



Designation: D2488 – 17

Standard Practice for Description and Identification of Soils (Visual-Manual Procedures)¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D2488; 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.

1. Scope*

1.1 This practice covers procedures for the description of soils for engineering purposes.

1.2 This practice also describes a procedure for identifying soils, at the option of the user, based on the classification system described in Test Method [D2487](#). The identification is based on visual examination and manual tests. It shall be clearly stated in reporting, the soil identification is based on visual-manual procedures.

1.2.1 When precise classification of soils for engineering purposes is required, the procedures outlined in Test Method [D2487](#) shall be used.

1.2.2 In this practice, the identification procedures assigning a group symbol and name are limited to soil particles smaller than 3 in. (75 mm).

1.2.3 The identification portion of this practice is limited to naturally occurring soils. Specimens used for identification may be either intact or disturbed.

NOTE 1—This practice may be used as a descriptive system applied to such materials as shale, claystone, shells, crushed rock, etc. (see [Appendix X2](#)).

1.3 The descriptive information in this practice may be used with other soil classification systems or for materials other than naturally occurring soils.

1.4 *Units*—The values stated in inch-pound units are to be regarded as standard. The values given in parentheses are rationalized conversions to SI units that are provided for information only and are not considered standard. The sieve designations are identified using the “alternative” system in accordance with Practice [E11](#).

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, health and environmental practices and deter-*

mine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use. For specific precautionary statements see Section 8.

1.6 *This practice offers a set of instructions for performing one or more specific operations. This document cannot replace education or experience and should be used in conjunction with professional judgment. Not all aspects of this practice may be applicable in all circumstances. This ASTM standard is not intended to represent or replace the standard of care by which the adequacy of a given professional service must be judged, nor should this document be applied without consideration of a project's many unique aspects. The word “Standard” in the title of this document means only that the document has been approved through the ASTM consensus process.*

1.7 *This international standard was developed in accordance with internationally recognized principles on standardization established in the Decision on Principles for the Development of International Standards, Guides and Recommendations issued by the World Trade Organization Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Committee.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:²

- [D653 Terminology Relating to Soil, Rock, and Contained Fluids](#)
- [D1452 Practice for Soil Exploration and Sampling by Auger Borings](#)
- [D1586 Test Method for Standard Penetration Test \(SPT\) and Split-Barrel Sampling of Soils](#)
- [D1587 Practice for Thin-Walled Tube Sampling of Fine-Grained Soils for Geotechnical Purposes](#)
- [D2113 Practice for Rock Core Drilling and Sampling of Rock for Site Exploration](#)
- [D2487 Practice for Classification of Soils for Engineering Purposes \(Unified Soil Classification System\)](#)
- [D3740 Practice for Minimum Requirements for Agencies Engaged in Testing and/or Inspection of Soil and Rock as Used in Engineering Design and Construction](#)

¹ This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee [D18](#) on Soil and Rock and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee [D18.07](#) on Identification and Classification of Soils.

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² For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

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