



# Standard Practice for Preservative Treatment of Utility Poles by the Thermal Process<sup>1</sup>

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D 4064; 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.

<sup>ε1</sup> NOTE—Section 10 was added editorially in November 1995.

## 1. Scope

1.1 This practice covers the full-length preservative treatment of utility poles by the thermal process.

1.2 Poles furnished under this practice shall be limited to the following species:

- Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*),
- Lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*),
- Alaska yellow cedar (*Chamaecyparis nootkatensis*),
- Northern white cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*), and
- Western red cedar (*Thuja plicata*).

1.3 The purchaser should note that requirements both within and between species vary and care must be used in selection of specific options for the intended use and service area.

## 2. Referenced Documents

### 2.1 ASTM Standards:

- D 390 Specification for Coal-Tar Creosote for the Preservative Treatment of Piles, Poles, and Timbers for Marine, Land, and Fresh Water Use<sup>2</sup>
- D 1272 Specification for Pentachlorophenol<sup>2</sup>
- D 1860 Test Method for Moisture and Creosote-Type Preservative in Wood<sup>2</sup>
- D 2085 Test Method for Determining Chloride Used In Calculating Pentachlorophenol in Solutions or Wood (Lime Ignition Method)<sup>2</sup>
- D 2604 Specification for High-Boiling Hydrocarbon Solvent for Preparing Oil-Borne Preservative Solutions<sup>2</sup>

### 2.2 Other Standard:

- ANSI 05.1 American National Standard Specifications and Dimensions for Wood Poles<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D-7 on Wood, and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D07.06 on Treatments for Wood Products.

Current edition approved Oct. 27, 1989. Published December 1989. Originally published as D 4064 – 81. Last previous edition D 4064 – 83.

Some requirements in this practice are similar to those in the Commodities Standards of the American Wood-Preservers' Association for full-length preservative treatment of utility poles by the thermal process with preservative materials and solutions. Acknowledgment is made to the American Wood-Preservers' Association for its development of subject matter used in this practice.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 04.10.

<sup>3</sup> Available from American National Standards Institute, 11 W. 42nd St., 13th Floor, New York, N. Y. 10036.

## 3. Terminology

### 3.1 Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:

3.1.1 *groundline or setting depth*—the groundline distance from the butt.

## 4. Description of Treating Process

4.1 The thermal process consists of at least two operations, namely the hot and the cold or cooling cycles. A cold cycle is accomplished by removing the preservative of the hot cycle from the treating tank and replacing it with preservative at a lower temperature. A cooling cycle is accomplished by allowing the preservative of the hot cycle to remain in the treating tank and cool. In addition, a final expansion cycle with hot preservative may be applied.

4.2 At no time during the entire process shall the temperature of the preservative exceed 230°F (110°C).

## 5. Plant Equipment

5.1 Treating plants shall be equipped with thermometers, gages, clocks, recording devices, and related items to indicate accurately the conditions at all stages of the treating process. Such equipment shall be maintained in acceptable, working condition.

5.2 The apparatus and chemicals necessary for making analyses and tests required shall be provided by plant operators and kept in condition for use at all times.

## 6. Prior to Treatment

6.1 *Seasoning*—Before treatment, poles shall be air seasoned as defined in ANSI 05.1, Paragraph 4.1.2.1, under proper sanitary conditions to minimize checking after treatment and to permit maximum penetration and retention of preservative. Certain arid areas will require lower moisture contents than the values expressed in this practice.

6.1.1 *Determination of Moisture Content*—Prior to treatment, determine the moisture content of a charge or carload (whichever is less in number) by either of the following methods: (a) Use of an approved resistance type moisture meter equipped with insulated needles. The needles shall be driven to a depth equal to the minimum preservative penetration for standard treatments; (b) Oven-drying increment borer cores. The sample used shall be the aggregate sapwood present

in cores (heartwood discarded) dried to constant weight at 220°F (105°C).

6.1.2 *Location of Samples*—Determine meter readings at, or remove increment borer cores from, a point approximately halfway between the extreme top and extreme butt of the pole. Take borer cores to a depth at least equal to the depth of the sapwood.

6.1.3 *Basis of Calculation*—express all moisture contents as a percentage of the oven-dry weight.

6.1.4 *Testing for moisture content*—If 100 % inspection for moisture content is not specified, test not less than 10 % of the poles in a tankload, but in no case less than 12 poles. Test all Alaska yellow cedar poles for moisture content.

6.2 *Machine Shaving*—When so specified, poles shall be machine shaved above the groundline area for the balance of their entire length. Keep shaving depth to a minimum but make it deep enough to ensure the removal of all inner bark. This operation may be in addition to machine peeling for bark removal at time of tree harvest.

6.3 *Incising*—In all incising operations, the wood shall not be splintered or loosened from the pole. The incisions shall be reasonably clean-cut and their spacing pattern and depth shall be such as to ensure uniform penetration of preservation to the required depth throughout the incised section. The depth of incising shall be at least as deep as the minimum preservative penetration required. In addition to the mandatory incising requirement, purchasers of poles for use in dry or arid areas may judge it desirable to also have the extreme butt area incised.

6.3.1 By agreement between the purchaser and the treater, aids to penetration of preservative on Douglas Fir poles such as deep incising and radial drilling shall be performed in the 3 ft below to 6 ft above groundline area. Radial drilling shall be confined to the use of maximum  $\frac{5}{16}$  in. diameter drill bits using a pattern which will achieve uniform penetration of preservative throughout the groundline area.

6.4 *Framing*—All specified framing, boring, and related operations to be performed by the supplier shall be done prior to treatment.

## 7. Preservatives

7.1 *Pentachlorophenol*—When pentachlorophenol is specified as the preservative, the pentachlorophenol shall meet the requirements of Specification D 1272 and be dissolved in a solvent meeting the requirements of Specification D 2604.

7.2 *Creosote*—When creosote is specified as the preservative, it shall meet the requirements of Specification D 390.

## 8. Results of Treatment

8.1 *Location of Borings*—Take the increment borer cores used to test for penetration and retention conformity requirements at a point approximately 1 ft (300 mm) below the groundline.

8.2 *Penetration*—Specify penetration conformity as being based on either 100 % or selective inspection.

8.2.1 *Inspection 100 %*—Reject all poles failing to meet

penetration requirements subject to retreatment.

8.2.2 *Selective Inspection*—Tentatively accept the charge or carload if 18 or more borer cores from 20 poles selected as representing the treatment meet penetration requirements. If 16 or 17 of the 20 borer cores meet penetration requirements, all poles are subject to the 100 % inspection of 8.2.1. If less than 16 borer cores meet penetration requirements, reject all poles, subject to retreatment.

8.2.3 *Distinguishing Heartwood and Sapwood*—In order to test for penetration conformity in Lodgepole pine or Douglas fir, it may be necessary to use approved staining procedures to distinguish between the sapwood and heartwood.

8.3 *Retention*—Preservative retention values shall be the aggregate average for the assay zone specified of the first 20 increment borer cores that are in good physical condition. No portion of any borer core that has been subjected to heartwood-sapwood indicator may be used for retention determination. Reject all poles from charges or carloads failing to meet minimum preservative retention requirements, subject to retreatment.

8.3.1 Determine pentachlorophenol retentions using Test Method D 2085.

8.3.2 Determine creosote retention using Test Method D 1860.

8.4 *Plugging of Holes*—Fill all increment borer holes made to test for penetration, retention, and moisture content conformity with tight-fitting cylindrical plugs that have been thoroughly preservative treated.

## 9. Specific Requirements

9.1 The following specific requirements and options are listed in Table 1 (inch-pound units) and Table 2 (International System of Units):

- 9.1.1 Species,
- 9.1.2 Seasoning,
- 9.1.3 Incising,
- 9.1.4 Treating cycle,
- 9.1.5 Preservative, and
- 9.1.6 Treatment results:
  - (a) Penetration,
  - (b) Retention.

9.2 *Ordering Information*—The purchaser shall state species, preservative, 100 % or selective penetration inspection, standard, or extra treatment, and any exceptions being taken to this specifications.

9.3 *Certified Test Report*—When specifically requested by the purchaser, the supplier shall furnish a certified test report. This report shall certify that the poles have been inspected and tested in accordance with the requirements of this specification. It shall state the actual penetrations and retentions for each charge or carload and that all requirements of selected options have been met.

## 10. Keywords

10.1 poles; preservative; thermal; treatment

**TABLE 1 Requirements for the Treatment of Utility Poles by the Thermal Process (Inch-Pound Units)**

	Douglas Fir		Lodgepole Pine		Alaska Yellow Cedar Northern White Cedar Western Red Cedar	
<b>Seasoning:</b>						
(a) Moisture meter depth	¾ in. 23 % max any pole avg 19 % for lot		¾ in. 23 % max any pole avg 19 % for lot		½ in. 25 % max any pole avg 20 % for lot	
(b) Borer cores entire sapwood	max avg 19 % of all poles		max avg 19 % of all poles		max avg 20 % of all poles	
Incising	From 3 ft below to 6 ft above groundline		Optional		Poles less than 50 ft from 2 ft below to 1 ft above groundline Poles 50 ft and longer from 3 ft below to 3 ft above ground line	
<b>Treating:</b>						
<b>Hot cycle</b>						
Temperature max	230°F		230°F		230°F	
Temperature min	212°F		190°F		190°F	
Time min	20 h		No min		No min	
<b>Cold cycle</b>						
Expansion cycle	230°F max		230°F max		230°F	
<b>Preservative</b>						
Specify either	Pentachlorophenol Creosote		Pentachlorophenol Creosote		Pentachlorophenol Creosote	
<b>Treating results:</b>						
	Standard	Extra	Standard	Extra	Standard	Extra
(a) Penetration (Both preservation)	0.75 in. min and 85 % sapwood	1.50 in. min and 85 % sapwood	0.75 in. min and 85 % sapwood	0.75 in. min and 85 % sapwood	0.50 in. or 100 % sapwood	0.63 in. or 100 % sapwood
(b) Retention						
Pentachlorophenol	0.6 PCF	0.8 PCF	0.6 PCF	0.8 PCF	1.0 PCF <sup>A</sup>	1.25 PCF <sup>A</sup>
Creosote	12 PCF	16 PCF	12 PCF	16 PCF	20 PCF <sup>A</sup>	25 PCF <sup>A</sup>
Location of boring for Penetration and retention tests	1 ft below groundline		1 ft below groundline		1 ft below groundline	
Assay zone—Distance from surface	0.25 to 1.00 in.		0.10-0.75 in.		0.0 to 0.50 in.	
No. of borer cores	20		20		20	

<sup>A</sup> Retention values for the cedars are in terms of weight per unit volume of sapwood in the samples assayed.

**TABLE 2 Requirements for the Treatment of Utility Poles by the Thermal Process (International System of Units)**

	Douglas Fir		Lodgepole Pine		Alaska Yellow Cedar Northern White Cedar Western Red Cedar	
Seasoning:						
(a) Moisture meter depth	19 mm 23 % max any pole avg 19 % for lot		19 mm 23 % max any pole avg 19 % for lot		13 mm 25 % max any pole avg 20 % for lot	
(b) Borer cores entire sapwood	max avg 19 % of all poles		max avg 19 % of all poles		max avg 20 % of all poles	
Incising	From 910 mm below to 1830 mm above groundline		Optional		Poles less than 15 m from 610 mm below to 300 mm above groundline Poles 15 m and longer from 910 mm below to 910 mm above groundline	
Treating						
Hot cycle						
Temperature max.	110°C		110°C		110°C	
Temperature min	100°C		88°C		88°C	
Time min	20 h		No min		No min	
Cold cycle	No limitation		No limitation		No limitation	
Expansion cycle	110°C		110°C		110°C	
Preservative						
Specify either	Pentachlorophenol Creosote		Pentachlorophenol Creosote		Pentachlorophenol Creosote	
Treating results:						
	Standard	Extra	Standard	Extra	Standard	Extra
(a) Penetration (Both preservatives)	19 mm min and 85 % sapwood	38 mm min and 85 % sapwood	19 mm min and 85 % sapwood	19 mm min and 85 % sapwood	13 mm min or 100 % sapwood	16 mm min or 100 % sapwood
(b) Retention						
Pentachlorophenol	9.6 kg/m <sup>3</sup>	12.8 kg/m <sup>3</sup>	9.6 kg/m <sup>3</sup>	12.8 kg/m <sup>3</sup>	16 kg/m <sup>3A</sup>	20 kg/m <sup>3A</sup>
Creosote	192 kg/m <sup>3</sup>	256 kg/m <sup>3</sup>	192 kg/m <sup>3</sup>	256 kg/m <sup>3</sup>	320 kg/m <sup>3A</sup>	400 kg/m <sup>3A</sup>
Location of borings for penetration and retention tests	300 mm below groundline		300 mm below groundline		300 mm below groundline	
Assay zone—Distance from surface	6.4 to 25.0 mm		2.5 to 19 mm		0.00 to 13 mm	
No. of borer cores	20		20		20	

<sup>A</sup> Retention values for the cedars are in terms of weight per unit volume of sapwood in the samples assayed.

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