

# INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

# ISO 3681

Fourth edition  
2018-11

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## **Binders for paints and varnishes — Determination of saponification value — Titrimetric method**

*Liants pour peintures et vernis — Détermination de l'indice de  
saponification — Méthode titrimétrique*



Reference number  
ISO 3681:2018(E)

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Published in Switzerland

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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see [www.iso.org/patents](http://www.iso.org/patents)).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see [www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html).

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 35, *Paints and varnishes*.

This fourth edition cancels and replaces the third edition (ISO 3681:1996), which has been technically revised.

The main changes compared to the previous edition are as follows:

- the normative references in [Clause 2](#) have been updated;
- a reference to ISO 4618 for terms and definitions relating to paints and varnishes has been added to [Clause 3](#);
- the concentration of the phenolphthalein ([5.4](#)) solution has been lowered to 0,9 %.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at [www.iso.org/members.html](http://www.iso.org/members.html).



# Binders for paints and varnishes — Determination of saponification value — Titrimetric method

## 1 Scope

This document specifies a titrimetric method for determining the esterified-acid content in binders for paints and varnishes, free acids and acid anhydrides being necessarily included in the result obtained.

Because different binders vary in their resistance to saponification, this document is of limited applicability. If necessary, completeness of saponification can be checked by repeating the test under more severe conditions achieved by the use of longer saponification time, more concentrated potassium hydroxide solution, or a higher-boiling alcohol as solvent.

[Annex A](#) specifies a procedure suitable for binders that saponify with difficulty.

The method is not applicable to those materials that show further reaction with alkalis beyond normal saponification.

## 2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 385, *Laboratory glassware — Burettes*

ISO 648, *Laboratory glassware — Single-volume pipettes*

ISO 3696, *Water for analytical laboratory use — Specification and test methods*

ISO 4618, *Paints and varnishes — Terms and definitions*

ISO 15528, *Paints, varnishes and raw materials for paints and varnishes — Sampling*

## 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 4618 and the following apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>

### 3.1

#### saponification

formation of the alkali metal salts of derivatives of organic acids

### 3.2

#### saponification value

milligrams of potassium hydroxide (KOH) required for the *saponification* (3.1) of 1 g of the product tested

## 4 Principle

After a preliminary test to determine the saponification conditions (concentration of potassium hydroxide solution, saponification time, etc.) for the product to be tested, a test portion is boiled under reflux with potassium hydroxide solution under these conditions. The hot solution is titrated with standard volumetric hydrochloric acid, either in the presence of a colour indicator or potentiometrically.

## 5 Reagents

During the analysis, use only reagents of recognized analytical grade, and only water of at least grade 3 purity as defined in ISO 3696.

**5.1 Toluene**, or other suitable unsaponifiable solvent.

**5.2 Potassium hydroxide solution**, in isopropanol, ethanol or methanol,  $c(\text{KOH}) = 0,5 \text{ mol/l}$ .

If more severe conditions for saponification are needed, 2 mol/l ethanolic potassium hydroxide solution may be used, or 1,2-ethanediol (ethylene glycol) or 2,2'-oxydiethanol (diethylene glycol) may be used as the solvent, in accordance with [Clause 8](#) and [Annex A](#).

Where isopropanol can be used instead of ethanol or methanol, it shall be used. The applicability of the solution in isopropanol is comparable to that of an ethanolic solution and its toxicity is less than that of a methanolic solution.

**5.3 Hydrochloric acid**, standard volumetric solution,  $c(\text{HCl}) = 0,5 \text{ mol/l}$ , in a mixture of 4 parts by volume of methanol and 1 part by volume of water or in water.

**5.4 Phenolphthalein** or **thymolphthalein**, 9 g/l solution in 95 % (volume fraction) ethanol, in methanol or in isopropanol (see [5.2](#)).

## 6 Apparatus

Ordinary laboratory apparatus and glassware together with the following.

**6.1 Conical flask**, of capacity 250 ml, with a ground-glass joint.

**6.2 Reflux condenser**, with a ground-glass joint.

**6.3 Burette** or **pipette**, of capacity 25 ml or 50 ml, complying with the requirements of ISO 385 and ISO 648.

**6.4 Potentiometric titration apparatus**, fitted with a glass electrode and a reference electrode. The use of this apparatus is an optional alternative (see [9.3](#)).

**6.5 Magnetic stirrer**.

**6.6 Water bath** or **oil bath**.

## 7 Sampling

Take a representative sample of the product to be tested, as described in ISO 15528.

## 8 Preliminary test

If no saponification conditions are specified or agreed, carry out the procedure specified in [Clause 9](#) using 25 ml of potassium hydroxide solution ([5.2](#)) and a boiling time of 1 h. To test whether the saponification value can be determined under these conditions, intensify the conditions by increasing the saponification time to at least 2 h and/or by using a 2 mol/l potassium hydroxide solution or a solution of potassium hydroxide in an alcohol that has a boiling point distinctly higher than that of ethanol, for example 1,2-ethanediol (ethylene glycol) or 2,2'-oxydiethanol (diethylene glycol).

If no increase in the final (i.e. mean) result (see [10.1](#)) is obtained using the more intense conditions, the test may be carried out using this document. If a higher value is obtained which is not further increased by again intensifying the test conditions, this document may be followed but using and noting the intensified conditions applied. If a constant result is not obtained even under the most severe conditions of saponification, the method to be used shall be agreed between the interested parties.

## 9 Procedure

### 9.1 Number of determinations

Carry out the determination in duplicate.

### 9.2 Test portion

By reference to [Table 1](#), select the appropriate mass of test portion to be taken. This mass shall be chosen so that less than half of the volume of potassium hydroxide solution added is sufficient to saponify the test portion.

**Table 1 — Mass of test portion**

Expected saponification value mg KOH/g	Approximate mass of test portion g
up to 10	20
above 10 to 20	10
above 20 to 50	5
above 50 to 100	2,5
above 100 to 200	1,5
above 200 to 300	1
above 300 to 500	0,5
above 500	0,2

Weigh, to the nearest 1 mg, the test portion into the conical flask ([6.1](#)).

### 9.3 Determination

Dissolve the test portion, if necessary, in a measured volume of toluene or other suitable, unsaponifiable solvent ([5.1](#)), warming, if necessary, under the reflux condenser ([6.2](#)). Add, from the burette or pipette ([6.3](#)), one of the following:

- 25 ml of 0,5 mol/l potassium hydroxide solution ([5.2](#));
- 25 ml of a different potassium hydroxide solution (see [Clause 8](#) and [5.2](#));
- the specified or agreed volume of a potassium hydroxide solution.

Heat, while stirring, the contents of the flask to boiling in a water bath or oil bath ([6.6](#)) and reflux for 1 h or the specified or agreed time, or the time found necessary in the preliminary test (see [Clause 8](#)).



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Titrate the hot solution with hydrochloric acid (5.3) after addition of 3 drops of phenolphthalein or thymolphthalein solution (5.4).

If the potentiometric titration is used, the electrode shall have a suitable response time.

If precipitation occurs, bring the precipitate back into solution by addition of water, which acts as a solvent.

### 9.4 Blank test

Carry out a blank test, following the same procedure but omitting the test portion.

## 10 Expression of results

### 10.1 Calculation

Calculate the saponification value SV, in milligrams of KOH per gram of product, using Formula (1):

$$SV = \frac{(V_0 - V_1) \cdot c \cdot 56,1}{m} \quad (1)$$

where

$V_0$  is the volume, in millilitres, of hydrochloric acid (5.3) required for the blank test (9.4);

$V_1$  is the volume, in millilitres, of hydrochloric acid (5.3) required for the determination (9.3);

$c$  is the actual concentration, in moles per litre, of the hydrochloric acid (5.3);

56,1 is the factor for the conversion of millilitres of hydrochloric acid,  $c(\text{HCl}) = 1 \text{ mol/l}$ , to milligrams of potassium hydroxide;

$m$  is the mass, in grams, of the test portion (9.2).

If the two results (duplicates) differ by more than 3 % (relative to the mean), repeat the procedure described in Clause 9.

Report as the final result the mean, rounded to the nearest 0,1 mg KOH/g, of two valid results (replicates).

### 10.2 Precision

No precision data are currently available.

## 11 Test report

The test report shall contain at least the following information:

- all details necessary to identify the product tested;
- a reference to this document (i.e. ISO 3681);
- the result of the test as indicated in 10.1;
- the solvent and the concentration and volume of the potassium hydroxide solution used;
- the period of boiling;

- f) the type of titration: in the presence of a colour indicator (phenolphthalein or thymolphthalein) or potentiometric;
- g) any deviation (by agreement or otherwise) from the test method specified;
- h) any unusual features (anomalies) observed during the test;
- i) the date of the test.



## Annex A (normative)

### Binders which are saponifiable with difficulty — Determination of saponification value

#### A.1 Reagents

During the analysis, use only reagents of recognized analytical grade, and only water of at least grade 3 purity as defined in ISO 3696.

**A.1.1 Hydrochloric acid**, aqueous standard volumetric solution,  $c(\text{HCl}) = 0,25 \text{ mol/l}$ .

**A.1.2 Potassium hydroxide**, solution in 1,2-ethanediol.

Weigh about 6 g of potassium hydroxide into a 100 ml conical flask (see [A.2.1](#)) and add 25 ml of 1,2-ethanediol. Warm until the potassium hydroxide is dissolved. It is advisable to insert a thermometer into the solution while carrying out the dissolving procedure in order to avoid exceeding a temperature of 130 °C. If this occurs, a deep yellow colour develops in the solution.

When the potassium hydroxide is completely dissolved, transfer the solution to a 150 ml conical flask (see [A.2.1](#)) containing 75 ml of 1,2-ethanediol. Shake the resultant solution carefully and allow it to cool.

**A.1.3 Phenolphthalein**, 9 g/l solution in 95 % (volume fraction) ethanol.

#### A.2 Apparatus

**A.2.1 Conical flasks**, of capacity 100 ml and 150 ml, with ground-glass stoppers.

**A.2.2 Pipette**, capacity 10 ml, the delivery end of which has been modified so that its internal diameter is between 2 mm and 3 mm in order to facilitate the delivery of the potassium hydroxide solution.

The modified pipette shall be recalibrated before use.

**A.2.3 Oil bath**, capable of being maintained at temperatures up to 150 °C to within 1 °C.

**A.2.4 Magnetic stirrer**.

#### A.3 Preliminary test

See [Clause 8](#).

#### A.4 Procedure

##### A.4.1 Number of determinations

Carry out the determination in duplicate.

#### A.4.2 Test portion

Weigh, to the nearest 0,1 mg, about 0,5 g of the sample into a 100 ml conical flask (see [A.2.1](#)).

#### A.4.3 Determination

By means of the pipette ([A.2.2](#)), add 10 ml of potassium hydroxide solution ([A.1.2](#)) to the flask containing the test portion ([A.4.2](#)).

Stopper the flask and mix the contents by swirling.

Secure the stopper and heat the contents in the oil bath ([A.2.3](#)) to 70 °C to 80 °C. Maintain this temperature for 2 min to 3 min.

Swirl the contents of the flask, as before, during heating.

Remove the flask from the oil bath. Shake the contents vigorously and allow the flask to stand. Remove the stopper carefully so as to permit air to escape.

Again secure the stopper in the flask and return the flask to the oil bath heated to 120 °C to 130 °C.

If necessary, a temperature higher than 130 °C may be used. Saponification under pressure is also possible.

Heat for 3 min at this temperature, cool the flask to 80 °C to 90 °C, remove the stopper and rinse it with water, collecting the washings in the flask.

Add a further 15 ml of water to the flask and a few drops of phenolphthalein solution ([A.1.3](#)). Titrate the mixture, while stirring, with hydrochloric acid ([A.1.1](#)).

#### A.4.4 Blank test

Carry out a blank test, using the same procedure but omitting the test portion.

#### A.5 Expression of results

See [Clause 10](#).

#### A.6 Test report

See [Clause 11](#).

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