

# **Gauging and Inspection of Casing, Tubing, and Line Pipe Threads**

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No provision of this recommended practice shall be cause for rejection of casing or tubing provided the threads are in accordance with the requirements of the latest edition of API Standard 5B.

This recommended practice is presented as a guide and instructional tool for pipe mill inspectors, third party inspectors, and users interested in developing skills in inspection of threads on oil country tubular goods and line pipe. It includes pictures of numerous gauges and measuring instruments. Every effort has been made to present gauges without regard to the origin of manufacture. Additionally, inclusion of certain gauges should not be construed as an endorsement of the instrument or its manufacture. Similarly, the exclusion of any gauge is not an indication of dissatisfaction with that instrument.

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# CONTENTS

	Page
1 INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
1.1 Background . . . . .	1
1.2 Scope . . . . .	2
2 REFERENCES . . . . .	2
2.1 Requirements . . . . .	2
2.2 Equivalent Standards . . . . .	2
3 DEFINITIONS. . . . .	3
4 API THREADED CONNECTIONS . . . . .	4
4.1 Line Pipe Thread . . . . .	5
4.2 Round Tubing and Casing Threads . . . . .	5
4.3 Buttress Thread-Casing (Threaded and Coupled). . . . .	5
4.4 Extreme-Line Thread (Integral Connection). . . . .	8
4.5 Rounded Nose . . . . .	8
5 VISUAL THREAD INSPECTION . . . . .	8
5.1 Visual Thread Inspection (VTI). . . . .	8
5.2 Procedure for Evaluation of Visually Located Thread Imperfections . . . . .	10
5.3 Procedure for Coupling Makeup Position. . . . .	13
6 CARE OF INSPECTION GAUGES . . . . .	13
6.1 General. . . . .	13
6.2 Storage . . . . .	14
6.3 Handling. . . . .	14
6.4 Use . . . . .	14
7 CALIBRATION AND VERIFICATION OF DIAL INDICATORS AND FIXED GAUGES . . . . .	14
7.1 Calibration . . . . .	14
7.2 Verification. . . . .	15
8 THREAD INSPECTION . . . . .	15
8.1 Introduction . . . . .	15
8.2 Inspection Procedure . . . . .	15
8.3 Round Thread Inspection. . . . .	16
8.4 Line Pipe Thread Inspection . . . . .	30
8.5 Buttress Thread Inspection . . . . .	33
8.6 Extreme-Line Thread Inspection. . . . .	37
9 SUPPLEMENTAL MEASUREMENTS . . . . .	47
9.1 Thread Contour Microscope . . . . .	47
9.2 Seal-Ring Groove Relative Depth and Concentricity Gauging . . . . .	47
Figures	
1 Schematic Diagram of an Oil or Gas Well Completed with a Hung Liner . . . . .	1
2 Typical Pipe Coupling. . . . .	5
3 Line Pipe Thread Configuration . . . . .	6

4	Round Thread Casing and Tubing Thread Configuration . . . . .	6
5	Buttress Thread Configuration for 13 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>8</sub> -in. OD and Smaller Casing . . . . .	7
6	Buttress Thread Configuration for 16-in. OD and Larger Casing . . . . .	7
7	Extreme-Line Casing Thread Configuration . . . . .	7
8	External Thread Inspection Parameters . . . . .	11
9	Featheredge . . . . .	12
10	Razor Edge . . . . .	12
11	Dial-Indicator Type Gauges . . . . .	13
12	Fixed-Type Gauge . . . . .	14
13	Gauge Storage Box . . . . .	14
14	Thread Depth Gauge Setting Standard . . . . .	15
15	Basic Dimensions of Line Pipe Threads and Casing and Tubing Round Threads . . . . .	16
16	Pin End Thread on Which is Drawn a Longitudinal Line to Facilitate Inspection—Coupling Longitudinal Line is Drawn in Similar Manner . . . . .	16
17	Picture of Scale Correctly Held for Total Thread Length Determination . . . . .	17
18	Balanced-Dial Type Gauge for Measuring Thread Height of Internal Threads and All External Threads. . . . .	17
19	Thread Height Gauge for Internal Threads 3-in. OD and Smaller. . . . .	17
20	Setting Standards for (a) API Round and Vee-Type Threads, (b) Extreme-Line and 16-in. and Larger Buttress Threads, and (c) Vee-Block Setting Standard for Contact and Point Verification. . . . .	18
21	Height Gauge Applied to Setting Standard. . . . .	18
22	Continuous-Dial Height Gauge Applied to a Vee Block . . . . .	22
23	Continuous-Dial Type Gauge Applied to a Setting Standard. . . . .	22
24	External/Internal Thread Height Gauge Applied to a Thread. . . . .	22
25	Balanced-Dial Type Gauge Applied to Thread Showing Small Error in Thread Height . . . . .	22
26	Lead Gauges . . . . .	23
27	Lead Setting Standard with External/Internal Lead Gauge Applied . . . . .	25
28	External Thread Taper Caliper . . . . .	25
29	Internal Taper Caliper for 4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> -in. OD and Larger Showing Gauge Extensions . . . . .	25
30	Internal Thread Taper Caliper for Pipe Less Than 4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> -in. OD . . . . .	26
31	Assembled Internal Taper Gauge for 4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> -in. OD and Larger Pipe . . . . .	27
32	Flush-Type Ring Gauge . . . . .	27
33	Insert Style Plug Gauge. . . . .	28
34	Step-Type Ring Gauge . . . . .	28
35	Template-Type Ring Gauge . . . . .	28
36	Standoff of Master Plug and Working Ring Gauges . . . . .	29
37	Standoff Lines Style Plug Gauge . . . . .	30
38	Template Style Plug Gauge. . . . .	30
39	Full-Crested Threads and Triangle Stamp Measurement on a Buttress Thread Pin . . . . .	33
40	Step-Type External/Internal Buttress Thread Height Gauge for 16-in., 18 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> -in., and 20-in. Diameter Pipe and Couplings and All Extreme-Line Casing Threads . . . . .	34
41	Buttress Thread Runout Gauge . . . . .	36
42	Buttress Thread Ring Gauge . . . . .	37
43	Extreme-Line Length Templates. . . . .	38
44	Extreme-Line Casing Configuration 5-in. through 7 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> -in. OD. . . . .	39
45	Extreme-Line Casing Configuration 8 <sup>5</sup> / <sub>8</sub> through 10 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> -in. OD . . . . .	40
46	Scale Positioned on Extreme-Line Pin for Measuring the Thread Length . . . . .	41

47	Extreme-Line Length Measurement Using Templates. . . . .	41
48	Extreme-Line Thread Height Gauge Setting Standard. . . . .	42
49	Internal Micrometer Fitted with Flat Contacts for Crest-to-Crest Measurement . . . . .	43
50	Extreme-Line Thread Width Go-No-Go Gauge. . . . .	43
51	Extreme-Line Thread Ring Gauge with Sliding Seal Gauging Ring. . . . .	44
52	Extreme-Line Thread Plug Gauge with Sliding Seal Gauging Element . . . . .	44
53	Go-No-Go Feeler Gauge for Extreme-Line Ring Gauge. . . . .	44
54	Go-No-Go Feeler Gauge for Extreme-Line Plug Gauge . . . . .	44
55	Extreme-Line Thread Ring Gauge Installed Hand-Tight and Seal Ring Advanced . . . . .	46
57	Extreme-Line Thread Plug Gauge Installed Hand-Tight and Seal Plug Advanced. . . . .	46
56	Extreme-Line Thread Ring Gauge Installed Hand-Tight and Seal Ring Advanced . . . . .	46
58	Extreme-Line Thread Plug Gauge Installed Hand-Tight and Seal Plug Advanced. . . . .	46
59	Thread Contour Microscope . . . . .	47
60	Gauging of Tubing Coupling Grooves . . . . .	48
61	Gauging of Casing Coupling Grooves . . . . .	48
62	Detail of Alternate Acceptable Contact Tip Configurations. . . . .	48

#### Tables

1	Tubing Pin $L_c$ and Box PTL . . . . .	11
2	Casing Pin $L_c$ and Coupling PTL . . . . .	11
3	Casing Short Thread Dimensions . . . . .	19
4	Casing Long Thread Dimensions . . . . .	19
5	Non-Upset Thread Dimensions. . . . .	20
6	External Upset Tubing Thread Dimensions . . . . .	20
7	Thread Height Gauge Recommended Contact Point Dimensions. . . . .	20
8	Thread Depth for Various Thread Forms . . . . .	21
9	Recommended Contact Point Dimensions for Lead Gauge. . . . .	24
10	Recommended Contact Point Dimensions for Taper Calipers. . . . .	24
11	Casing Long-Thread $L_1$ –Short-Thread $L_1$ . . . . .	29
12	Line Pipe Thread Dimensions. . . . .	31
13	Buttress Thread Casing Dimensions. . . . .	33
14	Buttress Thread Acceptable Taper . . . . .	36
15	Extreme-Line Lengths. . . . .	37
16	Extreme-Line Height Gauge Setting Standard Dimensions. . . . .	41
17	Extreme-Line Thread Height . . . . .	41
18	Go-No-Go Feeler Gauge Dimensions for Extreme-Line Ring and Plug Gauges. . . . .	45





# Gauging and Inspection of Casing, Tubing, and Line Pipe Threads

## 1 Introduction

The ability of line pipe and oil country tubular goods (such as, oil and gas well casing and tubing) to perform properly depends on the physical integrity of the pipe body and connections. Threads at each end of the pipe provide a means of joining the pipe segments into a continuous “string” of pipe. There are many thread configurations applied to oil country tubular goods. However, they all have two functions in common: they must resist leakage and tensile failures. This is accomplished by applying threads which are specially designed and accurately machined. Laboratory and prototype testing prior to marketing of the connection verifies the proper design. Accurate machining depends on a repetitive process to simulate tool wear. Excessive tool wear and/or damage after machining reduces the thread’s performance.

This recommended practice provides guidance and instruction on the correct use of thread inspection techniques and equipment to assure dimensionally accurate connections. The inspector carries a heavy responsibility. This responsibility can be discharged properly only if the inspector is adequately trained. This recommended practice provides the training and insight necessary to perform an adequate inspection of line pipe and oil country tubular goods connections.

### 1.1 BACKGROUND

*Casing* and *tubing* are two terms which are used to describe oil country tubular goods that become part of a completed oil and gas well.

When these terms are used in field drilling and production operations, the term “casing” applies to pipe that is used to line the drilled hole to protect the well from formation fluid flow or formation collapse. It is a permanent part of the well in which bottom sections of casing are cemented in place. At times, cement is circulated to the surface. Among the various types of casing are conductor pipe, surface casing, intermediate or protective casing, and production casing (Figure 1). These casing strings extend to the surface. A section of the hole lined with pipe that does not reach the surface is called a liner. Liners may or may not be cemented in place.

The term “tubing” applies to the innermost pipe in a well. Well fluids are brought to the surface through the tubing. The tubing may be isolated from the casing by a production packer. Tubing is frequently removed from the hole and at times is replaced.

The terms *casing* and *tubing*, when used in a steel mill or in API specifications, are oriented to size and not necessarily to end use. The mills may not know what will be the end use of their pipe. Accordingly, in mill practice and in API specifications, casing generally covers pipe 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>-in. OD or larger. Tubing generally covers pipe 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>-in. OD and smaller. This

publication uses the terms casing and tubing in the mill/API sense. In most cases, this will also conform to the end use description.

Each of the pipe connections must be capable of withstanding internal and/or external pressure without leakage. The competence of the design and the accuracy of manufacture of the connection provides assurance of the required leak resistance. API connections are among the most accurately machined threads currently mass produced. Each component shape and size is designed and machined to interact with the mating component to form a fluid seal.

Inspecting the threaded ends of pipe determines if the manufactured product is in compliance with the design specification. Oil country tubular goods and line pipe are inspected at the manufacturer’s facility prior to shipment. Additionally, the pipe may be inspected at the pipe yard, job site, and/or drilling rig.

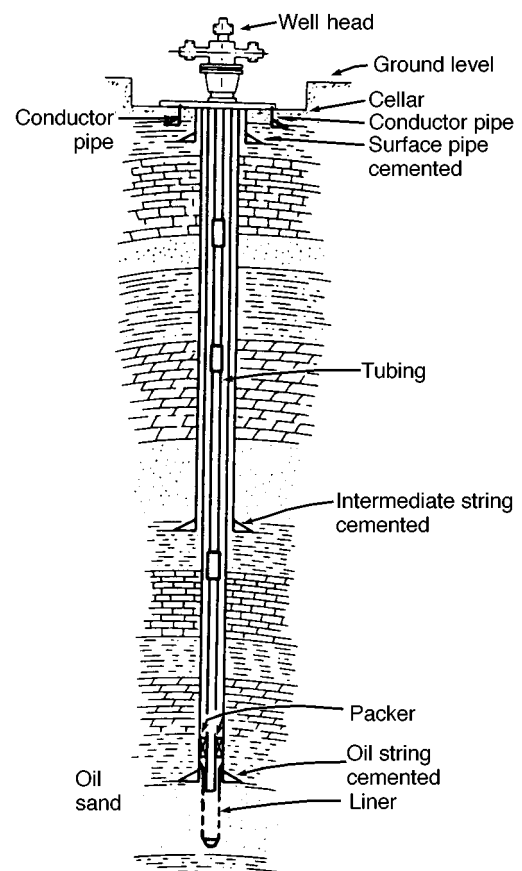


Figure 1—Schematic Diagram of an Oil or Gas Well Completed with a Hung Liner