75 mm (3 in.) by determining the smallest sieve opening through which each particle will pass. Start the test on the smallest sieve to be used. Rotate the particles, if necessary, in order to determine whether they will pass through a particular opening; however, do not force particles to pass through an opening.

8.7 Determine the mass of each size increment on a scale or balance conforming to the requirements specified in 5.1 to the nearest 0.1 % of the total original dry sample mass. The total mass of the material after sieving should check closely with original mass of sample placed on the sieves. If the amounts differ by more than 0.3 %, based on the original dry sample mass, the results should not be used for acceptance purposes.

8.8 If the sample has previously been tested by Test Method C 117, add the mass finer than the 75-µm (No. 200) sieve determined by that method to the mass passing the 75-µm (No. 200) sieve by dry sieving of the same sample in this method.

9. Calculation

9.1 Calculate percentages passing, total percentages retained, or percentages in various size fractions to the nearest 0.1 % on the basis of the total mass of the initial dry sample. If the same test sample was first tested by Test Method C 117, include the mass of material finer than the 75-µm (No. 200) size by washing in the sieve analysis calculation; and use the total dry sample mass prior to washing in Test Method C 117 as the basis for calculating all the percentages.

9.1.1 When sample increments are tested as provided in 7.6, total the masses of the portion of the increments retained on each sieve, and use these masses to calculate the percentages as in 9.1.

9.2 Calculate the fineness modulus, when required, by adding the total percentages of material in the sample that is coarser than each of the following sieves (cumulative percentages retained), and dividing the sum by 100: 150-µm (No. 100), 300-µm (No. 50), 600-µm (No. 30), 1.18-mm (No. 16), 2.36-mm (No. 8), 4.75-mm (No. 4), 9.5-mm (¾-in.), 19.0-mm (¾-in.), 37.5-mm (1½-in.), and larger, increasing in the ratio of 2 to 1.

10. Report

10.1 Depending upon the form of the specifications for use of the material under test, the report shall include the following:

10.1.1 Total percentage of material passing each sieve, or

10.1.2 Total percentage of material retained on each sieve, or

10.1.3 Percentage of material retained between consecutive sieves.

10.2 Report percentages to the nearest whole number, except if the percentage passing the 75- μm (No. 200) sieve is less than 10 %, it shall be reported to the nearest 0.1 %.

10.3 Report the fineness modulus, when required, to the nearest 0.01.

11. Precision and Bias

11.1 *Precision*—The estimates of precision for this test method are listed in Table 2. The estimates are based on the results from the AASHTO Materials Reference Laboratory Proficiency Sample Program, with testing conducted by Test Method C 136 and AASHTO Test Method T 27. The data are based on the analyses of the test results from 65 to 233 laboratories that tested 18 pairs of coarse aggregate proficiency test samples and test results from 74 to 222 laboratories that tested 17 pairs of fine aggregate proficiency test samples (Samples No. 21 through 90). The values in the table are given for different ranges of total percentage of aggregate passing a sieve.

11.1.1 The precision values for fine aggregate in Table 2 are based on nominal 500-g test samples. Revision of this test method in 1994 permits the fine aggregate test sample size to be 300 g minimum. Analysis of results of testing of 300-g and 500-g test samples from Aggregate Proficiency Test Samples 99 and 100 (Samples 99 and 100 were essentially identical) produced the precision values in Table 3, which indicate only minor differences due to test sample size.

NOTE 6—The values for fine aggregate in Table 2 will be revised to reflect the 300-g test sample size when a sufficient number of Aggregate Proficiency Tests have been conducted using that sample size to provide reliable data.

TABLE 2 Precision

	Total Percentage of Material Passing		Standard Deviation (1s), % ^A	Acceptable Range of Two Results (d2s), % ^A	
<i>Coarse Aggregate:</i> ^B					
Single-operator precision	<100	≥ 95	0.32	0.9	
	<95	≥ 85	0.81	2.3	
	<85	≥ 80	1.34	3.8	
	<80	≥ 60	2.25	6.4	
	<60	≥ 20	1.32	3.7	
	<20	≥ 15	0.96	2.7	
	<15	≥ 10	1.00	2.8	
	<10	≥ 5	0.75	2.1	
	<5	≥ 2	0.53	1.5	
	<2	>0	0.27	0.8	
	Multilaboratory precision	<100	≥ 95	0.35	1.0
		<95	≥ 85	1.37	3.9
		<85	≥ 80	1.92	5.4
<80		≥ 60	2.82	8.0	
<60		≥ 20	1.97	5.6	
<20		≥ 15	1.60	4.5	
<15		≥ 10	1.48	4.2	
<10		≥ 5	1.22	3.4	
<5		≥ 2	1.04	3.0	
<2		>0	0.45	1.3	
<i>Fine Aggregate:</i>					
Single-operator precision		<100	≥ 95	0.26	0.7
		<95	≥ 60	0.55	1.6
	<60	≥ 20	0.83	2.4	
	<20	≥ 15	0.54	1.5	
	<15	≥ 10	0.36	1.0	
	<10	≥ 2	0.37	1.1	
	<2	>0	0.14	0.4	
	Multilaboratory precision	<100	≥ 95	0.23	0.6
<95		≥ 60	0.77	2.2	
<60		≥ 20	1.41	4.0	
<20		≥ 15	1.10	3.1	
<15		≥ 10	0.73	2.1	
<10		≥ 2	0.65	1.8	
<2		>0	0.31	0.9	

^A These numbers represent, respectively, the (1s) and (d2s) limits described in Practice C 670.

^B The precision estimates are based on aggregates with nominal maximum size of 19.0 mm (¾ in.).

11.2 *Bias*—Since there is no accepted reference material suitable for determining the bias in this test method, no statement on bias is made.

12. Keywords

12.1 aggregate; coarse aggregate; fine aggregate; gradation; grading; sieve analysis; size analysis

TABLE 3 Precision Data for 300-g and 500-g Test Samples

Fine Aggregate Proficiency Sample				Within Laboratory		Between Laboratory	
Test Result	Sample Size	Number Labs	Average	1s	d2s	1s	d2s
ASTM C136/AASHTO T27							
Total material passing the No. 4 sieve (%)	500 g	285	99.992	0.027	0.066	0.037	0.104
	300 g	276	99.990	0.021	0.060	0.042	0.117
Total material passing the No. 8 sieve (%)	500 g	281	84.10	0.43	1.21	0.63	1.76
	300 g	274	84.32	0.39	1.09	0.69	1.92
Total material passing the No. 16 sieve (%)	500 g	286	70.11	0.53	1.49	0.75	2.10
	300 g	272	70.00	0.62	1.74	0.76	2.12
Total material passing the No. 30 sieve (%)	500 g	287	48.54	0.75	2.10	1.33	3.73
	300 g	276	48.44	0.87	2.44	1.36	3.79
Total material passing the No. 50 sieve (%)	500 g	286	13.52	0.42	1.17	0.98	2.73
	300 g	275	13.51	0.45	1.25	0.99	2.76
Total material passing the No. 100 sieve (%)	500 g	287	2.55	0.15	0.42	0.37	1.03
	300 g	270	2.52	0.18	0.52	0.32	0.89
Total Material passing the No. 200 sieve (%)	500 g	278	1.32	0.11	0.32	0.31	0.85
	300 g	266	1.30	0.14	0.39	0.31	0.85

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

This section identifies the location of changes to this test method that have been incorporated since the last issue.

- (1) Paragraph 8.4 was revised.

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