

GRI - GM13 Standard Specification

Standard Specification for "Test Methods, Test Properties and Testing Frequency for High Density Polyethylene (HDPE) Smooth and Textured Geomembranes" SM

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1. Scope

1.1 This specification covers high density polyethylene (HDPE) geomembranes with a formulated sheet density of 0.940 g/ml, or higher, in the thickness range of 0.75 mm (30 mils) to 3.0 mm (120 mils). Both smooth and textured geomembrane surfaces are included.

1.2 This specification sets forth a set of minimum, physical, mechanical and chemical properties that must be met, or exceeded by the geomembrane being manufactured. In a few cases a range is specified.

1.3 In the context of quality systems and management, this specification represents manufacturing quality control (MQC).

Note 1: Manufacturing quality control represents those actions taken by a manufacturer to ensure that the product represents the stated objective and properties set forth in this specification.

1.4 This standard specification is intended to ensure good quality and performance of HDPE geomembranes in general applications, but is possibly not adequate for the complete specification in a specific situation. Additional tests, or more restrictive

*This GRI standard specification is developed by the Geosynthetic Research Institute through consultation and review by the member organizations. This specification will be reviewed at least every 2-years, or on an as-required basis. In this regard it is subject to change at any time. The most recent revision date is the effective version and it is kept current on the Institute's Website <>.

values for test indicated, may be necessary under conditions of a particular application.

Note 2: For information on installation techniques, users of this standard are referred to the geosynthetics literature, which is abundant on the subject.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards

D 792 Specific Gravity (Relative Density) and Density of Plastics by Displacement

D 1004 Test Method for Initial Tear Resistance of Plastics Film and Sheeting

D 1238 Test Method for Flow Rates of Thermoplastics by Extrusion Plastometer
D 1505 Test Method for Density of Plastics by the Density-Gradient Technique
D 1603 Test Method for Carbon Black in Olefin Plastics

D 4218 Test Method for Determination of Carbon Black Content in Polyethylene Compounds by the Muffle-Furnace Technique

D 4833 Test Method for Index Puncture Resistance of Geotextiles,

Geomembranes and Related Products

D 5199 Test Method for Measuring Nominal Thickness of Geotextiles and Geomembranes

D 5397 Procedure to Perform a Single Point Notched Constant Tensile Load – (SP-NCTL) Test: Appendix

D 5596 Test Method for Microscopic Evaluation of the Dispersion of Carbon Black in Polyolefin Geosynthetics

D 5721 Practice for Air-Oven Aging of Polyolefin Geomembranes

D 5885 Test method for Oxidative Induction Time of Polyolefin Geosynthetics by High Pressure Differential Scanning Calorimetry

D 5994 Test Method for Measuring the Core Thickness of Textured Geomembranes

D 6370 Standard Test Method for Rubber-Compositional Analysis by Thermogravimetry (TGA)

D 6693 Test Method for Determining Tensile Properties of Nonreinforced

Polyethylene and Nonreinforced Flexible Polypropylene Geomembranes D 7238 Test Method for Effect of Exposure of Unreinforced Polyolefin

Geomembrane Using Fluorescent UV Condensation Apparatus

D 7466 Test Method for Measuring the Asperity Height of Textured Geomembranes

D 8117 Standard Test Method for Oxidative Induction Time of Polyolefin Geosynthetics by Differential Scanning Calorimetry

2.2 GRI Standards

GM10 Specification for the Stress Crack Resistance of Geomembrane Sheet

2.3U. S. Environmental Protection Agency Technical Guidance Document "Quality Control Assurance and Quality Control for Waste Containment Facilities," EPA/600/R-93/182, September 1993, 305 pgs.

3. Definitions

Manufacturing Quality Control (MQC) - A planned system of inspections that is used to directly monitor and control the manufacture of a material which is factory originated. MQC is normally performed by the manufacturer of geosynthetic materials and is necessary to ensure minimum (or maximum) specified values in the manufactured product. MQC refers to measures taken by the manufacturer to determine compliance with the requirements for materials and workmanship as stated in certification documents and contract specifications. ref. EPA/600/R-93/182

Manufacturing Quality Assurance (MQA) - A planned system of activities that provides assurance that the materials were constructed as specified in the certification documents and contract specifications. MQA includes manufacturing facility inspections, verifications, audits and evaluation of the raw materials (resins and additives) and geosynthetic products to assess the quality of the manufactured materials. MQA refers to measures taken by the MQA organization to determine if the manufacturer is in compliance with the product certification and contract specifications for the project. ref. EPA/600/R-93/182

Formulation - The mixture of a unique combination of ingredients identified by type,

properties and quantity. For HDPE polyethylene geomembranes, a formulation is defined as the exact percentages and types of resin(s), additives and carbon black.

Nominal - Representative value of a measurable property determined under a set of conditions, by which a product may be described. Abbreviated as nom. in Tables 1 and 2.

4. Material Classification and Formulation

4.1 This specification covers high density polyethylene geomembranes with a formulated sheet density of 0.940 g/ml, or higher. Density can be measured by ASTM D1505 or ASTM D792. If the latter, Method B is recommended.

4.2 The polyethylene resin from which the geomembrane is made will generally be in the density range of 0.932 g/ml or higher, and have a melt index value per ASTM D1238 of less than 1.0 g/10 min.

4.3 The resin shall be virgin material with no more than 10% rework. If rework is used, it must be a similar HDPE as the parent material.

4.4 No post consumer resin (PCR) of any type shall be added to the formulation.

5. Physical, Mechanical and Chemical Property Requirements

5.1 The geomembrane shall conform to the test property requirements prescribed in Tables 1 and 2. Table 1 is for smooth HDPE geomembranes and Table 2 is for single and double sided textured HDPE geomembranes. Each of the tables are given in English and SI (metric) units. The conversion from English to SI (metric) is soft.

Note 3: The tensile strength properties in this specification were originally based on ASTM D 638 which uses a laboratory testing temperature of $23^{\circ}\text{C} \pm 2^{\circ}\text{C}$. Since ASTM Committee D35 on Geosynthetics adopted ASTM D 6693 (in place of D 638), this GRI Specification followed accordingly. The difference is that D 6693 uses a testing

temperature of $21^{\circ}\text{C} \pm 2^{\circ}\text{C}$. The numeric values of strength and elongation were not changed in this specification. If a dispute arises

in this regard, the original temperature of $23^{\circ}\text{C} \pm 2^{\circ}\text{C}$ should be utilized for testing purposes.

Note 4: There are several tests often included in other HDPE specifications which are omitted from this standard because they are outdated, irrelevant or generate information that is not necessary to evaluate on a routine MQC basis. The following tests have been purposely omitted:

- Volatile Loss

• Volatile Loss	• Water Absorption
• Dimensional Stability	• Ozone Resistance
• Coeff. of Linear Expansion	• Modulus of Elasticity
• Resistance to Soil Burial	• Hydrostatic Resistance
• Low Temperature Impact	• Tensile Impact
• ESCR Test (D 1693)	• Field Seam Strength
• Wide Width Tensile	• Multi-Axial Burst
• Water Vapor Transmission	• Various Toxicity Tests

Note 5: There are several tests which are included in this standard (that are not customarily required in other HDPE specifications) because they are relevant and important in the context

of current manufacturing processes. The following tests have been purposely added:

- Oxidative Induction Time
- Oven Aging
- Ultraviolet Resistance
- Asperity Height of Textured Sheet (see Note 6)

Note 6:The minimum average value of asperity height does not represent an expected value of interface shear strength. Shear strength associated with geomembranes is both site-specific and product-specific and should be determined by direct shear testing using ASTM D5321/ASTM D6243 as prescribed. This testing should be included in the particular site's CQA conformance testing protocol for the geosynthetic materials involved, or formally waived by the Design Engineer, with concurrence from the Owner prior to the deployment of the geosynthetic materials.

Note 7:There are other tests in this standard, focused on a particular property, which are updated to current standards. The following are in this category:

- Thickness of Textured Sheet
- Puncture Resistance
- Stress Crack Resistance
- Carbon Black Dispersion (In the viewing and subsequent quantitative interpretation of ASTM D 5596 only near spherical agglomerates shall be included in the assessment).

5.2The values listed in the tables of this specification are to be interpreted according to the designated test method. In this respect they are neither minimum average roll values (MARV) nor maximum average roll values (MaxARV).

5.3The properties of the HDPE geomembrane shall be tested at the minimum frequencies shown in Tables 1 and 2. If the specific manufacturer's quality control guide is more stringent and is certified accordingly, it must be followed in like manner.

Note 8:This specification is focused on manufacturing quality control (MQC). Conformance testing and manufacturing quality assurance (MQA) testing are at the discretion of the purchaser and/or quality assurance engineer, respectively.

6. Workmanship and Appearance

6.1Smooth geomembrane shall have good appearance qualities. It shall be free from such defects that would affect the specified properties of the geomembrane.

6.2Textured geomembrane shall generally have uniform texturing appearance. It shall be free from agglomerated texturing material and such defects that would affect the specified properties of the geomembrane.

6.3General manufacturing procedures shall be performed in accordance with the manufacturer's internal quality control guide and/or documents.

7. MQC Sampling

7.1Sampling shall be in accordance with the specific test methods listed in Tables 1 and 2. If no sampling protocol is stipulated in the particular test method, then test specimens shall be taken evenly spaced across the entire roll width.

7.2The number of tests shall be in accordance with the appropriate test methods listed in Tables 1 and 2.

7.3The average of the test results should be calculated per the particular standard cited and compared to the minimum value listed in these tables, hence the values listed are the

minimum average values and are designated as "min. ave."

8. MQC Retest and Rejection

8.1 If the results of any test do not conform to the requirements of this specification, retesting to determine conformance or rejection should be done in accordance with the manufacturing protocol as set forth in the manufacturer's quality manual.

9. Packaging and Marketing

9.1 The geomembrane shall be rolled onto a substantial core or core segments and held firm by dedicated straps/slings, or other suitable means. The rolls must be adequate for safe transportation to the point of delivery, unless otherwise specified in the contract or order.

10. Certification

10.1 Upon request of the purchaser in the contract or order, a manufacturer's certification that the material was manufactured and tested in accordance with this specification, together with a report of the test results, shall be furnished at the time of shipment.

Table 1(a) – High Density Polyethylene (HDPE) Geomembrane -Smooth

Properties	Test Method	Test Value								Testing Frequency (minimum)
		30 mils	40 mils	50 mils	60 mils	80 mils	100 mils	120 mils		
Thickness (min. ave.) - mils • lowest individual of 10 values - %	D5199	nom. -10	nom. -10	nom. -10	nom. -10	nom. -10	nom. -10	nom. -10	nom. -10	per roll
Formulated Density (min. ave.) - g/cc	D 1505/D 792	0.940	0.940	0.940	0.940	0.940	0.940	0.940	0.940	200,000 lb
Tensile Properties (1) (min. ave.) • yield strength - lb/in. • break strength - lb/in. • yield elongation - % • break elongation - %	D 6693 Type IV	63 114 12 700	84 152 12 700	105 190 12 700	126 228 12 700	168 304 12 700	210 380 12 700	252 456 12 700	20,000 lb	
Tear Resistance (min. ave.) - lb	D 1004	21	28	35	42	56	70	84	45,000 lb	
Puncture Resistance (min. ave.) - lb	D 4833	54	72	90	108	144	180	216	45,000 lb	
Stress Crack Resistance (2) - hr. (App.)	D5397	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	per GRI-GM10	
Carbon Black Content (range) - %	D 4218 (3)	2.0-3.0	2.0-3.0	2.0-3.0	2.0-3.0	2.0-3.0	2.0-3.0	2.0-3.0	20,000 lb	
Carbon Black Dispersion	D 5596	note (4)	note (4)	note (4)	note (4)	note (4)	note (4)	note (4)	45,000 lb	
Oxidative Induction Time (OIT) (min. ave.) (5) (a) Standard OIT - min. — or — (b) High Pressure OIT - min.	D 8117 D 5885	100 400	100 400	100 400	100 400	100 400	100 400	100 400	200,000 lb	
Oven Aging at 85°C (5), (6) (a) Standard OIT (min. ave.) - % retained after 90 days — or — (b) High Pressure OIT (min. ave.) - % retained after 90 days	D 5721 D 8117 D 5885	55 80	55 80	55 80	55 80	55 80	55 80	55 80	per each formulation	
UV Resistance (7) (a) Standard OIT (min. ave.) — or — (b) High Pressure OIT (min. ave.) - % retained after 1600 hrs (9)	D 7238 D 8117 D 5885	N.R. (8) 50	N.R. (8) 50	N.R. (8) 50	N.R. (8) 50	N.R. (8) 50	N.R. (8) 50	N.R. (8) 50	per each formulation	

(1) Machine direction (MD) and cross machine direction (XMD) average values should be on the basis of 5 test specimens each direction. Yield elongation is calculated using a gage length of 1.3 inches

Break elongation is calculated using a gage length of 2.0 in.

(2) The yield stress used to calculate the applied load for the SP-NCTL test should be the manufacturer's mean value via MQC testing.

(3) Other methods such as D 1603 (tube furnace) or D 6370 (TGA) are acceptable if an appropriate correlation to D 4218 (muffle furnace) can be established. (4) Carbon black dispersion (only near spherical agglomerates) for 10 different views:

9 in Categories 1 or 2 and 1 in Category 3

(5) The manufacturer has the option to select either one of the OIT methods listed to evaluate the antioxidant content in the geomembrane.

(6) It is also recommended to evaluate samples at 30 and 60 days to compare with the 90 day response.

(7) The condition of the test should be 20 hr. UV cycle at 75°C followed by 4 hr. condensation at 60°C.

(8) Not recommended since the high temperature of the Std-OIT test produces an unrealistic result for some of the antioxidants in the UV exposed samples.

(9)UV resistance is based on percent retained value regardless of the original HP-OIT value.

Table 2(a) – High Density Polyethylene (HDPE) Geomembrane - Textured

Properties	Test Method	Test Value							Testing Frequency (minimum)
		30 mils	40 mils	50 mils	60 mils	80 mils	100 mils	120 mils	
Thickness mils (min. ave.) - mils • lowest individual for 8 out of 10 values - % • lowest individual for any of the 10 values - %	D 5994	nom. -5% -10 -15	nom. -5% -10 -15	nom. -5% -10 -15	nom. -5% -10 -15	nom. -5% -10 -15	nom. -5% -10 -15	nom. -5% -10 -15	per roll
Asperity Height mils (min. ave.) - mils	D 7466	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	every 2 nd roll (1)
Formulated Density (min. ave.) - g/cc	D 1505/D 792	0.940	0.940	0.940	0.940	0.940	0.940	0.940	200,000 lb
Tensile Properties (min. ave.) (2) • yield strength - lb/in. • break strength - lb/in. • yield elongation - % • break elongation - %	D 6693 Type IV	63 45 12 100	84 60 12 100	105 75 12 100	126 90 12 100	168 120 12 100	210 150 12 100	252 180 12 100	20,000 lb
Tear Resistance (min. ave.) - lb	D 1004	21	28	35	42	56	70	84	45,000 lb
Puncture Resistance (min. ave.) - lb	D 4833	45	60	75	90	120	150	180	45,000 lb
Stress Crack Resistance (3) - hr. (App.)	D 5397	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	per GRI GM10
Carbon Black Content (range) - %	D 4218 (4)	2.0-3.0	2.0-3.0	2.0-3.0	2.0-3.0	2.0-3.0	2.0-3.0	2.0-3.0	20,000 lb
Carbon Black Dispersion	D 5596	note (5)	note (5)	note (5)	note (5)	note (5)	note (5)	note (5)	45,000 lb
Oxidative Induction Time (OIT) (min. ave.) (6) (a) Standard OIT - min. — or — (b) High Pressure OIT - min.	D 8117 D 5885	100 400	100 400	100 400	100 400	100 400	100 400	100 400	
Oven Aging at 85°C (6), (7) (a) Standard OIT (min. ave.) - % retained after 90 days — or — (b) High Pressure OIT (min. ave.) - % retained after 90 days	D 5721 D 8117 D 5885	55 55 80	55 55 80	55 55 80	55 55 80	55 55 80	55 55 80	55 55 80	per each formulation
UV Resistance (8) (a) Standard OIT (min. ave.) — or — (b) High Pressure OIT (min. ave.) - % retained after 1600 hrs (10)	D 7238 D 8117 D 5885	N.R. (9) N.R. (9) 50	N.R. (9) N.R. (9) 50	N.R. (9) N.R. (9) 50	N.R. (9) N.R. (9) 50	N.R. (9) N.R. (9) 50	N.R. (9) N.R. (9) 50	N.R. (9) N.R. (9) 50	per each formulation

Table 2(b) – High Density Polyethylene (HDPE) Geomembrane - Textured

Properties	Test Method	Test Value							Testing Frequency (minimum)
		0.75 mm	1.00 mm	1.25 mm	1.50 mm	2.00 mm	2.50 mm	3.00 mm	
Thickness (min. ave.) - mm • lowest individual for 8 out of 10 values - % • lowest individual for any of the 10 values - %	D 5994	nom. -5% -10 -15	nom. -5% -10 -15	nom. -5% -10 -15	nom. -5% -10 -15	nom. -5% -10 -15	nom. -5% -10 -15	nom. -5% -10 -15	per roll
Asperity Height mils (min. ave.) - mm	D 7466	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	every 2 nd roll (1)
Formulated Density (min. ave.) - g/cc	D 1505/D 792	0.940	0.940	0.940	0.940	0.940	0.940	0.940	90,000 kg
Tensile Properties (min. ave.) (2) • yield strength - kN/m • break strength - kN/m • yield elongation - % • break elongation - %	D 6693 Type IV	11 8 12 100	15 10 12 100	18 13 12 100	22 16 12 100	29 21 12 100	37 26 12 100	44 32 12 100	9,000 kg
Tear Resistance (min. ave.) - N	D 1004	93	125	156	187	249	311	374	20,000 kg
Puncture Resistance (min. ave.) - N	D 4833	200	267	333	400	534	667	800	20,000 kg
Stress Crack Resistance (3) - hr. (App.)	D 5397	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	per GRI GM10
Carbon Black Content (range) - %	D 4218 (4)	2.0-3.0	2.0-3.0	2.0-3.0	2.0-3.0	2.0-3.0	2.0-3.0	2.0-3.0	9,000 kg
Carbon Black Dispersion	D 5596	note (5)	note (5)	note (5)	note (5)	note (5)	note (5)	note (5)	20,000 kg
Oxidative Induction Time (OIT) (min. ave.) (6) (a) Standard OIT - min. — or — (b) High Pressure OIT - min.	D 8117 D 5885	100 400	100 400	100 400	100 400	100 400	100 400	100 400	
Oven Aging at 85°C (6), (7) (a) Standard OIT (min. ave.) - % retained after 90 days — or — (b) High Pressure OIT (min. ave.) - % retained after 90 days	D 5721 D 8117 D 5885	55 55 80	55 55 80	55 55 80	55 55 80	55 55 80	55 55 80	55 55 80	per each formulation
UV Resistance (8) (a) Standard OIT (min. ave.) — or — (b) High Pressure OIT (min. ave.) - % retained after 1600 hrs (10)	D 7238 D 8117 D 5885	N.R. (9) N.R. (9) 50	N.R. (9) N.R. (9) 50	N.R. (9) N.R. (9) 50	N.R. (9) N.R. (9) 50	N.R. (9) N.R. (9) 50	N.R. (9) N.R. (9) 50	N.R. (9) N.R. (9) 50	per each formulation

- (1) Alternate the measurement side for double sided textured sheet
- (2) Machine direction (MD) and cross machine direction (XMD) average values should be on the basis of 5 test specimens each direction. Yield elongation is calculated using a gage length of 33 mm
Break elongation is calculated using a gage length of 50 mm
- (3)The SP-NCTL test is not appropriate for testing geomembranes with textured or irregular rough surfaces. Test should be conducted on smooth edges of textured rolls or on smooth sheets made from the same formulation as being used for the textured sheet materials.
The yield stress used to calculate the applied load for the SP-NCTL test should be the manufacturer's mean value via MQC testing.
- (4)Other methods such as D 1603 (tube furnace) or D 6370 (TGA) are acceptable if an appropriate correlation to D 4218 (muffle furnace) can be established. (5)Carbon black dispersion (only near spherical agglomerates) for 10 different views:
9 in Categories 1 or 2 and 1 in Category 3

- (6)The manufacturer has the option to select either one of the OIT methods listed to evaluate the antioxidant content in the geomembrane.
- (7)It is also recommended to evaluate samples at 30 and 60 days to compare with the 90 day response.
- (8)The condition of the test should be 20 hr. UV cycle at 75°C followed by 4 hr. condensation at 60°C.
- (9)Not recommended since the high temperature of the Std-OIT test produces an unrealistic result for some of the antioxidants in the UV exposed samples.
- (10)UV resistance is based on percent retained value regardless of the original HP-OIT value.

Adoption and Revision Schedule for
HDPE Specification per GRI-GM13

“Test Methods, Test Properties, Testing Frequency for
High Density Polyethylene (HDPE) Smooth and Textured Geomembranes”

Adopted:June 17, 1997

Revision 1:November 20, 1998; changed CB dispersion from allowing 2 views to be in Category 3 to requiring all 10 views to be in Category 1 or 2. Also reduced UV percent retained from 60% to 50%.

Revision 2:April 29, 1999: added to Note 5 after the listing of Carbon Black Dispersion the following: “(In the viewing and subsequent quantitative interpretation of ASTM D5596 only near spherical agglomerates shall be included in the assessment)” and to Note (4) in the property tables.

Revision 3:June 28, 2000: added a new Section 5.2 that the numeric table values are neither MARV or MaxARV. They are to be interpreted per the the designated test method.

Revision 4:December 13, 2000: added one Category 3 is allowed for carbon black dispersion. Also, unified terminology to “strength” and “elongation”.

Revision 5:May 15, 2003: Increased minimum acceptable stress crack resistance time from 200 hrs to 300 hrs.

Revision 6:June 23, 2003: Adopted ASTM D 6693, in place of ASTM D 638, for tensile strength testing. Also, added Note 2.

Revision 7:February 20, 2006: Added Note 6 on Asperity Height clarification with respect to shear strength.

Revision 8:Removed recommended warranty from specification.

Revision 9:June 1, 2009: Replaced GRI-GM12 test for asperity height of textured geomembranes with ASTM D 7466.

Revision 10April 11, 2011: Added alternative carbon black content test methods

Revision 11December 13, 2012: Replaced GRI-GM11 with the equivalent ASTM D 7238.

Revision 12November 14, 2014: Increased minimum acceptable stress crack resistance time from 300 to 500 hours. Also, increased asperity height of textured sheet from 10 to 16 mils (0.25 to 0.40 mm).

Revision 13November 4, 2015: Removed Footnote (1) on asperity height from tables.

Revision 14January 6, 2016: Removed Trouser Tear from Note 5.

Revision 15:September 9, 2019: Editorial update to harmonize tables.

Revision 16:March 17, 2021: Updated Standard OIT Test from ASTM D3895 to D8117