Mirror Manufacturing Process

Initial Cleaning
The creation of mirrors begins with a single sheet of clear glass, commonly referred to as a “lite”. The lite is placed onto the silver line and proceeds through a physical washing process. Washing is done using pumice and deionized water with the objective to remove all contaminants and oils that are commonly present on float glass. This cleansing process can take up to a minute per lite and is an essential step to ensure the proper bonding of metal to the lite. Heated deionized water rinses the glass at 40 psi and allows the lite to achieve a temperature of 80-90 degrees Fahrenheit, which is optimum for the tinning process.

Tinning
Liquified tin is sprayed onto the surface of the cleaned lite. As silver will not adhere directly to glass, an ultra-thin layer of tin is first applied. Tin will bond both to glass and silver. After the tinning process, the lite is rinsed with heated deionized water, which raises the temperature of the lite to 90-100 degrees Fahrenheit, which is optimum for the silvering process.

Silvering
Liquified silver is applied to the tinned lite. The silver is what gives mirrors their reflective qualities. The liquid silver, mixed with an activator, is applied to the tinned lite at a thickness of 70-80 milligrams per square foot. The silver hardens almost immediately upon contact with the tin layer. The layer of silver is applied at a temperature of ~100 degrees Fahrenheit. After the silver application, the lite is passed under a high velocity air knife to remove excess silver and water before entering the coppering process.

Coppering
A liquid copper solution consisting of copper sulfate, sulfuric acid, and iron powder is applied to the lite at a thickness of 15-18 milligrams per square foot. The purpose of applying the copper layer is to protect the silver layer from corrosion. The lite is rinsed, dried with pressurized heated air ovens, and sent to the painting process.

Painting
Paint is applied to the back of the mirror to protect the plated metals. The paint is applied using a double roll coat system, which applies two separate coats of low-lead paint to the back of the mirror. After the protective paint layers are applied, the mirror enters the final heating process.

Curing, Cleaning, and Inspection
The mirror cures in the ovens as it continues down the silver line. The mirror is heated to a temperature of 265-285 degrees Fahrenheit for ~6 minutes to properly cure. After exiting the ovens, the mirror continues down the line to cool the mirror. Upon cooling, it is run through a final cleaning process. Once the mirror reaches the end of the silver line, the mirror is quality inspected, removed from the line, and packed onto a rack for custom fabrication or packaging.
Fabrication and Packaging
If the mirror is scheduled for custom fabrication, it is moved to appropriate fabrication station. Custom fabrication may include cutting to pre-specified sizes (CNC cutter), beveled, edge polishing, grooving, or safety tape backing. Upon the conclusion of fabrication, the mirrors are packaged and shipped to our customer.

Silvered Flat Glass Mirror Certification
Gilded certifies that all its manufactured mirror products are silvered with a uniform coat of tin, silver, copper, and further protected by two coats of paint. Our mirror products are manufactured with flat glass that meets or exceeds ASTM C1036-01 Standard Specification for Flat Glass Substrate. Our mirror products are certified to meet or exceed ASTM C1503-01 Standard Specification for Silvered Flat Glass Mirror.

Standard Specification for Silvered Flat Glass Mirror
ASTM C 1503-01
In 1998, the members of the former North American Association of Mirror Manufacturers (now the Mirror Division of the Glass Association of North America) drafted what is now published by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM International) as the industry consensus document C 1503-01 Standard Specifications for Silvered Flat Glass Mirror.

In terms of the Standard, Gilded Mirrors’ products would be classified as having the quality of Mirror Glazing and the grade of Mirror Cut Size. As such, the buyer should recognize that the mirrors may contain small quantities of minor defects as permitted by the Standard. Acceptable rejects are those with noticeable defects under normal viewing conditions. Normal viewing conditions are defined as viewing with normal fixed lighting at a minimum distance of three feet at an angle of thirty to ninety degrees.
Standard Specification for Silvered Flat Glass Mirror

This standard is issued under the fixed designation C 1503; 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 (e) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

1. Scope

1.1 This specification covers the requirements for silvered flat glass mirrors of rectangular shape supplied as cut sizes, stock sheets or as lehr ends and to which no further processing (such as edgework or other fabrication) has been done.

1.2 This specification covers the quality requirements of silvered annealed monolithic clear and tinted flat glass mirrors up to 6 mm (¼ in.) thick. The mirrors are intended to be used indoors for mirror glazing, for components of decorative accessories or for similar uses.

1.3 This specification does not address safety glazing materials nor requirements for mirror applications. Consult model building codes and other applicable standards for safety glazing applications.

1.4 Mirrors covered in this specification are not intended for use in environments where high humidity or airborne corrosion promoters, or both, are consistently present (such as swimming pool areas, ocean-going vessels, chemical laboratories and other corrosive environments).

1.5 The dimensional values stated in metric units are to be regarded as the standard. The inch-pound units given in parentheses are for information only.

1.6 The following safety hazards caveat pertains only to the test method portion Section 7 of this specification. 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 requirements prior to use.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 Reference to these documents shall be the latest issue unless otherwise specified by the authority applying this specification:

2.2 ASTM Standards:
B 117 Practice for Operating Salt Spray (Fog) Apparatus
C 162 Terminology of Glass & Glass Products
C 1036 Specification for Flat Glass
E 903 Test Method for Solar Absorptance, Reflectance and Transmittance of Materials Using Integrating Spheres

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions—Refer to Terminology C 162 and the standards referenced in 2.2 as appropriate.

3.1.1 blemishes—an imperfections in the body or on the surface of the mirror. For the purpose of this specification blemishes are divided into 2 categories:

3.1.1.1 point blemishes—knots, dirt, stones, gaseous inclusions (seeds and bubbles), tin particles, crush and other similar imperfections.

3.1.1.2 linear blemishes—scratches, rubs, digs and other similar imperfections.

3.1.2 chip—an imperfection on the edge of a mirror lite due to breakage of a small fragment out of an otherwise regular surface.

3.1.2.1 shell chip—a circular indentation in the mirror edge due to breakage of a small fragment.

3.1.2.2 v-chip—a V-shaped chip indentation in the mirror edge due to breakage of a small fragment.

3.1.2.3 chip width—the perpendicular distance from the edge of the mirror to the inner edge of the chip.

3.1.2.4 chip length—the distance, parallel to the edge of the mirror, from one edge of a chip to the other.

3.1.2.5 chip depth—the measured distance of a chip from the face of the mirror into the thickness.

3.1.3 clean cut edge—natural cut edge of mirror without further fabrication.

3.1.4 cluster—a group of not less than 3 point blemishes separated by not more than 50 mm (2 in.).

3.1.5 crush—a lightly pitted area in the glass surface resulting in a dull gray or white appearance over the region.

3.1.6 dig—deep, short scratch in the glass surface.

3.1.7 dirt—a small particle of foreign material imbedded in the glass surface.

3.1.8 edge corrosion—change in the color or level of reflectance along the mirror edge as a result of degradation of the silver coating from external sources.

3.1.9 edgework—fabrication of the mirror edge beyond the original clean-cut condition.

3.1.10 flare—a protrusion on the edge of a lile of mirror.
3.1.11 gaseous inclusion—(also known as seed or bubble) a round or elongated bubble at the surface (open) or within the
body thickness leaving a cavity in the mirror.

3.1.12 knot—an inhomogeneity in the form of a vitreous lump in the mirror.

3.1.13 mirror cut size—mirrors intended for final use in the size ordered (i.e. mirrors not intended for recutting).

3.1.14 mirror lehr end—mirrors intended for recutting by the user into smaller sizes where it is expected that some material may be lost in cutting due to blemishes and edge quality.

3.1.15 mirror stock sheet—mirrors intended for architectural use and where trimming will be required.

3.1.16 rub—an abrasion of the mirror surface producing a frosted appearance.

3.1.17 scratch—damage on the glass surface in the form of a line caused by the relative movement of an object across and in contact with the glass surface.

3.1.18 silver coating—the metallic silver coating in a silvered mirror product.

3.1.19 silvered mirror—mirror product fabricated through the application of metallic silver and protected by a mirror backing paint.

3.1.20 spot silver fault—a small area at which the silver coating is partially or entirely absent.

3.1.21 stone—a crystalline inclusion in the mirror.

3.1.22 visible clouding—a frosted appearance in the reflected image from a silvered mirror.

4. Classification and Intended Use

4.1 Grades—Mirrors furnished under this specification shall be of the following grades, as specified.

4.1.1 Mirror Cut Size—Mirrors intended for final use in the size ordered (that is, mirrors not intended for recutting).

4.1.2 Mirror Stock Sheet—Mirrors intended for architectural use and where trimming will be required.

4.1.3 Mirror Lehr End—Mirrors intended for recutting by the user into smaller sizes where it is expected that some material may be lost in cutting due to blemishes and edge quality.

4.2 Qualities—Mirrors furnished under this specification shall be of the following qualities, as specified.

4.2.1 Mirror Select Quality—(Usually available in 6 mm (¼ in.) clear mirror only.) Recommended or intended or both, for use in visually demanding applications requiring minimal distortion and blemishes.

4.2.2 Mirror Glazing Quality—Recommended or intended or both, for general use where limited levels of minor blemishes or distortion, or both are acceptable.

4.3 Color—The glass substrate may be clear or tinted.

4.3.1 Clear Glass Mirrors—Mirrors made with clear (untinted) glass.

4.3.2 Tinted Glass Mirrors—Mirrors made with tinted (colored) glass. Intended for use primarily in decorative applications where diminished light reflectance is not a concern. A variety of tinted glass substrates are available. The specific tint desired should be specified by the purchaser and is subject to availability. Not all grades or qualities may be available in tinted glass mirror.

Note: 1—Actual color or shade of tinted glass mirror may vary from manufacturer to manufacturer and from batch to batch.

4.4 Thickness—Mirrors are available in the following standard nominal thicknesses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Thickness</th>
<th>Maximum recommended surface area per cut size piece</th>
<th>Intended use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>2.5 mm</td>
<td>Up to .5 sq. m. (5 sq.ft.)</td>
<td>Utility mirrors where distortion and blemishes are not a major concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double or 1/4 in.</td>
<td>3.0 mm</td>
<td>Up to .75 sq. m. (7.5 sq.ft.)</td>
<td>Mirror components and other general use applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/16 in.</td>
<td>4.0 mm</td>
<td>Up to 1 sq. m. (10 sq.ft.)</td>
<td>Mirror components and other general use applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/32 in.</td>
<td>5.0 mm</td>
<td>Up to 3 sq. m. (32 sq. ft.)</td>
<td>Architectural use and other applications where optical quality is a major concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/8 in.</td>
<td>6.0 mm</td>
<td>Up to 3 sq. m. (32 sq. ft.)</td>
<td>Architectural use and other applications where optical quality is a major concern</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Ordering Information

5.1 Purchasers should select the preferred options permitted in this specification and include the following information in procurement documents:

5.1.1 Title, number, and date of this specification.

5.1.2 Grade of mirror (see 4.1).

5.1.3 Quality of mirror (see 4.2).

5.1.4 Color of mirror (see 4.3).

5.1.5 Thickness of mirror.

5.1.6 Nominal length and width.

5.2 Packaging Requirements—Mirror packaging and protection shall be standard manufacturer practice unless otherwise specified. Consult manufacturer before specifying.

6. Requirements

6.1 Reflectance Requirements—When measured in accordance with Test Method 7.1, reflectance shall not be less than the following:

6.1.1 For clear glass mirrors—minimum visible light reflectance = 83 %.

6.1.2 For tinted glass mirrors—minimum visible light reflectance = (T) (where T = the visible light transmission value for the glass substrate in its unsilvered state.)

6.2 Coating Requirements:

6.2.1 Appearance of Silver Coating—When inspected in accordance with Test Method 7.2, the silver coating shall be free of visible blemishes.

6.2.2 Coating Resistance Requirements—When tested in accordance with Test Method 7.3 mirrors shall meet the requirements shown in Table 6.

6.3 Blemish Limits—Blemishes, other than visible blemishes in the silver coating, are permitted within the following limits.

6.3.1 Blemish Limits for Mirror Cut Size and Mirror Stock Sheet Grades:

6.3.1.1 Point Blemish Limits—When inspected in accordance with Test Method 7.4.1 point blemishes shall be within the limits shown in Table 2.
6.3.1.2 Linear Blemish Limits—When inspected in accordance with Test Method 7.4.2 linear blemishes shall be within the limits shown in Table 4.

6.3.2 Blemish Limits for Mirror Lehr End Grade:

6.3.2.1 Point Blemish Limits—When tested in accordance with Test Method 7.4.1 mirrors shall meet the quality requirements shown in Tables 2 and 3.

6.3.2.2 Linear Blemish Limits—When tested in accordance with Test Method 7.4.2 mirrors shall meet the quality requirements shown in Table 4.

6.4 Edge Quality Requirements—Edges shall be clean cut. (Types and qualities of edgework are not within the scope of this specification. Consult manufacturer before specifying.)

6.4.1 Shell Chips—Shell chips are permitted in the edges of clean cut mirror as long as they do not exceed the acceptance criteria shown in Table 5.

6.4.2 V-Chips—V-Chips are not permitted.

6.5 Dimensional Tolerances:

6.5.1 Thickness—When measured at any point throughout the sheet, tolerances for thickness (including uniformity of thickness) of mirrors shall be in accordance with Table 1.

6.5.2 Length and Width—When measured in accordance with Test Method 7.5, tolerances for length and width of mirrors shall be in accordance with Table 1.

6.5.3 Squareness—When measured in accordance with Test Method 7.6, tolerances for squareness of mirrors shall be in accordance with Table 1.

6.6 Distortion Requirements—Limited levels of distortion are inherent in flat glass mirrors and are permitted, provided that the glass used in manufacturing the mirrors conforms to the following limits.

6.6.1 Distortion Limits for Mirror Select Quality Mirrors—
Glass used in the manufacture of Mirror Select Quality mirrors shall conform to the allowable distortion limits cited in Specification C 1036 for Q1 quality glass.

6.6.2 Distortion Limits for Mirror Glazing Quality Mirrors—Glass used in the manufacture of Mirror Glazing Quality mirrors shall conform to the allowable distortion limits cited in Specification C 1036 for Q2 quality glass.

6.7 Fabrication Requirements—Mirrors may be further fabricated using a variety of cutting, edging, and decorating processes. These processes are not covered within the scope of this specification and must be agreed upon between buyer and seller.

7. Test Methods

7.1 Test Method for Reflectance—Reflectance shall be measured in accordance with Test Method E 903.

7.2 Test Method for Appearance of Silver Coating—Place samples in a vertical position at a distance of approximately 1 m (39 in.) from the viewer. The viewer shall, with normal 20/20 vision (naked eye or corrected), inspect the reflective surface of the sample at an angle of 90º perpendicular to the surface using daylight (without direct sunlight) or other uniform diffused background lighting that simulates daylight.

7.3 Coating Resistance Evaluation—Coating resistance
shall be measured in accordance with Practice B 117 (Standard Method of Salt Spray Testing) except that the salt solution shall be prepared by dissolving 20 ± 1 parts of mass sodium chloride to 80 ± 1 parts water. Test specimens shall measure 150 × 150 mm (6 × 6 in.). The period of exposure shall be 300 h. In evaluating test specimens at the end of the test, the viewing distance shall be approximately 450 mm (18 in.) with normal 20/20 vision (naked eye or corrected) so that illumination and viewing angles are opposing at approximately 45°. Illumination shall approximate two 40-watt fluorescent tubes at a distance of 1200 to 1500 mm (4 to 5 ft). Refer to Table 6 for evaluation criteria.

7.4 Test Methods for Blemish Evaluation—All visual inspections for blemishes are to be made with normal 20/20 vision (naked eye or corrected).

7.4.1 Blemish Detection for Point Blemishes (Knots, Dirt, Stones, Gaseous Inclusions, Tin Particles, Crush and Other Similar Blemishes)—Place samples in a vertical position at a distance of approximately 1 m (39 in.) from the viewer. The viewer shall look at the sample at an angle of 90° perpendicular to the surface using daylight (without direct sunlight) or other uniform diffused background lighting that simulates daylight. If a blemish is detected, measure in accordance with 7.4.1.1 and refer to Tables 2 and 3 for evaluation criteria.

7.4.1.1 Point Blemish Measurement—Point blemish size shall be determined by measuring the length and width of the blemish (including associated distortion) and calculating the average of the two dimensions ((Length + Width) / 2). The allowable blemish sizes are listed in Tables 2 and 3.

7.4.2 Detection For Linear Blemishes (Scratches, Hands, Digs and Other Similar Blemishes)—Place samples in a vertical position to the viewer. The viewer shall stand approximately 4 m (13 ft) from the samples and look at the samples at an angle of 90° perpendicular to the surface using daylight (without direct sunlight) or other uniform diffused background lighting that simulates daylight. The viewer shall move towards the samples until a blemish is detected (if any). The distance from the viewer to the mirror surface when the blemish is first detectable is defined as the detection distance. Refer to Table 4 for evaluation criteria.

7.4.3 Blemish Distribution—In order to determine the allowable separation between blemishes (see Table 2 and Table 4), measure the distance between the two closest points of the blemishes. The allowable separation distance between blemishes is determined by the minimum separation of the larger of the two blemishes.

7.5 Dimensional Measurements—To measure the length and width of cut and stock sizes of mirrors, measure the perpendicular distance from edge to edge, including flares. Measurements taken at any point shall fall within the tolerance limits set forth in Table 1.

7.6 Squareness Measurement—Measure the length of both diagonals (corner to corner). The difference in length between the two diagonals (D1–D2) shall not exceed the limits set forth in Table 1.

8. Marking

8.1 Each package of mirror shall bear a label, affixed by the manufacturer, giving the manufacturer’s name or trademark, grade of mirror, quality of mirror, color, nominal thickness, quantity, dimensions, and place of manufacture.

9. Keywords

9.1 flat glass; glazing; mirror; reflectance; reflective coating; silvered