

Standard Procedures for Calibrating Magnetic Instruments to Measure the Delta Ferrite Content of Austenitic and Duplex Ferritic-Austenitic Stainless Steel Weld Metal



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An American National Standard

Approved by the
American National Standards Institute
February 27, 2020

Standard Procedures for Calibrating Magnetic Instruments to Measure the Delta Ferrite Content of Austenitic and Duplex Ferritic-Austenitic Stainless Steel Weld Metal

6th Edition

Revises AWS A4.2M:2006 (R2014) (ISO 8249:2000 MOD)

Prepared by the
American Welding Society (AWS) A5 Committee on Filler Metals and Allied Materials

Under the Direction of the
AWS Technical Activities Committee

Approved by the
AWS Board of Directors

Abstract

Calibration procedures are specified for a number of commercial instruments that can then provide reproducible measurements of the ferrite content of austenitic stainless steel weld metals. Certain of these instruments can be further calibrated for measurements of the ferrite content of duplex ferritic-austenitic stainless steel weld metals. Calibration with primary standards (non-magnetic coating thickness standards from the U.S. National Institute of Standards and Technology) is the preferred method for appropriate instruments. Alternatively, these and other instruments can be calibrated with weld-metal-like secondary standards.

Reproducibility of measurement after calibration is specified. Problems associated with accurate determination of ferrite content are described.



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Foreword

This foreword is not part of this standard but is included for informational purposes only.

This document is an adoption of ISO 8249:2018 with additional normative and informative annexes to replace AWS A4.2M, *Standard Procedures for Calibrating Magnetic Instruments to Measure the Delta Ferrite Content of Austenitic and Duplex Ferritic-Austenitic Stainless Steel Weld Metal*, first published in 1974 and revised in 1986 and again in 1991. These revisions were prepared by the Subcommittee on Welding Stainless Steel of the Welding Research Council and by the AWS Committee on Filler Metals. Then it was revised again in 1997 and in 2006 by AWS A5 Committee on Filler Metals and Allied Materials. The current revision is the third to use the SI system of measurement as the primary system, and updates the standard in the light of new information.

A certain minimum ferrite content in most austenitic stainless steel weld metals is useful in assuring freedom from microfissures and hot cracks. Upper limits on ferrite content in austenitic stainless steel weld metals can be imposed to limit corrosion in certain media or to limit embrittlement due to transformation of ferrite to sigma phase during heat treatment or elevated temperature service. Upper limits on ferrite content in duplex ferritic-austenitic stainless steel weld metals can be imposed to help assure ductility, toughness, and corrosion resistance in the as-welded condition.

Reproducible quantitative ferrite measurements in stainless steel weld metals are therefore of interest to filler metal producers, fabricators of weldments, weldment end users, regulatory authorities, and insurance companies.

At present, there is no universal opinion concerning the best experimental method that gives an absolute measurement of the amount of ferrite in a weld metal, either destructively or nondestructively. This situation has led to the development and use, internationally, of the concept of a “Ferrite Number” or FN. A Ferrite Number is a description of the ferrite content of a weld metal determined using a standardized procedure. Such procedures are described in this Standard. The Ferrite Number of a weld metal has been considered approximately equivalent to the percentage ferrite content, particularly at low FN values. More recent information suggests that the FN may overstate the volume percent ferrite at higher FN by a factor in the order of 1.3 to 1.5, which depends to a certain extent upon the actual composition of the alloy in question.

Although other methods are available for determining the Ferrite Number, the standardized measuring procedure, described in this Standard, is based on assessing the tear-off force needed to pull the weld metal sample from a magnet of defined strength and size. The relationship between tear-off force and FN is obtained using primary standards consisting of a non-magnetic coating of specified thickness on a magnetic base. Each non-magnetic coating thickness is assigned an FN value.

The ferrite content determined by this method is arbitrary and is not necessarily the true or absolute ferrite content. In recognition of this fact, the term “Ferrite Number” (FN) shall be used instead of “ferrite percent” when quoting a ferrite content determined by this method. To help convey the message that this standardized calibration procedure has been used, the terms “Ferrite Number” and “FN” are capitalized as proper nouns.

Document Development

AWS A4.2-74	<i>Standard Procedures for Calibrating Magnetic Instruments to Measure the Delta Ferrite Content of Austenitic Stainless Steel Weld Metal</i>
ANSI/AWS A4.2-86	<i>Standard Procedures for Calibrating Magnetic Instruments to Measure the Delta Ferrite Content of Austenitic Stainless Steel Weld Metal</i>
ANSI/AWS A4.2-91	<i>Standard Procedures for Calibrating Magnetic Instruments to Measure the Delta Ferrite Content of Austenitic and Duplex Austenitic-Ferritic Stainless Steel Weld Metal</i>

ANSI/AWS A4.2M/A4.2:1997 *Standard Procedures for Calibrating Magnetic Instruments to Measure the Delta Ferrite Content of Austenitic and Duplex Ferritic-Austenitic Stainless Steel Weld Metal*

AWS A4.2M:2006 (ISO 8249:2000 MOD) *Standard Procedures for Calibrating Magnetic Instruments to Measure the Delta Ferrite Content of Austenitic and Duplex Ferritic-Austenitic Stainless Steel Weld Metal*

AWS A4.2M:2006 (R2014) (ISO 8249:2000 MOD) *Standard Procedures for Calibrating Magnetic Instruments to Measure the Delta Ferrite Content of Austenitic and Duplex Ferritic-Austenitic Stainless Steel Weld Metal*

NOTE: The user's attention is called to the possibility that compliance with this standard may require use of an invention covered by patent rights.

By publication of this standard, no position is taken with respect to the validity of any such claim(s) or of any patent rights in connection therewith. If a patent holder has filed a statement of willingness to grant a license under these rights on reasonable and nondiscriminatory terms and conditions to applicants desiring to obtain such a license, then details may be obtained from the standards developer.

Please note that ISO uses commas (,) and AWS uses periods (.) for decimals. The ISO decimal commas have been replaced by periods in this document for consistency.

Substantive change is correcting FN number in Table 1 for coating thickness 0.052 mm which is shown in *Italic* font.

Comments and suggestions for the improvement of this standard are welcome. They should be sent to the Secretary, AWS A5 Committee on Filler Metals and Allied Materials, American Welding Society, 8669 NW 36 St, # 130, Miami, FL 33166.

Table of Contents

	Page No.
<i>Personnel</i>	v
<i>Foreword</i>	vii
<i>List of Tables</i>	x
<i>List of Figures</i>	x
1. Scope	1
2. Normative References	2
3. Principle	2
4. Calibration	2
4.1 Coating Thickness Standards	2
4.2 Magnet	2
4.3 Instruments	3
4.4 Calibration Curve	3
5. Standard Method for Covered Electrode Test Pads	5
5.1 Dimensions of Weld Metal Test Specimen	5
5.2 Depositing Weld Metal Test Specimen	5
5.3 Measuring	6
6. Standard Methods for Test Pads of Other Processes and for Production Welds	7
6.1 Standard Method for Test Pads for Other Weld Metals	7
6.2 Production Welds	7
7. Other Methods	7
7.1 Methods	7
7.2 Results	7
7.3 Maintaining Calibration	7
8. Procedures Used to Prepare Secondary Standards for Delta Ferrite in Austenitic Stainless Steel Weld Metal	8
<i>Annexes:</i>	
Annex A (Informative)—Manufacture of Secondary Standards by Strip Cladding	9
Annex B (Informative)—Manufacture of Secondary Standards by Centrifugal Chill Casting	17
<i>National Annexes:</i>	
Annex C (Normative)—Calibration of Legacy Instruments with Primary Standards	25
Annex D (Informative)—Instruments	29
Annex E (Informative)—Requesting an Official Interpretation on an AWS Standard	35
Annex F (Informative)—List of Deviations from ISO 8249:2018	37
Bibliography	37
AWS Filler Metal Specifications by Material and Welding Process	39
AWS Filler Metal Specifications and Related Documents	41

List of Tables

Table	Page No.
1 Relationship Between Ferrite Number and Thickness of Non-Magnetic Coating of Coating Thickness Standards (specified in 4.1) for Calibration of Instruments for Measurement of Ferrite Content Through Attractive Force (specified in 4.3) Using the Standard Magnet (specified in 4.2)	4
2 Welding Parameters and Deposit Dimensions	6
3 Maximum Allowable Deviation in the Periodic FN Check	8
A.1 Welding Parameters.....	10
A.2 Example of the Chemical Composition of Seventh Layer of Strip Clad Deposits	13
A.3 NIST (NBS) Standards Employed for Magne-Gage Calibration for Strip Cladding Secondary Standards.....	15
A.4 Example of the Tabular Presentation of Results on the Card Accompanying Each Box of Standards	16
B.1 NIST Standard Used for Magne-Gage Calibration for Centrifugally Cast Secondary Standard Samples	21
B.2 Tolerance on the Position of Calibration Points Using Primary Standards	21
B.3 Examples of the Tabular Presentation of Results of the Card Accompanying Each Box of Centrifugally Cast Standards	23
C.1 Ferrite Numbers (FN) for Primary Standards for Feritscope Model FE8-KF Calibration	26
C.2 Maximum Allowable Deviation of the Periodic Ferrite Number (FN) Check for Feritescopes/ Ferritescopes	27
C.3 Ferrite Numbers (FN) for Primary Standards for Inspector Gage Calibration	27
C.4 Maximum Allowable Deviation of the Periodic Ferrite Number (FN) Check for Inspector Gages	28

List of Figures

Figure	Page No.
1 Relationship Between the Tear-Off Forces of the Standard Magnet Defined in 4.2 and the Coating Thickness Standards Defined in 4.1	3
2 Weld Metal Specimen for Ferrite Determination.....	5
A.1 Method of Depositing Weld Metal for Secondary Standard by Strip Cladding	10
A.2 Bead Deposition and Machining Sequences for Secondary Standards by Strip Cladding	11
A.3 Cutting Sequences for Secondary Standard by Strip Cladding.....	12
A.4 Extraction of Individual Strip Cladding Secondary Standards	12
A.5 Marking of Each Strip Cladding Ferrite Secondary Standard	13
A.6 Marking on Each Strip Cladding Secondary Standard Sample and Identification of the Five Measuring Points.....	14
B.1 Centrifugally Chill Cast Ring for Secondary Standards	18
B.2 Dimensions and FN Measurement Positions on Six Faces of Blocks Machined from Centrifugally Chill Cast Rings	18
B.3 IIW Commission II, 6th Round Robin Measurement Results—Overall Results.....	19
B.4 IIW Commission II, 6th Round Robin Measurement Results—Face Center Results	20
D.1 Magne-Gage-Type Instruments.....	30
D.2 Ferritescope Model FE8-KF	31
D.3 Inspector Gage	32
D.4 Ferrite Indicator (Severn Gage).....	33
D.5 Foerster Ferrite Content Meter.....	34

Standard Procedures for Calibrating Magnetic Instruments to Measure the Delta Ferrite Content of Austenitic and Duplex Ferritic-Austenitic Stainless Steel Weld Metal

1. Scope

1.1 This standard specifies the method and apparatus for

- the measurement of the delta ferrite content, expressed as Ferrite Number (FN), in largely austenitic and duplex ferritic-austenitic stainless steel¹ weld metal through the attractive force between a weld metal sample and a standard permanent magnet;
- the preparation and measurement of standard pads for shielded metal arc covered electrodes. The general method is also recommended for the ferrite measurement of production welds and for weld metal from other processes, such as gas tungsten arc welding, gas metal arc welding, and submerged arc welding (in these cases, the way of producing the pad should be defined);
- the calibration of other instruments to measure FN.

The method described in this standard is intended for use on weld metals in the as-welded state and on weld metals after thermal treatments causing complete or partial transformation of ferrite to any non-magnetic phase. Austenitizing thermal treatments which alter the size and shape of the ferrite will change the magnetic response of the ferrite.

The method is not intended for measurement of the ferrite content of cast, forged or wrought austenitic or duplex ferritic-austenitic steel samples.

1.2 Safety and health issues and concerns are beyond the scope of this standard; some safety and health information is provided, but such issues are not fully addressed herein. Safety and health information is available from the following sources:

American Welding Society:

- (1) ANSI Z49.1, *Safety in Welding, Cutting, and Allied Processes*
- (2) AWS Safety and Health Fact Sheets
- (3) Other safety and health information on the AWS website

Material or Equipment Manufacturers:

- (1) Safety Data Sheets supplied by materials manufacturers
- (2) Operating Manuals supplied by equipment manufacturers

Applicable Regulatory Agencies

Work performed in accordance with this standard may involve the use of materials that have been deemed hazardous and may involve operations or equipment that may cause injury or death. This standard does not purport to address all safety and health risks that may be encountered. The user of this standard should establish an appropriate safety program to address such risks as well as to meet applicable regulatory requirements. ANSI Z49.1 should be considered when developing the safety program.

¹ The term “austenitic-ferritic (duplex) stainless steel” is sometimes applied in place of “duplex ferritic-austenitic stainless steel”.

2. Normative References

The documents listed below are referenced within this publication and are mandatory to the extent specified herein. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced standard shall apply. For dated references, subsequent amendments to, or revisions of, any of these publications do not apply.

ISO 15510, *Stainless steels — Chemical composition*.

3. Principle

The measurement of the ferrite content of largely austenitic stainless steel weld metal through the attractive force between a weld metal sample and a permanent magnet is based upon the fact that the attractive force between a two-phase (or multiphase) sample containing one ferromagnetic phase and one (or more) non-ferromagnetic phase(s) increases as the content of the ferromagnetic phase increases. In largely austenitic and duplex ferritic-austenitic stainless steel weld metal, ferrite is *ferromagnetic*, whereas austenite, carbides, sigma phase, and inclusions are non-ferromagnetic.

4. Calibration

4.1 Coating Thickness Standards. The coating thickness standards shall consist of non-magnetic copper applied to an unalloyed steel base of size 30 mm × 30 mm. The thickness of the unalloyed steel base shall be equal to or greater than the experimentally determined minimum thickness at which a further increase of the thickness does not cause an increase of the attractive force between the standard permanent magnet and the coating thickness standard. The thickness of the non-magnetic copper coating shall be known to an accuracy of $\pm 5\%$ or better. The chemical composition of unalloyed steel shall be within the following limits:

Element	Limit %
C	0.08 to 0.13
Si	0.10 max.
Mn	0.30 to 0.60
P	0.040 max.
S	0.050 max.

The copper coating may be covered by a chromium flash. The force required to tear off a given permanent magnet from the copper coating side of such a standard increases as the thickness of the copper coating decreases.

NOTE: To ensure adequate reproducibility of the calibration, the coating thickness standards defined above should be used. In particular, coating thickness standards produced by the U.S. National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST, formerly National Bureau of Standards or NBS) may be used.

4.2 Magnet. The standard magnet shall be a permanent magnet of cylindrical shape, 2 mm in diameter and about 50 mm in length. One end of the magnet shall be hemispherical, with a 1 mm radius and polished. As an example, such a magnet can be made of 36% cobalt magnet steel, 48.45 mm $\pm$ 0.05 mm long, magnetically saturated and then diluted to 85%. The magnetic strength of the magnet shall be such that the force needed to tear off the standard magnet from the different coating thickness standards is within $\pm 10\%$ of the relationship shown in Figure 1 (the weight of the magnet excluded). This is equivalent to a relationship between tear-off force and Ferrite Number of 5.0 FN/g $\pm$ 0.5 FN/g.

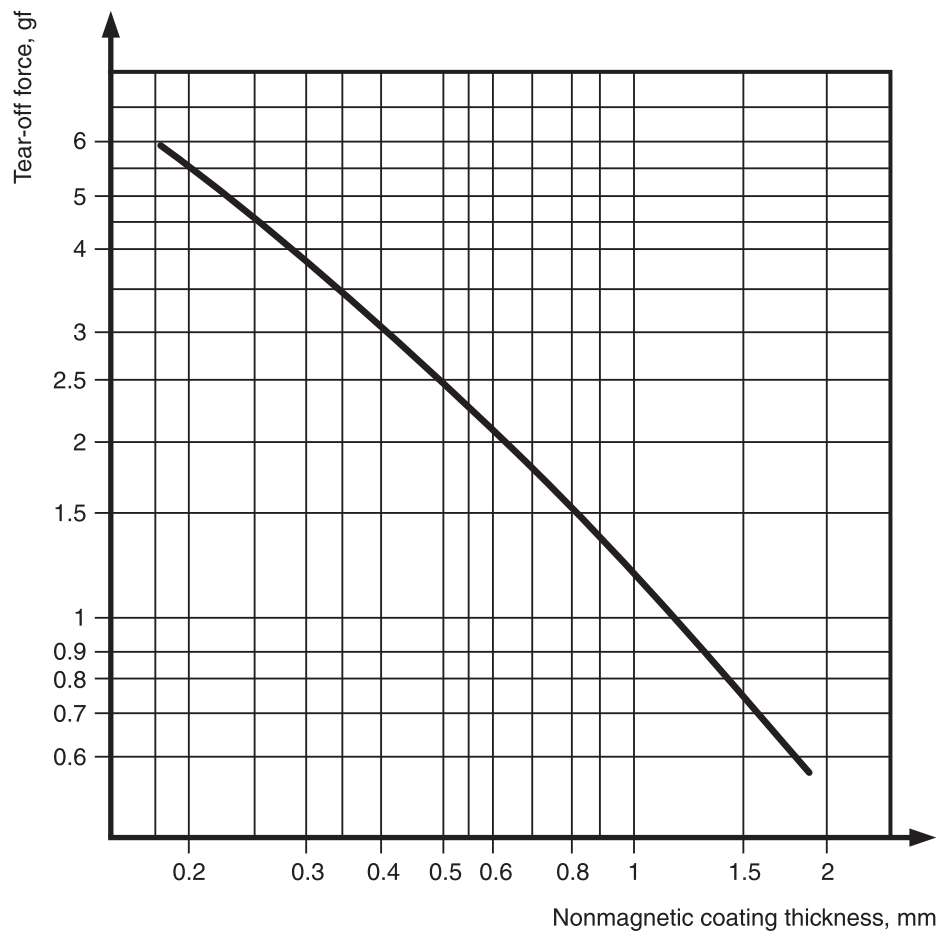


Figure 1—Relationship Between the Tear-Off Forces of the Standard Magnet Defined in 4.2 and the Coating Thickness Standards Defined in 4.1

4.3 Instruments. The measurement by this method shall be made by an instrument enabling an increasing tear-off force to be applied to the magnet perpendicularly to the surface of the test specimen. The tear-off force shall be increased until the permanent magnet is detached from the test specimen. The instrument shall accurately measure the tear-off force which is required for detachment. The reading of the instrument may be directly in FN or in grams-force or in other units. If the reading of the instrument is in units other than FN, the relationship between the FN and the instrument reading shall be defined by a calibration curve².

4.4 Calibration Curve. In order to generate a calibration curve, determine the force needed to tear off the standard magnet defined in 4.2 from several coating thickness standards defined in 4.1. Then convert the thickness of non-magnetic coating of the coating thickness standards into FN according to Table 1, or according to the equivalent equation (1), as follows:

$$FN = \exp\{1.805\,9 - 1.118\,86 [\ln(t)] - 0.177\,40 [\ln(t)]^2 - 0.035\,02 [\ln(t)]^3 - 0.003\,67 [\ln(t)]^4\} \quad (1)$$

where t is the non-magnetic coating thickness, expressed in mm.

Finally, plot the calibration curve as the relationship between the tear-off force in the units of the instrument reading and the corresponding FN.

² Many instruments used to measure the thickness of a non-magnetic coating over a ferromagnetic base are suitable (e.g., MAGNE-GAGE of USA origin) and some commercially available instruments are designed directly for measurement of ferrite content (e.g., ALPHA-PHASE-METER of former USSR origin). In addition, after suitable in-house alterations, some laboratory balances can be used.

Table 1
Relationship Between Ferrite Number and Thickness of Non-Magnetic Coating
of Coating Thickness Standards (specified in 4.1) for Calibration of Instruments
for Measurement of Ferrite Content Through Attractive Force (specified in 4.3)
Using the Standard Magnet (specified in 4.2)

Coating Thickness (t) mm	FN	Coating Thickness (t) mm	FN	Coating Thickness (t) mm	FN	Coating Thickness (t) mm	FN	Coating Thickness (t) mm	FN
0.020	110.5	0.049	68.3	0.078	51.0	0.134	35.3	0.300	19.1
0.021	108.0	0.050	67.5	0.079	50.6	0.136	34.9	0.320	18.1
0.022	105.7	0.051	66.7	0.080	50.2	0.138	34.5	0.340	17.2
0.023	103.4	0.052	65.9	0.082	49.3	0.140	34.2	0.360	16.4
0.024	101.3	0.053	65.1	0.084	48.6	0.142	33.8	0.380	15.7
0.025	99.2	0.054	64.4	0.086	47.8	0.144	33.5	0.400	15.0
0.026	97.3	0.055	63.7	0.088	47.1	0.146	33.2	0.420	14.4
0.027	95.4	0.056	63.0	0.090	46.4	0.148	32.8	0.440	13.8
0.028	93.6	0.057	62.3	0.092	45.7	0.150	32.5	0.460	13.2
0.029	91.9	0.058	61.6	0.094	45.1	0.155	31.7	0.480	12.7
0.030	90.3	0.059	60.9	0.096	44.4	0.160	31.0	0.500	12.3
0.031	88.7	0.060	60.3	0.098	43.8	0.165	30.3	0.550	11.2
0.032	87.2	0.061	59.7	0.100	43.2	0.170	29.7	0.600	10.3
0.033	85.8	0.062	59.1	0.102	42.6	0.175	29.0	0.650	9.6
0.034	84.4	0.063	58.5	0.104	42.1	0.180	28.4	0.700	8.9
0.035	83.0	0.064	57.9	0.106	41.5	0.185	27.9	0.750	8.3
0.036	81.7	0.065	57.3	0.108	41.0	0.190	27.3	0.800	7.7
0.037	80.5	0.066	56.8	0.110	40.5	0.195	26.8	0.900	6.8
0.038	79.3	0.067	56.2	0.112	40.0	0.200	26.3	1.000	6.1
0.039	78.1	0.068	55.7	0.114	39.5	0.205	25.8	1.200	4.93
0.040	77.0	0.069	55.2	0.116	39.0	0.210	25.3	1.400	4.09
0.041	75.9	0.070	54.7	0.118	38.6	0.220	24.4	1.600	3.45
0.042	74.8	0.071	54.2	0.120	38.1	0.230	23.6	1.800	2.94
0.043	73.8	0.072	53.7	0.122	37.7	0.240	22.8	2.000	2.54
0.044	72.8	0.073	53.2	0.124	37.2	0.250	22.1	2.200	2.21
0.045	71.8	0.074	52.8	0.126	36.8	0.260	21.4	2.400	1.94
0.046	70.9	0.075	52.3	0.128	36.4	0.270	20.8	2.600	1.72
0.047	70.0	0.076	51.9	0.130	36.0	0.280	20.2	2.800	1.53
0.048	69.1	0.077	51.4	0.132	35.6	0.290	19.6	3.000	1.36

To calibrate the instrument for measurement of ferrite content within the range from 0 to approximately 30 FN, which is appropriate for nominally austenitic stainless steel weld metals, a set consisting of a minimum of eight standards with copper coating thicknesses between approximately 0.17 mm and approximately 2 mm is recommended³. To extend the

³ This calibration procedure may give misleading results if used on instruments measuring the ferrite content in ways other than through the attractive force or on instruments measuring ferrite through the attractive force but employing other than the standard magnet defined in 4.2. Instruments which cannot be calibrated by the coating thickness standards and by the procedure specified in 4.2 to 4.4 may be calibrated as described in Clause 7.

calibration from approximately 30 FN to 100 FN, which is appropriate for duplex ferritic-austenitic stainless steel weld metals, a set consisting of a minimum of five standards with coating thicknesses between 0.03 mm and 0.17 mm is recommended.

5. Standard Method for Covered Electrode Test Pads

5.1 Dimensions of Weld Metal Test Specimen. Standard weld metal test specimens for manual electrodes shall be of the size and shape indicated in Figure 2. For the measurement of ferrite content by instruments/magnets or processes other than those specified in 4.2 and 4.3, a larger specimen may be necessary. In such cases, the size and way of producing the pad shall be clearly and carefully defined.

5.2 Depositing Weld Metal Test Specimens

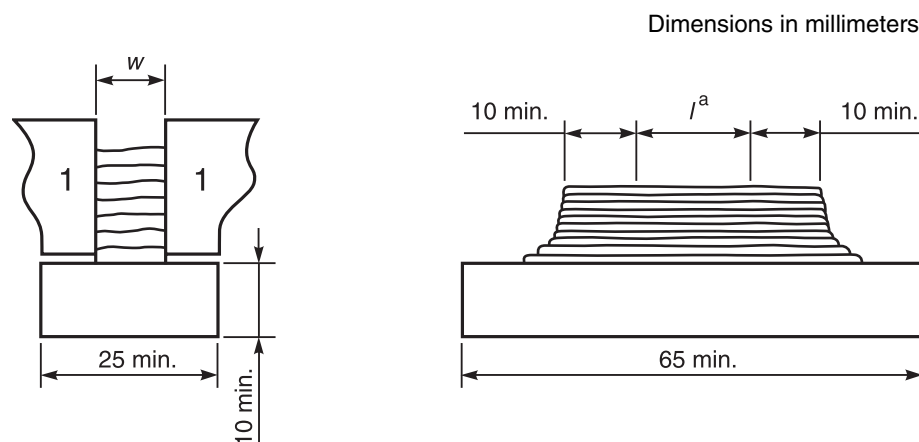
(1) The weld pad shall be built up between two copper bars laid parallel on the base plate. Spacing shall be adjusted to accommodate the electrode size to be used as specified in Table 2.

(2) The weld pad shall be built up by depositing layers one on top of the other to a minimum height of 12.5 mm (see the note on Figure 2). Each layer shall be made in a single pass for electrode diameters ≥ 4 mm. For small diameters, each layer except the top layer shall be constituted by two or more beads deposited with a maximum weave of $3 \times$ the core wire diameter. The arc shall not be allowed to come into contact with the copper bar.

(3) The arc length shall be as short as practicable.

(4) The welding currents shall comply with the values given in Table 2. The weld stops and starts shall be located at the ends of the weld build-up. The welding direction shall be changed after each pass.

(5) The weld pad may be cooled between passes by water quenching no sooner than 20 s after the completion of each pass. The maximum temperature between passes shall be 100°C . The top pass shall be air cooled to a temperature below 425°C before water quenching.



Key

1 Copper bar of dimensions $70 \times 25 \times 25$

NOTE: The base metal should preferably be austenitic Cr-Ni steel type X2CrNi18-9 [304L] or X5CrNi18-9 [304] (see ISO 15510) and in this case the minimum pad height is 13 mm. Mild steel (C-Mn steel) may also be used and in this case the minimum pad height is 18 mm.

^aFerrite content shall be measured in this area.

Figure 2—Weld Metal Specimen for Ferrite Determination

Table 2
Welding Parameters and Deposit Dimensions

Electrode Diameter mm	Welding Current ^a A	Approximate Dimensions	
		width (w) mm	length (l) mm
1.6	35 to 45	12.5	30
2.0	45 to 55	12.5	30
2.4 or 2.5	65 to 75	12.5	40
3.2	90 to 100	12.5	40
4.0	120 to 140	12.5	40
4.8 or 5.0	165 to 185	15	40
6.3 or 6.4	240 to 250	18	40

^a Or 90% of the maximum value recommended by the electrode manufacturer.

(6) Each weld pass shall be cleaned before the next is deposited.

(7) In all cases, the topmost layer, at least, shall consist of a single bead deposited with a maximum weave of $3 \times$ the core wire diameter.

5.3 Measuring

5.3.1 Surface Finishing. After welding, the weld build-up of nominally austenitic stainless steel weld metals (< 30 FN) shall be prepared smooth and flat, taking care to avoid heavy cold working⁴ of the surface; this aim can be achieved by draw filing with a sharp clean 350 mm flat mill bastard file held on both sides of the weld and with the long axis of the file perpendicular to the long axis of the weld. Draw filing shall be accomplished by smooth forward strokes along the length of the weld with a firm downward pressure being applied. The weld shall not be cross-filed.

After welding, the weld build-up of duplex ferritic-austenitic stainless steel weld metals (> 30 FN) shall be ground with successively finer abrasives to a finish of 600 grit or finer. Care shall be taken during grinding to avoid excessive pressure that leads to burnishing or overheating of the surface.

The finished surface shall be smooth with all traces of weld ripple removed. The prepared surface shall be continuous over the length to be measured and not less than 5 mm in width.

5.3.2 Individual Measurements. A minimum of six ferrite readings shall be taken at different locations on the finished surface along the longitudinal axis of the weld bead. Care shall be taken to isolate the weldment under test from vibrations which can cause premature magnet detachment during measuring.

For weld metals of 20 FN or less, only a single reading need be taken at each location. For weld metals above 20 FN, five readings shall be taken at any single location, and only the reading corresponding to the highest FN amongst those five readings shall be accepted as the FN for that location. A minimum of six locations shall be so measured as to obtain the required values for averaging.

5.3.3 Reporting. The six or more accepted readings obtained shall be averaged to a single value for conversion to the Ferrite Number reported for the weld metal under test.

⁴ Cold working may produce martensite, which is also ferromagnetic and gives a false ferrite indication.