

# WSDOT Errata to FOP for AASHTO T 265

## *Laboratory Determination of Moisture Content of Soils*

WAQTC FOP for AASHTO T 265 has been adopted by WSDOT with the following changes:

### Sample Preparation

**TABLE 1 Sample Sizes for Moisture Content of Aggregate** – *Shall conform to the following nominal maximum size definition and include the note below.*

\*For Aggregate, the nominal maximum size sieve is the largest standard sieve opening listed in the applicable specification upon which more than 1-percent of the material by weight is permitted to be retained. For concrete aggregate, the nominal maximum size sieve is the smallest standard sieve opening through which the entire amount of aggregate is permitted to pass.

**Note:** For an aggregate specification having a generally unrestrictive gradation (i.e., wide range of permissible upper sizes), where the source consistently fully passes a screen substantially smaller than the maximum specified size, the nominal maximum size, for the purpose of defining sampling and test specimen size requirements may be adjusted to the screen, found by experience to retain no more than 5 percent of the materials.



**TOTAL EVAPORABLE MOISTURE CONTENT OF AGGREGATE BY DRYING  
FOP FOR AASHTO T 255  
LABORATORY DETERMINATION OF MOISTURE CONTENT OF SOILS  
FOP FOR AASHTO T 265****Scope**

This procedure covers the determination of moisture content of aggregate and soil in accordance with AASHTO T 255-22 and AASHTO T 265-22. It may also be used for other construction materials.

**Overview**

Moisture content is determined by comparing the wet mass of a sample and the mass of the sample after drying to constant mass. The term constant mass is used to define when a sample is dry.

*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**

- Balance or scale: capacity sufficient for the principal sample mass, accurate to 0.1 percent of sample mass or readable to 0.1 g, and meeting the requirements of AASHTO M 231
- Containers: clean, dry, and capable of being sealed
- Suitable drying container
  - For soils: container requires close-fitting lid
  - For aggregate: container lid is optional
- Microwave safe container with ventilated lid (for drying aggregate only)
- Heat source, thermostatically controlled, capable of maintaining  $110 \pm 5^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $230 \pm 9^{\circ}\text{F}$ ).
  - Forced draft oven (preferred)
  - Ventilated oven
  - Convection oven
- Heat source, uncontrolled, for use when allowed by the agency, will not alter the material being dried, and close control of the temperature is not required:
  - Infrared heater/heat lamp, hot plate, fry pan, or any other device/method allowed by the agency .
  - Microwave oven (900 watts minimum)
- Utensils such as spoons
- Hot pads or gloves

**Sample Preparation**

Obtain a representative sample according to the FOP for AASHTO R 90 in its existing condition. If necessary, reduce the sample to moisture content sample size according to the FOP for AASHTO R 76.

For aggregate, the moisture content sample size is based on Table 1 or other information that may be specified by the agency.

**TABLE 1**  
**Sample Sizes for Moisture Content of Aggregate**

Nominal Maximum Size* mm (in.)	Minimum Sample Mass g (lb)
150 (6)	50,000 (110)
100 (4)	25,000 (55)
90 (3 1/2)	16,000 (35)
75 (3)	13,000 (29)
63 (2 1/2)	10,000 (22)
50 (2)	8000 (18)
37.5 (1 1/2)	6000 (13)
25.0 (1)	4000 (9)
19.0 (3/4)	3000 (7)
12.5 (1/2)	2000 (4)
9.5 (3/8)	1500 (3.3)
4.75 (No. 4)	500 (1.1)

\* One sieve larger than the first sieve to retain more than 10 percent of the material using an agency specified set of sieves based on cumulative percent retained. Where large gaps in specification sieves exist, intermediate sieve(s) may be inserted to determine nominal maximum.

For soils the moisture content sample size is based on Table 2 or other information that may be specified by the agency.

**TABLE 2**  
**Sample Sizes for Moisture Content of Soil**

<b>Maximum Particle Size mm (in.)</b>	<b>Minimum Sample Mass g</b>
50 (2)	1000
25.0 (1)	500
12.5 (1/2)	300
4.75 (No. 4)	100
0.425 (No. 40)	10

Immediately seal or cover moisture content samples to prevent any change in moisture content or follow the steps in “Procedure.”

### Procedure

Determine and record the sample masses as follows:

- For aggregate, determine and record all masses to the nearest 0.1 percent of the sample mass or to the nearest 0.1 g.
- For soil, determine and record all masses to the nearest 0.1 g.

When determining the mass of hot samples or containers or both, place and tare a buffer between the sample container and the balance. This will eliminate damage to or interference with the operation of the balance or scale.

1. Determine and record the mass of the container .
  - a. For soils: the container includes the mass of the close-fitting lid.
  - b. For aggregate: the lid is optional unless drying with a microwave then a ventilated lid is required.
2. Place the wet sample in the container.
3. Determine and record the total mass of the container and wet sample.
  - a. For oven(s), hot plates, infrared heaters, etc.: Spread the sample in the container.
  - b. For microwave oven: Heap sample in the container; cover with ventilated lid.
4. Determine and record the wet mass of the sample ( $M_w$ ) by subtracting the container mass determined in Step 1 from the mass of the container and sample determined in Step 3.
5. Place the sample in one of the following drying apparatuses:
  - a. For aggregate –
    - i. Controlled heat source (oven): at  $110 \pm 5^\circ\text{C}$  ( $230 \pm 9^\circ\text{F}$ ).
    - ii. Uncontrolled heat source (Hot plate, infrared heater, or other heat source as allowed by the agency): Stir frequently to avoid localized overheating.

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b. For soil – controlled heat source (oven): at  $110 \pm 5^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $230 \pm 9^{\circ}\text{F}$ ).

**Note 1:** Soils containing gypsum or significant amounts of organic material require special drying. For reliable moisture contents dry these soils at  $60^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $140^{\circ}\text{F}$ ). For more information see AASHTO T 265, Note 2.

6. Dry until sample appears moisture free.
7. Determine mass of sample and container.
8. Determine and record the mass of the sample by subtracting the container mass determined in Step 1 from the mass of the container and sample determined in Step 7.
9. Return sample and container to the heat source for the additional time interval.

a. Drying intervals for aggregate –

- i. Controlled heat source (oven): 30 minutes
- ii. Uncontrolled heat source (Hot plate, infrared heater, or other heat source as allowed by the agency): 10 minutes
- iii. Uncontrolled heat source (Microwave oven): 2 minutes

**Caution:** Some minerals in the sample may cause the aggregate to overheat, crack, and explode; altering the aggregate gradation.

b. Drying interval for soil – controlled heat source (oven): 1 hour

10. Determine mass of sample and container.
11. Determine and record the mass of the sample by subtracting the container mass determined in Step 1 from the mass of the container and sample determined in Step 10.
12. 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.
13. Continue drying, performing steps 9 through 12, until there is less than a 0.10 percent change after additional drying time.
14. Constant mass has been achieved; sample is defined as dry.
15. Allow the sample to cool. Immediately determine and record the total mass of the container and dry sample.
16. Determine and record the dry mass of the sample ( $M_D$ ) by subtracting the mass of the container determined in Step 1 from the mass of the container and sample determined in Step 15.
17. Determine and record percent moisture ( $w$ ) by subtracting the final dry mass determination ( $M_D$ ) from the initial wet mass determination ( $M_w$ ), dividing by the final dry mass determination ( $M_D$ ), and multiplying by 100.

**Table 3**  
**Methods of Drying**

<b>Aggregate</b>		
<b>Heat Source</b>	<b>Specific Instructions</b>	<b>Drying intervals to achieve constant mass (minutes)</b>
<b>Controlled:</b>		
Forced draft (preferred), ventilated, or convection oven	110 ±5°C (230 ±9°F)	30
<b>Uncontrolled:</b>		
Hot plate, infrared heater, or any other device/method allowed by the agency	Stir frequently	10
Microwave	Heap sample and cover with ventilated lid	2
<b>Soil</b>		
<b>Heat Source</b>	<b>Specific Instructions</b>	<b>Drying interval to achieve constant mass</b>
<b>Controlled:</b>		
Forced draft (preferred), ventilated, or convection oven	110 ±5°C (230 ±9°F)	1 hour

**Calculation****Constant Mass**

Calculate constant mass using the following formula:

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

Where:

$M_p$  = previous mass measurement

$M_n$  = new mass measurement

**Example:**

Mass of container: 1232.1 g

Mass of container and sample after first drying cycle: 2637.2 g

Mass,  $M_p$ , of possibly dry sample:  $2637.2 \text{ g} - 1232.1 \text{ g} = 1405.1 \text{ g}$

Mass of container and sample after second drying cycle: 2634.1 g

Mass,  $M_n$ , of sample:  $2634.1 \text{ g} - 1232.1 \text{ g} = 1402.0 \text{ g}$

$$\% \text{ Change} = \frac{1405.1 \text{ g} - 1402.0 \text{ g}}{1405.1 \text{ g}} \times 100 = 0.22\%$$

*0.22 percent is not less than 0.10 percent, so continue drying.*

Mass of container and sample after third drying cycle: 2633.0 g

Mass,  $M_n$ , of sample:  $2633.0 \text{ g} - 1232.1 \text{ g} = 1400.9 \text{ g}$

$$\% \text{ Change} = \frac{1402.0 \text{ g} - 1400.9 \text{ g}}{1402.0 \text{ g}} \times 100 = 0.08\%$$

*0.08 percent is less than 0.10 percent, so constant mass has been reached.*



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### Moisture Content:

Calculate the moisture content, as a percent, using the following formula:

$$w = \frac{M_W - M_D}{M_D} \times 100$$

where:

w = moisture content, percent

M<sub>w</sub> = wet mass

M<sub>D</sub> = dry mass

Example:

Mass of container: 1232.1 g

Mass of container and wet sample: 2764.7 g

Mass, M<sub>w</sub>, of wet sample: 2764.7 g - 1232.1 g = 1532.6 g

Mass of container and dry sample (COOLED): 2633.5 g

Mass, M<sub>D</sub>, of dry sample: 2633.5 g - 1232.1 g = 1401.4 g

$$w = \frac{1532.6 \text{ g} - 1401.4 \text{ g}}{1401.4 \text{ g}} \times 100 = \frac{131.2 \text{ g}}{1401.4 \text{ g}} \times 100 = 9.36\% \text{ report } 9.4\%$$

### Report

- On forms approved by the agency
- Sample ID
- M<sub>w</sub>, wet mass
- M<sub>D</sub>, dry mass
- w, moisture content to the nearest 0.1 percent

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## PERFORMANCE EXAM CHECKLIST

### TOTAL EVAPORABLE MOISTURE CONTENT OF AGGREGATE BY DRYING FOP FOR AASHTO T 255

### LABORATORY DETERMINATION OF MOISTURE CONTENT OF SOILS FOP FOR AASHTO T 265

Participant Name \_\_\_\_\_ Exam Date \_\_\_\_\_

Record the symbols "P" for passing or "F" for failing on each step of the checklist.

Procedure Element	Trial 1	Trial 2
1. Representative sample of appropriate mass obtained?	_____	_____
2. Mass of container determined to 0.1 g?	_____	_____
3. Sample placed in container and mass determined to 0.1 g?	_____	_____
4. Test sample mass conforms to the required mass?	_____	_____
5. Wet sample mass determined to 0.1 g?	_____	_____
6. Loss of moisture avoided prior to mass determination?	_____	_____
7. Sample dried by a suitable heat source?	_____	_____
a. Describe suitable heat sources for aggregate?	_____	_____
b. Describe suitable heat sources for soils?	_____	_____
8. If aggregate heated by means other than a controlled oven, is sample stirred to avoid localized overheating?	_____	_____
9. For microwave, aggregate heaped and covered with a ventilated lid?	_____	_____
10. For aggregate, heated for the additional, specified time?	_____	_____
a. Forced draft, ventilated, convection ovens – 30 minutes		
b. Microwave – 2 minutes		
c. Other – 10 minutes		
11. For soil:		
a. Heated for at least 1 hour additional drying time using a controlled heat source?	_____	_____
12. Mass determined and compared to previous mass - showing less than 0.10 percent loss?	_____	_____
13. Sample cooled, dry mass determined and recorded to the nearest 0.1 percent?	_____	_____
14. Moisture content calculated correctly and recorded to the nearest 0.1 percent?	_____	_____

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Comments:      First attempt: Pass\_\_\_\_Fail\_\_\_\_      Second attempt: Pass\_\_\_\_Fail\_\_\_\_

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Examiner Signature \_\_\_\_\_ WAQTC #: \_\_\_\_\_