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# IPC-3408

## General Requirements for Anisotropically Conductive Adhesive Films

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A standard developed by IPC

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2215 Sanders Road, Northbrook, IL 60062-6135

Tel. 847.509.9700 Fax 847.509.0700

[www.ipc.org](http://www.ipc.org)



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# General Requirements for Anisotropically Conductive Adhesive Films

Developed by the SMT Mounting Adhesives Task Group (5-24d) of  
the Assembly and Joining Materials Subcommittee (5-24) of IPC

Users of this standard are encouraged to participate in the  
development of future revisions.

Contact:

IPC  
2215 Sanders Road  
Northbrook, Illinois  
60062-6135  
Tel 847 509.9700  
Fax 847 509.9798



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### Assembly and Joining Materials Subcommittee

Chairman  
James Maguire  
Boeing Defense & Space Group

### SMT Mounting Adhesives Task Group

Chairman  
Richard T. Thompson  
Loctite Corp.

### Technical Liaison of the IPC Board of Directors

Stanley Plzak  
Pensar Corporation

### SMT Mounting Adhesives Task Group

Allison, Leonard, Acheson Industries  
Aoki, Edward Masami, Hewlett Packard Laboratories  
Arnold, Daniel, EMD Associates Inc.  
Astbury, Arthur, Altron Incorporated  
Bakszt, Monica, Ericsson Components  
Barrett, Chris, Pace Inc.  
Bates, Gerald, Sherwood-Davis & Geck  
Black, Robert, Northrop Grumman  
Burdzy, Matthew, Loctite Corp.  
Colish, Jeffrey, Northrop Grumman  
Dady, Michael, Lockheed Martin  
Dermarderosian, Erin, Raytheon  
Devore, John, Devore Associates  
Ecker, Bernard, Teledyne  
Engelmaier, Werner, Engelmaier Associates Inc.  
Evans, Gregory, Indium Corp. of America  
Flaten, Alina, Lucent Technologies  
Gockenbach, William, Northrop Grumman  
Gamalski, Jurgen, Siemens AG  
Hall, Robert, Calumet Electronics Corp.  
Hartbauer, Rodney, Kester Solder Division

Heaton, James, Loctite Corp.  
Hunadi, Ron, Thermoset Plastics  
Hvims, Henrik, DELTA Danish Electronics, Light & Acoustics  
Hymes, Les, Les Hymes Associates  
Jarboe, Mike, AlliedSignal  
Jawitz, Martin, Eimer Company  
Jordan, David, Grace Specialty Polymers  
Kenyon, William, Global Centre for Process Change  
Lambert, Leo, EPTAC  
Liebowitz, Joseph, Shirline Composites  
Long, Donald, W. R. Grace  
Loft, John, Loctite Corp.  
Mackzum, Stan, Ericsson Inc.  
Matijasevic, Goran, Toranaga Technologies  
Martin, Wayne, TACL Inc.  
Miosi, Debra, Toppan West Inc.  
Morhaim, Mitchell, Jolt Technology  
Murray, Bruce, Grace Specialty Polymers  
Murray, Neil, Automotive Systems Laboratory Inc.  
Nelson, Michele, 3M Company  
Officer, Bruce, Lockheed Martin

Parkinson, Harry, Digital Equipment Corporation  
Parmer, Cindy, Rockwell International  
Payne, James, Molex Electronics  
Payne, Ron, Olin Aerospace  
Radman, John, Trace Laboratories  
Robb, Jeff, Lockheed Martin  
Roos, Leo, ACES  
Rosselle, Paul, Lockheed Martin  
Rubin, Wallace, Multicore Solders  
Rudy, Donald, Lucent Technologies  
Rumps, Don, Lucent Technologies  
Saidman, Laurence, Nordson Corp.  
Scheiner, David, Kester Solder  
Schneider, Alvin, Alpha Metals Inc.  
Sellers, Robin, Delco Electronics  
Siegel, Eric, Pace Inc.  
Skidmore, Tim, Multicore Solders  
Smedley, Grant, Texas Instruments  
Socolowski, Norbert, Alpha Metals  
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Theroux, Gil, Honeywell Inc.  
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# General Requirements for Anisotropically Conductive Adhesive Films

## 1.0 SCOPE

This document covers requirements and test methods for anisotropically conductive adhesive films used to bond and electrically connect components and for their long-term properties as a part of the printed wiring board assembly. Applications include the following: flexible PWB-to-glass, flexible PWB-to-rigid PWB, flip chip-to-glass, flip chip-to-flexible PWB, flip chip-to-rigid PWB, and fine pitch SMD. The adhesive film may be supplied pre-attached to a flexible circuit or other product.

**1.1 Purpose** This standard defines anisotropically conductive adhesive films (also known as Z-axis films, ZAF) through specification of test methods and inspection criteria.

## 1.2 Adhesive Classification

**1.2.1 Anisotropically Conductive Film (ACF)** Anisotropic films are either tacky or non-tacky films made with a controlled dispersion of conductive particles, such that the particles do not contact each other in the plane of the film. The conductors are usually present in concentrations of less than 20% by volume. During the bonding process the particles come into contact with the mated conductor lines to allow conduction through the adhesive film thickness.

**1.2.2 Thermoplastic** Thermoplastic adhesives soften and become tacky at elevated temperatures forming a bond and making the electrical connection. The elevated temperatures do not cause a chemical change in the adhesive, only a certain degree of melting.

**1.2.3 Thermoset** Thermoset adhesives cure at an elevated temperature, generally developing higher strength and stability than thermoplastic materials, but are not as easily reworked because of the permanent change that occurs during cure. Fully-cured thermosets may soften upon subsequent exposure to high temperatures, but will not melt or flow.

**1.2.4 Thermoset/Thermoplastic Combinations** Thermoset and Thermoplastic adhesives can be combined to achieve the greater bond stability of thermosets, particularly at high temperatures, while retaining some of the processing advantages of thermoplastics.

**1.3 Terms and Definitions** The definition of terms shall be in accordance with IPC-T-50, except as defined in 1.3.1-1.3.19.

**1.3.1 Accelerated Aging** A means whereby the deterioration of an adhesive system encountered in natural aging (i.e., temperature and humidity) can be hastened and reproduced in the laboratory.

**1.3.2 Compliant Layer** A material interposed between the hot bar and flexible circuit to help even out applied pressure variations across the bond area.

**1.3.3 Creep** The plastic flow under a sustained load. Sustained loads in an adhesion bond can originate from an external source (vibration or tensile load) or can also be present in the form of thermal sources. Thermal stresses can be induced both by the bonding process and by temperature excursions. Creep in the adhesion joint can result in loss of contact force, so it is a potential failure mechanism.

**1.3.4 Cure** A change in the physical properties of an adhesive by a chemical reaction. Curing can be affected by the application of heat through convection or conduction, by the use of radiation such as infrared or ultraviolet energy, or in standard temperature and pressure conditions with the aid of catalysts. This is usually accompanied by a change in the glass transition temperature ( $T_g$ ) and the melting temperature ( $T_m$ ) with an accompanying increase in the modulus of elasticity. Curing usually involves molecular weight increases and/or cross-linking of the adhesive resin.

**1.3.5 Failure, Adhesive** The rupture of an adhesive bond such that the separation appears to be at the adhesive-adherent interface.

**1.3.6 Failure, Cohesive** The rupture of an adhesive bond such that the separation appears to be within the adhesive.

**1.3.7 Fillet** The portion of an adhesive which fills the corner or angle formed where two adherends are joined.

A berm is a ridge of adhesive that forms around the perimeter of a thermode during bonding from the flow caused by compression of the bond area.

**1.3.8 Green Strength** The strength of a joint or assembly with an uncured adhesive.

**1.3.9 Insulation Resistance** A measure of the capability of the adhesive to insulate adjacent conductors from each other.

