

**UNIT5**  
**HIGHWAY MATERIAL, CONSTRUCTION AND**  
**MAINTENANCE**

# ***UNIT 5***

## **HIGHWAY MATERIAL, CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE**

### **Overview**

A highway pavement is a structure consisting of superimposed layers of processed materials above the natural soil sub-grade, whose primary function is to distribute the applied vehicle loads to the sub-grade. The pavement structure should be able to provide a surface of acceptable riding quality, adequate skid resistance, favorable light reflecting characteristics, and low noise pollution. The ultimate aim is to ensure that the transmitted stresses due to wheel load are sufficiently reduced, so that they will not exceed bearing capacity of the sub-grade. Two types of pavements are generally recognized as serving this purpose, namely flexible pavements and rigid pavements. This chapter gives an overview of pavement types, layers, and their functions, and pavement failures. Improper design of pavements leads to early failure of pavements affecting the riding quality.

### Requirements of a pavement

An ideal pavement should meet the following requirements:

- Sufficient thickness to distribute the wheel load stresses to a safe value on the sub-grade soil, structurally strong to withstand all types of stresses imposed upon it,
- Adequate coefficient of friction to prevent skidding of vehicles, Smooth surface to provide comfort to road users even at high speed, Produce least noise from moving vehicles,
- Dust proof surface so that traffic safety is not impaired by reducing visibility, Impervious surface, so that sub-grade soil is well protected, and
- Long design life with low maintenance cost.

### **Types of pavements**

The pavements can be classified based on the structural performance into two, flexible pavements and rigid pavements. In flexible pavements, wheel loads are transferred by grain-to-grain contact of the aggregate through the granular structure. The flexible pavement, having less flexural strength, acts like a flexible sheet (e.g. bituminous road). On the contrary, in rigid pavements, wheel loads are transferred to sub-grade soil by flexural strength of the pavement and the pavement acts like a rigid plate (e.g. cement concrete roads). In addition to these, composite pavements are also available. A thin layer of flexible pavement over rigid pavement is an ideal pavement with most desirable characteristics. However, such pavements are rarely used in new construction because of

high cost and complex analysis required.

### **Failure of flexible pavements**

The major flexible pavement failures are fatigue cracking, rutting, and thermal cracking. The fatigue cracking of flexible pavement is due to horizontal tensile strain at the bottom of the asphaltic concrete. The failure criterion relates allowable number of load repetitions to tensile strain and this relation can be determined in the laboratory fatigue test on asphaltic concrete specimens. Rutting occurs only on flexible pavements as indicated by permanent deformation or rut depth along wheel load path. Two design methods have been used to control rutting: one to limit the vertical compressive strain on the top of subgrade and other to limit rutting to a tolerable amount (12 mm normally). Thermal cracking includes both low-temperature cracking and thermal fatigue cracking.

### **Failure criteria of rigid pavements**

Traditionally fatigue cracking has been considered as the major, or only criterion for rigid pavement design. The allowable number of load repetitions to cause fatigue cracking depends on the stress ratio between flexural tensile stress and concrete modulus of rupture. Of late, pumping is identified as an important failure criterion. Pumping is the ejection of soil slurry through the joints and cracks of cement concrete pavement, caused during the downward movement of slab under the heavy wheel loads. Other major types of distress in rigid pavements include faulting, spalling, and deterioration.

### **Pavements are a conglomeration of materials.**

These materials, their associated properties, and their interactions determine the properties of the resultant pavement. Thus, a good understanding of these materials, how they are characterized, and how they perform is fundamental to understanding pavement. The materials which are used in the construction of highway are of intense interest to the highway engineer. This requires not only a thorough understanding of the soil and aggregate properties which affect pavement stability and durability, but also the binding materials which may be added to improve these pavement features.

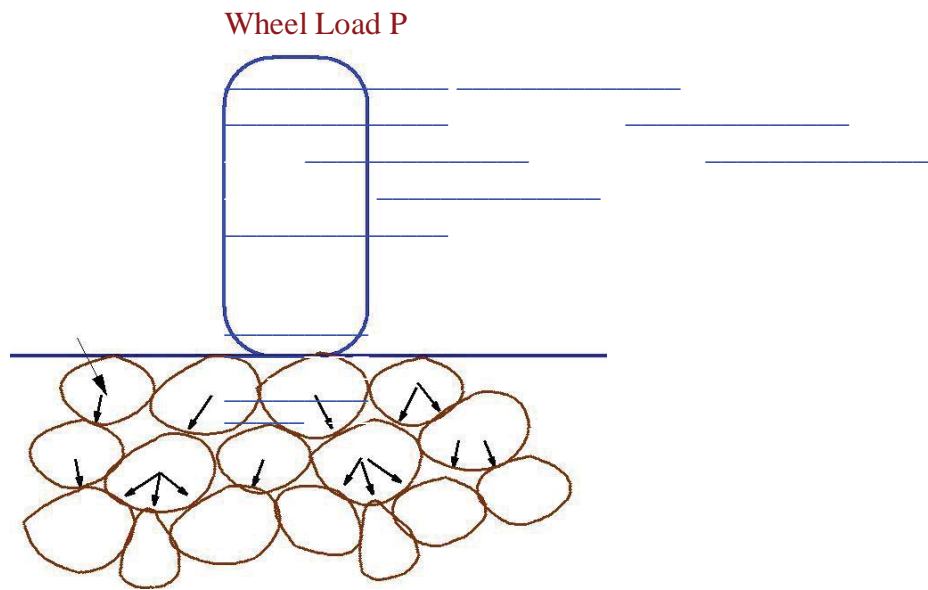


Figure 19:1: Load transfer in granular structure

## Flexible pavements

Flexible pavements will transmit wheel load stresses to the lower layers by grain-to-grain transfer through the points of contact in the granular structure (see Figure 19:1). The wheel load acting on the pavement will be distributed to a wider area, and the stress decreases with the depth. Taking advantage of these stress distribution characteristic, flexible pavements normally has many layers. Hence, the design of flexible pavement uses the concept of layered system. Based on this, flexible pavement may be constructed in a number of layers and the top layer has to be of best quality to sustain maximum compressive stress, in addition to wear and tear. The lower layers will experience lesser magnitude of stress and low quality material can be used. Flexible pavements are constructed using bituminous materials. These can be either in the form of surface treatments (such as bituminous surface treatments generally found on low volume roads) or, asphalt concrete surface courses (generally used on high volume roads such as national highways). Flexible pavement layers reflect the deformation of the lower layers on to the surface layer (e.g., if there is any undulation in sub-grade then it will be transferred to the surface layer). In the case of flexible pavement, the design is based on overall performance of flexible pavement, and the stresses produced should be kept well below the allowable stresses of each pavement layer.

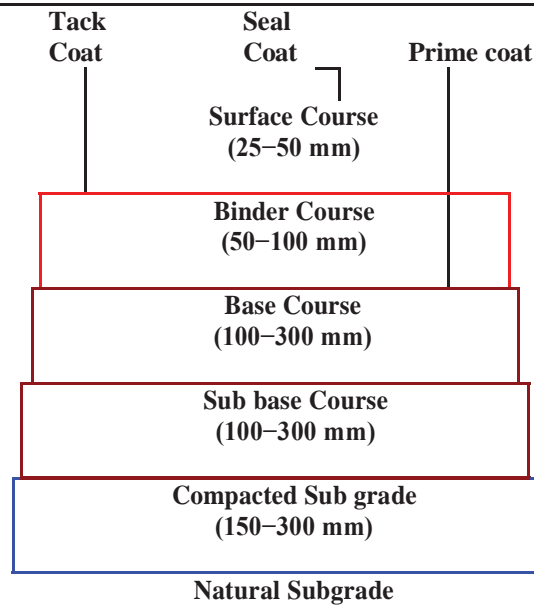


Figure 19:2: Typical cross section of a flexible pavement

### Types of Flexible Pavements

The following types of construction have been used in flexible pavement:

- Conventional layered flexible pavement, full - depth asphalt pavement, and
- Contained rock asphalt mat (CRAM).

Conventional flexible pavements are layered systems with high quality expensive materials are placed in the top where stresses are high, and low quality cheap materials are placed in lower layers.

Full - depth asphalt pavements are constructed by placing bituminous layers directly on the soil sub-grade. This is more suitable when there is high traffic and local materials are not available.

Contained rock asphalt mats are constructed by placing dense/open graded aggregate layers in between two asphalt layers. Modified dense graded asphalt concrete is placed above the sub-grade will significantly reduce the vertical compressive strain on soil sub-grade and protect from surface water.

### Typical layers of a flexible pavement

Typical layers of a conventional flexible pavement includes seal coat, surface course, tack coat,

binder course, prime coat, base course, sub-base course, compacted sub-grade, and natural sub-grade (Figure 19:2).

**Seal Coat:** Seal coat is a thin surface treatment used to water-proof the surface and to provide skid resistance.

**Tack Coat:** Tack coat is a very light application of asphalt, usually asphalt emulsion diluted with water. It provides proper bonding between two layer of binder course and must be thin, uniformly cover the entire surface, and set very fast.

**Prime Coat:** Prime coat is an application of low viscous cutback bitumen to an absorbent surface like granular bases on which binder layer is placed. It provides bonding between two layers. Unlike tack coat, prime coat penetrates into the layer below, plugs the voids, and forms a water tight surface.

### **Surface course**

Surface course is the layer directly in contact with traffic loads and generally contains superior quality materials. They are usually constructed with dense graded asphalt concrete (AC). The functions and requirements of this layer are:

It provides characteristics such as friction, smoothness, drainage, etc. Also it will prevent the entrance of excessive quantities of surface water into the underlying base, sub-base and sub-grade,

It must be tough to resist the distortion under traffic and provide a smooth and skid- resistant riding surface,

It must be water proof to protect the entire base and sub-grade from the weakening effect of water.

### **Binder course**

This layer provides the bulk of the asphalt concrete structure. Its chief purpose is to distribute load to the base course. The binder course generally consists of aggregates having less asphalt and doesn't require quality as high as the surface course, so replacing a part of the surface course by the binder course results in more economical design.

### **Base course**

The base course is the layer of material immediately beneath the surface of binder course and it

provides additional load distribution and contributes to the sub-surface drainage. It may be composed of crushed stone, crushed slag, and other untreated or stabilized materials.

### **Sub-Base course**

The sub-base course is the layer of material beneath the base course and the primary functions are to provide structural support, improve drainage, and reduce the intrusion from the sub-grade in the pavement structure. If the base course is open graded, then the sub-base course with more can serve as a leer between sub-grade and the base course. A sub-base course is not always needed or used. For example, a pavement constructed over a high quality, sub-grade may not need the additional features by a sub-base course. In such situations, sub-base course may not be provided.

### **Sub-grade**

The top soil or sub-grade is a layer of natural soil prepared to receive the stresses from the layers above. It is essential that at no time soil sub-grade is overstressed. It should be compacted to the desirable density, near the optimum moisture content.

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As you see here Indian Roads Congress guidelines for design of flexible pavements are given in IRC: 37. This is the number of the guidelines that is given by Indian Roads Congress, 2001 indicates the year in which the latest revision has been given. So we are going to discuss about the provisions of Indian Roads Congress 37: 2001. These guidelines are result of research work carried out by various institutions in India on the basis of performance data that is collected on different pavement sections in India and this version of IRC guideline 37 for designing flexible pavements is considered to be more rational compared to its previous version which was issued in 1984.



Rigid pavements have sufficient flexural strength to transmit the wheel load stresses to a wider area below. A typical cross section of the rigid pavement is shown in Figure 19:3. Compared to flexible pavement, rigid pavements are placed either directly on the prepared sub-grade or on a single layer of granular or stabilized material. Since there is only one layer of material between the concrete and the sub-grade, this layer can be called as base or sub-base course

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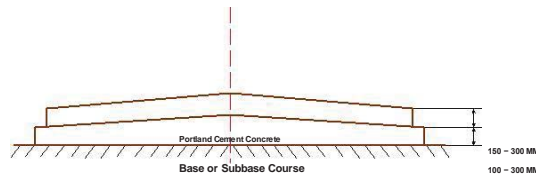


Figure 19:3: Typical Cross section of Rigid pavement

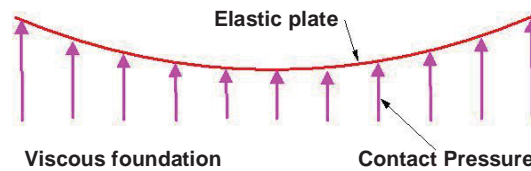


Figure 19:4: Elastic plate resting on Viscous foundation

## Rigid pavements

Rigid pavements have sufficient flexural strength to transmit the wheel load stresses to a wider area below. A typical cross section of the rigid pavement is shown in Figure 19:3. Compared to flexible pavement, rigid pavements are placed either directly on the prepared sub-grade or on a single layer of granular or stabilized material. Since there is only one layer of material between the concrete and the sub-grade, this layer can be called as base or sub-base course.

In rigid pavement, load is distributed by the slab action, and the pavement behaves like an elastic plate resting on a viscous medium (Figure 19:4). Rigid pavements are constructed by Portland cement concrete (PCC) and should be analyzed by plate theory instead of layer theory, assuming an elastic plate resting on viscous foundation. Plate theory is a simplified version of layer theory that assumes the concrete slab as a medium thick plate which is plane before loading and to remain plane after loading. Bending of the slab due to wheel load and temperature variation and the resulting tensile and flexural stress.

## Types of Rigid Pavements

Rigid pavements can be classified into four types:

1. Jointed plain concrete pavement (JPCP),
2. Jointed reinforced concrete pavement (JRCP),
3. Continuous reinforced concrete pavement (CRCP), and Pre-stressed concrete pavement

Jointed Plain Concrete Pavement: are plain cement concrete pavements constructed with closely spaced contraction joints. Dowel bars or aggregate interlocks are normally used for load transfer across joints. They normally has a joint spacing of 5 to 10m.

Jointed Reinforced Concrete Pavement: Although reinforcements do not improve the structural capacity significantly, they can drastically increase the joint spacing to 10 to 30m. Dowel bars are required for load transfer. Reinforcement's help to keep the slab together even after cracks.

Continuous Reinforced Concrete Pavement: Complete elimination of joints are achieved by reinforcement.

### **Binder course**

This layer provides the bulk of the asphalt concrete structure. It's chief purpose is to distribute load to the base course The binder course generally consists of aggregates having less asphalt and doesn't require quality as high as the surface course, so replacing a part of the surface course by the binder course results in more economical design.

### **Base course**

The base course is the layer of material immediately beneath the surface of binder course and it provides additional load distribution and contributes to the sub-surface drainage It may be composed of crushed stone, crushed slag, and other untreated or stabilized materials.

## **Production of Bitumen**

Bitumen is the residue or by-product when the crude petroleum is re need. A wide variety of re nary processes, such as the straight distillation process, solvent extraction process etc. may be used to produce bitumen of different consistency and other desirable properties. Depending on the sources and characteristics of the crude oils and on the properties of bitumen required, more than one processing method may be employed.

### **Failure criteria of rigid pavements**

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Bituminous materials or asphalts are extensively used for roadway construction, primarily because of their excellent binding characteristics and water proofing properties and relatively low cost. Bituminous materials consist of bitumen which is a black or dark colored solid or viscous cementitious substance consisting chiefly of high molecular weight hydrocarbons derived from distillation of petroleum or natural asphalt, has adhesive properties, and is soluble in carbon disulphide. Tars are residues from the destructive distillation of organic substances such as coal, wood, or petroleum and are temperature sensitive than bitumen. Bitumen will be dissolved in petroleum oils whereas unlike tar.

### **Vacuum steam distillation of petroleum oils**

In the vacuum-steam distillation process the crude oil is heated and is introduced into a large cylindrical still. Steam is introduced into the still to aid in the vaporization of the more volatile constituents of the petroleum and to minimize decomposition of the distillates and residues. The volatile constituents are collected, condensed, and the various fractions stored for further refining, if needed. The residues from this distillation are then fed into a vacuum distillation unit, where residue pressure and steam will further separate out heavier gas oils. The bottom fraction from this unit is the vacuum-steam-refined asphalt cement. The consistency of asphalt cement from this process can be controlled by the amount of heavy gas oil removed. Normally, asphalt produced by this process is softer. As the asphalt cools down to room temperature, it becomes a semi solid viscous material.

### **Different forms of bitumen**

#### **Cutback bitumen**

Normal practice is to heat bitumen to reduce its viscosity. In some situations preference is given to

use liquid binders such as cutback bitumen. In cutback bitumen suitable solvent is used to lower the viscosity of the Bitumen. From the environmental point of view also cutback bitumen is preferred. The solvent from the bituminous material will evaporate and the bitumen will bind the aggregate. Cutback bitumen is used for cold weather bituminous road construction and maintenance. The distillates used for preparation of cutback bitumen are naphtha, kerosene, diesel oil, and furnace oil. There are different types of cutback bitumen like rapid curing (RC), medium curing (MC), and slow curing (SC). RC is recommended for surface dressing and patchwork. MC is recommended for premix with less quantity of aggregate. SC is used for premix with appreciable quantity of aggregate.

### **Bitumen Emulsion**

Bitumen emulsion is a liquid product in which bitumen is suspended in a newly divided condition in an aqueous medium and stabilized by suitable material. Normally cationic type emulsions are used in India. The bitumen content in the emulsion is around 60% and the remaining is water. When the emulsion is applied on the road it breaks down resulting in release of water and the mix starts to set. The time of setting depends upon the grade of bitumen. The viscosity of bituminous emulsions can be measured as per IS: 8887-1995. Three types of bituminous emulsions are available, which are Rapid setting (RS), Medium setting (MS), and Slow setting (SC). Bitumen emulsions are ideal binders for hill road construction. Where heating of bitumen or aggregates are difficult. Rapid setting emulsions are used for surface dressing work. Medium setting emulsions are preferred for premix jobs and patch repairs work. Slow setting emulsions are preferred in rainy season.

### **Bituminous primers**

In bituminous primer the distillate is absorbed by the road surface on which it is spread. The absorption therefore depends on the porosity of the surface. Bitumen primers are useful on the stabilized surfaces and water bound macadam base courses. Bituminous primers are generally prepared on road sites by mixing penetration bitumen with petroleum distillate. The residues from this distillation are then fed into a vacuum distillation unit, where residue pressure and steam will further separate out heavier gas oils. The bottom fraction from this unit is the vacuum-steam-rene asphalt cement. The consistency of asphalt cement from this process can be controlled by the amount of heavy gas oil removed. Normally, asphalt produced by this process is softer. As the asphalt cools down to room temperature, it becomes a semi solid viscous material.

## **Modified Bitumen**

Certain additives or blend of additives called as bitumen modifiers can improve properties of Bitumen and bituminous mixes. Bitumen treated with these modifiers is known as modified bitumen. Polymer modified bitumen (PMB)/ crumb rubber modified bitumen (CRMB) should be used only in wearing course depending upon the requirements of extreme climatic variations. The detailed specifications for modified bitumen have been issued by IRC: SP: 53-1999. It must be noted that the performance of PMB and CRMB is dependent on strict control on temperature during construction. The advantages of using modified bitumen are as follows

- Lower susceptibility to daily and seasonal temperature variations
- Higher resistance to deformation at high pavement temperature
- Better age resistance properties
- Higher fatigue life for mixes
- Better adhesion between aggregates and binder
- Prevention of cracking and reflective cracking

## **Requirements of Bitumen**

The desirable properties of bitumen depend on the mix type and construction. In general, Bitumen should possess following desirable properties.

The bitumen should not be highly temperature susceptible: during the hottest weather the mix should not become too soft or unstable, and during cold weather the mix should not become too brittle causing cracks.

The viscosity of the bitumen at the time of mixing and compaction should be adequate. This can be achieved by use of cutbacks or emulsions of suitable grades or by heating the bitumen and aggregates prior to mixing.

There should be adequate affinity and adhesion between the bitumen and aggregates used in the mix.

## **Tests on bitumen**

There are a number of tests to assess the properties of bituminous materials. The following tests are usually conducted to evaluate different properties of bituminous materials.

Penetration test

Ductility test

Softening point test

Specific gravity test

Viscosity test

Flash and Fire point test

Float test

Water content test

Loss on heating test

### **Penetration test**

It measures the hardness or softness of bitumen by measuring the depth in tenths of a millimeter to which a standard loaded needle will penetrate vertically in 5 seconds. BIS had standardized the equipment and test procedure. The penetrometer consists of a needle assembly with a total weight of 100g and a device for releasing and locking in any position. The bitumen is softened to a pouring consistency, stirred thoroughly and poured into containers at a depth at least 15 mm in excess of the expected penetration. The test should be conducted at a specified temperature of 25° C. It may be noted that penetration value is largely influenced by any inaccuracy with regards to pouring temperature, size of the needle, weight placed on the needle and the test temperature. A grade of 40/50 bitumen means the penetration value is in the range 40 to 50 at standard test conditions. In hot climates, a lower penetration grade is preferred. The Figure 23.4.1 shows a schematic Penetration Test setup.

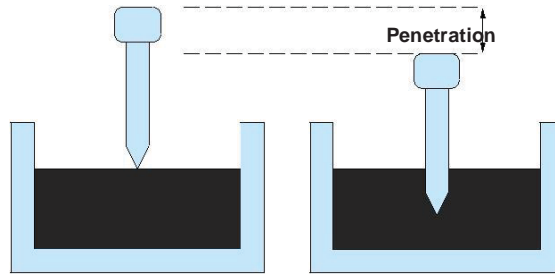


Figure 23:1: Penetration Test Setup

### Ductility test

Ductility is the property of bitumen that permits it to undergo great deformation or elongation. Ductility is defined as the distance in cm, to which a standard sample or briquette of the material will be elongated without breaking. Dimension of the briquette thus formed is exactly 1 cm square. The bitumen sample is heated and poured in the mould assembly placed on a plate. These samples with moulds are cooled in the air and then in water bath at 27° C temperature. The excess bitumen is cut and the surface is leveled using a hot knife. Then the mould with assembly containing sample is kept in water bath of the ductility machine for about 90 minutes. The sides of the moulds are removed, the clips are hooked on the machine and the machine is operated. The distance up to the point of breaking of thread is the ductility value which is reported in cm. The ductility value gets affected by factors such as pouring temperature, test temperature, rate of pulling etc. A minimum ductility value of 75 cm has been specified by the BIS. Figure 23.4.2 shows ductility moulds to be filled with bitumen.

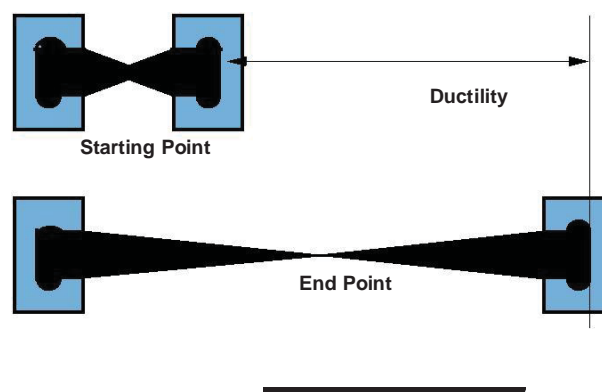


Figure 23:2: Ductility Test

### Softening point test

Softening point denotes the temperature at which the bitumen attains a particular degree of



softening under the specifications of test. The test is conducted by using Ring and Ball apparatus. A brass ring containing test sample of bitumen is suspended in liquid like water or glycerin at a given temperature. A steel ball is placed upon the bitumen sample and the liquid medium is heated at a rate of 5° C per minute. Temperature is noted when the softened bitumen touches the metal plate which is at a specified distance below. Generally, higher

Softening point indicates lower temperature susceptibility and is preferred in hot climates. Figure 23.4.3 shows Softening Point test setup.

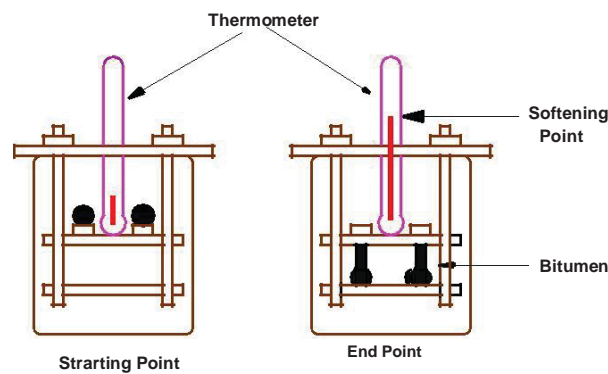


Figure 23:3: Softening Point Test Setup

### Specific gravity test

In paving jobs, to classify a binder, density property is of great use. In most cases bitumen is weighed, but when used with aggregates, the bitumen is converted to volume using density values. The density of bitumen is greatly influenced by its chemical composition. Increase in aromatic type mineral impurities cause an increase in specific gravity.

The specific gravity of bitumen is defined as the ratio of mass of given volume of bitumen of known content to the mass of equal volume of water at 27° C. The specific gravity can be measured using either pycnometer or preparing a cube specimen of bitumen in semi solid or solid state. The specific gravity of bitumen varies from 0.97 to 1.02.

### Viscosity test

Viscosity denotes the fluid property of bituminous material and it is a measure of resistance to flow. At the application temperature, this characteristic greatly influences the strength of resulting paving

mixes. Low or high viscosity during compaction or mixing has been observed to result in lower stability values. At high viscosity, it resists the compactive effort and thereby resulting mix is heterogeneous, hence low stability values. And at low viscosity instead of providing a uniform film over aggregates, it will lubricate the aggregate particles. Orifice type viscometers are used to indirectly measure the viscosity of liquid binders like cutbacks and emulsions. The viscosity expressed in seconds is the time taken by the 50 ml bitumen material to pass through the orifice of a cup, under standard test conditions and specified temperature. Viscosity of a cutback can be measured with either 4.0 mm orifice at 25° C or 10 mm orifice at 25 or 40° C.

### Flash and fire point test

At high temperatures depending upon the grades of bitumen materials leave out volatiles. And these volatiles catch fire which is very hazardous and therefore it is essential to qualify this temperature for each bitumen grade. BIS defined the flash point as the temperature at which the vapor of bitumen momentarily catches

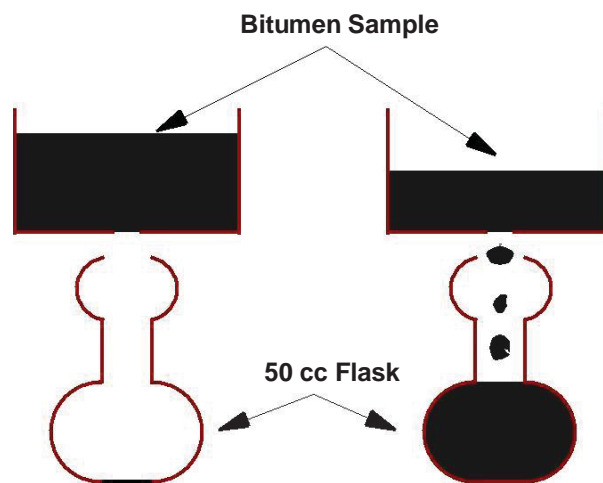


Figure 23:4: Viscosity Test

in the form of ash under specified test conditions. The fire point is defined as the lowest temperature under specified test conditions at which the bituminous material gets ignited and burns.

### Float test

Normally the consistency of bituminous material can be measured either by penetration test or viscosity test. But for certain range of consistencies, these tests are not applicable and Float test is used. The apparatus consists of an aluminum float and a brass collar filled with bitumen to be tested.

The specimen in the mould is cooled to a temperature of 5°C and screwed in to oat. The total test assembly is floated in the water bath at 50°C and the time required for water to pass its way through the specimen plug is noted in seconds and is expressed as the oat value.

### **Water content test**

It is desirable that the bitumen contains minimum water content to prevent foaming of the bitumen when it is heated above the boiling point of water. The water in bitumen is determined by mixing known weight of specimen in a pure petroleum distillate free from water, heating and distilling of the water. The weight of the water condensed and collected is expressed as percentage by weight of the original sample. The allowable maximum water content should not be more than 0.2% by weight.

### **Loss on heating test**

When the bitumen is heated it loses the volatility and gets hardened. About 50gm of the sample is weighed and heated to a temperature of 163<sup>0</sup>C for 5hours in a specified oven designed for this test. The sample specimen is weighed again after the heating period and loss in weight is expressed as percentage by weight of the original sample. Bitumen used in pavement mixes should not indicate more than 1% loss in weight, but for bitumen having penetration values 150-200 up to 2% loss in weight is allowed.

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Table 23:1: Tests for Bitumen with IS codes

Type of test	Test Method
Penetration Test	IS: 1203-1978
Ductility test	IS: 1208-1978
Softening Point test	IS: 1205-1978
Specific gravity test	IS: 1202-1978
Viscosity test	IS: 1206-1978
Flash and Fire Point test	IS: 1209-1978
Float Test	IS: 1210-1978
Determination of water content	IS: 1211-1978
Determination of Loss on heating	IS:1212-1978