MDT Boring Log Descriptive Terminology

Key to Soil Symbols and Terms

Geotechnical Section

SOIL CLASSIFICATION CHART

MAJOR DIVISIONS			SYMBOLS GRAPH	SYMBOLS LETTER	TYPICAL DESCRIPTIONS
COARSE GRAINED SOILS	GRAVEL AND GRAVELLY SOILS	CLEAN GRAVELS (LITTLE OR NO FINES)		GW	Well-graded gravels, gravel sand mixtures, little or no fines.
				GP	Poorly graded gravels, gravel-sand mixtures, little or no fines.
	MORE THAN 50% OF COARSE FRACTION RETAINED ON NO. 4 SIEVE	GRAVELS WITH FINES (APPRECIABLE AMOUNT OF FINES)		GM	Silty gravels, gravel-sand-silt mixtures.
				GC	Clayey gravels, gravel-sand-clay mixtures.
MORE THAN 50% OF MATERIAL IS LARGER THAN NO. 200 SIEVE SIZE	SAND AND SANDY SOILS	CLEAN SANDS (LITTLE OR NO FINES)		SW	Well-graded sands, gravelly sands, little or no fines.
				SP	Poorly graded sands, gravelly sands, little or no fines.
	MORE THAN 50% OF COARSE FRACTION PASSING ON NO. 4 SIEVE	SANDS WITH FINES (APPRECIABLE AMOUNT OF FINES)		SM	Silty sands, sand-silt mixtures.
				SC	Clayey sands, sand-clay mixures.
FINE GRAINED SOILS	SILTS AND CLAYS	LIQUID LIMIT LESS THAN 50		ML	Inorganic silts and very fine sands, rock flour, silty or clayey fine sands or clayey silts with slight plasticity.
				CL	Inorganic clays of low to medium plasticity, gravelly clays, sandy clays, silty clays, lean clays.
				OL	Organic silts and organic silty clays of low plasticity.
MORE THAN 50% OF MATERIAL IS SMALLER THAN NO. 200 SIEVE SIZE	SILTS AND CLAYS	LIQUID LIMIT GREATER THAN 50		MH	Inorganic silts, micaceous or diatomaceous fine sandy or silty soils, elastic silts.
				CH	Inorganic clays of high plasticity, fat clays.
				OH	Organic clays of medium to high plasticity, organic silts.
HIGHLY ORGANIC SOILS				PT	Peat and other highly organic soils.

NOTE: DUAL SYMBOLS ARE USED TO INDICATE BORDERLINE SOIL CLASSIFICATIONS

Order of Descriptors

- Group Name
- Consistency or Relative Density
- Moisture Condition
- Color
- Particle size descriptor(s) (coarse grained soils only)
- Angularity of coarse grained soils
- Other relevant notes

Criteria For Descriptors

Consistency of Fine Grained Soils

Consistency	N-Value (uncorrected)
Very Soft	< 2
Soft	2 - 4
Medium Stiff	5 - 8
Stiff	9 - 15
Very Stiff	16 - 30
Hard	> 30

Apparent Density of Coarse Grained Soils

Relative Density	N-Value (uncorrected)
Very Loose	< 4
Loose	4 - 10
Medium Dense	11 - 30
Dense	31 - 50
Very Dense	> 50

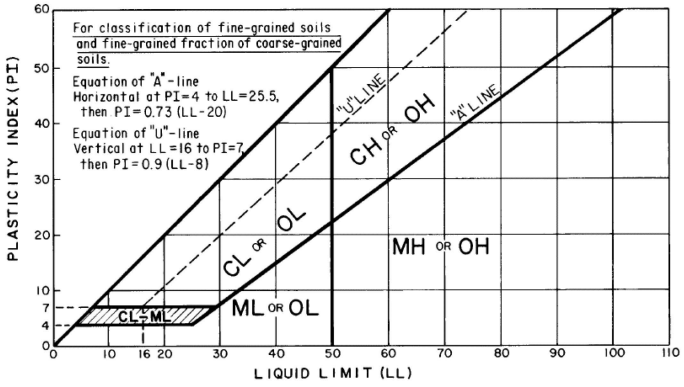
Moisture Condition

Dry	-Absence of moisture, dusty, dry to the touch.
Moist	-Damp, but no visible water.
Wet	-Visible free water.

Definition of Particle Size Ranges

Soil Component	Size Range
Boulder	> 12 in (300 mm)
Cobble	3 in (75 mm) - 12 in (300 mm)
Gravel	No. 4 Sieve (4.75 mm) to 3 in (75 mm)
Sand	No. 200 (0.075 mm) to No. 4 Sieves (4.75 mm)
Silt	< No. 200 Sieve (0.075 mm)*
Clay	< No. 200 Sieve (0.075 mm)*

*Use Atterberg limits and chart below to differentiate between silt and clay.



Notes

SPT (Standard Penetration Test-ASTM D1586):
The number of blows of a 140 lb (63.6 kg) hammer falling 2.5 ft (750 mm) used to drive a 2 in (50 mm) O.D. Split Spoon sampler for a total of 1.5 ft (0.45 m) of penetration.
Written as follows:
first 0.5 ft (0.15 m) - second 0.5 ft (0.15 m) - third 0.5 ft (0.15 m) (ex: 1-3-9)
Note: if the number of blows exceeds 50 before 0.5 ft (0.15 m) of penetration is achieved, the actual penetration follows the number of blows in parentheses (ex: 12-24-50 (0.09 m), 34-50 (0.4 ft), or 100 (0.3 ft)).
WR denotes a zero blow count with the weight of the rods only.
WH denotes a zero blow count with the weight of the rods plus the weight of the hammer.

Soil Classifications are Based on the Unified Soil Classification System, ASTM D2487 and D2488. Also included are the AASHTO group classifications (M145). Descriptions are based on visual observation, except where they have been modified to reflect results of laboratory tests as deemed appropriate.

Angularity of Coarse-Grained Particles

Angular	-Particles have sharp edges and relative plane sides with unpolished surfaces.
Subangular	-Particles are similar to angular description, but have rounded edges.
Subrounded	-Particles have nearly plane sides, but have no edges.
Rounded	-Particles have smoothly curved sides and well-rounded corners and edges.

Example soil description: Sandy FAT CLAY, soft, wet, brown.

MDT Boring Log Descriptive Terminology

Key to Rock Symbols and Terms

Geotechnical Section

Rock Type	Symbol	Rock Type	Symbol	Rock Type	Symbol
Argillite		Dolomite		Quartzite	
Basalt		Gneiss		Rhyolite	
Bedrock (other)		Granitic		Sandstone	
Breccia		Limestone		Schist	
Claystone		Siltstone		Shale	
		Conglomerate			

Order of Descriptors

- Rock Type
- Color
- Grain size (if applicable)
- Stratification/Foliation (as applicable)
- Weathering
- Field Hardness
- Other relevant notes

Criteria For Descriptors

Grain Size

Description	Characteristic
Coarse Grained	Individual grains can be easily distinguished by eye
Fine Grained	Individual grains can be distinguished with difficulty

Stratum Thickness

Thickly Bedded	3-10 ft (1-3 m)
Medium Bedded	1-3 ft (300 mm - 1 m)
Thinly Bedded	2-12 in (50-300 mm)
Very Thinly Bedded	< 2 in (50 mm)

Weathering

Highly Weathered	More than half of the rock is decomposed; rock is weakened so that a minimum 2 inch (50mm) diameter sample can be broken readily by hand across rock fabric
Moderately Weathered	Rock is discolored and noticeably weakened, but less than half is decomposed; a minimum 2 inch (50mm) diameter sample cannot be broken readily by hand across rock fabric
Slightly Weathered	Rock is slightly discolored, but not noticeably lower in strength than fresh rock

Example Rock Log

SANDSTONE, gray, fine grained, thickly bedded, slightly weathered, hard field hardness.

Rock Field Hardness

Very Soft	Can be carved with knife. Can be excavated readily with point of rock hammer. Can be scratched readily by fingernail.
Soft	Can be grooved or gouged readily by knife or point of rock hammer. Can be excavated in fragments from chips to several inches in size by moderate blows of the point of a rock hammer.
Medium	Can be grooved or gouged 0.05 in (2 mm) deep by firm pressure of knife or rock hammer point. Can be excavated in small chips to pieces about 1 in (25 mm) maximum size by hard blows of the point of a rock hammer.
Moderately hard	Can be scratched with knife or pick. Gouges or grooves to 0.25 in (6 mm) can be excavated by hard blow of rock hammer. Hand specimen can be detached by moderate blows.
Hard	Can be scratched with knife or pick only with difficulty. Hard hammer blows required to detach hand specimen.
Very Hard	Cannot be scratched with knife or sharp rock hammer point. Breaking of hand specimens requires several hard blows of a rock hammer.

Notes:

Qu = Unconfined Compressive Strength obtained from laboratory testing at the given depth.

Miscellaneous Soil/Rock Symbols and Terms

- Concrete
- Asphalt
- Water
- Boulders and Cobbles
- Coal
- Fill
- Millings
- Topsoil

-Soil and Rock descriptions are based on visual observation, except where they have been modified to reflect results of laboratory tests as deemed appropriate.

Explanation of Text Fields in Boring Logs:

Material Description: Lithologic Description of soil or rock encountered.

Remarks: Comments on drilling, including method, bit type, and problems encountered.

Notes: Legal Description, explanation of survey method used, and horizontal coordinates.

General Notes

- Descriptions on these boring logs apply only at the specific boring, and at the time the time the borings were made. These logs are not warranted to be representative of subsurface conditions at other locations or times.
- Water level observations apply only at the specific boring, and at the time the borings were made. Due to the variability of groundwater measurements given the type of drilling used, and the stratification of the soil in the boring, these logs are not warranted to be representative of groundwater conditions at other locations or times.
- Other terms may be used as descriptors, as defined by the profession.

Operation Types:		Sample Types:		
	Auger	Split Spoon		Cone Penetrometer
	Casing Advancer	Shelby		Vane Shear
	Core Barrel	Bulk Sample		Special Samplers
	Drive Casing	Grab Sample		Testpit