



# Standard Terminology Relating to Photovoltaic Solar Energy Conversion<sup>1</sup>

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## 1. Scope

1.1 This terminology pertains to photovoltaic (radiant-to-electrical energy conversion) device performance measurements and is not a comprehensive list of terminology for photovoltaics in general.

1.2 Additional terms used in this terminology and of interest to solar energy may be found in Terminology E 772.

## 2. Referenced Documents

### 2.1 ASTM Standards:

E 490 Solar Constant and Air Mass Zero Solar Spectral Irradiance Tables<sup>2</sup>

E 772 Terminology Relating to Solar Energy Conversion<sup>3</sup>

G 159 Tables for Referencel Solar Spectral Irradiance at Air Mass 1.5: Direct Normal and Hemispherical for a 37° Tilted Surface<sup>4</sup>

## 3. Terminology

### 3.1 Definitions:

**absolute spectral response**,  $n$ — $R_a(\lambda)$ ,  $AW^{-1}$ ,  $n$ —of a photovoltaic device, the short-circuit current density per unit irradiance at a given wavelength.

DISCUSSION—Spectral response is normally reported over the wavelength range to which a device responds.

**cell temperature**,  $n$ —the temperature of the semiconductor junction of a photovoltaic cell.

**efficiency**,  $n$ —of a photovoltaic device, the ratio of the power produced by a photovoltaic device operated at its maximum power point to the incident radiant power.

**fill factor**,  $n$ —of a photovoltaic device, the ratio of maximum power to the product of open-circuit voltage and short-circuit current.

**global horizontal solar irradiance**,  $n$ —See **global solar irradiance** in Terminology E 772.

**global normal solar irradiance**,  $n$ —solar irradiance from a  $2\pi$  steradian field-of-view incident upon a surface that is perpendicular to the axis of the solid angle defined by the disk of the sun.

**irradiance**,  $E$ ,  $Wm^{-2}$ ,  $n$ —See **solar irradiance at a point of surface** in Terminology E 772.

**maximum power**,  $n$ —of a photovoltaic device, the electrical output when operated at a point where the product of current and voltage is maximum.

**open-circuit voltage**,  $n$ —of a photovoltaic device, the voltage potential across the positive and the negative terminals under irradiation when zero current flows into or out of these terminals.

**photovoltaic array**,  $n$ —an assembly of panels or modules, together with support structure and other components (if used), to form a complete dc power-producing unit.

**photovoltaic cell**,  $n$ —the basic device that generates electricity by the photovoltaic effect when exposed to radiant energy such as sunlight.

**photovoltaic cell area**,  $n$ —the total frontal area of the cell including the area covered by the grids and contacts.

**photovoltaic device**,  $n$ —any photovoltaic cell or collection of cells (module, panel, or array) under consideration.

**photovoltaic module**,  $n$ —a single package containing two or more electrically interconnected photovoltaic cells, including a frame or integral mounting points, and means for electrical connection; which make it suitable for field installation without additional modification.

**photovoltaic module area**,  $n$ —the rectangular area that touches the extreme outside edges of the module.

**photovoltaic panel**,  $n$ —a number of modules which are electrically connected and mechanically integrated, and designed to provide a field-installable unit.

**photovoltaic reference cell**,  $n$ —a photovoltaic cell whose short-circuit current is calibrated against the total irradiance of a reference spectral irradiance distribution. See also **reference cell calibration constant**.

**primary photovoltaic reference cell**,  $n$ —a photovoltaic reference cell calibrated in sunlight.

**rated power**,  $n$ —See **reported power**.

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<sup>2</sup> Annual Book of ASTM Standards, Vol 15.03.

<sup>3</sup> Annual Book of ASTM Standards, Vol 12.02.

<sup>4</sup> Annual Book of ASTM Standards, Vol 14.04.

**reference cell calibration constant,  $n$** —a number that expresses the calibration of a photovoltaic reference cell in terms of short-circuit current per unit incident irradiance at a given temperature.

**DISCUSSION**—For a calibrated reference cell, the calibration constant equals the short-circuit current of the photovoltaic reference cell when irradiated by a reference spectral irradiance distribution (such as Standard E 490 or Tables G 159) divided by the total irradiance of that reference spectral irradiance distribution.

**reported power,  $n$** — of a photovoltaic device, the output power at a selected test voltage.

**relative spectral response,  $R_r(\lambda)$ ,  $n$** — of a photovoltaic device, the absolute spectral response of a photovoltaic device where the irradiance is measured in relative units.

**DISCUSSION**—The relative spectral response is used where the absolute magnitude of the spectral response is unimportant, simplifying the measurement procedure.

**secondary photovoltaic reference cell,  $n$** —a photovoltaic reference cell calibrated against a primary reference cell.

**short-circuit current,  $n$** — of a photovoltaic device, the current flowing between the positive and negative terminals under illumination when zero voltage appears across these terminals.

**spectral irradiance,  $E(\lambda)$ ,  $n$** —See **solar irradiance at a point of surface and spectral** in Terminology E 772.

**spectral response,  $R(\lambda)$ ,  $AW^{-1}$ ,  $n$** —See **absolute spectral response**.

**standard reporting conditions,  $n$** —for photovoltaic performance measurements, a fixed set of conditions that constitute the device temperature, the total irradiance, and the reference spectral irradiance distribution to which electrical performance data are translated.

**total irradiance,  $n$** —(1) the integral of the solar spectral irradiance; (2) the solar irradiance measured by a wide bandwidth radiometer.

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