



Standard Terminology Relating to Soaps and Other Detergents^{1,2}

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1. Scope

1.1 This terminology covers soaps and other detergents.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:

D 460 Test Methods for Sampling and Chemical Analysis of Soaps and Soap Products³

D 820 Test Methods for Chemical Analysis of Soaps Containing Synthetic Detergents³

D 2330 Test Method for Methylene Blue Active Substances⁴

D 2667 Test Method for Biodegradability of Alkylbenzene Sulfonates⁵

D 2960 Test Method for Controlled Laundering Test Using Naturally Soiled Fabrics and Household Appliances³

D 4265 Guide for Evaluating Stain Removal Performance in Home Laundering³

D 5548 Guide for Evaluating Color Transfer or Color Loss of Dyed Fabrics in Laundering³

3. Terms and Definitions

ABS—an abbreviation for alkyl benzene sulfonate. Although strictly speaking this might apply to any such compound, present practice is to use it for those containing branched chains. (See **LAS**).

acid-wash color—the color developed in the separated acid when a sample of detergent alkylate is agitated with sulfuric acid under the conditions prescribed by the method.

active ingredient of a synthetic detergent—the organic surface-active material present in the detergent.

active oxygen—in cleaning compounds, the oxidizing power of oxygen present as peroxide or other active oxygen-containing moieties in solution expressed as oxygen (equivalent weight 8.00).

alkaline detergent—under **detergent**, see *inorganic alkaline detergent*.

alkyl benzene sulfonate (in the context of soaps and detergents)—the detergent produced by sulfonating detergent alkylate; any surface-active substance having the molecular structure of a benzene sulfonic acid having as a ring substituent(s) an alkyl group(s) sufficiently large to confer detergent properties.

ampholytic surfactant or amphoteric surfactant—see **surface-active agent**.

anhydrous soap—under **soap**, see *anhydrous soap*.

anionic detergent—under **detergent**, see *anionic detergent*.

artificially soiled cloth (sometimes called “standard soiled cloth”)—cloth soiled with one or more materials and used to evaluate the effectiveness of detergents or washing equipment.

available chlorine in cleaning compounds—the oxidizing power of chlorine present as hypochlorite or other oxidizing chlorine moieties in solution, expressed as chlorine of equivalent weight 35.45, and as determined by thiosulfate titration.

bathroom soil—the soil composed of water insoluble, or practically insoluble, materials or a mixture of these materials, present on typical bathroom surfaces other than those of floors and toilets. A major component of this soil is the insoluble precipitate, commonly referred to as “soap scum,” that is deposited when soap is used in hard water.

blended soap—under **soap**, see *blended soap*.

brightener—see **fluorescent whitening agents (FWA)**.

brightening agent—see **fluorescent whitening agents (FWA)**.

buffer action—the resistance of a solution to change in pH.

builder—a material added to a soap or synthetic detergent formulation that enhances or maintains the cleaning efficiency of the surfactant, principally by inactivating water hardness either by sequestration, precipitation, or ion exchange. Other functions, depending on the performance capability of the builder compound used, include supplying alkalinity, buffering to maintain alkalinity at effective cleaning levels, helping to keep removed soil in suspension, and emulsifying oily soils.

built soap—under **soap**, see *built soap*.

cationic detergent—under **detergent**, see *cationic detergent*.

chelating agent—a sequestering or complexing agent that, in aqueous solution, renders a metallic ion inactive through the formation of an inner ring structure with the ion.

¹ This terminology is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D12 on Soaps and Other Detergents and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D12.32 on Nomenclature and Definitions.

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² A “Handbook of Industry Terms” is available from the Soap and Detergent Association, 475 Park Ave. S., New York, NY 10016. This is an essentially nontechnical list of definitions of interest to the soap and detergent industry. It is referenced here for information purposes only.

³ *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 15.04.

⁴ *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 11.02.

⁵ *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 11.05.