



Designation: C39/C39M – 26

Standard Test Method for Compressive Strength of Cylindrical Concrete Specimens¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation C39/C39M; 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.

This standard has been approved for use by agencies of the U.S. Department of Defense.

1. Scope*

1.1 This test method covers determination of compressive strength of cylindrical concrete specimens such as molded cylinders and drilled cores. It is limited to concrete having a density in excess of 800 kg/m³ [50 lb/ft³].

1.2 The values stated in either SI units or inch-pound units are to be regarded separately as standard. The inch-pound units are shown in brackets. The values stated in each system may not be exact equivalents; therefore, each system shall be used independently of the other. Combining values from the two systems may result in non-conformance with the standard.

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.* (Warning—Means should be provided to contain concrete fragments during sudden rupture of specimens. Tendency for sudden rupture increases with increasing concrete strength and it is more likely when the testing machine is relatively flexible. The safety precautions given in R0030 are recommended.)

1.4 The text of this standard references notes which provide explanatory material. These notes shall not be considered as requirements of the standard.

1.5 *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.*

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee C09 on Concrete and Concrete Aggregates and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee C09.61 on Testing for Strength.

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2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:²

- C31/C31M Practice for Making and Curing Concrete Test Specimens in the Field
- C42/C42M Test Method for Obtaining and Testing Drilled Cores and Sawed Beams of Concrete
- C125 Terminology Relating to Concrete and Concrete Aggregates
- C192/C192M Practice for Making and Curing Concrete Test Specimens in the Laboratory
- C617/C617M Practice for Capping Cylindrical Concrete Specimens
- C670 Practice for Preparing Precision and Bias Statements for Test Methods for Construction Materials
- C873/C873M Test Method for Compressive Strength of Concrete Cylinders Cast in Place in Cylindrical Molds
- C943 Practice for Making Test Cylinders and Prisms for Determining Strength and Density of Preplaced-Aggregate Concrete in the Laboratory
- C1077 Practice for Agencies Testing Concrete and Concrete Aggregates for Use in Construction and Criteria for Testing Agency Evaluation
- C1176/C1176M Practice for Making Roller-Compacted Concrete in Cylinder Molds Using a Vibrating Table
- C1231/C1231M Practice for Use of Unbonded Caps in Determination of Compressive Strength of Hardened Cylindrical Concrete Specimens
- C1435/C1435M Practice for Molding Roller-Compacted Concrete in Cylinder Molds Using a Vibrating Hammer
- C1604/C1604M Test Method for Obtaining and Testing Drilled Cores of Shotcrete
- E4 Practices for Force Calibration and Verification of Testing Machines
- E18 Test Methods for Rockwell Hardness of Metallic Materials

² For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at www.astm.org/contact. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

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

E74 Practices for Calibration and Verification for Force-Measuring Instruments

R0030 Manual of Aggregate and Concrete Testing

2.2 AASHTO Standard:³

AASHTO R 119M/R 119 Standard Practice for Grinding the Ends of Cylindrical Concrete Specimens

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—For definitions of terms used in this practice, refer to Terminology C125.

3.2 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.2.1 *bearing block, n*—steel piece to distribute the load from the testing machine to the specimen.

3.2.2 *lower bearing block, n*—steel piece placed under the specimen to distribute the load from the testing machine to the specimen.

3.2.2.1 *Discussion*—The lower bearing block provides a readily machinable surface for maintaining the specified bearing surface. The lower bearing block may also be used to adapt the testing machine to various specimen heights. The lower bearing block is also referred to as *bottom block*, *plain block*, and *false platen*.

3.2.3 *platen, n*—primary bearing surface of the testing machine.

3.2.3.1 *Discussion*—The platen is also referred to as the testing machine *table*.

3.2.4 *spacer, n*—steel piece used to elevate the lower bearing block to accommodate test specimens of various heights.

3.2.4.1 *Discussion*—Spacers are not required to have hardened bearing faces because spacers are not in direct contact with the specimen or the retainers of unbonded caps.

3.2.5 *upper bearing block, n*—steel assembly suspended above the specimen that is capable of tilting to bear uniformly on the top of the specimen.

3.2.5.1 *Discussion*—The upper bearing block is also referred to as the *spherically seated block* and the *suspended block*.

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 This test method consists of applying a compressive axial load to molded cylinders or cores at a rate which is within a prescribed range until failure occurs. The compressive strength of the specimen is calculated by dividing the maximum load attained during the test by the cross-sectional area of the specimen.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 Care must be exercised in the interpretation of the significance of compressive strength determinations by this test method since strength is not a fundamental or intrinsic property of concrete made from given materials. Values obtained will depend on the size and shape of the specimen, batching, mixing

procedures, the methods of sampling, molding, and fabrication and the age, temperature, and moisture conditions during curing.

5.2 This test method is used to determine compressive strength of cylindrical specimens prepared and cured in accordance with Practices C31/C31M, C192/C192M, C617/C617M, C943, C1176/C1176M, C1231/C1231M, C1435/C1435M, and AASHTO R 119M/R 119, and Test Methods C42/C42M, C873/C873M, and C1604/C1604M.

5.3 The results of this test method are used as a basis for quality control of concrete proportioning, mixing, and placing operations; determination of compliance with specifications; control for evaluating effectiveness of admixtures; and similar uses.

5.4 The individual who tests concrete cylinders for acceptance testing shall meet the concrete laboratory technician requirements of Practice C1077, including an examination requiring performance demonstration that is evaluated by an independent examiner.

NOTE 1—Certification equivalent to the minimum guidelines for ACI Concrete Laboratory Technician, Level I or ACI Concrete Strength Testing Technician will satisfy this requirement.

6. Apparatus

6.1 *Testing Machine*—The testing machine shall be of a type having sufficient capacity and capable of providing the rates of loading prescribed in 8.5.

6.1.1 Verify the accuracy of the testing machine in accordance with Practices E4, except that the verified loading range shall be as required in 6.4. Verification is required:

6.1.1.1 Within 13 months of the last calibration,

6.1.1.2 On original installation or immediately after relocation,

6.1.1.3 Immediately after making repairs or adjustments that affect the operation of the force applying system or the values displayed on the load indicating system, except for zero adjustments that compensate for the mass of bearing blocks or specimen, or both, or

6.1.1.4 Whenever there is reason to suspect the accuracy of the indicated loads.

6.1.2 *Design*—The design of the machine must include the following features:

6.1.2.1 The machine must be power operated and must apply the load continuously rather than intermittently, and without shock. If it has only one loading rate (meeting the requirements of 8.5), it must be provided with a supplemental means for loading at a rate suitable for verification. This supplemental means of loading may be power or hand operated.

6.1.2.2 The space provided for test specimens shall be large enough to accommodate, in a readable position, an elastic calibration device which is of sufficient capacity to cover the potential loading range of the testing machine and which complies with the requirements of Practice E74.

NOTE 2—The types of elastic calibration devices most generally available and most commonly used for this purpose are the circular proving ring or load cell.

³ Available from American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), 555 12th St., NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC 20004, <https://transportation.org/store/>, or the ASTM website, www.astm.org.