



Standard Guide for Conducting Borehole Geophysical Logging: Mechanical Caliper¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D6167; the number immediately following the designation indicates the year of original adoption or, in the case of revision, the year of last revision. A number in parentheses indicates the year of last reapproval. A superscript epsilon (ϵ) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

1. Scope*

1.1 This guide covers the general procedures necessary to conduct caliper logging of boreholes, wells, access tubes, caissons, or shafts (hereafter referred as boreholes) as commonly applied to geologic, engineering, groundwater, and environmental (hereafter referred as geotechnical) investigations. Caliper logging for mineral or petroleum exploration and development are excluded.

1.1.1 *This guide offers an organized collection of information or a series of options and does not recommend a specific course of action. This document cannot replace education or experience and should be used in conjunction with professional judgment. Not all aspects of this guide may be applicable in all circumstances. This ASTM standard is not intended to represent or replace the standard of care by which the adequacy of a given professional service must be judged, nor should this document be applied without consideration of a project's many unique aspects. The word "Standard" in the title of this document means only that the document has been approved through the ASTM consensus process.*

1.2 This guide defines a caliper log as a record of borehole diameter with depth.

1.2.1 Caliper logs are essential in the interpretation of geophysical logs since they can be significantly affected by borehole diameter.

1.2.2 Caliper logs are commonly used to measure borehole diameter, shape, roughness, and stability; calculate borehole volume; provide information on borehole construction; and delineate lithologic contacts, fractures, and solution cavities and other openings.

1.2.2.1 Borehole-diameter information is essential for calculation of volumetric rate from flowmeter logs.

1.2.2.2 Caliper logs provide useful information for borehole completion and testing.

1.2.2.3 Caliper logs are used to locate the optimum placement of inflatable packers for borehole testing. Inflatable

packers can only form an effective seal within a specified range of borehole diameters, and can be damaged if they are set in rough or irregular parts of the borehole.

1.2.2.4 Caliper logs are used to estimate the volume of borehole completion material (cement, gravel, etc.) needed to fill the annular space between borehole and casing(s) or well screen.

1.2.2.5 Caliper logs may be applied to correlate lithology between boreholes based upon enlargements related to lithology. The measured borehole diameter may be significantly different than the drilled diameter because of plastic formations extruded into the borehole and friable formations enlarging the borehole. A series of caliper logs may also show increases or decreases in borehole diameter with time.

1.3 This guide is restricted to mechanically based devices with spring-loaded arms, which are the most common calipers used in caliper logging with geotechnical applications.

1.4 This guide provides an overview of caliper logging, including general procedures, specific documentation, calibration and standardization, and log quality and interpretation.

1.5 To obtain additional information on caliper logs see Section 9 of this guide.

1.6 This guide is to be used in conjunction with Guide **D5753**.

1.7 This guide should not be used as a sole criterion for caliper logging and does not replace professional judgment. Caliper logging procedures should be adapted to meet the needs of a range of applications and stated in general terms so that flexibility or innovation is not suppressed.

1.8 The geotechnical industry uses English or SI units. The caliper log is typically recorded in units of inches, millimetres, or centimetres.

1.9 *This guide does not purport to address all of the safety and liability problems (for example, lost or lodged probes and equipment decontamination) associated with its use.*

1.10 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

¹ This guide is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D18 on Soil and Rock and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D18.01 on Surface and Subsurface Characterization.

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2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:²

D653 Terminology Relating to Soil, Rock, and Contained Fluids

D5088 Practice for Decontamination of Field Equipment Used at Waste Sites

D5608 Practices for Decontamination of Field Equipment Used at Low Level Radioactive Waste Sites

D5753 Guide for Planning and Conducting Borehole Geophysical Logging

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions:

3.1.1 Definitions shall be in accordance with Terminology **D653**, Section 12, Ref (1),³ or as defined below:

3.1.2 *accuracy, n*—how close a measured log values approaches true value. It is determined in a controlled environment. A controlled environment represents a homogeneous sample volume with known properties.

3.1.3 *depth of investigation, n*—the radial distance from the measurement point to a point where the predominant measured response may be considered centered, that is not to be confused with borehole depth (for example, distance) measured from the surface.

3.1.4 *measurement resolution, n*—the minimum change in measured value that can be detected.

3.1.5 *repeatability, n*—the difference in magnitude of two measurements with the same equipment and in the same environment.

3.1.6 *vertical resolution, n*—the minimum thickness that can be separated into distinct units.

3.1.7 *volume of investigation, n*—the volume that contributes 90 % of the measured response. It is determined by a combination of theoretical and empirical modeling. The volume of investigation is non-spherical and has gradational boundaries.

4. Summary of Guide

4.1 This guide applies to borehole caliper logging and is to be used in conjunction with Guide **D5753**.

4.2 This guide briefly describes the significance and use, apparatus, calibration and standardization, procedures, and reports for conducting borehole caliper logging.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 An appropriately developed, documented, and executed guide is essential for the proper collection and application of caliper logs. This guide is to be used in conjunction with Guide **D5753**.

² For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

³ The boldface numbers given in parentheses refer to a list of references at the end of the text.

5.2 The benefits of its use include the following: improving selection of caliper logging methods and equipment, caliper log quality and reliability, and usefulness of the caliper log data for subsequent display and interpretation.

5.3 This guide applies to commonly used caliper logging methods for geotechnical applications.

5.4 It is essential that personnel (see the Personnel section of Guide **D5753**) consult up-to-date textbooks and reports on the caliper technique, application, and interpretation methods.

6. Interferences

6.1 Most extraneous effects on caliper logs are caused by instrument problems and borehole conditions.

6.2 Instrument problems include the following: electrical leakage of cable and grounding problems, temperature drift, wear of mechanical components including the hinge pins and in the linear potentiometer (mechanical hysteresis), damaged or bent arms, and lack of lubrication of the mechanical components.

6.3 Borehole conditions include heavy drilling mud, borehole deviation, and drilling-related borehole irregularities.

7. Apparatus

7.1 A geophysical logging system has been described in the general guide (see the Apparatus section of Guide **D5753**).

7.2 Caliper logs may be obtained with probes having a single arm, three arms (averaging or summation), multiple independent arms (x-y caliper), multiple-feeler arms, bow springs, or gap wheels. Single-arm and three-arm averaging probes are most commonly used for geotechnical investigations.

7.2.1 A single-arm caliper commonly provides a record of borehole diameter while being used to decentralize another type of log, such as a side-collimated gamma-gamma probe (see Fig. 1). The caliper arm generally follows the high side of a deviated hole. The single-arm decentralizing caliper may not have the resolution needed for some applications.

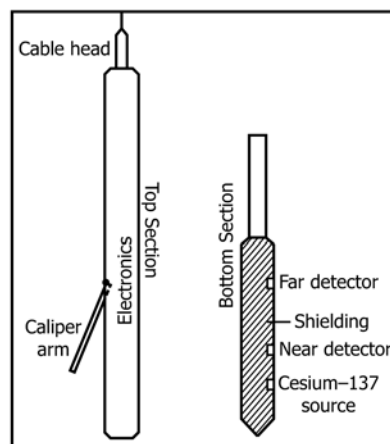


FIG. 1 Probe for Making Side-Collimated Gamma-Gamma Logs with Single-Arm Caliper (2)

7.2.2 The three-arm averaging or summation caliper has arms of equal length oriented 120° apart (see Fig. 2). All arms move together, which provides an average diameter measurement. This caliper provides higher resolution than the single-arm caliper measurement (see Fig. 3).

7.2.3 Multiple independent arm calipers generally have three or four independent arms of equal length; these arms are sometimes oriented. Horizontal resolution, that provides accurate borehole-diameter measurement regardless of borehole shape, is related to the number of independent arms. In general, calipers with four or more independent arms will have higher resolution than three-arm averaging (see Fig. 3). The four independent-arm caliper log may show borehole elongation (elliptical borehole shape) and better indicates the actual irregularity of the borehole.

7.3 Caliper probes using arms are typically spring loaded. The arms are retracted and opened with an electric motor and retention spring. The arms and gears are lubricated. Caliper probes closed by hand are held closed with an electric solenoid or weighted retention ring that is released with a sudden drop. Typically, the caliper arms are mechanically connected to a linear or rotary potentiometer such that changes in the angle of the arms causes changes in resistance. These changes in resistance are proportional to average borehole diameter. In some probes, the voltage changes are converted to a varying pulse rate or digitized downhole to eliminate or minimize cable transmission noise. Different arm length can be used to optimize sensitivity for the borehole-diameter range expected.

7.4 The concepts of volume of investigation and depth of investigation are not applicable to caliper logs since it is a surface-contact measurement.

7.5 Vertical resolution of caliper measurements is a function of the size of the contact surface (arm tip or pad), the response of the mechanical and electronic components, and digitizing interval used. The theoretical limit of vertical resolution is

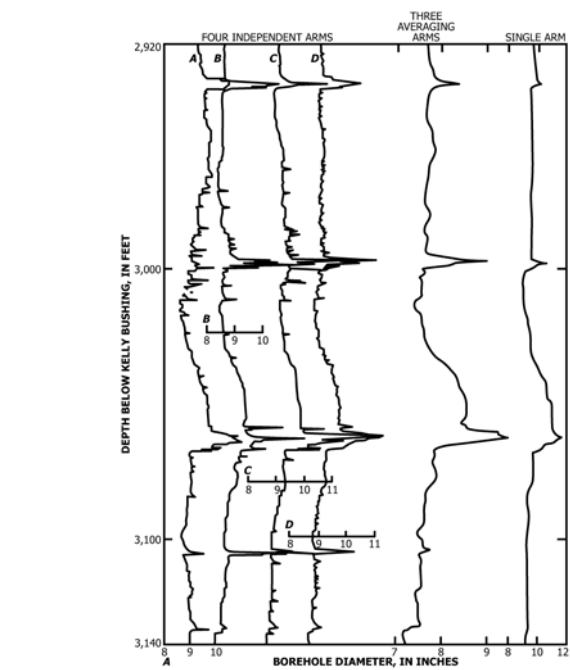


FIG. 3 Caliper Logs From Probes Having Four Independent Arms, Three Averaging Arms, and a Single Arm, Madison Limestone Test Well 1, Wyoming (2)

equal to the width of the caliper pad or tip. Selection of arm lengths and angle, and tip diameter will affect sensitivity. Shorter arms generally will provide more detail of the rugosity (borehole roughness as defined by Ref. (2)) of the borehole wall than longer arms. However, size of caliper probe and borehole diameter may also determine arm lengths used.

7.6 Measurement resolution of typical caliper probes is 0.05 in. (0.13 cm) of borehole diameter.

7.7 A variety of caliper logging equipment is available for geotechnical investigations. It is not practical to list all of the sources of potentially acceptable equipment.

8. Calibration and Standardization of Caliper Logs

8.1 General:

8.1.1 National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) calibration and standardization procedures do not exist for caliper logging.

8.1.2 Caliper logs can be used in a qualitative (for example, comparative) or quantitative (for example, borehole diameter corrections) manner depending upon the project objectives.

8.1.3 Caliper calibration methods and frequency shall be sufficient to meet project objectives.

8.1.3.1 Calibration and standardization should be performed each time a caliper probe is suspected to be damaged, modified, repaired, and at periodic intervals.

8.2 Calibration is the process of establishing values for caliper response and is accomplished with a physical model of a known diameter. Calibration data values related to the physical properties (for example, borehole diameter, roughness) may be recorded in units (for example, counts per

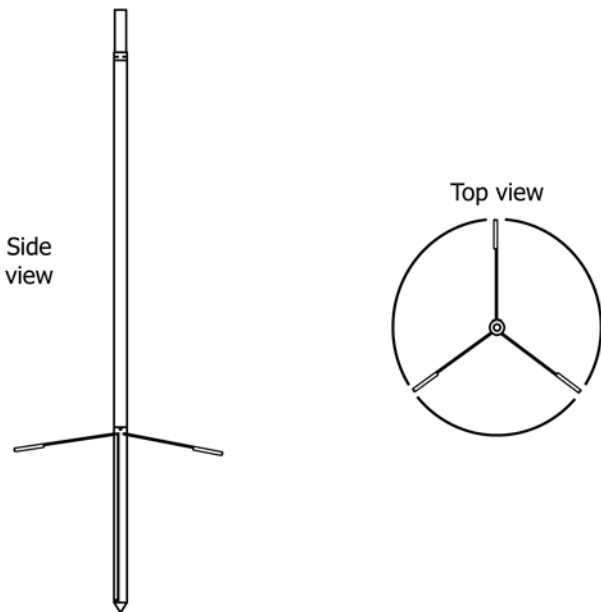


FIG. 2 Three-Arm Averaging Caliper

second), that can be converted to units of length (for example, inches, millimetres, or centimetres.)

8.2.1 At least two, and preferably more, values, which approximate the anticipated operating range, are needed to establish a calibration curve (for example, 4- and 10-in. (10.2- and 25.4-cm) rings) if the borehole diameter to be logged is 5 in. (12.7 cm)).

8.2.2 Physical models of measured diameter that may be used to calibrate the caliper response may include rings or bars made of rigid materials that are not easily deformed and resist wear.

8.2.2.1 Calibration of caliper probes is done most accurately in rings of different diameters.

8.2.2.2 A calibration bar is a plate that is drilled and marked at regular intervals and machined to fit over the body of the probe (see Fig. 4). One arm is placed in the appropriate hole for the range to be logged.

8.2.2.3 Calibration can be checked by using casing of measured diameter logged in the borehole.

8.3 Standardization is the process of checking logging response to show evidence of repeatability and consistency.

8.3.1 Calibration serves as a check of standardization.

8.3.2 A representative borehole may be used to periodically check caliper response providing the borehole environment does not change with time. Caliper response may not repeat exactly because the probe may rotate, causing the arms to follow slightly different paths within the borehole.

9. Procedure

9.1 See the Procedure section of Guide D5753 for planning a logging program, data formats, personnel qualifications, field documentation, and header documentation.

9.2 Caliper specific information (for example, arm length) should be documented.

9.3 Identify caliper logging objectives.

9.4 Select appropriate equipment to meet objectives.

9.4.1 Caliper equipment decontamination is addressed according to project specifications (see Practice D5088 for non-radioactive waste sites and Practice D5608 for low level radioactive waste sites). Some materials commonly used for caliper-arm lubrication may be environmentally sensitive.

9.5 Select the order in the logging sequence in which the caliper probe is to be run (see 8.2.2.1 of Guide D5753).

9.5.1 Caliper probes are run before any probe utilizing nuclear sources and more expensive centralized probes.

9.5.2 Caliper probes are run after any television camera and fluid property probes are run.

9.6 Caliper operation and calibration are checked at the start of each borehole or at an interval consistent with project objectives. (see the Procedure section of Guide D5753). After calibration, the caliper arms are closed before lowering.

9.7 Select and document the depth reference.

9.7.1 The selected depth reference needs to be stable and accessible (for example, top of borehole casing).

9.8 Determine and document probe zero reference point (for example, top of probe or cablehead) and depth offset to caliper measurement point.

9.8.1 The measurement point of a caliper is the end of caliper arms and it changes as the arms open and close with the sine of arm angle multiplied by length of arm. Typically, the measurement point varies less than a few tenths of a foot (a few centimetres).

9.8.2 The measurement point will change if the arm length is changed.

9.9 Select horizontal and vertical scales for log display.

9.10 Select digitizing interval (or sample rate if applicable) to meet project objectives (see 8.3.1.2 of Guide D5753).

9.10.1 Maximum vertical resolution requires the selection of a digitizing interval at least as small as the arm tip contact height.

9.10.2 Typically, this interval is no larger than 0.1 ft (0.03 m) for high-resolution applications.

9.11 The caliper probe is lowered to the bottom of the borehole.

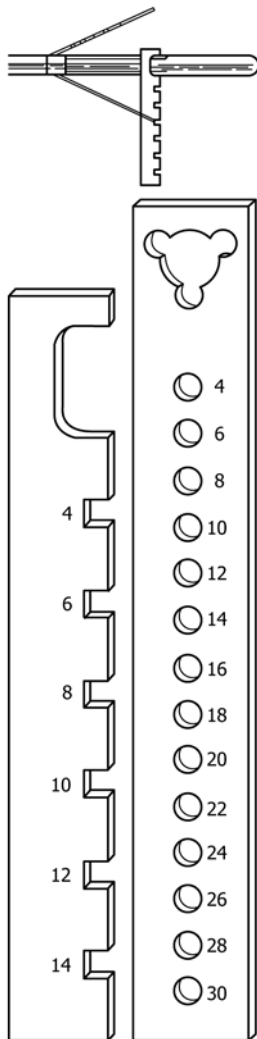


FIG. 4 Calibration Bars for Caliper Probes (3)

9.11.1 Any time the caliper probe is lowered in the borehole, the arms should be closed to avoid damaging equipment or borehole.

9.11.2 Selection of probe speed while lowering is based on knowledge of borehole depth, stability, and other conditions.

9.12 Open caliper arm(s).

9.13 Select logging speed.

9.13.1 A logging speed of approximately 15 ft (5 m) per min is recommended for high-resolution applications. Faster logging speeds may induce noise due to the caliper probe bumping the borehole wall. Slower logging speeds will not enhance measurement resolution for most systems.

9.14 Collect caliper data while the probe is moving up the borehole.

9.15 When the probe reaches the top of the borehole:

9.15.1 If surface casing is present, compare and document caliper measurement.

9.15.2 Check depth reference and document after survey depth error (ASDE).

9.15.3 Determine if ASDE meets project objectives.

9.15.4 Typical tolerance for ASDE is ± 0.4 ft per 100-ft (0.4 m per 100-m) interval logged.

9.16 Selected borehole intervals should be repeated (that is, relogged) under similar logging parameters as the initial log. Repeat logs provide information on the stability of the caliper equipment. The interval repeated should have enough variability, if possible, to check repeatability and resolution.

9.16.1 Repeat logs should be compared with the original log to ensure correct operation of the probe prior to ending a logging event.

9.16.2 Repeat sections may not repeat exactly due to a different orientation of the logging probe on the repeat run or changes in the borehole between logging runs (see Section 6).

9.16.3 Close caliper arms prior to lowering the probe down the borehole for a repeat section.

9.17 Evaluate the field log quality and compare log with drilling and completion information.

9.17.1 A reduction in borehole diameter over large depth sections may be indicative of borehole deviation on three-arm averaging caliper logs.

9.17.1.1 The magnitude of borehole deviation that causes this effect depends upon the length of the caliper arms being used and the strength of the tensioning spring within the caliper. Typically, a borehole deviation of greater than 15° is likely to produce this effect.

9.17.1.2 Converting the three-arm averaging caliper by removing two of the caliper arms may allow a good log to be obtained in these types of boreholes.

9.17.2 Mud can prevent caliper arms from opening fully, and thick mud cake may prevent accurate measurement of drilled diameter. Lack of caliper arm movement, especially in the bottom of a mud drilled borehole, may be indicative of arm sticking due to heavy mud.

9.17.2.1 If mud interferences are suspected, the borehole may be reconditioned, the caliper probe cleaned and lubricated, and the caliper log repeated.

9.18 Post-acquisition calibration checks may be required (surface casing or calibration standard) to meet the objectives of the logging program. Typical tolerances between pre- and post-calibration are ± 0.2 in. (0.5 cm).

10. Interpretation of Results

10.1 See the Log Interpretation section of Guide [D5753](#) for procedures on log interpretation.

10.2 A valid caliper log is essential in the interpretation of the logs that are affected by changes in borehole diameter, including those logs that are labeled ‘borehole compensated.’ It is not always possible to compensate logs for substantial differences in borehole diameter.

10.2.1 Caliper logs can be analyzed individually (that is, borehole volume).

10.2.2 Caliper logs can be analyzed as part of a suite to take advantage of the synergistic nature of log data.

10.3 The caliper log should be depth correlated with the other geophysical logs as the first step to interpretation. This is especially important for logs that use the caliper data for borehole correction and depth adjustment.

10.4 Other pertinent information, including borehole construction (casing size), drilling history (hole size, drill method, penetration rate, core loss, fluid loss, etc.), and geologic information, should be integrated with the caliper-log data.

10.5 Interpretations based on changes in borehole diameter may be related to changes in drilling, mud cake, mud rings, borehole construction, lithology and structure, fractures and solution openings, and stress-induced breakouts.

10.6 The measured borehole diameter may be significantly different than the drilled diameter because of plastic formations extruded into the borehole and friable formations enlarging the borehole. A series of caliper logs may also show increases or decreases in borehole diameter with time.

10.6.1 Caliper logs are useful for determining what other logs can be made and what range of borehole diameters will be accepted by centralizers or decentralizers.

10.7 Fractures and solution openings may be obvious on a caliper log; however, their character may not be uniquely defined.

10.7.1 The single-arm caliper log may completely miss a feature or indicate only a small anomaly.

10.7.2 The three-arm averaging caliper log of a fracture dipping at an angle such that the three arms enter the opening at different depths will indicate three separate anomalies rather than one.

10.8 Borehole-diameter information is essential for calculation of volumetric rate from flowmeter logs.

10.9 Caliper logs provide useful information for borehole completion and testing.

10.9.1 Caliper logs are used to locate the optimum placement of inflatable packers for borehole testing. Inflatable packers can only form an effective seal within a specified range of borehole diameters, and can be damaged if they are set in rough or irregular parts of the borehole.

10.9.2 Caliper logs are used to estimate the volume of borehole completion material (cement, gravel, etc.) needed to fill the annular space between borehole and casing(s) or well screen.

10.10 Caliper logs may be applied to correlate lithology between boreholes based upon enlargements related to lithology.

11. Report

11.1 Consult the Report section, Guide **D5753** for requirements of the report.

11.2 Reports presenting caliper logs shall describe the components of the caliper logging system, the principles of the methods used, and their limits, methods and results of calibration and standardization, and performance verification (for example, diameter of surface casing, correlation with other logs, repeat sections, ASDE, etc.).

11.3 Information on the software and algorithms used should be included in the report.

11.4 Any deviations from this guide should be justified with documentation.

11.5 Presentation of caliper logs should be designed to meet project objectives. At a minimum, depth (y-axis) and units of measurement (x-axis) scales should be clearly marked (see **Fig. 3**). There may be a difference between presentations of data collected in the field versus in final report. Any scale “wraps” should be clearly marked.

11.5.1 Caliper logs are typically displayed with linear scales in inches, millimetres, or centimetres.

12. Keywords

12.1 borehole correction; borehole diameter; borehole geophysics; borehole volume; caliper log; groundwater; single-arm caliper; three-arm caliper; well construction; well logging

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- (1) *Glossary of Terms and Expressions Used in Well Logging*, 2nd Ed., Society of Professional Well Log Analysts, Houston, TX, 1984.
- (2) Keys, W. S., *Borehole Geophysics Applied To Ground-Water Investigations, Techniques of Water-Resources Investigations of the United States Geological Survey, Book 2*, Chapter E2, 1990.
- (3) Hodges, R. E., *Calibration and Standardization of Geophysical Well-Logging Equipment for Hydrologic Applications, U.S. Geological Survey Water Resources Investigations Report 88-4058*, 1988.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

Committee D18 has identified the location of selected changes to this guide since the last issue, D6167-97(2004), that may impact the use of this guide. (Approved May 1, 2011)

- (1) Moved discussion of uses from Interpretation to Scope.
- (2) Added professional judgment caveat in Scope.

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