

INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

ISO
12114

First edition
1997-05-15

Fibre-reinforced plastics — Thermosetting moulding compounds and preregs — Determination of cure characteristics

*Plastiques renforcés de fibres — Compositions de moulage
thermodurcissables et préimprégnés — Détermination des caractéristiques
de durcissement*

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Reference number
ISO 12114:1997(E)

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X.400 c=ch; a=400net; p=iso; o=isocs; s=central

Printed in Switzerland

Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

International Standard ISO 12114 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 61, *Plastics*, Subcommittee SC 13, *Composites and reinforcement fibres*.

Introduction

The description of the cure characteristics of thermosetting moulding compounds is rather complex. Various parameters and properties like reactivity, temperature, pressure and shrinkage are of interest to the end user. Some of these parameters influence each other. For this reason, several test methods are necessary for quality control and to determine the effect of varying the proportion of any particular component in the formulation. The characteristics determined are selected to enable different moulding compounds and preregs to be compared and their shelf life assessed.

One important characteristic of thermosetting compounds is their reactivity, i.e. their ability to polymerize under the influence of a catalyst and/or heat. This reactivity can be evaluated by various methods. This International Standard gives two such methods:

- the first of which is a simple procedure which is limited to the determination of reactivity and shelf life by measuring the variation of temperature as a function of time under the conditions usually used in production;
- the second method is more sophisticated and gives information on the physical behaviour of the compound under simulated moulding conditions.

The description of the curing behaviour of a thermosetting compound is not possible by a single value. It is dependent on several parameters, like pressure, temperature and shrinkage, which influence each other. This interdependence must also be described. Such a description can be given by mathematical functions or expressed in terms of a set of curves for the various parameters, as in this International Standard. The curves for a particular compound are all shown in the same figure to enable the interdependence of the parameters concerned to be seen at a glance.

Fibre-reinforced plastics — Thermosetting moulding compounds and preregs — Determination of cure characteristics

1 Scope

This International Standard specifies two methods for the determination of the cure characteristics of fibre-reinforced thermosetting moulding compounds and preregs.

The characteristics measured are

- the heat generated by the exothermic reaction;
- the thermal expansion of the compound accompanying the rise in temperature;
- the shrinkage due to the curing reaction.

The methods specified are applicable to all compounds comprising thermosetting matrices reinforced with fibres. The major field of application is compounds based on unsaturated polyester resins.

Method I describes a test method to determine the reactivity of a thermosetting compound by a simple procedure. This method examines only the reactive behaviour of the matrix and its state of stabilization (one factor affecting the shelf life of the moulding compound).

Method II describes a test method which needs more sophisticated equipment, takes more time but provides additional detailed information about the physical behaviour of the compound under simulated practical moulding conditions. It produces a plate which can be used for further testing to determine properties of the moulded article.

2 Normative references

The following standards contain provisions which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this International Standard. At the time of publication, the editions indicated were valid. All standards are subject to revision, and parties to agreements based on this International Standard are encouraged to investigate the possibility of applying the most recent editions of the standards indicated below. Members of IEC and ISO maintain registers of currently valid International Standards.

ISO 472:1988, *Plastics — Vocabulary*.

ISO 8605:1989, *Textile glass reinforced plastics — Sheet moulding compound (SMC) — Basis for a specification*.

ISO 8606:1990, *Plastics — Preregs — Bulk moulding compound (BMC) and dough moulding compound (DMC) — Basis for a specification*.

3 Definitions

For the purposes of this International Standard, the definitions given in ISO 472, ISO 8605 and ISO 8606 apply, plus the following definitions:

3.1 reactivity: The reactivity of a thermosetting material is taken, by convention, as the maximum gradient, in degrees Celsius per second, of a plot of the temperature of the thermosetting material as a function of time during curing.

3.2 curing behaviour: The behaviour of a thermosetting material when moulded under commonly used moulding conditions, as described by the following set of parameters:

- cure time;
- thermal expansion;
- shrinkage due to the curing reaction;
- net shrinkage (reaction shrinkage less thermal expansion).

The values of these parameters will depend on the actual moulding conditions used.

3.3 elementary unit: The smallest normally commercially available entity of a given product. The description (form, dimensions, mass, etc.) of the elementary unit will normally be defined in the product specification. Elementary units may be supplied in the form of rolls or packages, for instance.

NOTE — For a given product, the dimensions, mass or volume of the elementary unit may change, as manufacturing techniques evolve, without necessarily causing any modification in the properties of the product or the way in which these properties vary within the elementary unit.

4 Apparatus

4.1 Method I

4.1.1 Cylindrical metal mould, with an inside diameter of 20 mm, equipped with a heater and a temperature control system, and with a heated steel punch which fits inside the cylindrical mould (see figure 1).

4.1.2 Device for applying a minimum force of 15 daN to the punch (see figure 2).

4.1.3 Insulated thermocouple, diameter 1 mm, located at the centre of the bottom of the mould and rising 5 mm into the mould cavity. The thermocouple shall be insulated from the heated steel block by insulation having a thickness of > 2 mm.

4.1.4 Suitable recording system, for plotting a curve of temperature versus time.

4.1.5 Device for preparing moulding-compound test specimens (see figure 3).

4.1.6 Syringe, for measuring out paste specimens.

4.1.7 Balance, accurate to the nearest 0,1 g.

4.1.8 Brass bristle brush, to clean the mould.