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

Scope

This procedure covers the determination of bulk specific gravity (G_{mb}) of compacted asphalt mixtures using three methods – A, B, and C – in accordance with AASHTO T 166-25. 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

Test Specimens

Test specimens may be either laboratory-molded or sampled from asphalt mixture 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.

Terminology

Constant mass: The state at which a mass does not change more than a given percent, after additional drying for a defined time interval, at a required temperature.

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.
- Potable water: Water that is suitable for drinking.
- 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. Use potable water to fill the water bath. The water in the bath does not need to maintain a potable condition but must remain clear at all times.

Note 1: The water bath may be equipped with a circulator and heater or chiller to maintain constant temperatures throughout the bath. If a circulator is used, turn it off before any masses are recorded.

- Towel: Damp cloth towel used for surface drying specimens.
- Oven: Capable of maintaining a temperature of 52 ± 3°C (126 ±5°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 15 to 45°C (59 to 113°F) and, graduated in 0.1°C (0.2°F) subdivisions.
- Vacuum device: refer to the FOP for AASHTO R 79 (optional)

Procedure – Method A (Suspension)

Recently molded laboratory specimens that have not been exposed to moisture do not need drying.

1. Dry the specimen to constant mass, if required.
   a. Oven method
      i. Initially dry overnight at 52 ±3°C (126 ±5°F).
      ii. Determine and record the mass of the specimen. Designate this mass as M_p.
      iii. Return the specimen to the oven for at least 2 hours.
      iv. Determine and record the mass of the specimen. Designate this mass as M_n.
      v. Determine percent change by subtracting the new mass determination, M_n, from the previous mass determination, M_p, dividing by the previous mass determination M_p, and multiplying by 100.
      vi. Continue drying until there is no more than 0.05 percent change in specimen mass after 2-hour drying intervals (constant mass).
      vii. Constant mass has been achieved; specimen is defined as dry.

   Note 2: To expedite the procedure, steps 1 and 2 may be performed last. To further expedite the process, see Method C.

   b. Vacuum dry method according to the FOP for AASHTO R 79.

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 the overflow level with water at 25 ±1°C (77 ±2°F) and allow the water to stabilize.
4. Zero or tare the balance with the suspension apparatus attached, ensuring that the suspension apparatus is completely submerged and 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 specimen from the water and quickly surface dry with a damp cloth towel within 5 sec.
8. Zero or tare the balance.
9. Immediately determine and record the mass of the saturated surface-dry (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 exceed 15 sec. performing Steps 7 through 9.

Calculations – Method A (Suspension)

Constant Mass:

Calculate constant mass using the following formula:

$$\%Change = \frac{M_p - M_n}{M_p} \times 100$$

Where:

M_p = previous mass measurement, g

M_n = new mass measurement, g

Bulk specific gravity (G_{mb}) and percent water absorbed:

$$G_{mb} = \frac{A}{B - C}$$

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

Where:

G_{mb} = Bulk specific gravity

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 ±2°F), g

Example:

$$G_{mb} = \frac{4833.6\ g}{4842.4\ g - 2881.3\ g} = 2.465$$

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

Given:

A = 4833.6 g

B = 4842.4 g

C = 2881.3 g

Apparatus – Method B (Volumeter)

- Balance or scale: 5 kg capacity, readable to 0.1 g and conforming to AASHTO M 231.
- Potable water: Water that is suitable for drinking.
- Water bath: For immersing the specimen in water, capable of maintaining a uniform temperature at 25 ± 1°C (77 ± 2°F). Use potable water to fill the water bath. The water in the bath does not need to maintain a potable condition but must remain clear at all times.
- Thermometer: Range of 15 to 45°C (59 to 113°F) and graduated in 0.1°C (0.2°F) subdivisions.
- Distilled water: Clear, distilled water for filling the volumeter.
- Volumeter: Calibrated to 1200 mL or appropriate capacity for specimen and having a tapered lid with a capillary bore.
- Oven: Capable of maintaining a temperature of 52 ± 3°C (126 ± 5°F) for drying the specimens to a constant mass.
- Pan: Pan or other suitable container of known mass, large enough to hold a specimen for drying in oven.
- Towel: Damp cloth towel used for surface drying specimens.
- Vacuum device: refer to the FOP for AASHTO R 79 (optional)

Procedure – Method B (Volumeter)

Method B is not acceptable for use with specimens that have more than 6 percent air voids.

Recently molded laboratory specimens that have not been exposed to moisture do not need drying.

1. Dry the specimen to constant mass, if required.
   a. Oven method:
      i. Initially dry overnight at 52 ±3°C (126 ±5°F).
      ii. Determine and record the mass of the specimen. Designate this mass as M_p.
      iii. Return the specimen to the oven for at least 2 hours.
      iv. Determine and record the mass of the specimen. Designate this mass as M_n.
      v. Determine percent change by subtracting the new mass determination, M_n, from the previous mass determination, M_p, dividing by the previous mass determination, M_p, and multiplying by 100.
      vi. Continue drying until there is no more than 0.05 percent change in specimen mass after 2-hour drying intervals (constant mass).
      vii. Constant mass has been achieved; specimen is defined as dry.

   Note 3: To expedite the procedure, steps 1 and 2 may be performed last. To further expedite the process, see Method C.

   b. Vacuum dry method according to the FOP for AASHTO R 79.
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 at 25 ±1°C (77 ±2°F) for at least 10 minutes.
4. At the end of the ten-minute period, fill the volumeter with distilled water at 25 ±1°C (77 ±2°F) making sure some water escapes through the capillary bore of the tapered lid.
5. Wipe the volumeter dry. Determine the mass of the volumeter and water to the nearest 0.1 g. Designate this mass as D.
6. Remove the specimen from the water bath and quickly surface dry with a damp cloth towel within 5 sec.
7. Immediately determine and record the mass of the SSD specimen to the 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.
8. Place the specimen in the volumeter and let stand 60 sec.
9. Bring the temperature of the water to 25 ±1°C (77 ±2°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, water, and specimen to the nearest 0.1 g. Designate this mass as E.

Calculations – Method B (Volumeter)

Constant Mass:

Calculate constant mass using the following formula:

$$\%Change = \frac{M_p - M_n}{M_p} \times 100$$

Where:

M_p = previous mass measurement, g

M_n = new mass measurement, g

Bulk specific gravity (G_{mb}) and percent water absorbed:

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

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

Where:

G_{mb} = Bulk specific gravity

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 ±2°F), g

E = Mass of volumeter filled with specimen and water, g

Example:

$$G_{mb} = \frac{4833.6\ g}{4842.4\ g + 2924.4\ g - 5806.0\ g} = 2.465$$

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

Given:

A = 4833.6 g

B = 4842.4 g

D = 2924.4 g

E = 5806.0 g

Apparatus – Method C (Rapid Test)

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

See Methods A or B.

Note 4: 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)

1. Start on Step 3 of Method A or B, and complete that procedure, then determine dry mass, A, as follows.
2. Determine and record mass of a large, flat-bottom container.
3. Place the specimen in the container.
4. Place in an oven at 110 ±5°C (230 ±9°F).
5. Dry until the specimen can be easily separated into fine aggregate particles that are not larger than 6.3 mm (¼ in.).
6. Determine and record the mass of the specimen. Designate this mass as M_p.
7. Return the specimen to the oven for at least 2 hours.
8. Determine and record the mass of the specimen. Designate this mass as M_n.
9. Determine percent change by subtracting the new mass determination, M_n, from the previous mass determination, M_p, dividing by the previous mass determination, M_p, and multiplying by 100.

10. Continue drying until there is no more than 0.05 percent change in specimen mass after 2-hour drying intervals (constant mass).
11. Constant mass has been achieved; specimen is defined as dry.
12. Cool in air to 25 ±5°C (77 ±9°F).
13. Determine and record the mass of the container and dry specimen to the nearest 0.1 g.
14. Determine and record the mass of the dry specimen to the nearest 0.1 g by subtracting the mass of the container from the mass determined in Step 13. Designate this mass as A.

Calculations – Method C (Rapid Test)

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

Report

- On forms approved by the agency
- Sample ID
- G_{mb} to the nearest 0.001
- Absorption to the nearest 0.01 percent
- Method performed.