



Designation: D5183 – 21

Standard Test Method for Determination of the Coefficient of Friction of Lubricants Using the Four-Ball Wear Test Machine¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D5183; 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 test method covers a procedure for determining the coefficient of friction by means of the Four-Ball Wear Test Machine.²

1.2 The values stated in either SI units or in the former cm-kgf metric units are to be regarded separately as the standard. Within the text the cm-kgf units are shown in parentheses. The values stated in each system are not exact equivalents, therefore each system must be used independently of the other. Combining values from the two systems can result in nonconformance to specification.

1.3 *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 determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.* Specific warning statements are given in 7.3 and 7.4.

1.4 *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:*³

D4172 Test Method for Wear Preventive Characteristics of

Lubricating Fluid (Four-Ball Method)

2.2 *ANSI Standard:*⁴

B3.12 Specification for Metal Balls

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions:*

3.1.1 *coefficient of friction, (μ)*—the ratio of the tangential force that is needed to start or to maintain uniform relative motion between two contacting surfaces to the perpendicular force holding them in contact.

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 Three 12.7 mm (0.5 in.) diameter steel balls are clamped together and covered with 10 mL of the wear-in lubricant. A fourth 12.7 mm diameter ball, referred to as the “top ball” is pressed with a force of 392 N (40 kgf) into the cavity formed by the three clamped balls for three-point contact. The temperature of the wear-in lubricant is regulated at 75 °C (167 °F), and then, the top ball is rotated at 600 r/min for 60 min.

4.2 Fluid is discarded and balls cleaned. The wear scar diameter on each of the lower three balls is examined. If the wear scars average 0.67 mm $\pm$ 0.03 mm, (0.026 in. $\pm$ 0.001 in.) then the 10 mL of test fluid is added to the ball cup with the worn-in test balls in place. The temperature of the test lubricant is regulated at 75 °C (167 °F) and the top ball is rotated at 600 r/min at 98.1 N (10 kgf) for 10 min.

4.3 The load is then increased by 98.1 N (10 kgf) at the end of each successive 10 min interval up to the point where the frictional trace indicates incipient seizure. The coefficient of friction is measured at the end of each 10 min interval.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 This test method can be used to determine the coefficient of friction of lubricating fluids under the prescribed test conditions. The user of this test method should determine to his own satisfaction whether results of this test method correlate with field performance or other bench test machines.

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D02 on Petroleum Products, Liquid Fuels, and Lubricants and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D02.L0.11 on Tribological Properties of Industrial Fluids and Lubricates.

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² The sole source of supply of the Four-Ball Wear Test Machine known to the committee at this time is Falex Corp., 1020 Airpark Dr., Sugar Grove, IL 60554. If you are aware of alternative suppliers, please provide this information to ASTM International Headquarters. Your comments will receive careful consideration at a meeting of the responsible technical committee,¹ which you may attend.

³ 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.

⁴ Available from American National Standards Institute (ANSI), 25 W. 43rd St., 4th Floor, New York, NY 10036, <http://www.ansi.org>.

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