

# INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

## NORME INTERNATIONALE



**Measurement procedures for materials used in photovoltaic modules –  
Part 2-1: Polymeric materials – Frontsheet and backsheet – Safety requirements**

**Procédures de mesure des matériaux utilisés dans les modules photovoltaïques –  
Partie 2-1: Matériaux polymères – Face avant et face arrière – Exigences de  
sécurité**



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## INTERNATIONAL ELECTROTECHNICAL COMMISSION

**MEASUREMENT PROCEDURES FOR MATERIALS  
USED IN PHOTOVOLTAIC MODULES –****Part 2-1: Polymeric materials –  
Frontsheet and backsheet – Safety requirements**

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The text of this International Standard is based on the following documents:

| Draft        | Report on voting |
|--------------|------------------|
| 82/2123/FDIS | 82/2148/RVD      |

Full information on the voting for its approval can be found in the report on voting indicated in the above table.

The language used for the development of this International Standard is English.

This document was drafted in accordance with ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2, and developed in accordance with ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1 and ISO/IEC Directives, IEC Supplement, available at [www.iec.ch/members\\_experts/refdocs](http://www.iec.ch/members_experts/refdocs). The main document types developed by IEC are described in greater detail at [www.iec.ch/standardsdev/publications](http://www.iec.ch/standardsdev/publications).

A list of all parts in the IEC 62788 series, published under the general title *Measurement procedures for materials used in photovoltaic modules*, can be found on the IEC website.

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## INTRODUCTION

This document provides test procedures and specifications for polymeric front- and backsheet constructions employed in a PV module for safety qualification on a component level. Test methods have been compiled to match the general requirements for polymeric materials used as relied-upon insulation defined in the IEC 61730 standard series in consideration of test methods in IEC TS 62788-2 (characterization of front- and backsheets), IEC TS 62788-7-2 [4]<sup>1</sup>(UV weathering test) and the retesting guidelines IEC TS 62915. This document provides clarifications on definitions of front- and backsheet construction types and related test requirements, and additional environmental stress testing, to which IEC 61730-1 refers. Separating out the component level testing into this document was considered to limit the complexity of the IEC 61730 standard series, also in view of the implementation of the test methods in the frame of IEC System of Conformity Assessment Schemes for Electrotechnical Equipment and Components (IECEE).

Test methods on a component level and PV module level are different for practical reasons. On a component level, the daylight filtered xenon test (IEC TS 62788-7-2) is applied for UV weathering, which is regarded as more representative to assess the durability of polymeric materials under outdoor weather conditions than the UVA test of IEC 61215-2. The latter has been developed in view of practicality of applying UV exposure to larger scale PV modules.

This document focusses on the safety relevant properties of front- and backsheets as required by IEC 61730.

The lamination protrusion test (aka DTI test) is required to measure the thickness of relied-upon insulation on the component level. The thickness of the relied layer(s) is verified by MST 04 of IEC 61730-2 on PV module level. The test provides additional information needed for evaluation of the Comparative Tracking Index (CTI) and dielectric strength / breakdown voltage.

- The lamination protrusion test applies default lamination conditions, that are representative for a typical PV module manufacturing process. Using a 800 µm diameter solder wire that mimics severe solder peaks and/or slatted ribbons, the test serves as worst case scenario for measurement of potential displacement of material under lamination conditions. Even more harsh lamination process conditions can be selected as recommended by the manufacturer of the front- or backsheet.
- The lamination protrusion test is also used to identify additional inner layers of the front- or backsheet that potentially may be in contact with live parts and for which CTI shall be determined. Additional layers may require CTI depending on the construction of the PV module, e.g., due to backsheet openings and through wiring for junction box connections with background provided in IEC 61730-1.
- The ratio of the measured distance through insulation ( $t_{DTI}$ ) to the total thickness is used to calculate the effective dielectric strength or required withstand voltage when measured on final products that contain inner layers, which can be displaced under lamination conditions (see breakdown voltage test in 6.4).
- Because of the relationship with thermal endurance,  $t_{DTI}$  can be listed as a function of the module operating temperature rating.

<sup>1</sup> Numbers in square brackets refer to the Bibliography.

This document specifies a suite of environmental stress tests to characterize the durability of the relied-upon insulation. In the evaluation of tensile testing a minimum elongation at break is considered in addition to retention of tensile strength, as this allows to differentiate known-bad and known-good materials. The thermal endurance performance, which is historically evaluated by tensile strength and dielectric strength in terms of TI or RTE (RTI), is therefore complemented by a thermal failsafe test to also evaluate elongation at break. The combination of these elements, tests covering thermal, damp heat and UV weathering stresses and evaluation of elongation at break, represents a step forward in safety testing of polymeric front- and backsheets that is still balanced in terms of practicality (duration) of testing.

The requirements in this document for model or variant designations and (re)testing of similar materials have been aligned with developments for the IEC TS 62915 module retesting guidelines. The current requirements provide a first step towards more detailed requirements which may be developed in a future revision of this document or a dedicated component retesting standard.

A future revision of this document may consider sequential testing on engineering coupons with (solder wire) bumps to better mimic the combination of UV and cyclic stress fatigue, that is currently discussed as the next level in endurance testing of polymeric front- and backsheets in IEC TS 62788-2 and IEC TS 63209-2[6]. However, method consolidation requires more time than available for this project.

In view of requirements for material identification in the context of the retesting guidelines (IEC TS 62915), approaches for “finger-printing” are provided in Annex A.

The requirements in this document may be used in the context of Manufacturing Quality Assurance of polymeric front- and backsheets as explained in the guideline IEC 62941[5].

## MEASUREMENT PROCEDURES FOR MATERIALS USED IN PHOTOVOLTAIC MODULES –

### Part 2-1: Polymeric materials – Frontsheet and backsheet – Safety requirements

#### 1 Scope

This document specifies the safety requirements for flexible polymeric front- and backsheet constructions, which are intended for use as relied-upon insulation in photovoltaic (PV) modules. The specifications in this document define the specific requirements of polymeric front- or backsheet constructions on the component level and cover mechanical, electrical, visual and thermal characterization in an unexposed state and/or after ageing.

This document covers class II and class 0 modules, as defined in IEC 61730-1. Class III modules are out of scope.

For qualification to IEC 61730-1 of a PV module using a polymeric front- or backsheet, the sheet must pass the requirements in this document for the specified module's safety class, rated system voltage, and module temperature rating.

Compliance with the safety requirements for a front- or backsheet on the component level does not replace the need for a safety qualification of the complete PV module, in which the front- or backsheet is integrated. The appropriate requirements for testing and qualification of PV modules, are defined in IEC 61730-1 and IEC 61215-1 (or IEC TS 62915 in case of retesting), with test methods provided by IEC 61730-2 and IEC 61215-2, respectively.

This document provides the requirements for qualification of front- and backsheets to be used in module safety qualification according to IEC 61730-1. Test method descriptions are provided in IEC TS 62788-2, along with additional characterization methods useful for performance or quality assurance.

#### 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.

IEC 60216-1, *Electrical insulating materials – Thermal endurance properties – Part 1: Ageing procedures and evaluation of test results*

IEC 60216-3, *Electrical insulating materials – Thermal endurance properties – Part 3: Instructions for calculating thermal endurance characteristics*

IEC 60216-5, *Electrical insulating materials – Thermal endurance properties – Part 5: Determination of relative temperature index (RTI) of an insulating material*

IEC 60664-1, *Insulation coordination for equipment within low-voltage supply systems – Part 1: Principles, requirements and tests*

IEC 61215-1, *Terrestrial photovoltaic (PV) modules – Design qualification and type approval – Part 1: Test requirements*