

Monolithic Refractories: Manufacture, Properties, and Selection

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Contents

	Page
1	Scope 1
2	Referenced Documents 1
3	Terms and Definitions. 2
4	Background 9
4.1	Early Beginnings. 9
4.2	Formulation Differences. 9
4.3	Cement Bonded Refractories 10
4.4	Comparison with Other Refractories 11
4.5	Other Types of Refractories. 12
4.6	Non-refractory Applications of Calcium Aluminate Cement [1, 7, 8, 9, 10] 13
5	Constituent Ingredients of Refractory Concretes 14
5.1	Introduction 14
5.2	Binders 14
5.3	Aggregates. 15
5.4	Water. 19
6	Constituent Ingredients of Plastics 21
6.1	Introduction 21
6.2	Particle Size/Moisture Level. 21
6.3	Aggregates. 22
6.4	Fine Grained Additives 23
6.5	Binder Ingredients 23
6.6	Manufacturing Methods 25
7	Selection Criteria for Refractory Concrete. 26
7.1	Introduction 26
7.2	Castables and Field Mixes 26
7.3	Service Temperature Range. 34
7.4	Thermal Cycling 34
7.5	Load Bearing Considerations 35
7.6	Manufacturing Methods 35
7.7	Corrosion Influences 35
7.8	Binder Types 36
7.9	Aggregate Types 37
7.10	Abrasion and Erosion Resistance 37
7.11	Methods of Installation. 37
7.12	Application and Use 38
7.13	Faster Dryout. 38
8	Selection Criteria for Plastic Refractories 39
8.1	Introduction 39
8.2	Defining the Service Requirements 41
8.3	Choice Between Pre-fired Brick and Monolithic Refractories 42
8.4	Choice Between Plastics and Refractory Concretes 42
8.5	Performance and End-use Requirements 46
8.6	Recommended Selection Procedure 51
9	Composition and Proportioning 52
9.1	Introduction 52

Contents

	Page
9.2	Basis for Proportioning 52
9.3	Field Mixes 53
9.4	Water Content 54
10	Plastics Characteristics 54
10.1	Introduction 54
10.2	Selection of a Plastic Refractory 55
10.3	Classification 56
10.4	Chemical Analysis 56
10.5	Sampling 57
10.6	Product Characteristics 57
11	Engineering Properties and Testing 61
11.1	Permanent Linear Change (ASTM C179) 62
11.2	Thermal Expansion 62
11.3	Mechanical Strength and Structural Stability 63
11.4	Cold Compressive Strength (Crushing) 64
11.5	Cold Modulus of Rupture 64
11.6	Hot Strength (ASTM C583) 65
11.7	Hot Modulus of Rupture 65
11.8	Thermal Structural Stability (ASTM C832 and ASTM C16) 65
11.9	Modulus of Elasticity and Stress-strain Properties (ASTM C885 and ASTM C1419) 65
11.10	Permeability (ASTM C577) 66
11.11	Thermal Properties 66
11.12	Thermal Shock and Spall Resistance 68
11.13	Electrical Resistivity 68
11.14	Abrasion/Erosion Resistance (ASTM C704) 68
11.15	Resistance to Carbon Monoxide (ASTM C288) 69
11.16	Resistance to Slag Attack 69
11.17	Status of Testing Procedures 70
	Bibliography 71
Figures	
1	Typical Taylor Screen Analysis of Plastics and Ramming Mixes 21
2	Typical Production Flow Sheet for the Manufacturer of Plastic Refractories 26
3	Temperature Drop versus Thickness for Different Refractory Castables [Hot-face Temperature Contact at 2000 °F (1090 °C)] 36
4	Refractories in a Petroleum Coke Calciner Showing the Use of Plastics, Castables and Ramming Mixes 40
5	Determining the Consistency of Freshly Mixed Refractory Castable Using the ASTM C860 Ball-in-hand Test 54
6	Net Thermal Expansion of a Typical Super-duty Plastic Recovery 63
7	Effect of Temperature on the Modulus of Rupture and Cold Crushing Strength of an 85 % Alumina Phos-bonded Plastic Refractory 64
8	Thermal Conductivity of Various Plastic Refractories 67

Contents

Page

Tables

1	Characteristics of Calcium Aluminate Cement Binders	15
2	Maximum Service Temperatures of Selected Aggregates Mixed With Calcium Aluminate Cements under Optimum Conditions	15
3	Aggregate Grading	17
4	Types of Lightweight Aggregates Used in Refractory Insulating Concretes	18
5	Effect on Calcium Aluminate Cement of Various Additives and Admixtures	20
6	Acid-neutral Aggregates	22
7	Liquid Binder Ingredients for Plastics	24
8	Dry Binder Ingredients for Plastics	25
9	Characteristics of Normal Weight Refractory Concretes	28
10	Characteristics of Lightweight Refractory Concretes	33
11	Methods of Installing Monolithic Refractories	43
12	Properties of Chemically Similar Monolithic Refractories (All Based on Tabular Alumina Aggregates)	44
13	Product and Performance Factors Considered in the Selection of Calcined Clay-based Plastics for Refractory Applications	47
14	Strength, Volume, Stability, and Installed Density of Phosphate-bonded and Conventional High-alumina (50 % to 90 % Al ₂ O ₃) Plastics and Conventional Calcined Clay-based Plastics (40 % to 47 % Al ₂ O ₃)	48
15	Product and Performance Factors Considered in the Selection of High-alumina Plastics and Ramming Mixes for Refractory Applications	48
16	Product and Performance Factors Considered in the Selection of Graphitic/Carbonaceous Plastics and Ramming Mixes	49
17	Product and Performance Factors Considered in the Selection of Magnesia-based Ramming Mixes and Refractory Applications	50
18	Product and Performance Factors Considered in the Selection of Zircon-Based Ramming Mixes for Refractory Applications	50
19	Product and Performance Factors Considered In the Selection of Chrome Ore-Based Plastics/ Ramming Mixes for Refractory Applications	51
20	Classification of Fireclay and High-alumina Plastic Refractories and Ramming Mixes (ASTM C673)	57
21	Properties of Plastics and Ramming Mixes	58

Introduction

API TR 978 is the first in a series of three API technical reports updating the state-of-the-art use of refractory concrete (castables), plastics, and ramming mixes in applications for the Hydrocarbon Processing Industry (HPI). This technical report is complemented by two additional reports in this series:

- API TR 979, *Applications of Refractory Lining Materials*
- API TR 980, *Monolithic Refractories: Installation and Dryout*

These three API technical reports are based on two original reports written by the American Concrete Institute (ACI) Committee 547 and published by ACI in 1979 and 1989. The original ACI reports are ACI 547.R-79, *State-of-the Art Report: Refractory Concrete and ACI 547.1R-89, State-of-the Art Report: Refractory Plastics and Ramming Mixes*. ACI granted API a license to use all material from the two original ACI reports, in need of revision at the time, for the betterment of the oil and gas industry.

ACI Committee 547 was organized in 1969 to provide a reliable and comprehensive source of information on monolithic refractories technology. In subsequent years, ACI support from the refractory technical community waned and shifted in favor of API. API has an Individual Certification Program (ICP) for refractory practitioners based on the API Standard 936, *Refractory Installation Quality Control—Inspection and Testing Monolithic Refractory Linings and Materials*. To facilitate development of updated content in API's certification program, ACI has allowed API to use the material from the two ACI reports, mentioned above, as the starting point for three new API technical reports, which add to and revise the content of the two ACI reports.

The American Petroleum Institute formed the Vessel Refractory Task Group in the late 1980s with the objective of providing a standard for inspection and application quality control of monolithic refractories used in refining applications. In response to demands for greater reliability and cycle life objectives, refiners had already developed their own company specifications for refractory installations for the most important applications where unit availability is critical. A cottage industry of supporting quality control experts and inspectors evolved to help owner-operators reduce the gap between ideal and actual cycle life. Prior to the Vessel Refractory Task Group (the predecessor of the SCRM), manufacturers and installers largely had little say in these efforts and uniform industry standards were never developed or adopted.

To address this issue, the Vessel Refractory Task Group allowed for a broad representation of all the stake holders as part of the API's spring and fall Refining Equipment Standards Meetings. Addressing the standards gap and noting the many similarities in owner-operator and OEM developed specifications, the API Task Force undertook the task of identifying useful industry practices and/or negotiating to agreement best fits for standards applications. API's *Refractory Installation Quality Control Guidelines—Inspection and Testing Monolithic Linings and Material* was first issued in 1996 as a recommended practice. After a number of subsequent revisions, it was published as API Standard 936 in 2006, with a certification program beginning in 2004.

In addition to maintaining API Standard 936 and overseeing the certification program, in 2014 the Task Force reorganized under the Committee on Refinery Equipment (CRE) as the Refractory Project Group (RPG). As a project group, work expanded to ceramic fiber and brick quality control standards; unit specific applications, such as SRU and hydrogen furnaces; and technical reports, including this report. In response to this broadening recognition of the need to advance this technology for HPI applications, the CRE reclassified the group as a full subcommittee in 2016 and it now works under the title of the Subcommittee on Refractory Materials.

Monolithic Refractories: Manufacture, Properties, and Selection

1 Scope

This technical report covers the installation and dryout of monolithic refractory lining materials for Hydrocarbon Processing Industry (HPI) applications. It discusses the best practice procedures and techniques used in the installation of refractory concrete, as well as those for air and heat setting plastics and ramming mixes. In addition, it addresses the need for curing and dryout procedures to achieve successful results. This instruction is consistent with API Standard 936, which is the HPI industry standard for the installation quality control of monolithic refractories. API 936 also serves as a body of knowledge document for the API certification program for refractory practitioners.

NOTE API TR 979 and API TR 980 are additional reports listed in Section 2, designed to provide a complete discussion of the monolithic refractory subject.

2 Referenced Documents

API 936, *Refractory Installation Quality Control—Inspection and Testing Monolithic Refractory Linings and Materials*

API TR 977, *ASTM C704 Test Variability Reduced to Allow Further Optimization of Erosion Resistant Refractories for Critical Oil Refining Applications*¹

API TR 979, *Applications of Refractory Lining Materials*¹

ASTM C16, *Standard Test Method for Load Testing Refractory Shapes at High Temperatures*

ASTM C20, *Standard Test Methods for Apparent Porosity, Water Absorption, Apparent Specific Gravity, and Bulk Density of Burned Refractory Brick and Shapes by Boiling Water*

ASTM C24, *Standard Test Method for Pyrometric Cone Equivalent (PCE) of Fireclay and High-Alumina Refractory Materials*

ASTM C92, *Standard Test Methods for Sieve Analysis and Water Content of Refractory Materials*

ASTM C115, *Standard Test Method for Fineness of Portland Cement by the Turbidimeter*

ASTM C129, *Standard Specification for Nonloadbearing Concrete Masonry Units*

ASTM C133, *Standard Test Methods for Cold Crushing Strength and Modulus of Rupture of Refractories*

ASTM C134, *Standard Test Methods for Size, Dimensional Measurements, and Bulk Density of Refractory Brick and Insulating Firebrick*

ASTM C150, *Standard Specification for Portland Cement*

ASTM C179, *Standard Test Method for Drying and Firing Linear Change of Refractory Plastic and Ramming Mix Specimens*

ASTM C181, *Standard Test Method for Workability Index of Fireclay and High-Alumina Refractory Plastics*

ASTM C191, *Standard Test Methods for Time of Setting of Hydraulic Cement by Vicat Needle*

ASTM C201, *Standard Test Method for Thermal Conductivity of Refractories*