
**Preparation of steel substrates before
application of paints and related
products — Surface roughness
characteristics of blast-cleaned steel
substrates —**

Part 2:

**Method for the grading of surface
profile of abrasive blast-cleaned steel —
Comparator procedure**

*Préparation des subjectiles d'acier avant application de peintures et
de produits assimilés — Caractéristiques de rugosité des subjectiles
d'acier décapés —*

*Partie 2: Méthode de classification d'un profil de surface en acier décapée
par projection d'abrasif — Utilisation des comparateurs viso-tactiles*



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ISO copyright office
Case postale 56 • CH-1211 Geneva 20
Tel. + 41 22 749 01 11
Fax + 41 22 749 09 47
E-mail copyright@iso.org
Web www.iso.org

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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 8503-2 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 35, *Paints and varnishes*, Subcommittee SC 12, *Preparation of steel substrates before application of paints and related products*.

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO 8503-2:1988), which has been technically revised.

ISO 8503 consists of the following parts, under the general title *Preparation of steel substrates before application of paints and related products — Surface roughness characteristics of blast-cleaned steel substrates*:

- *Part 1: Specifications and definitions for ISO surface profile comparators for the assessment of abrasive blast-cleaned surfaces*
- *Part 2: Method for the grading of surface profile of abrasive blast-cleaned steel — Comparator procedure*
- *Part 3: Method for the calibration of ISO surface profile comparators and for the determination of surface profile — Focusing microscope procedure*
- *Part 4: Method for the calibration of ISO surface profile comparators and for the determination of surface profile — Stylus instrument procedure*
- *Part 5: Replica tape method for the determination of the surface profile*

Introduction

The performance of protective coatings of paint and related products applied to steel is significantly affected by the state of the steel surface immediately prior to painting. The principal factors that are known to influence this performance are:

- a) the presence of rust and mill scale;
- b) the presence of surface contaminants, including salts, dust, oils and greases;
- c) the surface profile.

International Standards ISO 8501 (all parts), ISO 8502 (all parts) and ISO 8503 (all parts) have been prepared to provide methods of assessing these factors, while ISO 8504 (all parts) provides guidance on the preparation methods that are available for cleaning steel substrates, indicating the capabilities of each in attaining specified levels of cleanliness.

These International Standards do not contain provisions for the protective coating systems to be applied to the steel surface or for the surface quality provisions for specific situations, even though surface quality can have a direct influence on the choice of protective coating to be applied and on its performance. Such provisions are found in other documents such as national standards and codes of practice.

It is necessary for the users of these International Standards to ensure that the qualities specified are:

- compatible and appropriate both for the environmental conditions to which the steel is exposed and for the protective coating system to be used;
- within the capability of the cleaning procedure specified.

The four International Standards referred to above deal with the following aspects of preparation of steel substrates:

- ISO 8501: Visual assessment of surface cleanliness;
- ISO 8502: Tests for the assessment of surface cleanliness;
- ISO 8503: Surface roughness characteristics of blast-cleaned steel substrates;
- ISO 8504: Surface preparation methods.

Irrespective of the procedures and the type of abrasive used for the preparation of steel substrates, the surface after blast-cleaning consists of random irregularities with peaks and valleys that are not easily characterized. Consequently, it was concluded that, because of this random nature, no method is capable of giving a precise value for the profile. Thus, it is intended that the profile be identified as either dimpled (where shot abrasives are used) or angular (where grit abrasives are used) and that it be graded as “fine”, “medium” or “coarse”, each grade being defined by the limits specified in ISO 8503-1. These surface characteristics are considered to give sufficient distinguishing features for most painting requirements.

Particular attention, however, is drawn to the fact that the grades “fine”, “medium” and “coarse” represent different ranges in terms of roughness parameters, dependent upon whether these grades are applied to shot abrasive or grit abrasive blast-cleaned surfaces. In consequence, the effect produced on a given coating by a given grade “fine”, “medium” or “coarse” is determined not only by the specific surface character but also by the specific roughness value $\overline{R_{y5}}$ or $\overline{h_y}$ belonging to that grade. Where surface profile is particularly important, both the grade of the surface profile (“fine”, “medium” or “coarse”) and the type of abrasive which is to be used are to be specified.

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Preparation of steel substrates before application of paints and related products — Surface roughness characteristics of blast-cleaned steel substrates —

Part 2: Method for the grading of surface profile of abrasive blast-cleaned steel — Comparator procedure

1 Scope

This part of ISO 8503 describes a visual and tactile method for assessing the grade of the profile which is produced by one of the abrasive blast-cleaning procedures described in ISO 8504-2.

The method uses ISO surface profile comparators for assessing, on site, the roughness of surfaces before the application of paint or other protective treatments.

NOTE Where appropriate, ISO surface profile comparators can be used for assessing the roughness profile of other abrasive blast-cleaned substrates and, in addition, their use is not restricted solely to surfaces that are to be painted.

The method is applicable to steel surfaces which have been blast-cleaned by use of either shot abrasives or grit abrasives, but is only applicable to grades Sa 2½ and Sa 3 of ISO 8501-1 where the entire surface under test shows an overall blast-cleaned appearance.

It is applicable to surfaces which have been cleaned with either metallic or non-metallic abrasives.

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 8501-1, *Preparation of steel substrates before application of paints and related products — Visual assessment of surface cleanliness — Part 1: Rust grades and preparation grades of uncoated steel substrates and of steel substrates after overall removal of previous coatings*

ISO 8503-1:2012, *Preparation of steel substrates before application of paints and related products — Surface roughness characteristics of blast-cleaned steel substrates — Part 1: Specifications and definitions for ISO surface profile comparators for the assessment of abrasive blast-cleaned surfaces*

ISO 8503-3, *Preparation of steel substrates before application of paints and related products — Surface roughness characteristics of blast-cleaned steel substrates — Part 3: Method for the calibration of ISO surface profile comparators and for the determination of surface profile — Focusing microscope procedure*

ISO 8503-4, *Preparation of steel substrates before application of paints and related products — Surface roughness characteristics of blast-cleaned steel substrates — Part 4: Method for the calibration of ISO surface profile comparators and for the determination of surface profile — Stylus instrument procedure*

ISO 8504-2, *Preparation of steel substrates before application of paints and related products — Surface preparation methods — Part 2: Abrasive blast-cleaning*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the definitions given in ISO 8503-1 apply.

4 Principle

The surface profile of the test surface is compared by visual or tactile means with the profile of each of the segments of a calibrated ISO surface profile comparator to identify the two segments between the profiles of which the test surface lies. The results are converted to the appropriate grading: “fine”, “medium” or “coarse”.

5 Apparatus

5.1 ISO surface profile comparator, calibrated, conforming to the requirements of ISO 8503-1 or other comparator design and configuration with four segments that conform to the profiles specified in ISO 8503-1.

NOTE In ISO 8503-1, two comparators are specified: one with surface profiles corresponding to surfaces which have been blast-cleaned using grit abrasives (reference comparator G) and one with surface profiles corresponding to surfaces which have been blast-cleaned using metallic shot abrasives (reference comparator S). The nominal values for these profiles, which identify the limits of the three grades “fine”, “medium” and “coarse”, are given in ISO 8503-1.

If a mixture of shot and grit abrasives is used to blast-clean a substrate, the grit-abrasive reference comparator G should preferably be used.

Some abrasives (for example cast steel and cut wire) change their shape during use so that the “new” abrasive gives an angular profile, but a “working mix” gives a rounded profile. Hence, the relevant comparator should be selected for these abrasives (described in ISO 8504-2).

5.2 Hand lens, with magnification not exceeding $\times 7$.

6 Maintenance and re-calibration of comparators

Comparators require careful handling. If any wear is detected, the comparator shall be discarded or, if appropriate, re-calibrated (see ISO 8503-1:2012, Clause 7).

Comparators in frequent use should be checked against an unused comparator at three-monthly intervals or whenever the surface appears worn or damaged. If a segment of a used comparator, when compared with the equivalent segment of an unused comparator, yields a different grading assessment (see this part of ISO 8503) of a surface profile, the used comparator should be discarded or re-calibrated.

7 Procedure

7.1 Remove all loose dust and debris from the test surface. Sharp edges due to mechanical or flame cutting, boring, etc., are not considered part of the primary profile and should be removed by grinding prior to abrasive blast-cleaning.

7.2 Select the appropriate surface profile comparator (5.1) and place it against an area of the surface. Compare, in turn, the test surface with the four segments of the comparator, using the hand lens (5.2) if necessary (see the Note). If the hand lens is used, place it so that the test surface is viewed simultaneously with a segment of the comparator.

Assess the profiles on the comparator which are nearest to the profile of the test surface and, from these, determine its grade (see Table 1).

Table 1 — Limits of profile grades

Fine	Profiles equal to segment 1 and up to but excluding segment 2
Medium	Profiles equal to segment 2 and up to but excluding segment 3
Coarse	Profiles equal to segment 3 and up to but excluding segment 4

NOTE If visual assessment proves difficult, tactile assessment provides a useful guide. It is possible to assess the closest grading by passing either the back of the fingernail or a wooden stylus held between thumb and forefinger alternately over the test surface and the segments of the comparator.

7.3 Repeat the test with the comparator adjacent to each of the areas of the test surface, as required [see Clause 8, item c) 1].

7.4 Record the grades for all areas of the test surface. If any profile is assessed as below the lower limit for the “fine” grading, report the grading as “finer than fine”.

If any profile is assessed as above the upper limit for the “coarse” grading, report the grading as “coarser than coarse”.

7.5 When the condition of the steel which has been blast-cleaned, is such that the primary profile (see the Note to Clause 8) prevents assessment of the roughness of the secondary profile, carry out the assessment on a flat coupon of steel of equivalent specification which has been cleaned by the same procedure as the test surface, using the same abrasive, and state in the test report that

- a) direct assessment of the secondary profile was not possible due to the condition of the surface prior to blast-cleaning, and
- b) the blast-cleaning process employed produced a secondary profile of Grade ...¹⁾ as measured on a flat coupon of steel of equivalent specification to the test material.

NOTE 1 If the condition of the steel is such that it is necessary to adopt the procedure described in 7.5, the contributory effect of the primary profile on the profile obtained after blast-cleaning is such that the original painting specification can be reviewed.

NOTE 2 When surfaces are subject to re-blasting operations, the initial profile can override the secondary profile normally expected from the type of abrasive and conditions used in the re-blasting operations.

7.6 In cases of dispute, a representative sample of the surface shall be provided and measured as described in ISO 8503-3 or ISO 8503-4.

NOTE In the absence of agreement, measurement by the method described in ISO 8503-3 is the reference procedure.

8 Test report

The test report shall contain at least the following information:

- a) a reference to this part of ISO 8503, i.e. ISO 8503-2:2012;
- b) all information necessary for the identification of the steel substrate(s) tested;

1) Insert “fine”, “medium” or “coarse”, as appropriate.