



Standard Practice for Preparation of Surfaces of Plastics Prior to Adhesive Bonding¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This practice describes surface preparations for plastic adherends, to be used prior to adhesive bonding of test specimens. It should be noted, however, that this practice specifies only the pretreating conditions of the plastic and does not cover the preparation of test specimens, testing conditions, or evaluation of tests. These are covered in the various ASTM test methods or specifications for specific materials.

1.2 *Physical Treatments* (for example, sanding and solvent wiping) are used in order to remove the glossy finish and all traces of dirt, grease, mold release, or other contaminants from the bonding surfaces.

1.3 *Chemical Treatments* (for example, sulfuric acid—dichromate solution and sodium naphthalene complex) are used in some cases to alter chemically the surface layers of the polymer itself to improve its adhesion characteristics.

1.4 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as the standard. The values given in parentheses are for information only.

1.5 *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.* Specific precautionary statements are given in 6.1.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:

- D 897 Test Method for Tensile Properties of Adhesive Bonds²
- D 903 Test Method for Peel or Stripping Strength of Adhesive Bonds²
- D 905 Test Method for Strength Properties of Adhesive Bonds in Shear by Compression Loading²
- D 907 Terminology of Adhesives²
- D 950 Test Method for Impact Strength of Adhesive Bonds²

¹ This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D-14 on Adhesives and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D14.40 on Adhesives for Plastics.

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² *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 15.06.

D 952 Test Method for Bond or Cohesive Strength of Sheet Plastics and Electrical Insulating Materials³

D 1002 Test Method for Apparent Shear Strength of Single-Lap-Joint Adhesively Bonded Metal Specimens by Tension Loading (Metal-to-Metal)²

D 1193 Specification for Reagent Water⁴

D 3807 Test Method for Strength Properties of Adhesives in Cleavage Peel by Tension Loading (Engineering Plastics-to-Engineering Plastics)²

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—Many terms are defined in Terminology D 907.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 This practice is useful for reducing some of the surface variability of plastics (due to differences in manufacturing methods) that might otherwise cause excessive variation in the results of ASTM test methods designed to measure adhesion. The treatments specified are convenient for laboratory work.

4.2 This practice is not necessarily designed to provide optimum adhesion to the surfaces and the treatments specified may not always be practical for industrial use.

4.3 This practice does not address all of the surface preparation methods available; nor does this practice cite all of the types or classes of plastics currently available.

4.4 This practice is used as a starting point for evaluating surface preparation techniques for plastic adherends prior to adhesive bonding.

5. Apparatus

5.1 *Abrasive, Aluminum Oxide*, 320 grit, free of waxes, lubricants, or other potential contaminants.

5.2 *Glass Dish*, borosilicate, of appropriate dimensions, in which to heat the sulfuric acid-dichromate solution.

5.3 *Hot Plate* to provide a source for heating the acid.

5.4 *Cotton Cloths*, lint-free, clean, white, or non-linting paper wipers.

³ *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 08.01.

⁴ *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 11.01.

5.5 *Tongs*, stainless steel.

6. Pretreating Liquids

6.1 *Sodium Naphthalene Solution*—Sodium naphthalene solutions are commercially available.⁵ When not in use, keep the solution in a tightly-closed glass container to exclude air and moisture.

NOTE 1—**Caution:** Exercise extreme care in preparing, handling, and disposing of both the sulfuric acid-dichromate solution and the sodium naphthalene solution since these are hazardous materials.

6.2 *Solvents*—Use reagent grade solvents free of any contaminants such as dirt, grease, etc., for cleaning specimens.

6.3 *Sulfuric Acid-Dichromate Solution* (see section 4.1.1)—Dissolve 75 g of potassium dichromate (K₂Cr₂O₇) in 120 g of clean tap water, then add 1500 g of concentrated sulfuric acid (H₂SO₄, sp gr 1.84) in increments of approximately 200 g, stirring after each addition.

6.4 *Water*—Use clean tap water, at 16 – 38°C (61 – 100°F) to wash specimens.

7. Procedure

7.1 Use the following surface treatments to prepare the bonding areas of plastic adherends for adhesive test specimens as indicated in Tables 1 and 2.

7.1.1 *Solvent Wiping*—Wipe the bonding surface of each adherend with three successive portions of a clean solvent-dampened cloth (Note 2). Allow the adherends to stand in a clean, dust-free area with bonding surfaces upwards for 20 min to allow evaporation of solvents or condensed humidity.

NOTE 2—Use a fresh portion of cloth and fresh solvent for each wipe. Do not dampen the cloth by placing it in contact with the mouth of the bottle, but by pouring a small amount of solvent onto the cloth.

⁵ Acceptable solutions are available from W. S. Shamban and Co., 1855-T Centinela Avenue, Santa Monica, CA 90404 and W. L. Gore Associates, 555 Paper Mill Road, Newark, DE 19711.

7.1.2 *Sanding*—Sand the bonding surfaces of the adherends with a fine-grit sandpaper or emery cloth until no evidence of surface gloss is visible (Note 3). Wipe with a clean dry cloth to remove particles from the sanding. Bond the surface as soon after preparation as possible.

NOTE 3—Sanding is desirable in many instances to remove the surface of plastic that may have contaminants, for example, mold release. Sanding also gives a larger bonding area.

7.1.3 *Sulfuric Acid-Dichromate Solution Treatment:*

7.1.3.1 *Room Temperature*—Immerse the plastic adherends in the sulfuric acid-dichromate solution that is maintained at a temperature of 20 to 30°C (68 to 86°F) for the time period given in Table 2. Immediately remove them and rinse thoroughly under running tap water for at least 3 min, followed by a distilled or deionized water rinse in accordance with Specification D 1193, Type IV. Dry by placing, bonding side up, in an air-circulating oven at 37 ± 3°C (99 ± 5°F) for about 1 h. Do not wipe the surface during or after treatment.

7.1.3.2 *Elevated Temperature*—Immerse the plastic adherends in a sulfuric acid-dichromate solution that is maintained at a temperature of 71 ± 3°C (160 ± 5°F) for the time period given in Table 2. Immediately remove them and rinse thoroughly in running tap water for at least 3 min followed by a distilled or deionized water rinse in accordance with Specification D 1193, Type IV. Dry in an air-circulating oven at 37 ± 3°C (99 ± 5°F) for about 1 h.

7.1.4 *Sodium Naphthalene Complex Treatment*—Immerse the adherends in the liquid for 15 min at room temperature. Remove them from the solution with metal tongs, wash in acetone to remove excess organic materials, and subsequently wash with distilled or deionized water (Specification D 1193, Type IV) to remove the last traces of metallic salts from the treated surfaces. Before bonding dry the treated adherends in an air-circulating oven at 37 ± 3°C (99 ± 5°F) for about 1 h.

8. Keywords

8.1 adhesive bonding; plastic; surface preparation

TABLE 1 Physical Treatments

Plastic Adherend (Group I)	Cleaning Procedure
Cellulose acetate, cellulose acetate butyrate, cellulose nitrate, methylstyrene, polycarbonate, polystyrene, vinyl chloride, polymethylmethacrylate, cellulose propionate, ethylcellulose, ABS (acrylonitrile butadiene styrene)	Wipe with methanol, sand, wipe with a clean dry cloth, then repeat methanol wipe.
Epoxy, polyester, phenolic, urea-formaldehyde, diallyl phthalate, melamine, nylon, and polyurethane	Wipe with acetone, sand, wipe with a clean dry cloth, then repeat acetone wipe.



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TABLE 2 Chemical Treatments

Plastic Adherend (Group II)	Cleaning Procedure
Polyolefins (low- and high-density polyethylene, polypropylene, irradiated polyethylene), chlorinated polyether, polyformaldehyde	Wipe with acetone and treat with sulfuric acid-dichromate solution. Treat polyolefins for at least 1 h at room temperature. Treat chlorinated polyether for 5 min at $71 \pm 3^{\circ}\text{C}$ ($160 \pm 5^{\circ}\text{F}$). Treat polyformaldehyde up to 10 s at room temperature.
Trifluoromonochloroethylene, tetrafluoroethylene	Wipe with acetone and treat with sodium naphthalene complex for 15 min at room temperature.

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