

## News and Updates

So, we have come to the second edition of **The Observer**, the official newsletter of **BENCHMARK**, and I can hardly believe that 3 months have gone by already. I have not put up as much information as I would like so far, but I am planning on increasing the tempo moving forward. We have been to three important standards meetings in the first part of the year, including the ASTM G03 Committee on Weathering, where I am the Chairperson.

In G03 we have determined that the shrinking participation in our meetings is an existential problem. This decline has been going on for a decade, and pre-dates the covid 19 pandemic problems. It is not just Committee G03 that faces this issue, it is happening in ALL the technical or standards committees that I belong to. There are two issues at play, the problem at ASTM is that the membership is strong, but far too few of those members play any active role or come the meetings. Some other groups just don't even have the membership quantities as before.

### Sage Wisdom

"WE CAN LEARN A LOT BY LOOKING AT THE HISTORY OF OUR INDUSTRY. A LOT OF THE THINGS WE ARE DOING, HAVE ALREADY BEEN TRIED. IT IS BEST TO CHECK FIRST SO WE DON'T REPEAT MISTAKES. ASK AN OLD SAGE FOR ADVICE, I AM HERE TO HELP"

The problem for ASTM is that the attendees are now older, fewer, and without replacements. The average age of the ASTM member is 65, not a great indicator of future success. The question is "why are there no younger people coming to the meetings?"

We have conducted surveys in ASTM to ask our members why they don't come to meetings. The number one answer is their company does not support their travel expenses. A lot of companies no longer see any real need to participate in standards development. I don't know how we change this narrow view, but I know we must if we are going move forward.

ASTM G03 has decided to move the schedule of our meetings. We have traditionally met with Committee D01 on Paint, and there used to be enough people that attended for us to have our own little committee week in January and June each year. Starting in 2026 we are probably going to meet during the April and November committee weeks with D20 on Plastics. We hope that D01 also chooses to change to that same schedule.

### Jacksonville Exposures

General Motors requires auto paint manufacturers to test for acid etch resistance by performing an exposure in Jacksonville. The reasons for continuing this test are no longer valid in my opinion, for several reasons.

1. The location is no longer producing severe acid etch on stored cars. The sources of the acid rain have been or are being removed. The unique circumstances of a Blount Island parking lot have been radically cleaned up. The results from the last two years' exposures show almost no acid etch effects.

2. The historic test sites have been moved from their original location and are now off the island where the cars are actually stored. The Port Authority closed down the test sites suddenly and moved them several miles away. It is too early yet to know how much this affects the results.
3. The test can be successfully performed using more repeatable and easier methods. We can run an outdoor test in South Florida using artificial acid rain solution that is equivalent to the Jacksonville exposures. There is also an accelerated test using a xenon arc that is more severe and is therefore a much better way to determine relative acid etch performance.

The automotive OEMs though are notoriously slow to change existing test methods, no matter how bad they are.

### Technical Information

Florida exposure testing is the benchmark by which all other tests are compared. I have a presentation available on the website that explains why Florida is so good at predicting the results in a much faster time. Florida is the primary benchmark outdoor test site because “we have the same weather as you, just more of it”. Sure, Florida has higher levels of sunlight (UV), moisture, and temperature, but it is not as extreme as you might think. Most temperate locations have the same, or close, weather as Miami but for shorter periods of the year. It is a fact that Miami’s unique location is slightly moderated so that the extremes are not as far away as you might think.

Most weathering occurs during the summer months in most temperate regions. Degradation processes slow in the winter months, or drop to zero. But Florida is like a northern summer all year. Most cities in the temperate zone get the same weather as Florida for some summer months, so the degradation is the same. Acceleration depends on how many months are close to Miami.

### Standards Information

There is no new information on the revisions to SAE J576, as there have not been any ballots recently. The revisions to SAE J3097/ANSI Z26 are moving forward and should go to SAE Glazing Committee balloting soon.

### Blog

Check out the blog section on the website. It is listed as Latest Updates on the web page.

Benchmark is the name of our website, and is derived from the basis that “**Florida outdoor weathering is the Benchmark by which all other weathering tests are compared.**” You can find **BENCHMARK** at either of these URLs [bestweathertest.com](http://bestweathertest.com) or [bestcorrosiontest.com](http://bestcorrosiontest.com)

## CALENDAR

ASTM May Committee Week  
May 4 to 8, 2025  
Toronto, Canada

AATCC Technical Meetings  
May 12 to 15  
Raleigh, NC

CRRC Annual Meeting  
June 11, 2025  
New Orleans, LA

ASTM D01, G03  
June 22 to 24, 2025  
Kansas City, MO

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