BULK SPECIFIC GRAVITY ($G_{mb}$) OF COMPACTED HOT MIX ASPHALT (HMA) USING SATURATED SURFACE-DRY SPECIMENS
FOP FOR AASHTO T 166

Scope

This procedure covers the determination of bulk specific gravity ($G_{mb}$) of compacted hot mix asphalt (HMA) using three methods – A, B, and C – in accordance with AASHTO T 166-13. This FOP is for use on specimens not having open or interconnecting voids or absorbing more than 2.00 percent water by volume, or both. When specimens have open or interconnecting voids or absorbing more than 2.00 percent water by volume, or both, AASHTO T 275 or AASHTO T 331 should be performed.

Overview

- Method A: Suspension
- Method B: Volumeter
- Method C: Rapid test for A or B

Test Specimens

Test specimens may be either laboratory-molded or from HMA pavement. For specimens it is recommended that the diameter be equal to four times the maximum size of the aggregate and the thickness be at least one and one half times the maximum size.

Test specimens from HMA pavement will be sampled according to AASHTO R 67.

Terminology

Constant Mass: The mass at which further drying at 52 ±3°C (125 ±5°F) does not alter the mass by more than 0.05 percent. Samples shall initially be dried overnight and that mass determinations shall be made at 2-hour drying intervals. Recently molded laboratory samples that have not been exposed to moisture do not need drying.

Apparatus - Method A (Suspension)

Balance or scale: 5 kg capacity, readable to 0.1 g, and fitted with a suitable suspension apparatus and holder to permit weighing the specimen while suspended in water, conforming to AASHTO M 231.
• Suspension apparatus: Wire of the smallest practical size and constructed to permit the container to be fully immersed.

• Water bath: For immersing the specimen in water while suspended under the balance or scale, and equipped with an overflow outlet for maintaining a constant water level.

• Towel: Damp cloth towel used for surface drying specimens.

• Oven: Capable of maintaining a temperature of 110 ±5°C (230 ±9°F) for drying the specimens to a constant mass.

• Pan: Pan or other suitable container of known mass, large enough to hold a sample for drying in oven.

• Thermometer: Having a range of 19 to 27°C (66 to 80°F), graduated in 0.1°C (0.2°F) subdivisions.

Procedure - Method A (Suspension)

1. Dry the specimen to constant mass, if required.
   
   Note 1: To expedite the procedure, steps 1 and 2 may be performed last. To further expedite the process, see Method C.

2. Cool the specimen in air to 25 ±5°C (77 ±9°F), and determine and record the dry mass to the nearest 0.1 g. Designate this mass as “A.”

3. Fill the water bath to overflow level with water at 25 ±1°C (77 ±1.8°F) and allow the water to stabilize.

4. Zero or tare the balance with the immersion apparatus attached, ensuring that the device is not touching the sides or the bottom of the water bath.

5. Immerse the specimen shaking to remove the air bubbles. Place the specimen on its side in the suspension apparatus. Leave it immersed for 4 ±1 minutes.

6. Determine and record the submerged weight to the nearest 0.1 g. Designate this submerged weight as “C.”

7. Remove the sample from the water and quickly surface dry with a damp cloth towel within 5 seconds.

8. Zero or tare the balance.

9. Immediately determine and record the mass of the SSD specimen to nearest 0.1 g. Designate this mass as “B.” Any water that seeps from the specimen during the mass determination is considered part of the saturated specimen. Do not to exceed 15 seconds performing Steps 7 through 9.
Calculations - Method A (Suspension)

\[ G_{mb} = \frac{A}{B - C} \]

where:

A = Mass of dry specimen in air, g
B = Mass of SSD specimen in air, g
C = Weight of specimen in water at 25 ±1°C (77 ±1.8°F), g

\[ \text{Percent Water Absorbed (by volume)} = \frac{B - A}{B - C} \times 100 \]

Example:

\[ G_{mb} = \frac{4833.6 \, g}{4842.4 \, g - 2881.3 \, g} = 2.465 \]

\[ \% \text{ Water Absorbed (by volume)} = \frac{4842.4 \, g - 4833.6 \, g}{4842.4 \, g - 2881.3 \, g} \times 100 = 0.45\% \]

Apparatus - Method B (Volumeter)

- Balance or scale: 5 kg capacity, readable to 0.1 g and conforming to AASHTO M 231.
- Water bath: Thermostatically controlled to 25 ±0.5°C (77 ±0.9°F).
- Thermometer: Range of 19 to 27°C (66 to 80°F), and graduated in 0.1°C (0.2°F) subdivisions.
- Volumeter: Calibrated to 1200 mL or appropriate capacity for test sample and having a tapered lid with a capillary bore.
- Oven: Capable of maintaining a temperature of 110 ±5°C (230 ±9°F) for drying the specimens to a constant mass.
- Pan: Pan or other suitable container of known mass, large enough to hold a sample for drying in oven.
- Towel: Damp cloth towel used for surface drying specimens.
Procedure - Method B (Volumeter)

1. Dry the specimen to constant mass, if required.
   
   *Note 1:* To expedite the procedure, steps 1 and 2 may be performed last. To further expedite the process, see Method C.

2. Cool the specimen in air to 25 ±5°C (77 ±9°F), and determine and record the dry mass to the nearest 0.1 g. Designate this mass as “A.”

3. Immerse the specimen in the temperature-controlled water bath for at least 10 minutes.

4. Fill the volumeter with distilled water at 25 ±1°C (77 ±1.8°F) making sure some water escapes through the capillary bore of the tapered lid. Wipe the volumeter dry. Determine the mass of the volumeter to the nearest 0.1 g. Designate this mass as “D.”

5. At the end of the ten minute period, remove the specimen from the water bath and quickly surface dry with a damp cloth towel within 5 seconds.

6. Immediately determine and record the mass of the SSD specimen to the nearest 0.1 g.

7. Designate this mass as “B.” Any water that seeps from the specimen during the mass determination is considered part of the saturated specimen.

8. Place the specimen in the volumeter and let stand 60 seconds.

9. Bring the temperature of the water to 25 ±1°C (77 ±1.8°F) and cover the volumeter, making sure some water escapes through the capillary bore of the tapered lid.

10. Wipe the volumeter dry.

11. Determine and record the mass of the volumeter and specimen to the nearest 0.1 g. Designate this mass as “E.”

   *Note 2:* Method B is not acceptable for use with specimens that have more than 6 percent air voids.
Calculations - Method B (Volumeter)

\[ G_{mb} = \frac{A}{B + D - E} \]

where:

A = Mass of dry specimen in air, g
B = Mass of SSD specimen in air, g
D = Mass of volumeter filled with water at 25 ±1°C (77 ±1.8°F), g
E = Mass of volumeter filled with specimen and water, g

\[
Percent \ Water \ Absorbed \ (by \ volume) = \frac{B - A}{B + D - E} \times 100
\]

Example:

\[ G_{mb} = \frac{4833.6 \ g}{4842.4 \ g + 2924.4 \ g - 5806.0 \ g} = 2.465 \%
\]

\[
% \ Water \ Absorbed \ (by \ volume) = \frac{4842.4 \ g - 4833.6 \ g}{4842.4 \ g + 2924.4 \ g - 5806.0 \ g} \times 100 = 0.45\%
\]

Apparatus - Method C (Rapid Test for Method A or B)

See Methods A or B.

Note 3: This procedure can be used for specimens that are not required to be saved and contain substantial amounts of moisture. Cores can be tested the same day as obtained by this method.
Procedure - Method C (Rapid Test for Method A or B)

1. Determine which method to perform, A or B. Proceed with Method A or B, except that the dry mass, “A,” is determined last. In method A and B, start on Step 3 and complete that procedure, then continue as follows to determine mass “A.”

2. Place the specimen on a large, flat-bottom pan of known mass.

3. Heat at a minimum of 105°C (221°F), until the specimen can be easily separated to the point where the fine aggregate particles are not larger than 6.3 mm (¼ in.). In no case should the Job Mix Formula mixing temperature be exceeded.

4. Dry to constant mass. Constant mass is defined as the mass at which further drying at the temperature in Step 3 does not change by more than 0.05 percent after an additional 2 hour drying time.

5. Cool in air to 25 ±5°C (77 ±9°F).

6. Determine and record the mass of the pan and specimen to the nearest 0.1 g.

7. Determine and record the mass of the dry specimen to the nearest 0.1 g by subtracting the mass of the pan from the mass determined in Step 6. Designate this mass as “A.”

Calculations - Method C (Rapid Test for Method A or B)

Complete the calculations as outlined in Methods A or B, as appropriate.

Report

- Results on forms approved by the agency
- Sample ID
- $G_{mb}$ to 0.001
- Absorption to 0.01 percent
- Method performed