



# Standard Test Method for Conducting Time-to-Failure (Creep-Rupture) Tests of Joints Fabricated from Nonbituminous Organic Roof Membrane Material<sup>1</sup>

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D5405/D5405M; 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 ( $\epsilon$ ) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

## 1. Scope

1.1 This test method covers laboratory determination of the time-to-failure (creep-rupture) of joints fabricated from nonbituminous organic roof membrane material. The test method covers both T-peel and lap-shear joints subjected to constant tensile load under controlled environmental conditions. The joints, made from either unreinforced or fabric-reinforced membrane material, are prepared in the laboratory or sampled from roofs in service.

1.2 Sheet materials from which the joints are fabricated include vulcanized rubbers, nonvulcanized polymeric sheets, and thermoplastics. The bonding methods for joint formation include the use of liquid-based adhesives, preformed tapes, and thermal and solvent weld processes.

1.3 The values stated in either SI units or inch-pound units are to be regarded separately as standard. 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.

1.4 *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 and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

## 2. Referenced Documents

### 2.1 ASTM Standards:<sup>2</sup>

D816 Test Methods for Rubber Cements  
D907 Terminology of Adhesives

<sup>1</sup> This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D08 on Roofing and Waterproofing and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D08.18 on Nonbituminous Organic Roof Coverings.

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<sup>2</sup> For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, [www.astm.org](http://www.astm.org), or contact ASTM Customer Service at [service@astm.org](mailto:service@astm.org). For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

D1079 Terminology Relating to Roofing and Waterproofing  
D1876 Test Method for Peel Resistance of Adhesives (T-Peel Test)

## 3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—For definitions of terms used in this test method, refer to Terminology D907 and D1079.

### 3.2 Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:

3.2.1 *creep-rupture test*—a test that measures the time-to-failure of a specimen subjected to a constant load; progressive specimen deformation may also be measured.

3.2.2 *failure*—rupture of the bond resulting in complete separation of its adherends under the test conditions; or, alternatively, rupture of the membrane material away from the bonded section of the test specimen (that is, material rupture).

3.2.3 *time-to-failure*—the period of time beginning when a joint specimen is placed under load and ending when failure occurs.

## 4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 This test method is a creep-rupture test without measurement of specimen deformation. The time-to-failure, in hours, of joints fabricated from nonbituminous organic roof membrane materials is measured when subject to constant deadweight loads under controlled temperature and humidity conditions.

## 5. Significance and Use

5.1 An important factor affecting the performance of joints of nonbituminous membranes is their ability to remain bonded over the membrane's expected service life. Time-to-failure tests provide a means of characterizing the behavior of joints under constant load over time.

5.2 Creep is a sensitive index of rheological properties that depend on material, load, temperature, and time. Time-to-failure data that are obtained over a relatively short time period can evaluate one factor affecting a joint's ability to withstand static loading over a relatively long time period.

5.3 Time-to-failure data for joints of nonbituminous organic roof membrane specimens can be used for the following: (1) to

provide a measure of the load-carrying ability of the joint as a function of time at various levels of load, temperature, and relative humidity; (2) to characterize the joint with regard to factors affecting performance, such as surface preparation of the adherend, solvent-based adhesive thickness and open time, environment during adhesive application and cure, and temperature of thermal welding processes; and (3) to compare the effects of different bonding processes or adhesive bonding materials on joint performance.

5.4 While it is considered that the results obtained by this laboratory test may afford a measure of the performance of seams in service, provided that load, temperature, and humidity conditions are known, no direct correlation has been established.

## 6. Apparatus

6.1 *Test Chamber*, of sufficient size to hold a minimum of 15 specimens. The height of the chamber shall be sufficient to allow suspension of the deadweight loads and specimen deformation during testing. The chamber shall be structurally capable of supporting the loads anticipated during testing without appreciable deflection.

NOTE 1—A minimum height of 600 mm [24 in.] is suitable for the specimen sizes described in this test method if they are not extremely extensible. A taller chamber may be needed if they are extremely extensible.

6.1.1 *Temperature and Humidity Control*—The control of temperature and humidity is important, since small changes in these variables may produce large changes in time-to-failure. The temperature and relative humidity within the chamber shall be controlled within  $\pm 3^{\circ}\text{C}$  [ $\pm 5^{\circ}\text{F}$ ] and  $\pm 5\%$  relative humidity, respectively, over the duration of the test. Any deviations from these limits shall be given in the test report. The selected temperature and humidity conditions shall be uniform throughout the enclosed space ( $\pm 3^{\circ}\text{C}$  or  $\pm 5^{\circ}\text{F}$  and  $\pm 5\%$  relative humidity). If this uniformity is achieved through mechanical air circulation, it shall not cause the specimens to sway, vibrate, or be otherwise disturbed.

NOTE 2—Suggested test conditions are as follows: (1) normal ambient temperature (approximately  $23^{\circ}\text{C}$  or  $73^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) and humidity (50 % relative humidity); and (2) extremes to which the seams may be subjected in service.

6.2 *Specimen and Load Clamping*—The chamber shall be equipped with a means for clamping the joint specimens vertically to the top of the interior of the chamber, or other suitable upper support. Also, a clamp shall be provided to secure the deadweight loads to the bottom of the joint specimens. Figs. 1 and 2 show a suggested clamping arrangement including the deadweight load.

6.3 *Deadweight Loads*, of appropriate mass (see Section 10).

NOTE 3—It is convenient to have available a means of providing variable loads that may differ from test to test, depending on the properties of the joint specimens and test conditions. Hollow pipe nipples containing lead shot and sealed with end caps provide convenient deadweights. The mass of the deadweights is adjusted by adding or removing lead shot.

6.4 *Load Application Mechanism*—This device allows for placing all of the joint specimens under load simultaneously.

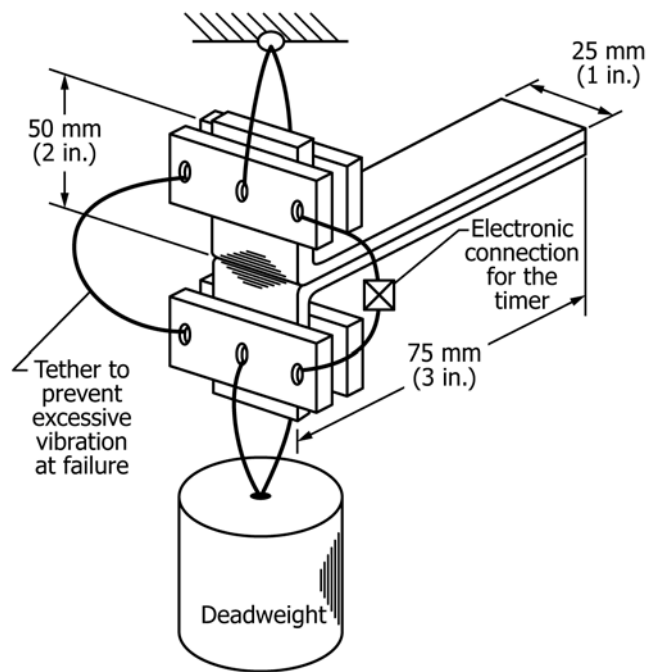


FIG. 1 Schematic of a T-Peel Specimen Clamped Under Load

An example of such a device is a large tray, suspended on pulleys, which supports the loads attached to the bottom of the specimens. Lowering the tray allows all test specimens and deadweights attached to them to be suspended freely at once.

NOTE 4—If each specimen has its own timer device (see 6.5), it is not necessary to load all specimens simultaneously.

6.5 *Timer Device*, for recording the total time over which each individual specimen is under load, or for marking the time at which failure of each specimen occurs. The sensitivity of the timer shall be as follows:

Failure Time	Timer Sensitivity
$\leq 25$ h	0.1 min
$> 25$ and $\leq 100$ h	0.01 h
$> 100$ h	0.1 h

NOTE 5—For investigations involving multiple specimens in the chamber, a computer-controlled timer that records the time-to-failure has been found to be satisfactory. In this case, a micro-electrical circuit connected to the computer is set up for each specimen. The circuit consists of a wire loop, of which one segment is a short length of wire (trigger wire) attached to each grip on the test specimen and set to stop the computer clock when failure occurs. At the point of attachment at the top grip, the trigger wire is inserted in an electrical connector. When the specimen fails and the deadweight on the lower grip falls, the trigger wire is pulled from the connector, breaking the circuit and stopping the clock.

## 7. Vibration Control

7.1 Because the time-to-failure tests are sensitive to vibration, select a location of the testing apparatus for minimum disturbance. When a vibration-free location is not available, the testing apparatus shall be designed so that the specimens are isolated from vibration. In addition, precautions shall be taken to avoid vibration caused by the falling deadweights at specimen failure. Caution shall be exercised during testing to avoid vibration due to normal laboratory activities such as opening and closing doors and bench drawers.

## CREEP-RUPTURE - LAP SHEAR

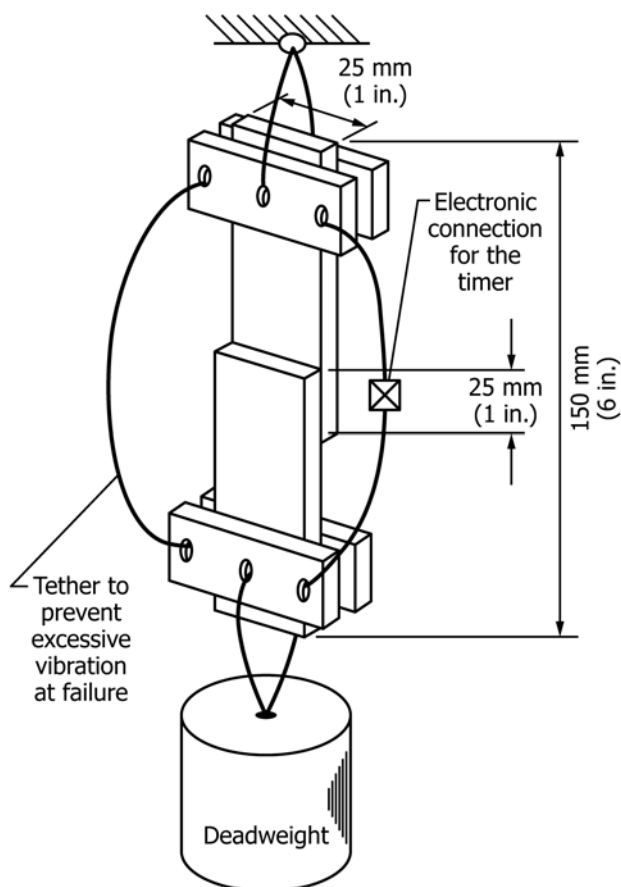


FIG. 2 Schematic of a Lap-Shear Specimen Clamped Under Load

NOTE 6—A wire cord, attached to the deadweight and also upper specimen clamp, minimizes vibration at specimen failure. The cord length must be long enough to allow free fall of the deadweight, but short enough to prevent it from striking the floor of the test chamber.

## 8. Test Specimens

### 8.1 Laboratory Specimens:

8.1.1 The time-to-failure tests are conducted on either T-peel or lap-shear specimens. Test specimen variables that can affect time-to-failure include, depending on the seam fabrication technique, the method of membrane material surface preparation, adhesive thickness, adhesive open time, pressure applied during bond formation, thermal weld temperature, and weld equipment speed. Other variables that can affect time-to-failure are time, temperature, and relative humidity of the specimen cure.

8.1.2 *T-Peel Specimens*—Prepare T-peel test specimens, 125 by 25 mm [5 by 1 in.],  $\pm 2\%$ , as shown in Fig. 3. The length of the bond shall be 75 mm [3 in.]  $\pm 2\%$ . The test specimens may be cut from a single section prepared by bonding two large pieces of sheet membrane material. If specimens having dimensions other than those specified are tested, they shall be described in the test report. Prior to bond formation, prepare the surface of the sheet material according to the membrane manufacturer's instructions, or using other methods that shall

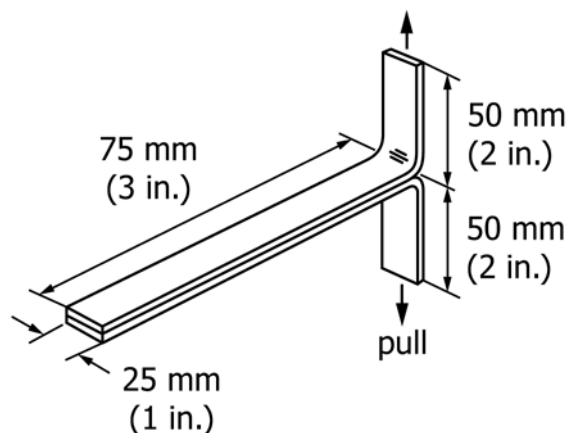


FIG. 3 Configuration and Dimensions of a T-Peel Specimen

be described in the test report. Similarly, form the joint using a process (that is, adhesive tape, or thermal or solvent weld) in accordance with the membrane manufacturer's instructions, or using other methods that shall be described in the test report. The use of test specimens whose preparation includes additional materials such as primers or sealants is permissible. When adhesives are used, control the thickness to  $\pm 20\%$  of the value selected for the test specimens (see 8.1.5). Label each specimen with an identification number.

8.1.3 *Lap-Shear Specimens*—Prepare lap-shear test specimens, 150 by 25 mm [6 by 1 in.],  $\pm 2\%$ , as shown in Fig. 4. The length of the bonded lap shall be 25 mm [1 in.]  $\pm 2\%$ . If specimens having dimensions other than those specified are tested, they shall be described in the test report. The sheet surface preparation and bond formation shall be as given in 8.1.2. Label each specimen with an identification number.

8.1.4 *Specimen Cure*—The temperature and relative humidity conditions under which the test specimens are prepared and cured shall be selected by the experimenter and described in the test report. The temperature and relative humidity shall be maintained within  $\pm 3^\circ\text{C}$  [ $\pm 5^\circ\text{F}$ ] and  $\pm 5\%$  relative humidity of the selected values, respectively.

8.1.5 *Adhesive Thickness*—When a liquid-based adhesive or tape is used for bond formation, measure the dry-film adhesive or tape thickness of each specimen using a convenient laboratory method. Describe the measurement method in the test report.

NOTE 7—One method for controlling the thickness of the liquid-based adhesive layer is to use a drawdown bar or similar device during application of the adhesive to the membrane sheet. Another method is to apply the wet liquid-based adhesive to the membrane sheet at a coverage quantity based on the solids content of the adhesive. In such cases,

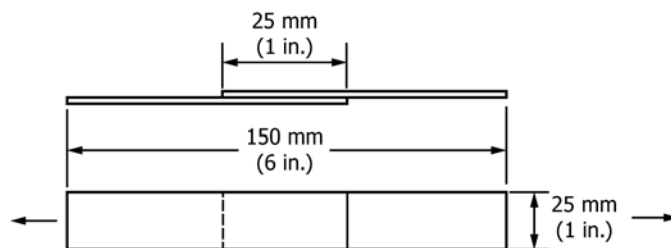


FIG. 4 Configuration and Dimensions of a Lap-Shear Specimen

measurements should be performed to establish the thickness-coverage relation; if necessary, consult with the membrane manufacturer for assistance in determining coverage quantities that will provide specific adhesive thicknesses.

## 8.2 Field Specimens:

8.2.1 T-peel or lap-shear specimens, having the dimensions given in Figs. 1 and 2, respectively, may be prepared from seams sampled from roofs in service. If the specimens have dimensions other than those given in Figs. 1 and 2, the specimen dimensions shall be given in the test report. In the case of lap-shear specimens, when the length of the bond is greater than that given in Fig. 2, precautions must be taken to select sufficiently high deadloads so that failure will occur in a reasonable testing time.

8.2.2 Record all available pertinent information, including, but not limited to, specimen age and type, type of membrane attachment, and location of the roof, in the test report.

## 9. Number of Test Specimens and Bond Strength

9.1 Prepare a sufficient number of specimens to conduct both bond strength measurement and time-to-failure tests.

NOTE 8—A newly prepared joint may change with time due to mechanisms such as cure, solvent evaporation, or crystallization. This results in a bond strength that increases with time initially and then reaches a constant value. In such cases, it is necessary to provide time-to-failure specimens that have been cured over a time period sufficient that their bond strength is constant. Determination of the constant bond strength will influence the number of specimens necessary to conduct this test method. Pretesting the bond strength of some specimens over time is useful to estimate the time at which constant strength is attained under the cure conditions.

9.2 Test the bond strength (see 9.2.1 and 9.2.2) of sets of a minimum of three joint specimens (either T-peel or lap-shear) periodically, and plot the strength results versus time. Use a minimum of four time intervals at least one day apart. The bond strength of the specimen shall be considered to be constant when the slope of the bond strength-time curve does not differ from zero significantly.

9.2.1 *Peel Strength*—Determine the peel strength as described in Test Method D1876, using test specimens as described in Fig. 3 of this test method. Apply the load at a constant head speed of 0.8 mm/s [2 in./min].

9.2.2 *Shear Strength*—Determine the shear strength using the procedure given in Test Methods D816, Method B, using test specimens as described in Fig. 4 of this test method. Apply the load at a constant head speed of 0.8 mm/s [2 in./min].

9.3 A minimum of 15 joint specimens shall be included in the time-to-failure tests for each condition of load, temperature, and humidity.

NOTE 9—Fifteen specimens provide a reasonable number for statistical treatment of the time-to-failure data.

## 10. Determination of Loads for Time-to-Failure Tests

10.1 Select the load such that the time-to-failure is, in general, neither excessively short (<0.1 h) nor long (>1000 h). The load shall be within 1 % of that selected. The mass of the lower clamp is included as part of the load applied. Report the load under which the test was conducted in the test report.

NOTE 10—Loads may be selected based on those expected to be

experienced by the seam in service. Pretesting specimens under selected loads is useful to estimate the time-to-failure of the specimens for the loading conditions used in this test method.

NOTE 11—Conducting successive tests at loads that are multiples of each other provides a means for determining the effect of load on the creep-rupture life of the joint specimen.

## 11. Procedure

11.1 Place the specimens in the upper clamps of the chamber by gripping 25 mm [1 in.],  $\pm 10$  %, of the free (unadhered) specimen end. Take care to avoid eccentric loading of the specimen.

11.2 Attach the lower clamps and selected loads to the specimens; grip 25 mm. [1.0 in.],  $\pm 10$  %, of the free end of the specimens in the clamps. The initial distances between the clamps are thus 50 mm [2 in.] and 100 mm [4 in.] for the T-peel and lap-shear specimens, respectively. Avoid pre-loading by preventing the deadweights from being suspended prematurely. Check the entire assembly of specimen and loading mechanism for alignment; make changes, as necessary, in the assembly until alignment is obtained.

11.3 Condition the specimens under the selected temperature and humidity conditions in the chamber for a minimum of 16 h.

11.4 Load all specimens simultaneously by lowering the load-application tray (if individual timers are not used). Apply the loads quickly but gently to avoid vibration of the specimens.

11.5 Record the time and date at which the specimens are loaded.

11.6 Record the time and date at which each specimen fails.

11.7 Conduct the tests until either all of the specimens fail, or until at least 50 % of the specimens have failed and it is determined to be impractical to continue the tests further.

NOTE 12—The determination of whether it is impractical to continue the tests may depend on the analysis and interpretation of the data.

11.8 Record the number of specimens that do not fail during the test period.

11.9 Record whether failure of the specimens occurs within or outside of the bond area.

11.9.1 Examine the specimens failing within the bond area for mode of failure, for example, whether it is adhesive, cohesive, or a combination of the two; record the observed mode of bond failure.

11.9.2 Examine the specimens failing outside the bond area for mode of failure, for example, whether the material ruptured (teared) or the polymeric coating delaminated from a reinforcement; record the observations.

## 12. Report

12.1 For specimens prepared in the laboratory, report the following information:

12.1.1 Complete identification of the membrane sheet material tested, including type, source, and manufacturer.

12.1.2 Complete identification of the bonding technique, that is, adhesive, tape, or thermal or solvent weld.



12.1.3 When adhesives or tapes are used, complete identification of the materials, including type, source, manufacturer, date manufactured, and shelf-life.

12.1.4 When thermal welding is used, the temperature of the process.

12.1.5 Type of joint test specimens, that is, T-peel or lap-shear.

12.1.6 Description of pertinent bond-formation factors such as the method of preparing the sheet surface, pressure applied, open time of liquid-based adhesives, and temperatures of thermal welds.

12.1.7 When warranted, method of measuring the adhesive thickness, including the procedure, locations of measurements on the specimen, average thickness, range, and standard deviation.

12.1.8 Cure conditions of the specimens.

12.1.9 Strength of the specimens attained after cure, tested in accordance with 9.2.

12.1.10 Number of specimens used and test conditions in the time-to-failure test, including the applied loads, temperature, and relative humidity. Indicate any deviations from the selected temperature and humidity conditions.

12.1.11 Times and dates at which the time-to-failure tests began and ended.

12.1.12 Times-to-failure for each specimen, whether failure was within or outside the bond, mode of bond failure, (adhesive or cohesive), mode of membrane material failure (tear or delamination), and number of specimens that did not fail.

12.1.13 Average time-to-failure, standard deviation, and coefficient of variation.

12.2 For specimens sampled from roofs in service, report all information specified in 12.1 to the extent possible.

12.2.1 Report information pertinent to the description of the roof such as specimen age, type of membrane attachment, and location of the roof.

### 13. Precision and Bias

13.1 At the present time, there is no basis for statements concerning the precision and bias of test results obtained from either within-laboratory or between-laboratory studies.

13.2 Variability in test results in this test method can be expected to result more from variability in the joint itself than from lack of precision in measurement. Time-to-failure may be expected to show extreme variability from one specimen to another. This variability is influenced by factors such as stress level, temperature, relative humidity, bond thickness, type of adhesive used, and specimen preparation techniques.

13.3 Limited data obtained in one laboratory<sup>3</sup> from joints fabricated from well-cleaned Ethylene Propylene Diene Terpolymer (EPDM) membrane material and both unprimed neoprene-based and butyl-based solvent adhesives and stressed in peel at 20 % of their short-term peel strength showed coefficients of variation of 90 and 21 %, respectively. Additional data from the same laboratory on 76 sets of joints fabricated from both pre-formed tape adhesives and butyl-based solvent adhesive and stressed in peel at loads ranging from 10 to 55 % of their short-term strengths showed that 97 % of the coefficients of variation were less than 32 %.

### 14. Keywords

14.1 creep; creep-rupture; joints; lap-shear; membranes; roofing; seams; test method; T-peel

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<sup>3</sup> Martin, J. W., et al., "Strength and Creep-Rupture Properties of Adhesive-Bonded EPDM Joints Stressed in Peel," *NIST Building Science Series 169*, National Institute of Standards and Technology, Gaithersburg, MD, May 1990, 59 pp.; Rossiter, W. J., Jr., et al., "Creep-Rupture Tests of Joints Fabricated from Aged EPDM Rubber Membrane Material," Paper 5, *Proceedings ACS Rubber Division Symposium on Elastomers in Roofing and Construction*, Detroit, MI, October 1991, 19 pp.; Rossiter, W.J., Jr., et al., "Performance of Tape-bonded Seams of EPDM Membranes: Comparison of the Peel Creep-Rupture Response of Tape-Bonded and Liquid-Adhesive-Bonded Seams," *NIST Building Science Series 175*, National Institute of Standards and Technology, Gaithersburg, MD, May, 1996, 69 pp.

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