



INTRODUCTION

Steel is the generic term for a large family of iron-carbon alloys, which are malleable, within some temperature range, immediately after solidification from the molten state. The principal raw materials used in steelmaking are iron ore, coal, and limestone.

These materials are converted in a blast furnace into a product known as "pig iron," which contains considerable amounts of carbon, manganese, sulfur, phosphorus, and silicon. Pig iron is hard, brittle, and unsuitable for direct processing into wrought forms.

Steelmaking is the process of refining pig iron as well as iron and steel scrap by removing undesirable elements from the melt and then adding desirable elements in predetermined amounts. A primary reaction in most steelmaking is the combination of carbon with oxygen to form a gas. If dissolved oxygen is not removed from the melt prior to or during pouring, the gaseous products continue to evolve during solidification. If the steel is strongly deoxidized by the addition of deoxidizing elements, no gas is evolved, and the steel is called "killed" because it lies quietly in the molds. Increasing degrees of gas evolution (decreased deoxidation) characterize steels called "semikilled", "capped," or "rimmed." The degree of deoxidation affects some of the properties of the steel. In addition to oxygen, liquid steel contains measurable amounts of dissolved hydrogen and nitrogen. For some critical steel applications, special deoxidation practices as well as vacuum treatments may be used to reduce and control dissolved gases.

The carbon content of common steel grades ranges from a few hundredths of a per cent to about 1 per cent. All steels also contain varying amounts of other elements, principally manganese, which acts as a deoxidizer and facilitates hot working. Silicon, phosphorus, and sulfur are also always present, if only in trace amounts. Other elements may be present, either as residuals that are not intentionally added, but result from the raw materials or steelmaking practice, or as alloying elements added to effect changes in the properties of the steel.

Steels can be cast to shape, or the cast ingot or strand can be reheated and hot worked by rolling, forging, extrusion, or other processes into a wrought mill shape. Wrought steels are the most widely used of engineering materials, offering a multitude of forms, finishes, strengths, and usable temperature ranges. No other material offers comparable versatility for product design.

Numbering Systems for Metals and Alloys

Several different numbering systems have been developed for metals and alloys by various trade associations, professional engineering societies, standards organizations, and by private industries for their own use. The numerical code used to identify the metal or alloy may or may not be related to a specification, which is a statement of the technical and commercial requirements that the product must meet. Numbering systems in use include those developed by the American Iron and Steel Institute (AISI), Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE), American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), American National Standards Institute (ANSI), Steel Founders Society of America, American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), American Welding Society (AWS), Aluminum Association, Copper Development Association, U.S. Department of Defense (Military Specifications), and the General Accounting Office (Federal Specifications).

The Unified Numbering System (UNS) was developed through a joint effort of the ASTM and the SAE to provide a means of correlating the different numbering systems for metals and alloys that have a commercial standing. This system avoids the confusion caused when more than one identification number is used to specify the same material, or when the same number is assigned to two entirely different materials. It is important to understand that a UNS number is not a specification; it is an identification number for metals and alloys for which detailed specifications are provided elsewhere. UNS numbers consist of a letter prefix followed by five digits. In some, the letter is suggestive of the family of metals identified by the series, such as A for aluminum and C for copper. Whenever possible, the numbers in the UNS groups contain numbering sequences taken directly from other systems to facilitate identification of the material; e.g., the corresponding UNS number for AISI 1020 steel is G10200.

Standard Steel Numbering System

The most widely used systems for identifying wrought carbon, low-alloy, and stainless steels are based on chemical composition, and are those of the American Iron and Steel Institute (AISI) and the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE). These systems are almost identical, but they are carefully coordinated. The standard steels so designated have been developed cooperatively by producers and users and have been found through long experience to cover most of the wrought ferrous metals used in automotive vehicles and related equipment. These designations, however, are not specifications, and should not be used for purchasing unless accompanied by supplementary information necessary to describe commercially the product desired. Engineering societies, associations, and institutes whose members make, specify, or purchase steel products publish standard specifications, many of which have become well known and respected. The most comprehensive and widely used specifications are those published by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM). The U.S. government and various companies also publish their own specification for steel products to serve their own special procurement needs.

Standard Steel Classification

Wrought steels may be classified systematically into groups based on some common characteristic, such as chemical composition, deoxidation practice, finishing method, or product form. Chemical composition is the most often used basis for identifying and assigning standard designations to wrought steels. Although carbon is the principal hardening and strengthening element in steel, no single element controls the steel's characteristics. The combined effect of several elements influences response to heat treatment, hardness, strength, microstructure, corrosion resistance, and formability.

The standard steels can be divided broadly into three main groups: carbon steels, alloy steels, and stainless steels.

Carbon Steels

A steel qualifies as a carbon steel when its manganese content is limited to 1.65 per cent (max), silicon to 0.60 per cent (max), and copper to 0.60 per cent (max). With the exception of deoxidizers and boron when specified, no other alloying elements are added intentionally, but they may be present as residuals. If any of these incidental elements are considered detrimental for special applications, maximum acceptable limits may be specified. In contrast to most alloy steels, carbon steels are most often used without a final heat treatment; however, they may be annealed, normalized, case hardened, or quenched and tempered to enhance fabrication or mechanical properties. Carbon steels may be killed, semikilled, capped, or rimmed, and, when necessary, the method of deoxidation may be specified.

Alloy Steels

Alloy steels comprise not only those grades that exceed the element content limits for carbon steel, but also any grade to which different elements than used for carbon steel are added, within specific ranges or specific minimums, to enhance mechanical properties, fabricating characteristics, or any other attribute of the steel. By this definition, alloy steels encompass all steels other than carbon steels; however, by convention, steels containing over 3.99 per cent chromium are considered "special types" of alloy steel, which include the stainless steels and many of the tool steels.

In a technical sense, the term alloy steel is reserved for those steels that contain a modest amount of alloying elements (about 1-4 per cent) and generally depend on thermal treatments to develop specific mechanical properties. Alloy steels are always killed, but special deoxidation or melting practices, including vacuum, may be specified for special critical applications. Alloy steels generally require additional care throughout their manufacture, because they are more sensitive to thermal and mechanical operations.

Stainless Steels

Stainless steels are high-alloy steels and have superior corrosion resistance to the carbon and conventional low-alloy steels because they contain relatively large amounts of chromium. Although other elements may also increase corrosion resistance, their usefulness in this respect is limited.

Stainless steels generally contain at least 10 per cent chromium, with or without other elements. It has been customary in the United States, however, to include in the stainless steel classification those steels that contain as little as 4 per cent chromium. Together, these steels form a family known as the stainless and heat-resisting steels, some of which possess very high strength and oxidation resistance. Few, however, contain more than 30 per cent chromium or less than 50 per cent iron.

In the broadest sense, the standard stainless steels can be divided into three groups based on their structures: austenitic, ferritic, and martensitic. In each of the three groups, there is one composition that represents the basic, general-purpose alloy. All other compositions are

derived from the basic alloy, with specific variations in composition being made to obtain very specific properties.

The austenitic grades are nonmagnetic in the annealed condition, although some may become slightly magnetic after cold working. They can be hardened only by cold working, and not by heat treatment, and combine outstanding corrosion and heat resistance with good mechanical properties over a wide temperature range. The austenitic grades are further classified into two subgroups: the chromium-nickel types and the less frequently used chromium-manganese-low-nickel types. The basic composition in the chromium-nickel group is widely known as 18-8 (Cr-Ni) and is the general-purpose austenitic grade. This grade is the basis for over 20 modifications that can be characterized as follows: the chromium-nickel ratio has been modified to change the forming characteristics; the carbon content has been decreased to prevent intergranular corrosion; the elements niobium or titanium have been added to stabilize the structure; or molybdenum has been added or the chromium and nickel contents have been increased to improve corrosion or oxidation resistance.

The standard ferritic grades are always magnetic and contain chromium but no nickel. They can be hardened to some extent by cold working, but not by heat treatment, and they combine corrosion and heat resistance with moderate mechanical properties and decorative appeal. The ferritic grades generally are restricted to a narrower range of corrosive conditions than the austenitic grades. The basic ferritic grade contains 17 per cent chromium. In this series, there are free-machining modifications and grades with increased chromium content to improve scaling resistance. Also in this ferritic group is a 12 per cent chromium steel (the basic composition of the martensitic group) with other elements, such as aluminum or titanium, added to prevent hardening.

The standard martensitic grades are magnetic and can be hardened by quenching and tempering. They contain chromium and, with two exceptions, no nickel. The basic martensitic grade normally contains 12 per cent chromium. There are more than 10 standard compositions in the martensitic series; some are modified to improve machinability and others have small additions of nickel or other elements to improve the mechanical properties or their response to heat treatment. Still others have greatly increased carbon content, in the tool steel range, and are hardenable to the highest levels of all the stainless steels. The martensitic grades are excellent for service in mild environments such as the atmosphere, freshwater, steam, and weak acids, but are not resistant to severely corrosive solutions.

Thermal Treatment of Steel

Steel's versatility is due to its response to thermal treatment. Although most steel products are used in the as-rolled or un-heat-treated condition, thermal treatment greatly increases the number of properties that can be obtained, because at certain "critical temperatures" iron changes from one type of crystal structure to another. This structural change, known as an allotropic transformation, is spontaneous and reversible and can be made to occur by simply changing the temperature of the metal.

In steel, the transformation in crystal structure occurs over a range of temperatures, bounded by lower and upper critical points. When heated, most carbon and low-alloy steels have a critical temperature range between 1300 and 1600 degrees F. Steel above this temperature, but below the melting range, has a crystalline structure known as austenite, in which the carbon and alloying elements are dissolved in a solid solution. Below this critical range, the crystal structure changes to a phase known as ferrite, which is capable of maintaining only a very small percentage of carbon in solid solution. The remaining carbon exists in the form of carbides, which are compounds of carbon and iron and certain of the other alloying elements. Depending primarily on cooling rate, the carbides may be present as thin plates alternating with the ferrite (pearlite); as spheroidal globular particles at ferrite grain boundaries or dispersed throughout the ferrite; or as a uniform distribution of extremely fine particles throughout a "ferritelike" phase, which has an acicular (needle-like) appearance, named martensite. In some of the highly alloyed stainless steels the addition of certain elements stabilizes the austenite structure so that it persists even at very low temperatures (austenitic grades). Other alloying elements can prevent the formation of austenite entirely up to the melting point (ferritic grades).

Fundamentally, all steel heat treatments are intended to either harden or soften the metal. They involve one or a series of operations in which the solid metal is heated and cooled under specified conditions to develop a required structure and properties. In general, there are five major forms of heat treatment for the standard steels that modify properties to suit either fabrication or end use.

Quenching and Tempering

The primary hardening treatment for steel, quenching and tempering, usually consists of three successive operations: heating the steel above the critical range and holding it at these temperatures for a sufficient time to approach a uniform solid solution (austenitizing); cooling the steel rapidly by quenching in oil, water, brine, salt or air to form a hard, usually brittle, metastable structure known as untempered or white martensite; tempering the steel by reheating it to a temperature below the critical range in order to obtain the required combination of hardness, strength, ductility, toughness, and structural stability (tempered martensite).

Two well-known modifications of conventional quenching and tempering are "austempering" and "martempering." They involve interrupted quenching techniques (two or more quenching media) that can be utilized for some steels to obtain desired structures and properties while minimizing distortion and cracking problems that may occur in conventional hardening.

Normalizing

The steel is heated to a temperature above the critical range, after which it is cooled in still air to produce a generally fine pearlite structure. The purpose is to promote uniformity of structure and properties after a hot-working operation such as forging or extrusion. Steels may be placed in service in the normalized condition, or they may be subjected to additional thermal treatment after subsequent machining or other operations.

Annealing

The steel is heated to a temperature above or within the critical range, then cooled at a predetermined slow rate (usually in a furnace) to produce a coarse pearlite structure. This treatment is used to soften the steel for improved machinability; to improve or restore ductility for subsequent forming operations; or to eliminate the residual stresses and microstructural effects of cold working.

Spheroidize Annealing

This is a special form of annealing that requires prolonged heating at an appropriate temperature followed by slow cooling in order to produce globular carbides, a structure desirable for machining, cold forming, or cold drawing, or for the effect it will have on subsequent heat treatment.

Stress Relieving

This process reduces internal stresses, caused by machining, cold working, or welding, by heating the steel to a temperature below the critical range and holding it there long enough to equalize the temperature throughout the piece.

Hardness and Hardenability

Hardenability is the property of steel that determines the depth and distribution of hardness induced by quenching from the austenitizing temperature. Hardenability should not be confused with hardness as such or with maximum hardness. Hardness is a measure of the ability of a metal to resist penetration as determined by any one of a number of standard tests (Brinell, Rockwell, Vickers, etc). The maximum attainable hardness of any steel depends solely on carbon content and is not significantly affected by alloy content. Maximum hardness is realized only when the cooling rate in quenching is rapid enough to ensure full transformation to martensite.

The as-quenched surface hardness of a steel part is dependent on carbon content and cooling rate, but the depth to which a certain hardness level is maintained with given quenching conditions is a function of its hardenability. Hardenability is largely determined by the percentage of alloying elements in the steel; however, austenite grain size, time and temperature during austenitizing, and prior microstructure also significantly affect the hardness depth. The hardenability required for a particular part depends on size, design, and service stresses. For highly stressed parts, the best combination of strength and toughness is obtained by through hardening to a martensitic structure followed by adequate tempering. There are applications, however, where through hardening is not necessary or even desirable. For parts that are stressed principally at or near the surface, or in which wear resistance or resistance to shock loading is anticipated, a shallow hardening steel with a moderately soft core may be appropriate.

For through hardening of thin sections, carbon steels may be adequate; but as section size increases, alloy steels of increasing hardenability are required. The usual practice is to select the most economical grade that can meet the desired properties consistently. It is not good practice to utilize a higher alloy grade than necessary, because excessive use of alloying elements adds little to the properties and can sometimes induce susceptibility to quenching cracks.

Quenching Media

The choice of quenching media is often a critical factor in the selection of steel of the proper hardenability for a particular application. Quenching severity can be varied by selection of quenching medium, agitation control, and additives that improve the cooling capability of the quenchant. Increasing the quenching severity permits the use of less expensive steels of lower hardenability; however, consideration must also be given to the amount of distortion that can be tolerated and the susceptibility to quench cracking. In general, the more severe the quenchant and the less symmetrical the part being quenched, the greater are the size and shape changes that result from quenching and the greater is the risk of quench cracking. Consequently, although water quenching is less costly than oil quenching, and water quenching steels are less expensive than those requiring oil quenching, it is important to know that the parts being hardened can withstand the resulting distortion and the possibility of cracking.

Oil, salt, and synthetic water-polymer quenchants are also used, but they often require steels of higher alloy content and hardenability. A general rule for the selection of steel and quenchant for a particular part is that the steel should have a hardenability not exceeding that required by the severity of the quenchant selected. The carbon content of the steel should also not exceed that required to meet specified hardness and strength, because quench cracking susceptibility increases with carbon content.

The choice of quenching media is important in hardening, but another factor is agitation of the quenching bath. The more rapidly the bath is agitated, the more rapidly heat is removed from the steel and the more effective is the quench.

Tempering

As-quenched steels are in a highly stressed condition and are seldom used without tempering. Tempering imparts plasticity or toughness to the steel, and is inevitably accompanied by a loss in hardness and strength. The loss in strength, however, is only incidental to the very important increase in toughness, which is due to the relief of residual stresses induced during quenching and to precipitation, coalescence, and spheroidization of iron and alloy carbides resulting in a microstructure of greater plasticity.

Alloying slows the tempering rate, so that alloy steel requires a higher tempering temperature to obtain a given hardness than carbon steel of the same carbon content. The higher tempering temperature for a given hardness permits a greater relaxation of residual stress and thereby improves the steel's mechanical properties. Tempering is done in furnaces or in oil or salt baths at temperatures varying from 300 to 1200 degrees F. With most grades of alloy steel, the range between 500 and 700 degrees F is avoided because of a phenomenon known as "blue brittleness," which reduces impact properties. Tempering the martensitic stainless steels in the range of 800-1100 degrees F is not recommended because of the low and erratic impact properties and reduced corrosion resistance that result. Maximum toughness is achieved at higher temperatures. It is important to temper parts as soon as possible after quenching, because any delay greatly increases the risk of cracking resulting from the high-stress condition in the as-quenched part.

Surface Hardening Treatment (Case Hardening)

Many applications require high hardness or strength primarily at the surface, and complex service stresses frequently require not only a hard, wear-resistant surface, but also core strength and toughness to withstand impact stress. To achieve these different properties, two general processes are used:

- 1) The chemical composition of the surface is altered, prior to or after quenching and tempering; the processes used include carburizing, nitriding, cyaniding, and carbonitriding
- 2) Only the surface layer is hardened by the heating and quenching process; the most common processes used for surface hardening are flame hardening and induction hardening

Carburizing

Carbon is diffused into the part's surface to a controlled depth by heating the part in a carbonaceous medium. The resulting depth of carburization, commonly referred to as case depth, depends on the carbon potential of the medium used and the time and temperature of the carburizing treatment. The steels most suitable for carburizing to enhance toughness are those with sufficiently low carbon contents, usually below 0.03 per cent. Carburizing temperatures range from 1550 to 1750 degrees F, with the temperature and time at temperature adjusted to obtain various case depths. Steel selection, hardenability, and type of quench are determined by section size, desired core hardness, and service requirements.

Three types of carburizing are most often used:

- 1) Liquid carburizing involves heating the steel in molten barium cyanide or sodium cyanide. The case absorbs some nitrogen in addition to carbon, thus enhancing surface hardness
- 2) Gas carburizing involves heating the steel in a gas of controlled carbon content. When used, the carbon level in the case can be closely controlled
- 3) Pack carburizing, which involves sealing both the steel and solid carbonaceous material in a gas-tight container, then heating this combination

With any of these methods, the part may be either quenched after the carburizing cycle without reheating or air cooled followed by reheating to the austenitizing temperature prior to quenching. The case depth may be varied to suit the conditions of loading in service. However, service characteristics frequently require that only selective areas of a part have to be case hardened. Covering the areas not to be cased, with copper plating or a layer of commercial paste, allows the carbon to penetrate only the exposed areas. Another method involves carburizing the entire part, then removing the case in selected areas by machining, prior to quench hardening.

Nitriding

The steel part is heated to a temperature of 900-1150 degrees F in an atmosphere of ammonia gas and dissociated ammonia for an extended period of time that depends on the case depth desired. A thin, very hard case results from the formation of nitrides. Strong nitride-forming elements (chromium and molybdenum) are required to be present in the steel, and often special nonstandard grades containing aluminum (a strong nitride former) are used. The major advantage of this process is that parts can be quenched and tempered, then machined, prior to nitriding, because only a little distortion occurs during nitriding.

Cyaniding

This process involves heating the part in a bath of sodium cyanide to a temperature slightly above the transformation range, followed by quenching, to obtain a thin case of high hardness.

Carbonitriding

This process is similar to cyaniding except that the absorption of carbon and nitrogen is accomplished by heating the part in a gaseous atmosphere containing hydrocarbons and ammonia. Temperatures of 1425-1625 degrees F are used for parts to be quenched, and lower temperatures, 1200-1450 degrees F, may be used where a liquid quench is not required.

Flame Hardening

This process involves rapid heating with a direct high-temperature gas flame, such that the surface layer of the part is heated above the transformation range, followed by cooling at a rate that causes the desired hardening. Steels for flame hardening are usually in the range of 0.30-0.60 per cent carbon, with hardenability appropriate for the case depth desired and the quenchant used. The quenchant is usually sprayed on the surface a short distance behind the heating flame. Immediate tempering is required and may be done in a conventional furnace or by a flame-tempering process, depending on part size and costs.

Induction Hardening

This process is similar in many respects to flame hardening except that the heating is caused by a high-frequency electric current sent through a coil or inductor surrounding the part. The depth of heating depends on the frequency, the rate of heat conduction from the surface, and the length of the heating cycle. Quenching is usually accomplished with a water spray introduced at the proper time through jets in or near the inductor block or coil. In some instances, however, parts are oil-quenched by immersing them in a bath of oil after they reach the hardening temperature.

Quality Variations of Carbon and Alloy Steels

Carbon steels may be produced with chemical composition (carbon, manganese, phosphorus, sulfur, and silicon) within the specified limits of a given grade and still have characteristics that are dissimilar. Each grade and quality variation thereof has a proper and useful place, depending on the end products to be made and the methods of fabrication.

In all phases of steel production, various practices are employed that determine the quality and types of the finished material.

Quality Classifications

The term "quality" as it technically relates to steel products may be indicative of many conditions such as the degree of internal soundness, relative uniformity of composition, relative freedom from injurious surface imperfections, and finish. Steel quality also relates to general suitability for particular applications. Sheet steel surface requirements may be broadly identified as to the end use by the suffix E for exposed parts requiring a good painted surface and suffix U for unexposed parts for which surface finish is unimportant.

Carbon steel may be obtained in a number of fundamental qualities that reflect various degrees of the quality conditions mentioned before. Some of those qualities may be modified by imposing such requirements as Limited Austenitic Grain Size, Specified Discard, Macroetch Test, Special Heat-Treating, Maximum Incidental Alloy Elements, Restricted Chemical Composition, and Nonmetallic Inclusions. In addition, several of the products have special qualities that are intended for specific end uses or fabricating practices.

Applications

Many factors enter into the selection of a steel for a particular application. These factors include the mechanical and physical properties needed to satisfy the design requirements and service environment; the cost and availability of the material; the cost of processing (machining, heat treatment, welding, etc.); and the suitability of available processing equipment or the cost of any new equipment required.

These steel selection considerations require input from designers, metallurgists, manufacturing engineers, service engineers, and procurement specialists, and can be considered proper or optimum when the part is made from the lowest cost material consistent with satisfying engineering and service requirements. The factors in selection can vary widely among different organizations, so that several different steels may be used successfully for similar applications. The best choice of a steel for any application most often results from a balance or trade-offs among the various selection considerations.

The AISI/SAE designated "standard steels" provide a convenient way for engineers and metallurgists to state briefly but clearly the chemical composition and, in some instances, some of the properties desired, and they are widely recognized and used in the United States and in many other countries. There are, however, numerous nonstandard carbon, alloy, and stainless steel grades that are widely used for special applications.

General characteristics and typical applications

Carbon Steels

Low Carbon

SAE Steels 1006, 1008, 1010, 1015: These steels are the lowest carbon steels of the plain carbon type, and are selected where cold formability is the primary requisite of the user. They are produced both as rimmed and killed steels. Rimmed steel is used for sheet, strip, rod, and wire where excellent surface finish or good drawing qualities are required, such as body and fender stock, hoods, lamps, oil pans, and other deep-drawn and -formed products. This steel is also used for cold-heading wire for tacks, and rivets and low carbon wire products. Killed steel (usually aluminum killed or special killed) is used for difficult stampings, or where nonaging properties are needed. Killed steels (usually silicon killed) should be used in preference to rimmed steel for forging or heat-treating applications.

These steels have relatively low tensile values and should not be selected where much strength is desired. Within the carbon range of the group, strength and hardness will rise with increases in carbon and/or with cold work, but such increases in strength are at the sacrifice of ductility or the ability to withstand cold deformation. Where cold rolled strip is used, the proper temper designation should be specified to obtain the desired properties.

With less than 0.15 carbon, the steels are susceptible to serious grain growth, causing brittleness, which may occur as the result of a combination of critical strain (from cold work) followed by heating to certain elevated temperatures. If cold-worked parts formed from these steels are to be later heated to temperatures in excess of 1100 degrees F, the user should exercise care to avoid or reduce cold working. When this condition develops, it can be overcome by heating the parts to a temperature well in excess of the upper critical point, or at least 1750 degrees F.

Steels in this group, being nearly pure iron or ferritic in structure, do not machine freely and should be avoided for cut screws and operations requiring broaching or smooth finish on turning. The machinability of bar, rod, and wire products is improved by cold drawing. Steels in this group are readily welded.

Low - Medium Carbon

SAE 1016, 1017, 1018, 1019, 1020, 1021, 1022, 1023, 1024, 1025, 1026, 1027, 1030: Steels in this group, due to the carbon range covered, have increased strength and hardness, and reduced cold formability compared to the lowest carbon group. For heat-treating purposes, they are known as carburizing or case hardening grades. When uniform response to heat treatment is required, or for forgings, killed steel is preferred; for other uses, semi-killed or rimmed steel may be indicated, depending on the combination of properties desired. Rimmed steels can ordinarily be supplied up to 0.25 carbon.

Selection of one of these steels for carburizing applications depends on the nature of the part, the properties desired, and the processing practice preferred. Increases in carbon give greater core hardness with a given quench, or permit the use of thicker sections. Increases in manganese improve the hardenability of both the core and case; in carbon steels this is the only change in composition that will increase case hardenability. The higher manganese variants also machine much better. For carburizing applications, SAE 1016, 1018, and 1019 are widely used for thin sections or water-quenched parts. SAE 1022 and 1024 are used for

heavier sections or where oil quenching is desired, and SAE 1024 is sometimes used for such parts as transmission and rear axle gears. SAE 1027 is used for parts given a light case to obtain satisfactory core properties without drastic quenching. SAE 1025 and 1030, although not usually regarded as carburizing types, are sometimes used in this manner for larger sections or where greater core hardness is needed.

For cold-formed or -headed parts, the lowest manganese grades (SAE 1017, 1020, and 1025) offer the best formability at their carbon level. SAE 1020 is used for fan blades and some frame members, and SAE 1020 and 1025 are widely used for low-strength bolts. The next higher manganese types (SAE 1018, 1021, and 1026) provide increased strength.

Medium Carbon

SAE 1030, 1033, 1034, 1035, 1036, 1038, 1039, 1040, 1041, 1042, 1043, 1045, 1046, 1049, 1050, 1052: These steels, of the medium-carbon type, are selected for uses where higher mechanical properties are needed and are frequently further hardened and strengthened by heat treatment or by cold work. These grades are ordinarily produced as killed steels.

Steels in this group are suitable for a wide variety of automotive-type applications. The particular carbon and manganese level selected is affected by a number of factors. Increases in the mechanical properties required in section thickness, or in depth of hardening, ordinarily indicate either higher carbon or manganese or both. The heat-treating practice preferred, particularly the quenching medium, has a great effect on the steel selected. In general, any of the grades over 0.30 carbon may be selectively hardened by induction or flame methods.

The lower-carbon and manganese steels in this group find usage for certain types of cold-formed parts. SAE 1030 is used for shift and brake levers. SAE 1034 and 1035 are used in the form of wire and rod for cold upsetting such as bolts, and SAE 1038 for bolts and studs. The parts cold-formed from these steels are usually heat-treated prior to use. Stampings are generally limited to flat parts or simple bends. The higher-carbon SAE 1038, 1040, and 1042 are frequently cold drawn to specified physical properties for use without heat treatment for some applications such as cylinder head studs.

Any of this group of steels may be used for forgings, the selection being governed by the section size and the physical properties desired after heat treatment. Thus, SAE 1030 and 1035 are used for shifter forks and many small forgings where moderate properties are desired, but the deeper-hardening SAE 1036 is used for more critical parts where a higher strength level and more uniformity are essential, such as some front suspension parts. Forgings such as connecting rods, steering arms, truck front axles, axle shafts, and tractor wheels are commonly made from the SAE 1038 to 1045 group. Larger forgings at similar strength levels need more carbon and perhaps more manganese. Examples are crankshafts made from SAE 1046 and 1052. These steels are also used for small forgings where high hardness after oil quenching is desired. Suitable heat treatment is necessary on forgings from this group to provide machinability. These steels are also widely used for parts machined from bar stock, the selection following an identical pattern to that described for forgings. They are used both with and without heat treatment, depending on the application and the level of properties needed. As a class, they are considered good for normal machining operations. It is also possible to weld these steels by most commercial methods, but precautions should be taken to avoid cracking from too rapid cooling.

High Carbon

SAE 1055, 1060, 1062, 1064, 1065, 1066, 1070, 1074, 1078, 1080, 1085, 1086, 1090, 1095: Steels in this group are of the high-carbon type, having more carbon than is required to achieve maximum as quenched hardness. They are used for applications where the higher carbon is needed to improve wear characteristics for cutting edges, to make springs, and for special purposes. Selection of a particular grade is affected by the nature of the part, its end use, and the manufacturing methods available.

In general, cold-forming methods are not practical on this group of steels, being limited to flat stampings and springs coiled from small-diameter wire. Practically all parts from these steels are heat treated before use, with some variations in heat-treating methods to obtain optimum properties for the particular use to which the steel is to be put.

Uses in the spring industry include SAE 1065 for pretempered wire and SAE 1066 for cushion springs of hard-drawn wire, SAE 1064 may be used for small washers and thin stamped parts, SAE 1074 for light flat springs formed from annealed stock, and SAE 1080 and 1085 for thicker flat springs. SAE 1085 is also used for heavier coil springs. Valve spring wire and music wire are special products.

Due to good wear properties when properly heat-treated, the high-carbon steels find wide usage in the farm implement industry. SAE 1070 has been used for plow beams, SAE 1074 for plow shares, and SAE 1078 for such parts as rake teeth, scrapers, cultivator shovels, and plow shares. SAE 1085 has been used for scraper blades, disks, and for spring tooth harrows. SAE 1086 and 1090 find use as mower and binder sections, twine holders, and knotter disks.

Free Cutting Steels

SAE 1111, 1112, 1113: This class of steels is intended for those uses where easy machining is the primary requirement. They are characterized by a higher sulfur content than comparable carbon steels. This composition results in some sacrifice of cold-forming properties, weldability, and forging characteristics. In general, the uses are similar to those for carbon steels of similar carbon and manganese content.

These steels are commonly known as Bessemer screw stock, and are considered the best machining steels available, machinability improving within the group as sulfur increases. They are used for a wide variety of machined parts. Although of excellent strength in the cold-drawn condition, they have an unfavorable property of cold shortness and are not commonly used for vital parts. These steels may be cyanided or carburized, but when uniform response to heat-treating is necessary, open-hearth steels are recommended.

SAE 1109, 1114, 1115, 1116, 1117, 1118, 1119, 1120, 1126: Steels in this group are used where a combination of good machinability and more uniform response to heat treatment is needed. The lower-carbon varieties are used for small parts that are to be cyanided or carbonitrided. SAE 1116, 1117, 1118, and 1119 carry more manganese for better hardenability, permitting oil quenching after case-hardening heat treatments in many instances. The higher-carbon SAE 1120 and 1126 provide more core hardness when this is needed.

SAE 1132, 1137, 1138, 1140, 1141, 1144, 1145, 1146, 1151: This group of steels has characteristics comparable to carbon steels of the same carbon level, except for changes due to higher sulfur as noted previously. They are widely used for parts where large amounts of machining are necessary, or where threads, splines, or other contours present special problems with tooling. SAE 1137, for example, is widely used for nuts and bolts and studs

with machined threads. The higher-manganese SAE 1132, 1137, 1141, and 1144 offer greater hardenability, the higher-carbon types being suitable for oil quenching for many parts. All these steels may be selectively hardened by induction or flame heating if desired.

Carburizing Grades of Alloy Steels

The properties of carburized and hardened cases (surface layers) depend on the carbon and alloy content, the structure of the case, and the degree and distribution of residual stresses. The carbon content of the case depends on the details of the carburizing process, and the response of iron and the alloying elements present, to carburization. The original carbon content of the steel has little or no effect on the carbon content produced in the case. The hardenability of the case, therefore, depends on the alloy content of the steel and the final carbon content produced by carburizing, but not on the initial carbon content of the steel.

With complete carbide solution, the effect of alloying elements on the hardenability of the case is about the same as the effect of these elements on the hardenability of the core. As an exception to this statement, any element that inhibits carburizing may reduce the hardenability of the case. Some elements that raise the hardenability of the core may tend to produce more retained austenite and consequently somewhat lower hardness in the case.

Alloy steels are frequently used for case hardening because the required surface hardness can be obtained by moderate speeds of quenching. Slower quenching may mean less distortion than would be encountered with water quenching. It is usually desirable to select a steel that will attain a minimum surface hardness of 58 or 60 Rockwell C after carburizing and oil quenching. Where section sizes are large, a high-hardenability alloy steel may be necessary, whereas for medium and light sections, low-hardenability steels will suffice.

In general, the case-hardening alloy steels may be divided into two classes as far as the hardenability of the case is concerned. Only the general type of steel (SAE 3300-4100, etc.) is discussed. The original carbon content of the steel has no effect on the carbon content of the case, so the last two digits in the specification numbers are not meaningful as far as the case is concerned.

1) High-Hardenability Case: SAE 2500, 3300, 4300, 4800, 9300As these are high-alloy steels, both the case and the core have high hardenability. They are used particularly for carburized parts having thick sections, such as bevel drive pinions and heavy gears. Good case properties can be obtained by oil quenching. These steels are likely to have retained austenite in the case after carburizing and quenching; consequently, special precautions or treatments, such as refrigeration, may be required.

2) Medium-Hardenability Case: SAE 1300, 2300, 4000, 4100, 4600, 5100, 8600, 8700Carburized cases of these steels have medium hardenability, which means that their hardenability is intermediate between that of plain carbon steel and the higher-alloy carburizing steels discussed earlier. In general, these steels can be used for average-size case-hardened automotive parts such as gears, pinions, piston pins, ball studs, universal joint crosses, crankshafts, etc. Satisfactory case hardness is usually produced by oil quenching.

Directly Hardenable Grades of Alloy Steels

These steels may be considered in five groups on the basis of approximate mean carbon content of the SAE specification. In general, the last two figures of the specification agree

with the mean carbon content. Consequently the heading "0.30-0.37 Mean Carbon Content of SAE Specification" includes steels such as SAE 1330, 3135, and 4137.

<u>Mean Carbon Content of SAE Specification</u>	<u>Common Applications</u>
(a)0.30-0.37 per cent	Heat-treated parts requiring moderate strength and great toughness.
(b)0.40-0.42 per cent	Heat-treated parts requiring higher strength and good toughness.
(c)0.45-0.50 per cent	Heat-treated parts requiring fairly high hardness and strength with moderate toughness.
(d)0.50-0.62 per cent	Springs and hand tools.
(e)1.02 per cent	Ball and roller bearings.

It is necessary to deviate from the above plan in the classification of the carbon molybdenum steels. When carbon molybdenum steels are used, it is customary to specify higher carbon content for any given application than would be specified for other alloy steels, due to the low alloy content of these steels. For example, SAE 4063 is used for the same applications as SAE 4140, 4145, and 5150. Consequently, in the following discussion, the carbon molybdenum steels have been shown in the groups where they belong on the basis of applications rather than carbon content.

For the present discussion, steels of each carbon content are divided into two or three groups on the basis of hardenability. Transformation ranges and consequently heat-treating practices vary somewhat with different alloying elements even though the hardenability is not changed.

0.30-0.37 Mean Carbon Content of SAE Specification: These steels are frequently used for water-quenched parts of moderate section size and for oil-quenched parts of small section size. Typical applications of these steels are connecting rods, steering arms and steering knuckles, axle shafts, bolts, studs, screws, and other parts requiring strength and toughness where section size is small enough to permit the desired physical properties to be obtained with the customary heat treatment.

Steels falling in this classification may be subdivided into two groups on the basis of hardenability:

- 1) Low Hardenability: SAE 1330, 1335, 4037, 4042, 4130, 5130, 5132, 8630
- 2) Medium Hardenability: SAE 2330, 3130, 3135, 4137, 5135, 8632, 8635, 8637, 8735, 9437

0.40-0.42 Mean Carbon Content of SAE Specification: In general, these steels are used for medium and large size parts requiring high degree of strength and toughness. The choice of the proper steel depends on the section size and the mechanical properties that must be produced. The low and medium hardenability steels are used for average size automotive parts such as steering knuckles, axle shafts, propeller shafts, etc. The high hardenability steels are used particularly for large axles and shafts for large aircraft parts.

These steels are usually considered as oil quenching steels, although some large parts made of the low and medium hardenability classifications may be quenched in water under properly controlled conditions.

These steels may be divided into three groups on the basis of hardenability:

- 1) Low Hardenability: SAE 1340, 4047, 5140, 9440

2) Medium Hardenability: SAE 2340, 3140, 3141, 4053, 4063, 4140, 4640, 8640, 8641, 8642, 8740, 8742, 9442

3) High Hardenability: SAE 4340, 9840

0.45-0.50 Mean Carbon Content of SAE Specification: These steels are used primarily for gears and other parts requiring fairly high hardness as well as strength and toughness. Such parts are usually oil-quenched and a minimum of 90 per cent martensite in the as-quenched condition is desirable.

1) Low Hardenability: SAE 5045, 5046, 5145, 9747, 9763

2) Medium Hardenability: SAE 2345, 3145, 3150, 4145, 5147, 5150, 8645, 8647, 8650, 8745, 8747, 8750, 9445, 9845

3) High Hardenability: SAE 4150, 9850

0.50-0.63 Mean Carbon Content of SAE Specification: These steels are used primarily for springs and hand tools. The hardenability necessary depends on the thickness of the material and the quenching practice.

1) Medium hardenability: SAE 4068, 5150, 5152, 6150, 8650, 9254, 9255, 9260, 9261

2) High Hardenability: SAE 8653, 8655, 8660, 9262

1.02 Mean Carbon Content of SAE Specification¾SAE 50100, 51100, 52100: These straight chromium electric furnace steels are used primarily for the races and balls or rollers of antifriction bearings. They are also used for other parts requiring high hardness and wear resistance. The compositions of the three steels are identical, except for a variation in chromium, with a corresponding variation in hardenability.

1) Low Hardenability: SAE 50100

2) Medium Hardenability: SAE 51100, 52100

Resulfurized Steel

Some of the alloy steels, SAE 4024, 4028, and 8641, are made resulfurized so as to give better machinability at a relatively high hardness. In general, increased sulfur results in decreased transverse ductility, notched impact toughness, and weldability.

High-Strength, Low-Alloy Steels

High-strength, low-alloy (HSLA) steel represents a specific group of steels in which enhanced mechanical properties and, sometimes, resistance to atmospheric corrosion are obtained by the addition of moderate amounts of one or more alloying elements other than carbon. Different types are available, some of which are carbon-manganese steels and others contain further alloy additions, governed by special requirements for weldability, formability, toughness, strength, and economics. These steels may be obtained in the form of sheet, strip, plates, structural shapes, bars, and bar size sections.

HSLA steels are especially characterized by their mechanical properties, obtained in the as-rolled condition. They are not intended for quenching and tempering. For certain applications, they are sometimes annealed, normalized, or stress relieved with some influence on mechanical properties.

Where these steels are used for fabrication by welding, care must be exercised in selection of grade and in the details of the welding process. Certain grades may be welded without preheat or postheat.

Because of their high strength-to-weight ratio, abrasion resistance, and, in certain compositions, improved atmospheric corrosion resistance, these steels are adapted particularly for use in mobile equipment and other structures where substantial weight

savings are generally desirable. Typical applications are truck bodies, frames, structural members, scrapers, truck wheels, cranes, shovels, booms, chutes, and conveyors.

Grade 942X: A niobium- or vanadium-treated carbon-manganese high-strength steel similar to 945X and 945C except for somewhat improved welding and forming properties.

Grade 945A: A HSLA steel with excellent welding characteristics, both arc and resistance, and the best formability, weldability, and low-temperature notch toughness of the high-strength steels. It is generally used in sheets, strip, and light plate thicknesses.

Grade 945C: A carbon-manganese high-strength steel with satisfactory arc welding properties if adequate precautions are observed. It is similar to grade 950C, except that lower carbon and manganese improve arc welding characteristics, formability, and low-temperature notch toughness at some sacrifice in strength.

Grade 945X: A niobium- or vanadium-treated carbon-manganese high-strength steel similar to 945C, except for somewhat improved welding and forming properties.

Grade 950A: A HSLA steel with good weldability, both arc and resistance, with good low-temperature notch toughness, and good formability. It is generally used in sheet, strip, and light plate thicknesses.

Grade 950B: A HSLA steel with satisfactory arc welding properties and fairly good low-temperature notch toughness and formability.

Grade 950C: A carbon-manganese high-strength steel that can be arc welded with special precautions, but is unsuitable for resistance welding. The formability and toughness are fair.

Grade 950D: A HSLA steel with good weldability, both arc and resistance, and fairly good formability. Where low-temperature properties are important, the effect of phosphorus in conjunction with other elements present should be considered.

Grade 950X: A niobium- or vanadium-treated carbon-manganese high-strength steel similar to 950C, except for somewhat improved welding and forming properties.

Grades 955X, 960X, 965X, 970X, 980X: These are steels similar to 945X and 950X with higher strength obtained by increased amounts of strengthening elements, such as carbon or manganese, or by the addition of nitrogen up to about 0.015 per cent. This increased strength involves reduced formability and usually decreased weldability. Toughness will vary considerably with composition and mill practice.

TOOL STEELS

As the designation implies, tool steels serve primarily for making tools used in manufacturing and in the trades for the working and forming of metals, wood, plastics, and other industrial materials. Tools must withstand high specific loads, often concentrated at exposed areas, may have to operate at elevated or rapidly changing temperatures and in continual contact with abrasive types of work materials, and are often subjected to shocks, or may have to perform under other varieties of adverse conditions. Nevertheless, when employed under circumstances that are regarded as normal operating conditions, the tool should not suffer major damage, untimely wear resulting in the dulling of the edges, or be susceptible to detrimental metallurgical changes.

Tools for less demanding uses, such as ordinary handtools, including hammers, chisels, files, mining bits, etc., are often made of standard AISI steels that are not considered as belonging to any of the tool steel categories.

The steel for most types of tools must be used in a heat-treated state, generally hardened and tempered, to provide the properties needed for the particular application. The adaptability to heat treatment with a minimum of harmful effects, which dependably results in the intended beneficial changes in material properties, is still another requirement that tool steels must satisfy.

To meet such varied requirements, steel types of different chemical composition, often produced by special metallurgical processes, have been developed. Due to the large number of tool steel types produced by the steel mills, which generally are made available with proprietary designations, it is rather difficult for the user to select those types that are most suitable for any specific application, unless the recommendations of a particular steel producer or producers are obtained.

Substantial clarification has resulted from the development of a classification system that is now widely accepted throughout the industry, on the part of both the producers and the users of tool steels. That system is used in the following as a base for providing concise information on tool steel types, their properties, and methods of tool steel selection.

The tool steel classification system establishes seven basic categories of tool and die steels. These categories are associated with the predominant applicational characteristics of the tool steel types they comprise. A few of these categories are composed of several groups to distinguish between families of steel types that, while serving the same general purpose, differ with regard to one or more dominant characteristics.

To provide an easily applicable guide for the selection of tool steel types best suited for a particular application, the subsequent discussions and tables are based on the previously mentioned application-related categories. As an introduction to the detailed surveys, a concise discussion is presented of the principal tool steel characteristics that govern the suitability for varying service purposes and operational conditions. A brief review of the major steel alloying elements and of the effect of these constituents on the significant characteristics of tool steels is also given in the following sections.

The Properties of Tool Steels

Tool steels must possess certain properties to a higher than ordinary degree to make them adaptable for uses that require the ability to sustain heavy loads and perform dependably even under adverse conditions.

The extent and the types of loads, the characteristics of the operating conditions, and the expected performance with regard to both the duration and the level of consistency are the principal considerations, in combination with the aspects of cost, that govern the selection of tool steels for specific applications.

Although it is not possible to define and apply exact parameters for measuring significant tool steel characteristics, certain properties can be determined that may greatly assist in appraising the suitability of various types of tool steels for specific uses.

Because tool steels are generally heat-treated to make them adaptable to the intended use by enhancing the desirable properties, the behavior of the steel during heat treatment is of prime importance. The behavior of the steel comprises, in this respect, both the resistance to

harmful effects and the attainment of the desirable properties. The following are considered the major properties related to heat treatment:

The Effect of Alloying Elements on Tool Steel Properties

Carbon (C)

The presence of carbon, usually in excess of 0.60 per cent for nonalloyed types, is essential for raising the hardenability of steels to the levels needed for tools. Raising the carbon content by different amounts up to a maximum of about 1.3 per cent increases the hardness slightly and the wear resistance considerably. The amount of carbon in tool steels is designed to attain certain properties (such as in the water-hardening category where higher carbon content may be chosen to improve wear resistance, although to the detriment of toughness) or, in the alloyed types of tool steels, in conformance with the other constituents to produce well-balanced metallurgical and performance properties.

Manganese (Mn)

In small amounts, to about 0.60 per cent, manganese is added to reduce brittleness and to improve forgeability. Larger amounts of manganese improve hardenability, permitting oil quenching for nonalloyed carbon steels, thus reducing deformation, although with regard to several other properties, manganese is not an equivalent replacement for the regular alloying elements.

Silicon (Si)

In itself, silicon may not be considered an alloying element of tool steels, but it is needed as a deoxidizer and improves the hot-forming properties of the steel. In combination with certain alloying elements, the silicon content is sometimes raised to about 2 per cent to increase the strength and toughness of steels used for tools that have to sustain shock loads.

Tungsten (W)

Tungsten is one of the important alloying elements of tool steels, particularly because of two valuable properties: it improves "hot hardness," that is, the resistance of the steel to the softening effect of elevated temperature, and it forms hard, abrasion-resistant carbides, thus improving the wear properties of tool steels.

Vanadium (V)

Vanadium contributes to the refinement of the carbide structure and thus improves the forgeability of alloy tool steels. Vanadium has a very strong tendency to form a hard carbide, which improves both the hardness and the wear properties of tool steels. However, a large amount of vanadium carbide makes the grinding of the tool very difficult (causing low grindability).

Molybdenum (Mo)

In small amounts, molybdenum improves certain metallurgical properties of alloy steels such as deep hardening and toughness. It is used often in larger amounts in certain high-speed tool steels to replace tungsten, primarily for economic reasons, often with nearly equivalent results.

Cobalt (Co)

As an alloying element of tool steels, cobalt increases hot hardness and is used in applications where that property is needed. Substantial addition of cobalt, however, raises the critical quenching temperature of the steel with a tendency to increase the decarburization of the surface, and reduces toughness.

Chromium (Cr)

This element is added in amounts of several per cent to high-alloy tool steels, and up to 12 per cent to types in which chromium is the major alloying element. Chromium improves hardenability and, together with high carbon, provides both wear resistance and toughness, a combination valuable in certain tool applications. However, high chromium raises the hardening temperature of the tool steel, and thus can make it prone to hardening deformations. A high percentage of chromium also affects the grindability of the tool steel.

Nickel (Ni)

Generally in combination with other alloying elements, particularly chromium, nickel is used to improve the toughness and, to some extent, the wear resistance of tool steels.

The addition of more than one element to a steel often produces what is called a synergistic effect. Thus, the combined effects of two or more alloy elements may be greater than the sum of the individual effects of each element.

Testing the Hardness of Metals

Brinell Hardness Test

The Brinell test for determining the hardness of metallic materials consists in applying a known load to the surface of the material to be tested through a hardened steel ball of known diameter. The diameter of the resulting permanent impression in the metal is measured and the Brinell Hardness Number (BHN) is then calculated from the following formula in which D = diameter of ball in millimeters, d = measured diameter at the rim of the impression in millimeters, and P = applied load in kilograms.

If the steel ball were not deformed under the applied load and if the impression were truly spherical, then the preceding formula would be a general one, and any combination of applied load and size of ball could be used. The impression, however, is not quite a spherical surface because there must always be some deformation of the steel ball and some recovery of form of the metal in the impression; hence, for a standard Brinell test, the size and characteristics of the ball and the magnitude of the applied load must be standardized. In the standard Brinell test, a ball 10 millimeters in diameter and a load of 3000, 1500, or 500 kilograms is used. It is desirable, although not mandatory, that the test load be of such magnitude that the diameter of the impression be in the range of 2.50 to 4.75 millimeters. The following test loads and approximate Brinell numbers for this range of impression diameters are: 3000 kg, 160 to 600 BHN; 1500 kg, 80 to 300 BHN; 500 kg, 26 to 100 BHN. In making a Brinell test, the load should be applied steadily and without a jerk for at least 15 seconds for iron and steel, and at least 30 seconds in testing other metals. A minimum period of 2 minutes, for example, has been recommended for magnesium and magnesium alloys. (For the softer metals, loads of 250, 125, or 100 kg are sometimes used.)

According to the American Society for Testing and Materials Standard E10-66, a steel ball may be used on material having a BHN not over 450, a Hultgren ball on material not over 500, or a carbide ball on material not over 630. The Brinell hardness test is not recommended for material having a BHN over 630.

Rockwell Hardness Test

The Rockwell hardness tester is essentially a machine that measures hardness by determining the depth of penetration of a penetrator into the specimen under certain fixed conditions of test. The penetrator may be either a steel ball or a diamond spheroconical penetrator. The hardness number is related to the depth of indentation and the number is higher the harder the material. A minor load of 10 kg is first applied, causing an initial penetration; the dial is set at zero on the black-figure scale, and the major load is applied. This major load is customarily 60 or 100 kg when a steel ball is used as a penetrator, but other loads may be used when necessary. The ball penetrator is 1/16 inch in diameter normally, but other penetrators of larger diameter, such as 1/8 inch, may be employed for soft metals. When a diamond spheroconical penetrator is employed, the load usually is 150 kg. Experience decides the best combination of load and penetrator for use. After the major load is applied and removed, according to standard procedure, the reading is taken while the minor load is still applied.

The Rockwell Hardness Scales

The various Rockwell scales and their applications are available to test for hardness. The type of penetrator and load used with each are shown in Tables, which give comparative hardness values for different hardness scales.

Scale Testing Application

A	For tungsten carbide and other extremely hard materials- Also for thin, hard sheets
B	For materials of medium hardness, ie. low- and medium-carbon steels in the annealed condition.
C	For materials harder than Rockwell B-100
D	Where a somewhat lighter load is desired than on the C scale, as on case-hardened pieces.
E	For very soft materials such as bearing metals
F	Same as the E scale but using a 1/16-inch ball
G	For metals harder than tested on the B scale
H & K	For softer metals
15-N; 30-N; 45-N	Where a shallow impression area is desired - For hardened steel and hard alloys
15-T; 30-T; 45-T	Where a shallow impression area is desired for materials softer than hardened steel

Shore's Scleroscope

The scleroscope is an instrument that measures the hardness of the work in terms of elasticity. A diamond-tipped hammer is allowed to drop from a known height on the metal to be tested. As this hammer strikes the metal, it rebounds, and the harder the metal, the greater the rebound. The extreme height of the rebound is recorded, and an average of a number of readings taken on a single piece will give a good indication of the hardness of the work. The surface smoothness of the work affects the reading of the instrument. The readings are also affected by the contour and mass of the work and the depth of the case, in carburized work, the soft core of light-depth carburizing, pack-hardening, or cyanide hardening, absorbing the force of the hammer fall and decreasing the rebound. The hammer weighs about 40 grains, the height of the rebound of hardened steel is in the neighborhood of 100 on the scale, or about 6 1/4 inches, and the total fall is about 10 inches or 255 millimeters.

Vickers Hardness Test

The Vickers test is similar in principle to the Brinell test. The standard Vickers penetrator is a square-based diamond pyramid having an included point angle of 136 degrees. The numerical value of the hardness number equals the applied load in kilograms divided by the area of the pyramidal impression: A smooth, firmly supported, flat surface is required. The load, which usually is applied for 30 seconds, may be 5, 10, 20, 30, 50, or 120 kilograms. The 50-kilogram load is the most usual. The hardness number is based upon the diagonal length of the square impression. The Vickers test is considered to be very accurate, and may be applied to thin sheets as well as to larger sections with proper load regulation.

Knoop Hardness Numbers

The Knoop hardness test is applicable to extremely thin metal, plated surfaces, exceptionally hard and brittle materials, very shallow carburized or nitrided surfaces, or whenever the applied load must be kept below 3600 grams. The Knoop indenter is a diamond ground to an elongated pyramidal form and it produces an indentation having long and short diagonals with a ratio of approximately 7 to 1. The longitudinal angle of the indenter is 172 degrees, 30 minutes, and the transverse angle 130 degrees. The Tukon Tester in which the Knoop indenter is used is fully automatic under electronic control. The Knoop hardness number equals the load in kilograms divided by the projected area of indentation in square millimeters. The indentation number corresponding to the long diagonal and for a given load may be determined from a table computed for a theoretically perfect indenter. The load,

which may be varied from 25 to 3600 grams, is applied for a definite period and always normal to the surface tested. Lapped plane surfaces free from scratches are required.

Monotron Hardness Indicator

With this instrument, a diamond-ball impressor point 3/4 mm in diameter is forced into the material to a depth of 9/5000 inch and the pressure required to produce this constant impression indicates the hardness. One of two dials shows the pressure in kilograms and pounds, and the other shows the depth of the impression in millimeters and inches. Readings in Brinell numbers may be obtained by means of a scale designated as M-1.

Keep's Test

With this apparatus, a standard steel drill is caused to make a definite number of revolutions while it is pressed with standard force against the specimen to be tested. The hardness is automatically recorded on a diagram on which a dead soft material gives a horizontal line, and a material as hard as the drill itself gives a vertical line, intermediate hardness being represented by the corresponding angle between 0 and 90 degrees.

Comparison of Hardness Scales

All such tables are based on the assumption that the metal tested is homogeneous to a depth several times that of the indentation. To the extent that the metal being tested is not homogeneous, errors are introduced because different loads and different shapes of penetrators meet the resistance of metal of varying hardness, depending on the depth of indentation. Another source of error is introduced in comparing the hardness of different materials as measured on different hardness scales. This error arises from the fact that in any hardness test, metal that is severely cold-worked actually supports the penetrator, and different metals, different alloys, and different analyses of the same type of alloy have different cold-working properties. In spite of the possible inaccuracies introduced by such factors, it is of considerable value to be able to compare hardness values in a general way.

Turner's Sclerometer

In making this test a weighted diamond point is drawn, once forward and once backward, over the smooth surface of the material to be tested. The hardness number is the weight in grams required to produce a standard scratch.

Mohs's Hardness Scale

Hardness, in general, is determined by what is known as Mohs's scale, a standard for hardness that is applied mainly to nonmetallic elements and minerals. In this hardness scale, there are ten degrees or steps, each designated by a mineral, the difference in hardness of the different steps being determined by the fact that any member in the series will scratch any of the preceding members. This scale is as follows:

- 1) talc
- 2) gypsum
- 3) calcite
- 4) fluor spar
- 5) apatite
- 6) orthoclase
- 7) quartz
- 8) topaz
- 9) sapphire or corundum
- 10) diamond

These minerals, arbitrarily selected as standards, are successively harder, from talc, the softest of all minerals, to diamond, the hardest. This scale, which is now universally used for nonmetallic minerals, is not applied to metals.

Relation Between Hardness and Tensile Strength

The approximate relationship between the hardness and tensile strength is shown by the following formula:

Tensile strength = $Bhn \times 0.515$ (for Brinell numbers up to 175).

Tensile strength = $Bhn \times 0.490$ (for Brinell numbers larger than 175).

The above formulas give the tensile strength in pounds per square inch for steels. These approximate relationships between hardness and tensile strength do not apply to nonferrous metals with the possible exception of certain aluminum alloys.

Durometer Tests

The durometer is a portable hardness tester for measuring hardness of rubber, plastics, and some soft metals. The instrument is designed to apply pressure to the specimen and the hardness is read from a scale while the pressure is maintained. Various scales can be used by changing the indenter and the load applied.

Creep

Continuing changes in dimensions of a stressed material over time is called creep, and it varies with different materials and periods under stress, also with temperature. Creep tests may take some time as it is necessary to apply a constant tensile load to a specimen under a selected temperature. Measurements are taken to record the resulting elongation at time periods sufficiently long for a relationship to be established. The data are then plotted as elongation against time. The load is applied to the specimen only after it has reached the testing temperature, and causes an initial elastic elongation that includes some plastic deformation if the load is above the proportional limit for the material.

Some combinations of stress and temperature may cause failure of the specimen. Others show initial high rates of deformation, followed by decreasing, then constant, rates over long periods. Generally testing times to arrive at the constant rate of deformation are over 1000 hours.

Creep Rupture

Tests for creep rupture are similar to creep tests but are prolonged until the specimen fails. Further data to be obtained from these tests include time to rupture, amount of elongation, and reduction of area. Stress-rupture tests are performed without measuring the elongation, so that no strain data are recorded, time to failure, elongation and reduction of area being sufficient. Sometimes, a V-notch is cut in the specimen to allow measurement of notch sensitivity under the testing conditions.

Stress Analysis

Stresses, deflections, strains, and loads may be determined by application of strain gages or lacquers to the surface of a part, then applying loads simulating those to be encountered in service. Strain gages are commercially available in a variety of configurations and are usually cemented to the part surface. The strain gages are then calibrated by application of a known moment, load, torque, or pressure. The electrical characteristics of the strain gages change in proportion to the amount of strain, and the magnitude of changes in these characteristics under loads to be applied in service indicate changes caused by stress in the shape of the components being tested.

Lacquers are compounded especially for stress analysis and are applied to the entire part surface. When the part is loaded, and the lacquer is viewed under light of specific wavelength, stresses are indicated by color shading in the lacquer. The presence and intensity of the strains can then be identified and measured on the part(s) or on photographs of the set-up. From such images, it is possible to determine the need for thicker walls, strengthening ribs and other modifications to component design that will enable the part to withstand stresses in service.

Most of these tests have been standardized by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), and are published in their Book of Standards in separate sections for metals, plastics, rubber, and wood. Many of the test methods are also adopted by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI).

Identifying Metals

When it is necessary to sort materials, several rough methods may be used without elaborate chemical analysis. The most obvious of these is by using a magnet to pick out those materials that contain magnetic elements. To differentiate various levels of carbon and other elements in a steel bar, hold the bar in contact with a grinding wheel and observe the sparks. With high levels of carbon, for instance, sparks are produced that appear to split into several bright tracers. Patterns produced by several other elements, including small amounts of aluminum and titanium, for instance, can be identified with the aid of a Data Sheet issued by the American Society for Metals (ASM), Metals Park, OH.