



Standard Practice for Thin-Walled Tube Sampling of Soils for Geotechnical Purposes¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D1587; 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.

^{ε1} NOTE—Editorial changes were made throughout in May 2012.

1. Scope

1.1 This practice covers a procedure for using a thin-walled metal tube to recover relatively intact soil samples suitable for laboratory tests of engineering properties, such as strength, compressibility, permeability, and density. Thin-walled tubes used in piston, plug, or rotary-type samplers should comply with Section 6.3 of this practice which describes the thin-walled tubes.

NOTE 1—This practice does not apply to liners used within the samplers.

1.2 This practice is limited to soils that can be penetrated by the thin-walled tube. This sampling method is not recommended for sampling soils containing gravel or larger size soil particles, cemented, or very hard soils. Other soil samplers may be used for sampling these soil types. Such samplers include driven split barrel samplers and soil coring devices (D1586, D3550, and D6151). For information on appropriate use of other soil samplers refer to D6169.

1.3 This practice is often used in conjunction with fluid rotary drilling (D1452, D5783) or hollow-stem augers (D6151). Subsurface geotechnical explorations should be reported in accordance with practice (D5434). This practice discusses some aspects of sample preservation after the sampling event. For information on preservation and transportation process of soil samples, consult Practice D4220. This practice does not address environmental sampling; consult D6169 and D6232 for information on sampling for environmental investigations.

1.4 The values stated in inch-pound units are to be regarded as standard. The values given in parentheses are mathematical conversions to SI units that are provided for information only and are not considered standard.

¹ This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D18 on Soil and Rock and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D18.02 on Sampling and Related Field Testing for Soil Evaluations.

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1.4.1 The tubing tolerances presented in Table 1 are from sources available in North America. Use of metric equivalent is acceptable as long as thickness and proportions are similar to those required in this standard.

1.5 *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.*

1.6 This practice offers a set of instructions for performing one or more specific operations. This document cannot replace education or experience and should be used in conjunction with professional judgment. Not all aspects of this practice may be applicable in all circumstances. This ASTM standard is not intended to represent or replace the standard of care by which the adequacy of a given professional service must be judged, nor should this document be applied without consideration of a project's many unique aspects. The word "Standard" in the title of this document means only that the document has been approved through the ASTM consensus process.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:²

D653 Terminology Relating to Soil, Rock, and Contained Fluids

D1452 Practice for Soil Exploration and Sampling by Auger Borings

D1586 Test Method for Penetration Test (SPT) and Split-Barrel Sampling of Soils

D2488 Practice for Description and Identification of Soils (Visual-Manual Procedure)

D3550 Practice for Thick Wall, Ring-Lined, Split Barrel, Drive Sampling of Soils

D3740 Practice for Minimum Requirements for Agencies

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.

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

TABLE 1 Dimensional Tolerances for Thin-Walled Tubes

Size Outside Diameter	Nominal Tube Diameters from Table 2 ^A Tolerances					
	2 in.	50.8 mm	3 in.	76.2 mm	5 in.	127 mm
Outside diameter, D _o	+0.007 -0.000	+0.179 -0.000	+0.010 -0.000	+0.254 -0.000	+0.015 -0.000	0.381 -0.000
Inside diameter, D _i	+0.000 -0.007	+0.000 -0.179	+0.000 -0.010	+0.000 -0.254	+0.000 -0.015	+0.000 -0.381
Wall thickness	±0.007	±0.179	±0.010	±0.254	±0.015	±0.381
Ovality	0.015	0.381	0.020	0.508	0.030	0.762
Straightness	0.030/ft	2.50/m	0.030/ft	2.50/m	0.030/ft	2.50/m

^A Intermediate or larger diameters should be proportional. Specify only two of the first three tolerances; that is, D_o and D_i, or D_o and Wall thickness, or D_i and Wall thickness.

Engaged in Testing and/or Inspection of Soil and Rock as Used in Engineering Design and Construction

[D4220 Practices for Preserving and Transporting Soil Samples](#)

[D5434 Guide for Field Logging of Subsurface Explorations of Soil and Rock](#)

[D5783 Guide for Use of Direct Rotary Drilling with Water-Based Drilling Fluid for Geoenvironmental Exploration and the Installation of Subsurface Water-Quality Monitoring Devices](#)

[D6151 Practice for Using Hollow-Stem Augers for Geotechnical Exploration and Soil Sampling](#)

[D6169 Guide for Selection of Soil and Rock Sampling Devices Used With Drill Rigs for Environmental Investigations](#)

[D6232 Guide for Selection of Sampling Equipment for Waste and Contaminated Media Data Collection Activities](#)

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions:

3.1.1 For common definitions of terms in this standard, refer to Terminology [D653](#).

3.2 Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:

3.2.1 *inside clearance ratio, %*, *n*—the ratio of the difference in the inside diameter of the tube, D_i, minus the inside diameter of the cutting edge, D_e, to the inside diameter of the tube, D_i expressed as a percentage (see [Fig. 1](#)).

3.2.2 *ovality, n*—the cross section of the tube that deviates from a perfect circle.

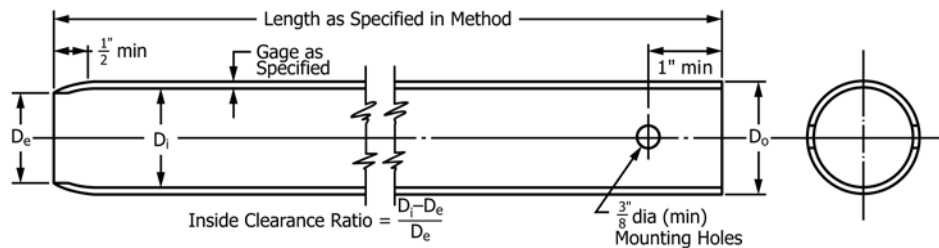
4. Summary of Practice

4.1 A relatively intact sample is obtained by pressing a thin-walled metal tube into the in-situ soil at the bottom of a boring, removing the soil-filled tube, and applying seals to the soil surfaces to prevent soil movement and moisture gain or loss.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 This practice, or Practice [D3550](#) with thin wall shoe, is used when it is necessary to obtain a relatively intact specimen suitable for laboratory tests of engineering properties or other tests that might be influenced by soil disturbance.

NOTE 2—The quality of the result produced by this standard is dependent on the competence of the personnel performing it, and the suitability of the equipment and facilities used. Agencies that meet the criteria of Practice [D3740](#) are generally considered capable of competent and objective sampling. Users of this practice, are cautioned that compliance with Practice [D3740](#) does not in itself assure reliable results. Reliable results depend on many factors; Practice [D3740](#) provides a means of evaluating some of those factors.



NOTE 1—Minimum of two mounting holes on opposite sides for D_o smaller than 4 in. (101.6 mm).

NOTE 2—Minimum of four mounting holes equally spaced for D_o 4 in. (101.6 mm) and larger.

NOTE 3—Tube held with hardened screws or other suitable means.

NOTE 4—2-in (50.8 mm) outside-diameter tubes are specified with an 18-gauge wall thickness to comply with area ratio criteria accepted for “intact samples.” Users are advised that such tubing is difficult to locate and can be extremely expensive in small quantities. Sixteen-gauge tubes are generally readily available.

Metric Equivalent Conversions

in.	mm
3/8	9.53
1/2	12.7
1	25.4
2	50.8
3	76.2
4	101.6
5	127

FIG. 1 Thin-Walled Tube for Sampling

TABLE 2 Suitable Thin-Walled Steel Sample Tubes^A

Outside diameter (D _o):			
in.	2	3	5
mm	50.8	76.2	127
Wall thickness:			
Bwg	18	16	11
in.	0.049	0.065	0.120
mm	1.24	1.65	3.05
Tube length:			
in.	36	36	54
m	0.91	0.91	1.45
Inside clearance ratio, %			
	<1	<1	<1

^A The three diameters recommended in Table 2 are indicated for purposes of standardization, and are not intended to indicate that sampling tubes of intermediate or larger diameters are not acceptable. Lengths of tubes shown are illustrative. Proper lengths to be determined as suited to field conditions.

6. Apparatus

6.1 *Drilling Equipment*—When sampling in a boring, any drilling equipment may be used that provides a reasonably clean hole; that minimizes disturbance of the soil to be sampled; and that does not hinder the penetration of the thin-walled sampler. Open borehole diameter and the inside diameter of driven casing or hollow stem auger shall not exceed 3.5 times the outside diameter of the thin-walled tube.

6.2 *Sampler Insertion Equipment*, shall be adequate to provide a relatively rapid continuous penetration force. For hard formations it may be necessary, although not recommended, to drive the thin-walled tube sampler.

6.3 *Thin-Walled Tubes*, should be manufactured to the dimensions as shown in Fig. 1. They should have an outside diameter of 2 to 5 in. (50 to 130 mm) and be made of metal having adequate strength for the type of soil to be sampled. Tubes shall be clean and free of all surface irregularities including projecting weld seams. Other diameters may be used but the tube dimensions should be proportional to the tube designs presented here.

6.3.1 *Length of Tubes*—See Table 2 and 7.4.1.

6.3.2 *Tolerances*, shall be within the limits shown in Table 1.

6.3.3 *Inside Clearance Ratio*, should be not greater than 1 % unless specified otherwise for the type of soil to be sampled. Generally, the inside clearance ratio used should increase with the increase in plasticity of the soil being sampled, except for sensitive soils or where local experience indicates otherwise. See 3.2.1 and Fig. 1 for definition of inside clearance ratio.

6.3.4 *Corrosion Protection*—Corrosion, whether from galvanic or chemical reaction, can damage or destroy both the thin-walled tube and the sample. Severity of damage is a function of time as well as interaction between the sample and the tube. Thin-walled tubes should have some form of protective coating, unless the soil is to be extruded less than 3 days. The type of coating to be used may vary depending upon the material to be sampled. Plating of the tubes or alternate base metals may be specified. Galvanized tubes are often used when long term storage is required. Coatings may include a light coat of lubricating oil, lacquer, epoxy, zinc oxide, and others.

NOTE 3—Most coating materials are not resistant to scratching by soils that contain sands. Consideration should be given for prompt testing of the

sample because chemical reactions between the metal and the soil sample can occur with time.

6.4 *Sampler Head*, serves to couple the thin-walled tube to the insertion equipment and, together with the thin-walled tube, comprises the thin-walled tube sampler. The sampler head shall contain a venting area and suitable check valve with the venting area to the outside equal to or greater than the area through the check valve. In some special cases, a check valve may not be required but venting is required to avoid sample compression. Attachment of the head to the tube shall be concentric and coaxial to assure uniform application of force to the tube by the sampler insertion equipment.

7. Procedure

7.1 Remove loose material from the center of a casing or hollow stem auger as carefully as possible to avoid disturbance of the material to be sampled. If groundwater is encountered, maintain the liquid level in the borehole at or above groundwater level during the drilling and sampling operation.

7.2 Bottom discharge bits are not permitted. Side discharge bits may be used, with caution. Jetting through an open-tube sampler to clean out the borehole to sampling elevation is not permitted.

NOTE 4—Roller bits are available in downward-jetting and diffused-jet configurations. Downward-jetting configuration rock bits are not acceptable. Diffuse-jet configurations are generally acceptable.

7.3 Lower the sampling apparatus so that the sample tube's bottom rests on the bottom of the hole and record depth to the bottom of the sample tube to the nearest 0.1 ft (0.03 m).

7.3.1 Keep the sampling apparatus plumb during lowering, thereby preventing the cutting edge of the tube from scraping the wall of the borehole.

7.4 Advance the sampler without rotation by a continuous relatively rapid downward motion and record length of advancement to the nearest 1 in. (25 mm).

7.4.1 Determine the length of advance by the resistance and condition of the soil formation, but the length shall never exceed 5 to 10 diameters of the tube in sands and 10 to 15 diameters of the tube in clays. In no case shall a length of advance be greater than the sample-tube length minus an allowance for the sampler head and a minimum of 3 in. (76 mm) for sludge and end cuttings.

NOTE 5—The mass of sample, laboratory handling capabilities, transportation problems, and commercial availability of tubes will generally limit maximum practical lengths to those shown in Table 2.

7.5 When the soil formation is too hard for push-type insertion, the tube may be driven or Practice D3550 may be used. If driving methods are used, the data regarding weight and fall of the hammer and penetration achieved must be shown in the report. Additionally, that tube must be prominently labeled a “driven sample.”

7.6 Withdraw the sampler from the soil formation as carefully as possible in order to minimize disturbance of the sample. The tube can be slowly rotated to shear the material at the end of the tube, and to relieve water or suction pressures (or both) and improve recovery. Where the soil formation is soft,

a delay before withdraw of the sampler (typically 5 to 30 minutes) may improve sample recovery.

8. Sample Measurement, Sealing and Labeling

8.1 Upon removal of the tube, remove the drill cuttings in the upper end of the tube and measure the length of the soil sample recovered to the nearest 0.25 in. (6 mm) in the tube. Seal the upper end of the tube. Remove at least 1 in. (25 mm) of material from the lower end of the tube. Use this material for soil description in accordance with Practice D2488. Measure the overall sample length. Seal the lower end of the tube. Alternatively, after measurement, the tube may be sealed without removal of soil from the ends of the tube.

8.1.1 Tubes sealed over the ends, as opposed to those sealed with expanding packers, should be provided with spacers or appropriate packing materials, or both prior to sealing the tube ends to provide proper confinement. Packing materials must be nonabsorbent and must maintain their properties to provide the same degree of sample support with time.

8.1.2 Depending on the requirements of the investigation, field extrusion and packaging of extruded soil samples can be performed. This allows for physical examination and classification of the sample. Samples are extruded in special device equipped which includes hydraulic jacks with properly sized platens to extrude the core in a smooth continuous speed. In some cases, further extrusion may cause sample disturbance reducing suitability for testing of engineering properties. In other cases, if damage is not significant, cores can be extruded and preserved for testing (Practice D4220). Bent or damaged tubes should be cut off before extruding.

8.2 Prepare and immediately affix labels or apply markings as necessary to identify the sample (see Section 9). Assure that the markings or labels are adequate to survive transportation and storage.

NOTE 6—Top end of the tube should be labeled “top.”

9. Field Log

9.1 Record the information that may be required for preparing field logs in general accordance to Guide D5434. This guide is used for logging explorations by drilling and sampling. Some examples of the information required include;

9.1.1 Name and location of the project,

9.1.2 Boring number,

9.1.3 Log of the soil conditions,

9.1.4 Surface elevation or reference to a datum to the nearest foot (0.5 m) or better,

9.1.5 Location of the boring,

9.1.6 Method of making the borehole,

9.1.7 Name of the drilling foreman and company, and

9.1.8 Name of the drilling inspector(s).

9.1.9 Date and time of boring-start and finish,

9.1.10 Depth to groundwater level: date and time measured,

9.2 Recording the appropriate sampling information is required as follows:

9.2.1 Depth to top of sample to the nearest 0.1 ft (0.03 m) and number of sample,

9.2.2 Description of thin-walled tube sampler: size, type of metal, type of coating,

9.2.3 Method of sampler insertion: push or drive,

9.2.4 Method of drilling, size of hole, casing, and drilling fluid used,

9.2.5 Soil description in accordance with Practice D2488,

9.2.6 Length of sampler advance (push), and

9.2.7 Recovery: length of sample obtained.

10. Keywords

10.1 geologic investigations; intact; sampling; soil exploration; soil investigations; subsurface investigations

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