



Standard Test Method for Linear Thermal Expansion of Rigid Solids with Interferometry¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This test method covers the determination of linear thermal expansion of rigid solids using either a Michelson or Fizeau interferometer.

1.2 For this purpose, a rigid solid is defined as a material which, at test temperature and under the stresses imposed by instrumentation, has a negligible creep, insofar as significantly affecting the precision of thermal length change measurements.

1.3 It is recognized that many rigid solids require detailed preconditioning and specific thermal test schedules for correct evaluation of linear thermal expansion behavior for certain material applications. Since a general method of test cannot cover all specific requirements, details of this nature should be discussed in the particular material specifications.

1.4 This test method is applicable to the approximate temperature range – 150 to 700°C. The temperature range may be extended depending on the instrumentation and calibration materials used.

1.5 The precision of measurement of this absolute method (better than $\pm 40 \text{ nm/m}\cdot\text{K}$) is significantly higher than that of comparative methods such as push rod dilatometry (for example, Test Methods D 696 and E 228) and thermomechanical analysis (for example, Test Method E 831) techniques. It is applicable to materials having low and either positive or negative coefficients of expansion (below $5 \text{ }\mu\text{m/m}\cdot\text{K}$) and where only very limited lengths or thickness of other higher expansion coefficient materials are available.

1.6 Computer or electronic based instrumentation, techniques and data analysis systems equivalent to this test method can be used. Users of the test method are expressly advised that all such instruments or techniques may not be equivalent. It is the responsibility of the user to determine the necessary equivalency prior to use.

1.7 *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.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:

- D 696 Test Method for Coefficient of Linear Thermal Expansion of Plastics²
- E 220 Test Method for Calibration of Thermocouples by Comparison Techniques³
- E 228 Test Method for Linear Thermal Expansion of Solid Materials with a Vitreous Silica Dilatometer⁴
- E 473 Terminology Relating to Thermal Analysis⁴
- E 831 Test Method for Linear Thermal Expansion of Solid Materials by Thermomechanical Analysis⁴
- E 1142 Terminology Relating to Thermophysical Properties⁴

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions:

3.1.1 The following terms are applicable to this document and are listed in Terminology E 473 and E 1142: coefficient of linear thermal expansion, thermodilatometry, thermomechanical analysis.

3.2 Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:

3.2.1 *thermal expansivity*, α_T , at temperature T , is calculated as follows from slope of length v temperature curve:

$$\alpha_T = \frac{1}{L_i} \lim_{T_2 \rightarrow T_1} \frac{(L_2 - L_1)}{(T_2 - T_1)} = (dL/dT)_{L_i} (T_1 < T_i < T_2) \quad (1)$$

and expressed as $\mu\text{m/m}\cdot\text{K}$.

NOTE 1—Thermal expansivity is sometimes referred to as instantaneous coefficient of linear expansion.

3.2.2 *mean coefficient of linear thermal expansion*, α_m , the average change in length relative to the length of the specimen accompanying a change in temperature between temperatures T_1 and T_2 , expressed as follows:

$$\alpha_m = \frac{1}{L_0} \frac{(L_2 - L_1)}{(T_2 - T_1)} = (\Delta L/L_0)/\Delta T \quad (2)$$

where:

α_m is obtained by dividing the linear thermal expansion ($\Delta L/L_0$) by the change of temperature (ΔT). It is normally expressed as $\mu\text{m/m}\cdot\text{K}$.

¹ This test method is under jurisdiction of ASTM Committee E-37 on Thermal Measurements and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee E37.05 on Thermophysical Properties.

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² Annual Book of ASTM Standards, Vol 08.01.

³ Annual Book of ASTM Standards, Vol 14.03.

⁴ Annual Book of ASTM Standards, Vol 14.02.