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**Paints and varnishes — Evaluation of sag  
resistance**

*Peintures et vernis — Évaluation de la résistance à la formation de  
festons*

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## 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.

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

The main task of technical committees is to prepare International Standards. 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.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

ISO 16862 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 35, *Paints and varnishes*, Subcommittee SC 9, *General test methods for paints and varnishes*.

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## Introduction

When a wet coat of paint is applied to an inclined surface, the coat will flow down the surface under its own weight with cohesive forces opposing this flow. The balance of rheological and gravitational forces will allow a certain wet-film thickness to be applied without this unwanted flow becoming objectionable. Flow down an inclined surface is normally unstable, particularly if the coat is of uneven thickness, and it is this instability that leads to unsightly sags and tears. For a vertical surface, the gravitational force per unit area of surface, i.e. the stress, is given by  $h \times d \times g$ , where  $h$  is the film thickness in micrometres,  $d$  is the density of the coat of paint in kilograms per cubic metre and  $g$  is the gravitational constant in metres per second squared. The cohesive force per unit area of the surface is given by  $V \times d\nu/dl$ , where  $V$  is the Newtonian viscosity in pascal seconds and  $d\nu/dl$  is the shear rate in reciprocal seconds. This International Standard describes two methods for determining the maximum wet-film thickness of a coating which can be applied to a vertical surface without giving rise to sagging or similar phenomena. The first method is carried out on a small scale using sag index applicators and the second is a larger-scale, practical test.

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# Paints and varnishes — Evaluation of sag resistance

## 1 Scope

This International Standard describes test methods for evaluating the sag resistance (resistance to sagging) of paints, varnishes and similar coating materials (coatings) when applied to a substrate and held in a vertical position.

Evaluation of the sag resistance can be carried out after the coating has been applied as follows:

a) using a sag index applicator on a horizontally placed test panel which is afterwards put into a vertical position,

or

b) using a spray gun for application on a substrate in a vertical position.

NOTE Brush or roller application can also be used provided that an even coating is applied.

This International Standard is applicable to liquid coatings only.

## 2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 1513, *Paints and varnishes — Examination and preparation of samples for testing*

ISO 1514, *Paints and varnishes — Standard panels for testing*

ISO 1517, *Paints and varnishes — Surface-drying test — Ballotini method*

ISO 2808, *Paints and varnishes — Determination of film thickness*

ISO 2884-1, *Paints and varnishes — Determination of viscosity using rotary viscometers — Part 1: Cone-and-plate viscometer operated at a high rate of shear*

ISO 2884-2, *Paints and varnishes — Determination of viscosity using rotary viscometers — Part 2: Disc or ball viscometer operated at a specified speed*

ISO 3270, *Paints and varnishes and their raw materials — Temperatures and humidities for conditioning and testing*

ISO 15528, *Paints, varnishes and raw materials for paints and varnishes — Sampling*

### 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

#### 3.1

##### **sag resistance**

greatest wet-film thickness, in micrometres, of a coating, under specified conditions of application, for a specified substrate and under specified environmental conditions, for which the coating will not have a tendency to flow during the drying process when placed in an inclined position

NOTE 1 This flow is known as sagging.

NOTE 2 Surface appearances typical of sagging are generally characterized by runs, tear drops, curtains or sags.

### 4 Apparatus

**4.1 Sag index applicator**, with gaps of defined clearance as given in Annex A, for applying film stripes of appropriate thickness. Examples of sag index applicators are given in Annex A.

**4.2 Spraying device**, airless or air-assisted, for applying the coating.

**4.3 Wet-film thickness gauge**, with an appropriate range.

**4.4 Stirrer**.

### 5 Sampling

Take a representative sample of the product to be tested, as described in ISO 15528, and prepare the sample for testing, as described in ISO 1513.

### 6 Test panels

Use standard panels prepared in accordance with ISO 1514.

NOTE For the sag index applicator method, glass panels should preferably be used to provide a flat surface over which the applicator will lay down stripes of coating of even thickness. A sag index applicator will not run consistently over a curved substrate.

### 7 Procedure

#### 7.1 Test conditions

Unless otherwise stipulated or agreed, carry out the test under standard conditions, i.e. a temperature of  $(23 \pm 2) ^\circ\text{C}$  and a relative humidity of  $(50 \pm 5) \%$  in accordance with ISO 3270.

The film thickness of a coating material at which sag does not occur when applied in accordance with 7.2.3 and 7.3.3 might differ. The values obtained by these methods are dependent on shear-rate at application, and the temperature. Moisture-cure and water-thinnable coating materials are particularly influenced by the relative humidity. The sagging tendency of two-component coatings is additionally influenced by the period between mixing the components and application.

## 7.2 Using a sag index applicator

### 7.2.1 Principle

Two test panels are coated with the material under test and the sag index applicator is drawn across the panels. The panels are placed vertically and the thickest stripe which shows no sign of sagging is noted on each panel. The actual wet-film thickness of each stripe is measured on a third panel.

### 7.2.2 General

A pre-shear programme is essential for a drawdown sag test to duplicate the breakdown in structure that occurs when thixotropic paints are applied by brush or another practical application method. The procedure therefore includes the pre-shearing of paints just prior to application. The rate of rotation and time of stirring shall be agreed between interested parties.

NOTE 1 Examples of procedures for pre-shearing are given in ASTM D 4400, which is an equivalent method using an applicator blade.

The wet-film thickness obtained through application is, depending on viscosity, rheology and application speed, smaller than the gap depth of the applicator. For this reason, it is necessary to determine the actual wet-film thickness applied and record this along with the largest gap size which does not produce sagging.

NOTE 2 If the test is being carried out for quality control purposes as a pass/fail test, then measurement of actual wet-film thickness may not be necessary.

Select a sag index applicator which will lay down a range of wet-film thicknesses which includes that specified for the product being tested. It may be necessary to determine which range is most suitable by experiment.

NOTE 3 For example, for a thixotropic thick film material with a sag resistance of approximately 60  $\mu\text{m}$  of wet film, a blade with a 450  $\mu\text{m}$  maximum gap depth should be used. In the case of a polyurethane finishing paint with a flow time of approximately 60 s through a cup with a 4 mm orifice, in accordance with ISO 2431, and a sag resistance of 60  $\mu\text{m}$ , a blade with a maximum depth of 150  $\mu\text{m}$  will suffice.

Ensure that the test panels are clean and dry. If necessary, clean with a suitable solvent and wipe dry with clean tissue or lint-free cloth.

### 7.2.3 Application

Lay one test panel horizontally and secure it over a sheet of tissue paper on a firm surface.

Place the sag index applicator on one end of the horizontal test panel with the clearance gaps facing downwards.

Carry out the agreed pre-shear programme (see 7.2.2) and immediately pour sufficient coating material against the applicator near the edge with the clearance gaps, avoiding bubble formation. Ensure that there is sufficient paint to enable properly formed stripes to be drawn down over a length of at least 100 mm, with excess paint being carried to the end of the panel and on to the tissue underneath.

Using a guide as necessary, immediately draw the applicator through the wet paint at a constant speed and with firm downward pressure so that separate stripes of wet paint are cleanly formed. If stripes which are not straight or which do not have clearly defined edges are formed, discard the test panel and repeat the application on a fresh panel.

NOTE Examples of methods for the automated application of paint films are described in ASTM D 823.

Immediately place the test panel in a vertical position with the stripes horizontal and with the smallest film thickness at the top.

Repeat the application procedure on a second panel.

Using a third panel, repeat the application procedure, keeping the force and application speed constant, and, with the panel still horizontal, immediately measure the wet-film thickness at the centre of each stripe in accordance with ISO 2808.

Allow air-drying coatings to achieve the surface-dry condition in accordance with ISO 1517 under the conditions given in 7.1.

In the case of stoving enamels, allow the coating to flash off in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions in a drying cabinet and bake at an agreed temperature. During the entire drying process, the test panels shall stand in a vertical position.

#### **7.2.4 Determination**

Once the coating has been allowed to flash off, assess the sag resistance by identifying the lowest (thickest) stripe which did not sag on each panel. Assess only the centre portion of the applied coating, disregarding portions of the stripe at the start and finish of the drawdown (nominally 10 mm) which might not be consistent in film thickness.

Using the wet-film thickness measurements taken on the third test panel, determine the actual wet-film thickness corresponding to the largest sag applicator gap size at which sagging did not occur.

NOTE Depending upon the rheology of the coating, sagging can occur immediately after application or several minutes thereafter. It is important to allow sufficient time between application and determination to ensure that the coating will not sag at a later time.

### **7.3 Using a spray gun for application**

#### **7.3.1 Principle**

A test panel is placed vertically and coated with an even thickness of the material under test. A line is drawn across the panel and, after a period of time, any signs of sagging are noted. The test is repeated, increasing or decreasing the coating thickness until the thickest coating with no signs of sagging is obtained.

#### **7.3.2 General**

In the case of spray application, the film thickness obtainable without sagging is dependent on the application method (e.g. high-pressure compressed-air spraying, airless spraying with or without air support) and the standardized processing viscosity. Consult the manufacturer's instructions to determine the appropriate orifice and fan size to be used with the material under test.

The test panels shall be of the substrate to which the coating will be applied most often in practice, or as otherwise agreed, with minimum dimensions of 100 mm × 300 mm. If necessary, the coating material may be adjusted to the application viscosity, reporting the thinner addition as a percentage by mass or volume [see Clause 10, item f)] and the viscosity determined in accordance with one of the parts of ISO 2884.

#### **7.3.3 Application**

NOTE 1 It is recommended that the person applying the coating with the spray gun has sufficient experience with this apparatus, as it is more difficult to obtain a homogeneous film thickness with a spray gun.

Place a test panel vertically and, taking care to apply the coating uniformly across the panel, apply the coating to the wet-film thickness required.

Verify the uniformity of the wet-film thickness in accordance with ISO 2808. Do not use panels which have any indications of uneven film thickness in the assessment.

Immediately after taking wet-film thickness measurements, draw a thin line horizontally across the panel, approximately 150 mm from the top edge, but avoiding marks made by wet-film thickness measurements, and cutting through the wet paint and exposing the substrate. Include the nominal width of the line in the test report.

NOTE 2 It is convenient to use a non-critical edge of the wet-film thickness gauge to score this line, provided that there is no possibility of damaging the gauge, e.g. on a blast-cleaned panel.

Re-check the wet-film thickness immediately above the horizontal score line and record the measurement.

NOTE 3 It is convenient to record film thickness measurements on the reverse of the test panel. This reduces the likelihood of confusion if several test panels are coated.

Remove the test panel from the immediate application area and allow the coating to flash off in a vertical position. Check for signs of sagging as described in 7.3.4.

#### 7.3.4 Determination

Examine the test panel for signs of sagging immediately after the horizontal line is drawn and also after a suitable flash-off period.

NOTE Depending upon the rheology of the coating, sagging might be observed almost immediately after application, or might take several minutes to occur. It is advisable to re-check all test panels once the coating is touch dry.

If the film thickness at which the coating is resistant to sagging is exceeded, the horizontal line will start to fill up, move or disappear completely, i.e. sag.

Assess the whole panel area for defects such as tears, runs and sags, including the score mark.

Repeat the application and determination using a new test panel and applying a lower wet-film thickness if signs of sagging were noted on the first test panel, or a higher wet-film thickness if no sagging was observed.

Repeat as necessary until the maximum thickness without signs of sagging has been determined.

## 8 Expression of results

### 8.1 General

Comb-type wet-film thickness gauges have teeth which vary in uniform steps. It is therefore only possible to quote the sag resistance as the highest value obtained on the gauge. For example, if the gauge has teeth which vary in 25  $\mu\text{m}$  steps, and the highest wet-film thickness value obtained is 250  $\mu\text{m}$ , then the actual sag resistance lies between 250  $\mu\text{m}$  and 275  $\mu\text{m}$ .

### 8.2 Sag index applicator method

For the sag index applicator method, report the highest gap size, in micrometres, at which sagging was not observed, and the actual measured wet-film thickness, in micrometres, corresponding to that gap size. If the result obtained from the two test panels differs, report the lower of the two results as the sag resistance.

If the result obtained from the two test panels differs by a value of greater than one gap size on the sag index applicator, the test shall be repeated.

### 8.3 Spray application method

For the spray application method, report the wet-film thickness, in micrometres, at which no sagging was observed.

## 9 Precision

Precision data for a related method using an applicator blade are given in ASTM D 4400.

## 10 Test report

The test report shall contain at least the following information:

- a) all details necessary to identify the product tested;
- b) a reference to this International Standard and its date of publication (ISO 16862:2003);
- c) the application method as described in 7.2 or 7.3 and, in the case of 7.3, the application method used and the nominal width of the line drawn across the panel;
- d) the substrate to which the paint under test was applied;
- e) the temperature and relative humidity during the test;
- f) the viscosity of the coating material and the type and quantity of the thinner added, if any;
- g) the pre-shear procedure used;
- h) the drying conditions;
- i) the maximum wet-film thickness, in micrometres, that does not show sagging;
- j) any deviations from the test method specified and any additional conditions;
- k) any other defects observed;
- l) the date of the test.

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