



Designation: E242 – 15 (Reapproved 2020)

Standard Reference Radiographs for Appearances of Radiographic Images as Certain Parameters are Changed¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation E242; 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.

1. Scope*

1.1 This document describes the appearance of a radiographic image where fundamental components of image quality are changed, that is, variables such as whether an X-ray or gamma ray source was used, the characteristics of the radiographic film (gradient, granularity, and developing conditions) and intensifying screens, and specimen thickness (the geometrical configuration of the radiographic set-up and focal spot size both affect image quality but are not considered in the reference radiographs).

1.2 The X-ray film systems used in obtaining the illustrative data were as follows: Very Fine Grain (comparable to class I of Test Method [E1815](#)) and Fine Grain (comparable to class II of Test Method [E1815](#)).

1.3 These reference radiographs² consist of four composite illustrations³ and show how such factors as radiation energy, specimen thickness, and film properties affect the radiographic image. The reference radiograph films are an adjunct to this document and must be purchased separately from ASTM if needed.

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.

1.5 *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, health, and environmental practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

1.6 *This international standard was developed in accordance with internationally recognized principles on standardization established in the Decision on Principles for the*

Development of International Standards, Guides and Recommendations issued by the World Trade Organization Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Committee.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:⁴

[E94](#) Guide for Radiographic Examination Using Industrial Radiographic Film

[E746](#) Practice for Determining Relative Image Quality Response of Industrial Radiographic Imaging Systems

[E1316](#) Terminology for Nondestructive Examinations

[E1735](#) Practice for Determining Relative Image Quality Response of Industrial Radiographic Imaging Systems from 4 to 25 MeV

[E1815](#) Test Method for Classification of Film Systems for Industrial Radiography

2.2 ASTM Adjuncts:

Reference Radiographs for Appearances of Radiographic Images as Certain Parameters Are Changed³

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions:* For definitions of terms used in this document, see Terminology [E1316](#), Section D.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 A key consideration with any radiographic system is its contrast resolution and spatial resolution capability (that is, sensitivity). The degree of obtainable sensitivity with a given system is dependent upon several radiographic parameters such as source energy level, film system class, type and thickness of intensifying screens, and material thickness radiographed. These reference radiographs permit the user to estimate the degree of sensitivity change that may be obtained when these parameters are varied from a specific technique. This standard may also be used in conjunction with Test Method [E1815](#) or with Practice [E746](#) or Test Method [E1735](#) to provide a basis for developing data for evaluation of a user's specific system. This

¹ These reference radiographs are under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee [E07](#) on Nondestructive Testing and are the direct responsibility of Subcommittee [E07.02](#) on Reference Radiological Images.

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² For ASME Boiler and Pressure Code applications, see related Reference Radiographs SE-242 in the Code.

³ Available from ASTM Headquarters. Order [RRE0242](#).

⁴ 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

data may assist a user in determining appropriate parameters for obtaining desired degrees of radiographic system sensitivity.

5. Factors Affecting Radiographic Appearance

5.1 The final interpretation of the radiograph is greatly affected by the appearance of a discontinuity. A poor technique can minimize the radiographic appearance of a discontinuity and conversely the optimum technique can emphasize this appearance. The appearance of a radiographic image is affected mainly by:

- 5.1.1 X-ray or gamma ray energy,
- 5.1.2 Section thickness,
- 5.1.3 Unsharpness,
- 5.1.4 Film and screen combinations, and
- 5.1.5 Film system class.

5.2 An equation that considers most of the above factors (excluding unsharpness) is:

$$\Delta x = [c(d_1 - d_2)/G\mu](kx + 1) \quad (1)$$

where:

- Δx = thickness of discontinuity,
- c = constant,
- $d_1 - d_2$ = minimum density change perceptible by eye,
- G = film gradient,
- μ = linear absorption coefficient (effective),
- k = scattering coefficient, and
- x = section thickness.

The minimum density change, perceptible by eye, depends on the film system class used, the geometric unsharpness, and the attenuation by the material. The thickness-dependent contrast sensitivity, CS, in % (equivalent penetrameter sensitivity) of section thickness for 2T hole plate IQIs is described as follows:

$$CS_{\% \text{ thickness}} = (PT/x) \times ((\sigma_D Ug) / (G \mu_{eff}))^{1/2} \quad (2)$$

where:

- PT = constant perception threshold for human operators,
- σ_D = film granularity,
- Ug = geometric unsharpness, and
- $\mu_{eff} = \mu/(kx+1)$.

NOTE 1—Gradient over granularity (G/σ_D) increases by a factor of three from film class III to Special Class (see Test Method E1815). The contrast sensitivity improves by 1.7.

As the above equations show, the minimum thickness of detectable discontinuity (Δx or CS) is:

- 5.2.1 A function of X-ray energy and scatter,
- 5.2.2 A function of section thickness,
- 5.2.3 An inverse function of film gradient and attenuation coefficient, and
- 5.2.4 A function of the film system class and geometric unsharpness.

5.3 These reference radiographs do not consider the effects of unsharpness other than due to specimen thickness.

6. Radiographic Illustrations

6.1 A series of 36 radiographs, each on 10-in. by 12-in. [254-mm by 305-mm] film, were taken of a 12-in. by 12-in. [305-mm by 305-mm] welded steel plate which contained discontinuities in the weld. These were taken to illustrate the differences in appearance of the radiographic image when techniques for taking radiographs are varied by changing the factors listed in Section 5. Technique data for each radiograph is in Table 1. A 2-in. by 2-in. [51-mm by 51-mm] area, which includes the identical image of the discontinuities in the weld, was selected and cut out from each 10-in. by 12-in. [254-mm by 305-mm] radiograph and arranged so as to make four composite illustrations identified as Figures 1 through 4. These

TABLE 1 Technique Data

NOTE 1—No radiographic geometry or focal spot size information is available.

Source	Lead Screens		Composite Illustration				Film	Notes	
			A	B	C	D			
	Steel Thickness								
	Front, in.	Back, in.	1 in. [25 mm]	2 in. [51 mm]	4 in. [102 mm]	6 in. [152 mm]			
150 kVp	0.005	0.005	x	...	...	...	Fine grain	¼ in. lead mask	
250 kVp	0.005	0.005	...	x	...	...	Fine grain	¼ in. lead mask	
1 MeV	{	0.030	0.010	x	x	x	...	Very fine grain	...
		0.030	0.010	...	...	...	x	Fine grain	...
		0.030	0.005	x	x	x	...	Fine grain	...
		0.005							
2 MeV	{	0.030	0.010	x	x	x	x	Very fine grain	...
		0.005	0.005	x	x	x	x	Fine grain	...
10 MeV	0.040	0.010	x	x	x	x	Fine grain	...	
15 MeV	0.030	0.010	x	x	x	x	Very fine grain	...	
Iridium 192	{	0.005	0.010	x	...	...	...	Fine grain	...
		0.010	0.010	...	x	x	...	Fine grain	...
Cobalt-60 (2½ Ci)	{	0.005	0.010	x	...	...	...	Fine grain	...
		0.010	0.010	...	x	x	...	Fine grain	...
Cobalt-60 (1000 Ci)	0.010	0.010	...	...	x	x	Fine grain	0.080 in. lead filter	
Radium-226 (250 mg)	0.010	0.010	x	x	x	...	Fine grain	...	

composite illustrations are an abridged version of the original 36 radiographs and serve as the reference radiographs for this document. Following are brief descriptions of these figures.

6.1.1 *Figure 1—Composite Illustration A* consists of cut outs from the 10 radiographs taken of the 1-in. [25-mm] thick welded steel plate.

6.1.2 *Figure 2—Composite Illustration B* consists of cut outs from the 10 radiographs taken of the welded steel plate, built up to 2 in. [51 mm] in thickness.

6.1.3 *Figure 3—Composite Illustration C* consists of cut outs from the 10 radiographs taken of the welded steel plate, built up to 4 in. [102 mm] in thickness.

6.1.4 *Figure 4—Composite Illustration D* consists of cut outs from the 6 radiographs taken of the welded steel plate, built up to 6 in. [152 mm] in thickness.

6.2 The radiographic appearance of discontinuities in 1, 2, 4, and 6-in. [25-mm, 51-mm, 102-mm, and 152-mm] thick steel is shown in the series of composite radiographs. (These are full-scale reproductions of the same selected area from all the reference radiographs.) All composite sets of radiographs show the change in radiographic appearance in the specified thickness of steel plate as the parameters of X-ray or gamma ray energy and film systems or both are changed.

6.3 *Film Deterioration*—Radiographic films are subject to wear and tear from handling and use. The extent to which the image deteriorates over time is a function of storage conditions, care in handling and amount of use. Reference radiograph films are no exception and may exhibit a loss in image quality over time. The radiographs should therefore be periodically examined for signs of wear and tear, including scratches, abrasions, stains, and so forth. Any reference radiographs which show signs of excessive wear and tear which could influence the interpretation and use of the radiographs should be replaced.

7. Use of the Reference Radiographs

7.1 As radiation energy increases, the radiographic appearance of a given discontinuity becomes less distinct because of the greater penetration of the radiation; that is, because of decreasing subject contrast. The reference radiographs permit a comparison of the radiographic appearance of the weld, at particular thickness over a range of X-ray or gamma ray energies.

7.2 Another condition that affects radiographic appearance is the specimen thickness for a given X-ray or gamma ray energy. As the thickness of examined material is increased, a discontinuity becomes less distinct in the radiographic image. This is due to two predominant factors:

7.2.1 Focal spot size and the distances between focal spot and object and object and film produce unsharpness on the film.

7.2.2 Scattered radiation within the material, which reduces the radiographic contrast.

7.2.3 The above processes are a function of material thickness and X-ray or gamma ray energy. This effect is illustrated in this document by the composite set of radiographs.

8. Film and Screens

8.1 The X-ray film systems used in obtaining the illustrative data were as follows: Very Fine Grain (comparable to class I of Test Method [E1815](#)) and Fine Grain (comparable to class II of Test Method [E1815](#)). Comparisons of these two film systems are illustrated in the composite radiographs and within [Table 1](#).

8.2 Several different lead foil screen combinations were used. The specific combination of lead foil screens for each radiograph is noted in [Table 1](#).

9. Conclusions and Summary

9.1 For a constant specimen thickness, the radiographic appearance of the discontinuities changes as the X-ray or gamma ray energy is varied.

9.2 As the section thickness of specimen increases, the radiographic appearance of the discontinuities becomes less distinct, the radiation energy remaining constant.

9.3 All other factors remaining constant, as the film is changed from very fine grain (class I of Test Method [E1815](#)) to fine grain (class II of Test Method [E1815](#)), the radiographic appearance of the discontinuities becomes less distinct.

9.4 For specimens of uniform thickness, these data reveal that the most distinct radiographic appearance of the discontinuities occurs when the finest grain film and the lowest X-ray or gamma ray energy is used, consistent with a given specimen thickness and practical exposure time.

10. Keywords

10.1 film systems; discontinuities; gamma rays; reference radiographs; steel; unsharpness; welds; x-ray



EXPLANATORY NOTES

NOTE 1—Total unsharpness factors such as source size, source-film distance, screens, film graininess, etc., must be considered in establishing techniques (Guide E94).

NOTE 2—It is not the intent of this document to limit the usefulness of any source of radiation. The radiographs included in this document are illustrative and not intended to be either inclusive or conclusive.

APPENDIX

(Nonmandatory Information)

X1. ADDITIONAL TECHNICAL INFORMATION

X1.1 Radiation source was centered over a drilled hole in center of specimen (as seen in the 10 in. by 12 in. [254 mm by 305 mm] full-size reproduction). In 1 MV and 2 MV radiography, the radiation was projected towards the specimen through the target, using a transmitted beam.

X1.2 Radiographic exposure was such that the film density in the radiograph at the center of a line connecting the image of two drilled holes in the plate was between 1.90 and 2.10.

X1.3 All films were developed using procedures recommended in Guide E94.

X1.4 Good contact between film and screens was maintained.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

Committee E07 has identified the location of selected changes to this standard since the last issue (E242 – 01(2010)) that may impact the use of this standard.

- (1) Added references.
- (2) Ensured SI units are included.
- (3) Made clear that radiographic sensitivity is a function of contrast and spatial resolution.
- (4) Added discussion of radiographic geometry and focal spot size affecting unsharpness.

- (5) Added film class and characteristics (gradient, granularity, and developing conditions) to Scope.
- (6) Added Eq. 2 and discussion.

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