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Standard Test Method for Determining Air Leakage Rate of Air Barrier Assemblies¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation E2357; 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.

1. Scope

1.1 This test method covers the determination of the air leakage rate of air barrier assemblies that are used in building enclosures. This procedure measures the air leakage of a representative air barrier assembly before and after exposure to specific conditioning cycles and then assigns a rating dependent upon the results. Although this is a laboratory procedure, the method may also be applied to site mockups.

1.2 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as standard. No other units of measurement are included in this 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.*

1.4 *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.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*²

[E283 Test Method for Determining Rate of Air Leakage Through Exterior Windows, Skylights, Curtain Walls, and Doors Under Specified Pressure Differences Across the Specimen](#)

[E330/E330M Test Method for Structural Performance of Exterior Windows, Doors, Skylights and Curtain Walls by Uniform Static Air Pressure Difference](#)

[E631 Terminology of Building Constructions](#)

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee E06 on Performance of Buildings and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee E06.41 on Air Leakage and Ventilation Performance.

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

[E783 Test Method for Field Measurement of Air Leakage Through Installed Exterior Windows and Doors](#)

[E1424 Test Method for Determining the Rate of Air Leakage Through Exterior Windows, Skylights, Curtain Walls, and Doors Under Specified Pressure and Temperature Differences Across the Specimen](#)

[E1677 Specification for Air Barrier \(AB\) Material or Assemblies for Low-Rise Framed Building Walls](#)

[E2178 Test Method for Determining Air Leakage Rate and Calculation of Air Permeance of Building Materials](#)

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions:

3.1.1 For definitions of general terms related to building construction used in this test method, refer to Terminology [E631](#).

3.2 Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:

3.2.1 *air barrier*—a designated “plane” of reduced air flow between different environments.

3.2.2 *air barrier accessory*—a transitional component of the air barrier that provides continuity.

3.2.3 *air barrier assembly*—the air barrier materials and accessories that provide a continuous designated plane to the movement of air through portions of building enclosure assemblies.

3.2.4 *air barrier material*—a primary element that provides a continuous barrier to the movement of air.

3.2.5 *air barrier system*—a combination of air barrier assemblies installed to provide a continuous barrier to the movement of air through building enclosures.

3.2.6 *air leakage rate*—the quantitative measure of air passage through a set surface area of an assembly within a given time period under a pressure differential between the two sides of the assembly.

3.2.7 *building enclosure*—a system of building components and materials designed and installed in such a manner as to provide a barrier between different environments, including dissimilar interior environments.

3.2.8 *continuity*—an uninterrupted succession of air barrier materials, accessories, and assemblies.

3.2.9 *durability*—the ability of a building component to perform its required functions over a period of time within the environment to which it is exposed.

3.2.10 *negative pressure*—air pressure on one side of a building enclosure lower than on the other side.

3.2.11 *positive pressure*—air pressure on one side of a building enclosure higher than on the other side.

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 This test method establishes a specimen preparation protocol with which an air barrier assembly may be evaluated. A test specimen is constructed and tested in separate pressures. Up to three specimens are constructed, each additionally representing different field conditions. Specimen 3 is optional and may be combined with Specimen 2. By applying air pressure differentials across the specimens in stages, the air barrier and system components may be evaluated as to their specific air leakage.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 This method is intended to simulate the performance of various air barrier materials/accessories when combined into an assembly. Based upon the results of the measurements, this procedure then assigns an air leakage rating for the air barrier assembly.

5.2 This method does not purport to establish all criteria necessary for consideration in the selection of an air barrier assembly. The results are intended to be used for comparison purposes and may not represent the field installed performance of the air barrier assembly when installed as part of an air barrier system in a building. However, the results of these tests may be useful in determining the appropriate use of a specified air barrier system assembly.

5.3 This method does not purport to establish all criteria necessary for air barrier systems of all construction types. Test Method [E2178](#) provides an air permeance test method for testing of some air barrier materials. Specification [E1677](#) provides a specification for air barrier systems for low-rise framed building walls.

6. Sampling

6.1 For each air barrier assembly, up to three specimens shall be tested as described in [Annex A1](#). The proponent may elect not to prepare and test specimen three or combine the details of Specimen 3 with Specimen 2.

7. Test Apparatus

7.1 The description of the apparatus in this section is general in nature. Any suitable arrangement of equipment capable of maintaining the required test tolerances is permitted.

7.2 *Test Chamber*—A well-sealed box, wall, or other apparatus into or against which the specimen is mounted and secured for testing. An air supply shall be provided to allow a positive or negative pressure differential to be applied across the specimen without significant extraneous losses. The chamber shall be capable of withstanding the differential test pressures that may be encountered in this procedure. At least

one static air pressure tap shall be provided on each side of the specimen to measure the test pressure differences. The pressure tap shall be located in an area of the chamber in which pressure readings will not be affected by any supply air. The air supply opening to the chamber shall be located in an area in which it does not directly impinge upon the test specimen.

7.2.1 *Supply Air System*—A controllable blower, exhaust fan, or reversible blower designed to provide the required air flow at the specified test pressure difference. The system should provide essentially constant air flow and cyclic loads at the specified test pressure difference for a time period sufficient to obtain readings of air flow.

7.2.2 *Pressure Measuring Apparatus*—A device to measure the differential test pressures to $\pm 2\%$ of setpoint or ± 2.5 Pa, whichever is greater.

7.2.3 *Air Flow Metering System*—A device to measure the air flow into the test chamber or through the test specimen.

7.3 This test method is intended for laboratory use. Persons interested in performing field air leakage tests on air barrier assemblies should reference Test Method [E783](#).

8. Sample Preparation

8.1 Air Leakage and Structural Performance Tests:

8.1.1 As the air barrier assembly is site-assembled, the specimens tested shall be representative of the site assembly. Therefore the test specimens shall be fabricated as prescribed by the proponent in providing for the specimen construction required herein.

8.2 Air Leakage and Structural Performance Test Specimens:

8.2.1 This test method specifies a minimum of (2) specimens for testing. [Annex A2](#) describes the requirements of the test specimens. To meet these requirements, one specimen shall be an opaque wall ([Fig. A1.1](#)) and one specimen shall have penetrations, terminations and connections as outlined in [Annex A2, Fig. A1.2](#). The test specimens are to be conditioned prior to being submitted to the structural performance qualification test program and subsequently, to the air leakage rate procedure. Photographs are to be taken of original test specimens including joining details.

8.3 Conditioning for Tests:

8.3.1 Unless otherwise stated, the specimens shall be tested “as received.” No modifications to the proponents’ assembly instructions are permitted.

8.3.2 If the evaluation of the aged performance of the air barrier assemblies is desired by the proponent, the specimens may be conditioned prior to testing by exposure, ultraviolet radiation or thermal cycling, or both.

9. Test Procedure

9.1 Air Leakage:

9.1.1 The air leakage rate shall be measured at each of the air pressure differences across the test specimen in accordance with Test Method [E283](#).

9.1.2 *Air Leakage Test Conditions*—The air leakage rate of the specimens, for both positive and negative cases, shall be determined with a minimum of seven (7) measurements conducted across the sample in accordance with Test Method