

BS 1377-3:2018



BSI Standards Publication

Methods of test for soils for civil engineering purposes –

Part 3: Chemical and electrochemical tests

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Published by BSI Standards Limited 2018

ISBN 978 0 580 96354 4

ICS 93.020

The following BSI references relate to the work on this document:

Committee reference B/526/3

Draft for comment 18/30351283 DC

Amendments/corrigenda issued since publication

Date	Text affected
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Summary of pages

This document comprises a front cover, and inside front cover, pages i to iv, pages 1 to 98, an inside back cover and a back cover.

Foreword

Publishing information

This part of BS 1377 is published by BSI Standards Limited, under licence from The British Standards Institution, and came into effect on 31 July 2018. It was prepared by Subcommittee B/526/3, *Site investigation and ground testing*, under the authority of Technical Committee B/526, *Geotechnics*. A list of organizations represented on these committees can be obtained on request to their secretary.

Supersession

This part of BS 1377 supersedes BS 1377-3:1990, which is withdrawn.

Relationship with other publications

BS 1377-3 is published in the following parts:

- Part 1: *General requirements and sample preparation*;
- Part 2: *Classification tests*;
- Part 3: *Chemical and electrochemical tests*;
- Part 4: *Compaction-related tests*;
- Part 5: *Compressibility, permeability and durability tests*;
- Part 6: *Consolidation and permeability tests in hydraulic cells and with pore pressure measurement*;
- Part 7: *Shear strength tests (total stress)*;
- Part 8: *Shear strength tests (effective stress)*;
- Part 9: *In-situ tests*.

Information about this document

This part of BS 1377 is intended to be read in conjunction with BS 1377-1.

In this part of BS 1377, the tests described in the 1990 edition have been retained. Additional tests have been added to include the recommendations of BRE Special Digest 1 [SD1] (BRE 2005) [[1](#)]. Also, analytical methods of chemical analysis have been included, i.e. total carbon analyzer, ion chromatography and inductively coupled plasma atomic emission spectroscopy. The two point resistivity method has been removed and additional four point tests included.

This is a full revision of the standard, and introduces the following principal changes:

- determination of total organic carbon;
- determination of total sulfur content;
- determination of total sulfide (reduced sulfur) content;
- determination of acid-soluble sulfide content (monosulfide sulfur); and
- determination of water soluble magnesium.

Hazard warnings

WARNING. Persons using this British Standard are expected to be familiar with normal laboratory practice. This British Standard calls for the use of substances and/or procedures that can be injurious to health if adequate precautions are not taken. It refers only to technical suitability and does not absolve the user from legal obligations relating to health and safety at any stage. These include the use of fume cupboards or similar apparatus when using acids and other toxic chemicals. This standard does not purport to address the safety problems, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user to establish appropriate safety and health practices and to ensure compliance with any national regulatory conditions.

It is expected that tests conducted in accordance with this British Standard will be carried out by suitably trained and experienced staff.

WARNING. It is dangerous to add water to concentrated acid.

Use of this document

It has been assumed in the preparation of this part of BS 1377 that the execution of its provisions will be entrusted to appropriately qualified and experienced people, for whose use it has been produced.

Presentational conventions

The provisions of this standard are presented in roman (i.e. upright) type. Its methods are expressed as a set of instructions, a description, or in sentences in which the principal auxiliary verb is “shall”.

Commentary, explanation and general informative material is presented in smaller italic type, and does not constitute a normative element.

Contractual and legal considerations

This publication does not purport to include all the necessary provisions of a contract. Users are responsible for its correct application.

Compliance with a British Standard cannot confer immunity from legal obligations.

1 Scope

This part of BS 1377 describes test methods for determining the amount of chemical substances in samples of soil and extremely weak and very weak rocks, as defined by BS 5930, and groundwater.

NOTE 1 Chemical tests in this part of BS 1377 may be used on other rocks if required.

It also describes test methods for the determination of some electrochemical and resistivity properties of solid samples.

NOTE 2 These tests provide data to assess the potential of the ground and solutes to damage construction materials, including cementitious materials and metals in the ground. They can also be used in assessment of the potential for volume change of the ground due to chemical reaction. Resistivity test results can also be used to assess in-situ resistivity results.

This British Standard is not written for testing samples from contaminated land or for soil quality assessment.

Procedures described in this part of BS 1377 are for the determination of the following:

- a) organic matter content in the material ([Clause 4](#));
- b) total organic carbon (TOC) content in the material ([Clause 5](#));
- c) loss on ignition of the material ([Clause 6](#));
- d) sulfur compounds ([Clause 7](#)):
 - 1) water-soluble sulfate content of the material by 2:1 extraction;
 - 2) sulfate content in groundwater;
 - 3) acid-soluble sulfate content of the material;
 - 4) total sulfur content of the material;
 - 5) total sulfide content (total reduced sulfur) content of the material;
 - 6) acid-soluble sulfide (monosulfides sulfur) content of the material;
- e) carbonate content of the material ([Clause 8](#));
- f) chloride content ([Clause 9](#)):
 - 1) water-soluble chloride content of the material;
 - 2) acid-soluble chloride content of the material.
- g) water-soluble magnesium content of the material ([Clause 10](#));
- h) total dissolved solids of the groundwater ([Clause 11](#));
- i) pH value ([Clause 12](#));
- j) electrical resistivity of the material ([Clause 13](#)); and
- k) redox potential of the material ([Clause 14](#)).

Brief guidance on the detrimental effects of sulfur compounds on engineering works and alternative methods of identifying the specific minerals is given in [Annex A](#).

NOTE 3 Good practice in chemical testing requires duplicate specimens to be tested. In each of the test methods the measurement of only one value of the overall result is described. It is recognized that it is necessary in many practical applications to make a number of tests in order to obtain a representative value and an indication of the reliability of the results. Guidance on the number of measurements required and the treatment of the results obtained are not provided in this standard.