
**Metallic materials — Knoop
hardness test —**
Part 3:
Calibration of reference blocks

Matériaux métalliques — Essai de dureté Knoop —
Partie 3: Étalonnage des blocs de référence



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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).

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).

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

For an explanation on 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 the following URL: www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 164, *Mechanical testing of metals*, Subcommittee SC 3, *Hardness testing*.

This second edition cancels and replaces the third edition (ISO 4545-3:2005), which has been technically revised.

Significant technical changes from the previous edition of this document include:

- the requirements for the maximum test surface area of the reference block have been added;
- the requirements for the maximum uncertainty of the line intervals on the stage micrometer have been revised;
- the requirements for the calibration and verification of the measuring system have been revised, as per ISO 4545-2;
- the requirements for the uniformity of the reference block hardness have been revised to account for different numbers of calibration indentations;
- the timing requirements for the approach velocity and the time duration at maximum test force have been revised to indicate a target time value;
- [Annex B](#) has been revised

A list of all parts in the ISO 4545 series can be found on the ISO website.

Metallic materials — Knoop hardness test —

Part 3: Calibration of reference blocks

1 Scope

This document specifies the method for the calibration of reference blocks to be used for the indirect verification of Knoop hardness testing machines as specified in ISO 4545-2.

The method is applicable only for indentations with long diagonals $\geq 0,020$ mm.

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 376:2011, *Metallic materials — Calibration of force-proving instruments used for the verification of uniaxial testing machines*

ISO 4545-1, *Metallic materials — Knoop hardness test — Part 1: Test method*

ISO 4545-2, *Metallic materials — Knoop hardness test — Part 2: Verification and calibration of testing machines*

3 Terms and definitions

No terms and definitions are listed in this document.

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

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

4 Manufacture of the reference block

4.1 General

The block shall be specially manufactured for use as a hardness-reference block using a manufacturing process that will give the necessary homogeneity, stability of structure and uniformity of surface hardness.

4.2 Thickness

Each metal block to be calibrated shall be of a thickness not less than 5 mm.

4.3 Test surface area

The test surface area of the reference block shall not exceed 40 cm².

4.4 Magnetism

The reference blocks shall be free of magnetism. It is recommended that the manufacturer ensure that the blocks, if made of steel, have been demagnetized at the end of the manufacturing process (before calibration).

4.5 Flatness and parallelism

The maximum deviation in flatness of the test and support surfaces shall not exceed 0,005 mm. The maximum error in parallelism shall not exceed 0,010 mm in 50 mm.

4.6 Surface roughness

The test surface shall be free from scratches that interfere with the measurement of the indentations. The test surface roughness, R_a , shall not exceed 0,05 μm ^[1]. The bottom support surface shall be a finely ground finish or better.

4.7 Prevention of the regrind of the test surface

To verify that no material is subsequently removed from the reference block, the thickness at the time of calibration shall be marked on the reference block to the nearest 0,01 mm, or an identifying mark shall be made on the test surface [see 8.2 e)].

5 Calibration machine

5.1 General

In addition to fulfilling the general requirements specified in ISO 4545-2, the calibration machine shall also meet the requirements given in 5.2 to 5.6.

NOTE The criteria specified in this document for the performance of the calibration machine have been developed and refined over a significant period of time. When determining a specific tolerance that the machine needs to meet, the uncertainty associated with the use of measuring equipment and/or reference standards has been incorporated within this tolerance and it would therefore be inappropriate to make any further allowance for this uncertainty by, for example, reducing the tolerance by the measurement uncertainty. This applies to all measurements made when performing a direct verification of the calibration machine.

5.2 Direct verification

The calibration machine shall be directly verified in intervals not exceeding 12 months.

Direct verification involves

- calibration of the test force,
- verification of the indenter,
- calibration and verification of the diagonal measuring system, and
- verification of the testing cycle, and if not possible, at least the force versus time behaviour.

5.3 Traceability of verification instruments

The instruments used for verification and calibration shall be traceable to national standards.

5.4 Test force

Each test force shall be verified at three different positions of the plunger, spaced at approximately equal increments covering the limits of travel used during testing. At each position, the force shall be measured three times using an elastic proving device, according to ISO 376:2011, Class 0,5 or better, or by another method having the same or better accuracy. Each measurement shall agree with the nominal value to within $\pm 0,5$ %.

5.5 Indenter

The indenter shall comply with ISO 4545-2 and meet the following requirements:

- the four faces of the rhombic-based diamond pyramid shall be highly polished, free from surface defects, and flat within 0,000 3 mm;
- the angle β (see ISO 4545-1), between opposite edges at the vertex of the diamond pyramid, shall be $(130 \pm 0,1)^\circ$;
- the angle between the axis of the diamond pyramid and the axis of the indenter holder (normal to the seating surface) shall not exceed $0,3^\circ$;
- the point of the diamond indenter shall be examined with a high-power measuring microscope or preferably with an interference microscope. If the four faces do not meet at a point, the line of junction, as described in ISO 4545-2, between opposite faces shall be less than 0,000 3 mm.

A valid calibration certificate shall exist which confirms the geometrical deviations of the indenter.

5.6 Diagonal measurement system

The scale of the diagonal measuring system shall be graduated to permit estimation of the diagonals of the indentation to the greater of 0,000 15 mm or 0,25 % of the length measured.

The system for measuring the long diagonal of the indentation shall be verified at each magnification and for each incorporated line scale to be used in two perpendicular measurement axes (if applicable), by performing measurements on an accurately ruled stage micrometer. Measurements shall be made at a minimum of five evenly spaced intervals, arranged centrally in the field of view, covering each working range.

The maximum expanded uncertainty of the distance between the line intervals on the stage micrometer shall be 0,000 2 mm or 0,04 %, whichever is greater.

Three measurements shall be made at each of the evenly spaced intervals. The maximum permissible error of each of the three diagonal measurements at each interval shall be the greater of 0,000 3 mm or 0,5 % of the length measured.

NOTE A helpful technique for adjusting optical systems that have Köhler illumination is given in [Annex A](#).

6 Calibration procedure

The reference blocks shall be calibrated by a calibration machine as specified in [Clause 5](#), at a temperature of $(23 \pm 5)^\circ\text{C}$, using the general procedure specified in ISO 4545-1.

During calibration, the thermal drift should not exceed 1°C .

Bring the indenter into contact with the test surface and apply the test force in a direction perpendicular to the surface, without shock or vibration, until the applied force attains the specified value. The approach velocity of the indenter shall be within 0,015 mm/s to 0,07 mm/s. The time from the initial application of the force until the full test force is reached shall be 7_{-1}^{+1} s. The duration of the test force shall be 14_{-1}^{+1} s.

The maximum allowable vibrational acceleration reaching the machine shall be less than 0,005 g_n [g_n being the standard acceleration due to gravity ($g_n = 9,806\ 65\ \text{m/s}^2$)].

7 Number of indentations

On each reference block, a minimum of five reference indentations shall be made, uniformly distributed over the test surface. At least one of the indentations shall be identified as a reference indentation.

To reduce the measurement uncertainty, more than 5 indentations should be made. It is recommended to make 10, 15 or 25 indentations distributed over five locations on the reference block.

8 Uniformity of hardness

8.1 Relative non-uniformity

For each reference block, let $H_1, H_2, \dots, H_n$ be the n measured hardness values arranged in increasing order of magnitude corresponding to the measured diagonals $d_1, d_2, \dots, d_n$ in decreasing order of magnitude. The average hardness, $\bar{H}$, is calculated according to [Formula \(1\)](#):

$$\bar{H} = \frac{H_1 + H_2 + \dots + H_n}{n} \quad (1)$$

The relative non-uniformity r_{rel} , expressed as a percentage of $\bar{H}$, is calculated according to [Formula \(2\)](#):

$$r_{\text{rel}} = 100 \times \frac{H_n - H_1}{\bar{H}} \quad (2)$$

The uniformity of the reference block is satisfactory if $d_1 - d_n \leq 0,001\ \text{mm}$. If $d_1 - d_n > 0,001\ \text{mm}$, the uniformity of the reference block is satisfactory, when r_{rel} is less than or equal to the percentages indicated in [Table 1](#).

Table 1 — Maximum permissible non-uniformity

Hardness of block	Maximum permissible value of non-uniformity, r_{rel} %HK		
	HK 0,001 to HK 0,1	> HK 0,1 to HK 0,5	> HK 0,5 to HK 2
$100 \leq \text{HK} \leq 200$	16	14	8
$200 < \text{HK} \leq 250$	10	14	8
$250 < \text{HK} \leq 650$	8	8	6
$\text{HK} > 650$	6	6	4

8.2 Uncertainty of measurement

The determination of the uncertainty of measurement of hardness-reference blocks is given in [Annex B](#).

9 Marking

Each reference block shall be marked with the following information:

- arithmetic mean of the hardness values found in the calibration test, for example, 249 HK 1;
- name or mark of the supplier or manufacturer;
- serial number;

- d) name or mark of the calibrating agency;
- e) thickness of the block, or an identifying mark on the test surface (see [4.7](#));
- f) year of calibration, if not indicated in the serial number.

All markings shall be placed on the test surface or on the side of the block. Any mark put on the side of the block shall be the right way up when the test surface is facing up.

10 Calibration certificate

Each delivered reference block shall be accompanied with a document giving at least the following information:

- a) a reference to this document, i.e. ISO 4545-2;
- b) the serial number of the block;
- c) the date of calibration;
- d) the arithmetic mean of the hardness values in the format defined in ISO 4545-1, and the value characterizing the non-uniformity of the block;
- e) the information about the location of each reference indentation together with the length of the long diagonal.

11 Validity

The reference block is only valid for the scale for which it was calibrated.

The calibration validity should be limited to a duration of five years. Attention is drawn to the fact that, for Al- and Cu-alloys, the calibration validity should be reduced to two to three years.

Annex A **(informative)**

Adjustment of Köhler illumination systems

A.1 General

While some optical systems are permanently aligned, others have means of minor adjustments. To gain the utmost in resolution, the following adjustments may be helpful.

A.2 Köhler illumination

Focus, to critical sharpness, the surface of a flat polished specimen.

Centre the illuminating source.

Centrally align the field and aperture diaphragms.

Open the field diaphragm so that it just disappears from the field of view.

Remove the eyepiece and examine the rear focal plane of the objective. If all the components are in their proper places, the source of illumination and the aperture diaphragm will appear in sharp focus.

A full-aperture diaphragm is preferred for maximum resolving power. If glare is excessive, reduce the aperture; but never use less than 3/4 of the opening, since resolution would be decreased and diffraction phenomena could lead to false measurements.

If the light is too strong for eye comfort, reduce the intensity by using an appropriate neutral density filter or rheostat control.

Annex B (informative)

Uncertainty of mean hardness value of hardness-reference blocks

B.1 General

Measurement uncertainty analysis is a useful tool to help determine sources of error and to understand differences between measured values. This annex gives guidance on uncertainty estimation but the values derived are for information only, unless specifically instructed otherwise by the customer. The criteria specified in this document for the performance of the testing machine have been developed and refined over a significant period of time. When determining a specific tolerance that the machine needs to meet, the uncertainty associated with the use of measuring equipment and/or reference standards has been incorporated within this tolerance and it would therefore be inappropriate to make any further allowance for this uncertainty by, for example, reducing the tolerance by the measurement uncertainty. This applies to all measurements made when performing a direct or indirect verification of the machine. In each case, it is simply the measured value resulting from the use of the specified measuring equipment and/or reference standards that is used to assess whether or not the machine complies with this document. However, there may be special circumstances where reducing the tolerance by the measurement uncertainty is appropriate. This should only be done by agreement of the parties involved.

The metrological chain necessary to define and disseminate hardness scales is shown in ISO 4545-1.

B.2 Direct verification of the hardness-calibration machine

B.2.1 Calibration of the test force

See [5.4](#) and ISO 4545-2.

B.2.2 Calibration of the diagonal measuring system

See [5.6](#) and ISO 4545-2.

B.2.3 Verification of the indenter

See [5.5](#) and ISO 4545-2.

B.2.4 Verification of the test cycle

See [Clause 6](#) and ISO 4545-2.

B.3 Indirect verification of the hardness-calibration machine

NOTE In this annex, the index “CRM (certified reference material)” means, according to the definitions of the hardness testing standards, “hardness reference block”.

By indirect verification with primary hardness-reference blocks calibrated by the national-level calibration agency (see ISO 4545-1), the overall function of the hardness-calibration machine is checked and the repeatability, as well as the deviation of the hardness-calibration machine from the actual hardness value, are determined.

The uncertainty of the measurement bias of the hardness calibration machine, u_{CM} , when measuring a primary hardness-reference block is calculated according to [Formula \(B.1\)](#):

$$u_{\text{CM}} = \sqrt{u_{\text{CRM-P}}^2 + u_{\text{xCRM-P}}^2 + u_{\text{CRM-D}}^2 + 2 \times u_{\text{ms}}^2} \quad (\text{B.1})$$

where

- $u_{\text{CRM-P}}$ is the calibration uncertainty of the primary hardness reference block, according to the calibration certificate for $k = 1$;
- $u_{\text{xCRM-P}}$ is the standard uncertainty of hardness-calibration machine when measuring the CRM;
- $u_{\text{CRM-D}}$ is the standard uncertainty due to the hardness change of the primary hardness-reference block since its last calibration due to drift;
- u_{ms} is the uncertainty due to the resolution of the hardness-calibration machine.

Regarding u_{ms} , both the resolution of the length measurement indicating instrument and the optical resolution of the measuring microscope shall be considered. In most cases, the overall resolution of the measurement system should be included twice in the calculation of u_{CM} due to resolving the positions of both ends of the long diagonal independently.

EXAMPLE

Using results as shown in [Table B.1](#) and the following information:

- hardness of the primary hardness-reference block: $H_{\text{CRM}} = 400,6 \text{ HK } 1$;
- uncertainty of measurement of the primary hardness-reference block ($k = 1$): $u_{\text{CRM}} = 6,0 \text{ HK } 1$;
- time drift of the primary hardness-reference block: $u_{\text{CRM-D}} = 0$;
- resolution of the diagonal measurement system is calculated according to [Formula \(B.2\)](#),

$$\delta_{\text{ms}} = \sqrt{\delta_{\text{OR}}^2 + \delta_{\text{IR}}^2} \quad (\text{B.2})$$

where

δ_{OR} is the resolution of the microscope objective (0,000 31 mm);

NOTE $\delta_{\text{OR}} = \lambda / (2 \times \text{NA})$, where

λ is the wave length of light in μm (approx. 0,55 μm for green light);

NA is the numerical aperture of the objective.

Example: For a 100 $\times$ objective with a NA of 0,9 using green light,
 $\delta_{\text{OR}} = 0,55 \mu\text{m} / (2 \times 0,9) = 0,306 \mu\text{m}$.

The above optical resolution formula is valid for lighting inclined at large angles.

δ_{IR} is the resolution of the length measurement indicating instrument (0,000 1 mm).

- uncertainty of measurement due to the resolution of the diagonal measurement system is calculated according to [Formula \(B.3\)](#):

$$u_{ms} = \frac{\delta_{ms}}{2 \times \sqrt{3}} = 0,000\,093\text{ mm} \quad (\text{B.3})$$

- standard uncertainty of the hardness-calibration machine when measuring the CRM is calculated according to [Formula \(B.4\)](#):

$$u_{x\text{CRM-P}} = \frac{t \cdot s_{x\text{CRM-P}}}{\sqrt{n}} = 1,08\text{ HK1} \quad (\text{B.4})$$

where $t = 1,14$ and $n = 5$,

the uncertainty of the measurement bias of the hardness calibration machine, u_{CM} , when measuring a primary hardness-reference block is calculated according to [Formula \(B.1\)](#), and as shown in [Table B.2](#).

The bias is calculated according to [Formula \(B.5\)](#):

$$b = \bar{H} - H_{\text{CRM}} \quad (\text{B.5})$$

$$b = (402,1 - 400,6)\text{ HK1} = 1,5\text{ HK1}$$

Table B.1 — Results of the indirect verification

Number	Measured indentation diagonal d mm	Calculated hardness value H HK 1
1	0,188 0	402,6
2	0,187 5 _{min}	404,7 _{max}
3	0,187 9	403,0
4	0,188 4	400,9
5	0,188 8 _{max}	399,2 _{min}
Mean value	0,188 1	402,1
Standard deviation, $s_{x\text{CRM-P}}$	0,000 50	2,1
Standard uncertainty of measurement, $u_{x\text{CRM-P}}$	0,000 25	1,08
HK: Knoop hardness		

Table B.2 — Budget of uncertainty of measurement

Quantity X_i	Estimated value x_i	Standard uncertainty of measurement $u(x_i)$	Distribution type	Sensitivity coefficient c_i	Uncertainty contribution $u_i(H)$ HK 1
u_{CRM}	400,6 HK 1	6,0 HK 1	Normal	1,0	6,0
$u_{x\text{CRM-P}}$	0 HK 1	1,08 HK 1	Normal	1,0	1,08
u_{ms}	0 mm	0,000 093 mm	Rectangular	-4 274,7 ^a	-0,40
$u_{\text{CRM-D}}$	0 HK 1	0 HK 1	Triangular	1,0	0
Combined uncertainty of measurement of the bias, u_{CM}					6,12
Expanded uncertainty of measurement of the bias, $U_{\text{CM}} (k = 2)$					12,25
^a The sensitivity coefficient follows from $c = \partial H / \partial d = -2(H/d)$ for $H = 402,1\text{ HK1}$, $d = 0,188\text{ mm}$.					

B.4 Uncertainty of measurement of hardness-reference blocks

The uncertainty of measurement of hardness-reference blocks is calculated according to [Formula \(B.6\)](#):

$$u_{\text{CRM}} = \sqrt{u_{\text{CM}}^2 + u_{\text{xCRM}}^2 + 2 \times u_{\text{ms}}^2} \quad (\text{B.6})$$

where

- u_{CM} is the uncertainty of the measurement bias of the hardness calibration machine when measuring a primary reference block (see [Formula B.1](#));
- u_{xCRM} is the standard uncertainty of the hardness measurement of hardness reference blocks with the hardness calibration machine;
- u_{ms} is the uncertainty due to the resolution of the hardness-calibration machine.

Regarding u_{ms} , both the resolution of the length measurement indicating instrument and the optical resolution of the measuring microscope shall be considered. In most cases, the overall resolution of the measurement system should be included twice in the calculation of u_{CRM} due to resolving the positions of both ends of the long diagonal independently.

For a hardness-reference block value that is not corrected for measurement bias, the uncertainty of the measurement value is calculated according to [Formula \(B.7\)](#):

$$U_{\text{CRM}} = 2 \times u_{\text{CRM}} + |b| \quad (\text{B.7})$$

For a hardness-reference block value that is corrected for measurement bias, the hardness-reference block value is corrected according to [Formula \(B.8\)](#):

$$H_{\text{CRM}} = \bar{H} - b \quad (\text{B.8})$$

The uncertainty of the measurement value is calculated according to [Formula \(B.9\)](#):

$$U_{\text{CRM}} = 2 \times u_{\text{CRM}} \quad (\text{B.9})$$

EXAMPLE

Using the test results shown in [Table B.3](#) and the following information:

- standard uncertainty of the hardness measurement of hardness reference blocks is calculated according to [Formula \(B.10\)](#):

$$u_{\text{xCRM}} = \frac{t \times s_{\text{xCRM}}}{\sqrt{n}} \quad (\text{B.10})$$

where $t = 1,14$ and $n = 5$;

$u_{\text{xCRM}} = 0,74 \text{ HK } 1$;

- combined uncertainty of measurement (from [Table B.2](#)): $u_{\text{CM}} = 6,12 \text{ HK } 1$;
- resolution of the diagonal measurement system, using u_{ms} (mm) from [Formula \(B.3\)](#): $u_{\text{ms}} = -0,34 \text{ HK } 1$,

the uncertainty of measurement of hardness reference blocks, u_{CRM} , is calculated according to [Formula \(B.6\)](#), and as shown in [Table B.4](#).