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Lasers and laser-related equipment — Test methods for determination of the shape of a laser beam wavefront —

Part 1: Terminology and fundamental aspects

Lasers et équipements associés aux lasers — Méthodes d'essai pour la détermination de la forme du front d'onde du faisceau laser —

Partie 1: Terminologie et aspects fondamentaux

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Foreword

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The main task of technical committees is to prepare International Standards. Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

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ISO 15367-1 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 172, Optics and optical instruments, Subcommittee SC 9, Electro-optical systems.

ISO 15367 consists of the following parts, under the general title *Lasers and laser-related equipment — Test methods for determination of the shape of a laser beam wavefront*:

— *Part 1: Terminology and fundamental aspects*

— *Part 2: Hartmann-Shack sensors*

Introduction

It is important, when designing, operating or maintaining a laser system, to be able to ensure repeatability, predict the propagation behaviour of the laser beam and to assess the safety hazards. There are four sets of parameters that could be measured for the characterization of a laser beam:

— power (energy) density distribution (ISO 13694);

— beam width, divergence angle and beam propagation factor (ISO 11146);

— phase distribution (ISO 15367);

— spatial beam coherence.

This part of ISO 15367 defines the terminology and symbols to be used when making reference to or measuring the phase distribution in a transverse plane of a laser beam. It specifies the procedures required for the measurement of

— the azimuth of the principal planes of the phase distribution;

— the magnitude of astigmatic aberrations;

— evaluation of the wavefront aberration function and the RMS wavefront deformation.

A useful technique for qualitative assessment of a beam is visual inspection of the fringe pattern in interferograms or an isometric view of a wavefront surface. However, more quantitative methods are needed for quality assurance and transfer of process technology. The measurement techniques indicated in this part of ISO 15367 allow numerical analysis of the phase distribution in a propagating beam and can provide recordable quantitative results.

While it is quite possible to ascribe other conventional aberrations (e.g. coma or spherical aberration) as well as astigmatism to a laser beam, these are not commonly used. Departure of the wavefront of a beam from some ideal surface is a more common indication of quality. On the other hand, rotational asymmetry has a much wider range of effects in a laser beam than is usually associated with astigmatism imposed on a beam of optical radiation by conventional optical systems. For this reason, various forms and characteristics of astigmatism in beams are now defined in detail.

The provisions of this part of ISO 15367 allow a test report to be commissioned with measurements or analysis of a selection of beam characteristics. Measurements of astigmatism are important to system designers who wish to specify optical elements for the correction of astigmatic beams. The measurement techniques defined in this part of ISO 15367 can also be used to assess any residual astigmatism after the addition of corrective elements and to aid with alignment.

A major application of phase distribution measurements comes with the possibility of combining those measurements with a simultaneous measurement of the power (energy) density distribution (ISO 13694) at the same location in the path of a beam. Digital processing of the data can reveal much more detailed characteristics of the propagating beam than can measurements of the power (energy) envelope resulting from calculation of the beam propagation ratio (ISO 11146). The more detailed information can be important to assessors of laser damage and safety hazards as well as process development engineers when it is necessary to know the power (energy) density distribution at the process interaction point.