

**TriAx<sup>®</sup>**

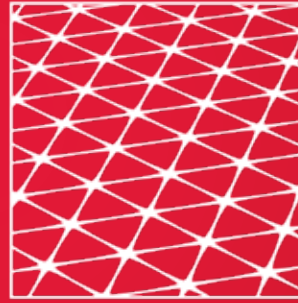
# **TENSAR<sup>®</sup> TRIAX<sup>®</sup> (TX) Geogrid**

INSTALLATION GUIDE



**Tensar<sup>®</sup>**

➤ **Tensar® TriAx® (TX)**  
Geogrids provide soil reinforcement that offers a predictable, cost-effective solution.



### **Tensar® Geogrids**

**Tensar® TriAx® (TX) Geogrids** stand the test of time, offering outstanding performance due to their stiff interlocking capability. For more information, visit [www.TensarCorp.com](http://www.TensarCorp.com).

## Introduction

When weak subgrade, heavy loads, thick fill layers, high structural fill costs, contaminated subgrades or shallow utilities disrupt your construction schedule or budget, Tensar® TriAx® (TX) Geogrids can provide the best solution.

Not only does this system allow access and construction for less than ideal situations, it also offers a predictable engineered solution. This solution relies on Tensar TriAx Geogrids and crushed aggregate base acting together to create a stronger composite structure, which increases the performance of the underlying subgrade or aggregate base course.

Tensar TriAx Geogrids have proven their performance and cost-efficiency in thousands of applications. Over soft ground, TriAx Geogrids improve the soil's effective bearing capacity by distributing applied loads more widely, similar to the way a snowshoe supports a man's weight over soft snow (Image 1). Over firmer ground, geogrids interlock with the fill materials by confining aggregate particles within their

apertures. This interlock and confinement greatly reduces the ability of an aggregate layer to break down over time, and can even improve the stiffness of the aggregate. Better interlock yields a stronger component for increased serviceability and durability.

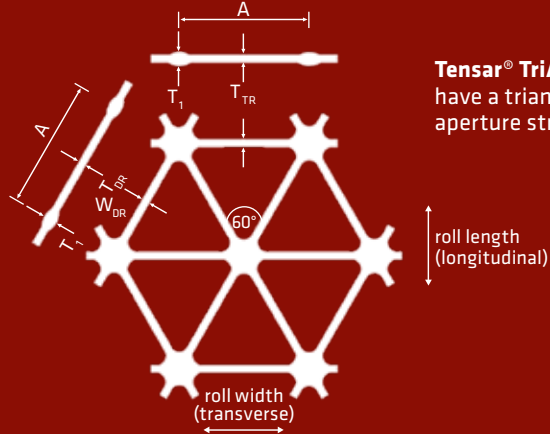
The subgrade stabilization and pavement optimization applications, and their primary mechanisms, are predetermined by ground or foundation support. Proper geogrid installation is also based on subgrade strength. We use California Bearing Ratio (CBR) to quantify this important variable.

Tensar TriAx Geogrids are used to minimize aggregate fill requirements, reduce or eliminate undercut, improve compaction, serve as a construction platform, and extend service life. These features depend upon proper installation as described in this guide.\*

*\*This guide cannot account for every possible construction scenario, but it does cover most applications. If you have questions regarding a specific project, call 800-TENSAR-1 or visit [www.TensarCorp.com](http://www.TensarCorp.com).*



**IMAGE 1:** The Snowshoe Effect – Tensar TriAx Geogrids distribute heavy loads over soft soils just like a snowshoe supports the weight of a man over soft snow.



Tensar® TriAx® Geogrids have a triangular aperture structure.

## 1. Getting Started

- ▶ When placing an order, communicate all pertinent project and/or application criteria, including certification requirements, if any, to your Tensar International Corporation (Tensar) representative. It is normally advisable to schedule a pre-construction meeting with this representative and any other appropriate parties at this time.
- ▶ Upon delivery, check the geogrid roll labels to verify that the intended product has been received. For instance, TX140 and TX160 Geogrids have a similar appearance, but different structural characteristics so the distinction is important. Inspect the geogrid to ensure it is free of any flaws or damage that may have occurred during shipping or handling. If variable roll widths are supplied, please confirm that the correct quantities have been delivered. Tensar Geogrid rolls are assigned distinct nomenclature to distinguish wide rolls from narrow rolls.
- ▶ Store Tensar Geogrid rolls in a manner that prevents excessive mud, wet concrete, epoxy or other deleterious materials from coming in contact with and affixing to the geogrid. Store geogrids above  $-20^{\circ}\text{F}$  ( $-29^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) and avoid handling below  $14^{\circ}\text{F}$  ( $-10^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) – the glass-transition temperature for polypropylene used in TX Geogrids. Tensar Geogrids may be stored uncovered for up to six months in direct exposure to sunlight without any loss in certifiable structural properties (contact Tensar if longer exposure is anticipated). Tensar Geogrids may be stored vertically (rolls stood on end) or, typically, horizontally in stacks not exceeding five rolls high (Image 2).
- ▶ Anticipate potential issues and resolve them with Tensar prior to construction. To contact the local Tensar representative for your area, call **800-TENSAR-1**.

*\*Roll characteristics can be found on page 11 of this guide under "Tensar Geogrid Roll Characteristics."*



**IMAGE 2:** Storing the Tensar Geogrid rolls horizontally.



**IMAGE 3:** Rolling out Tensor® Geogrid.

## 2. Site Preparation

- ▶ Clear, grub and excavate (if necessary) to the design subgrade elevation, stripping topsoil, deleterious debris and unsuitable material from the site. For very soft soils (CBR < 0.5), it may be beneficial to minimize subgrade disturbance and leave root mats in place, cutting stumps and other projecting vegetation as close and even to the ground surface as practical (Table 1). For moderately competent soils (CBR > 2), it may be prudent to lightly proof roll the subgrade to locate unsuitable materials. When possible, backdrag to smooth out any ruts.
- ▶ Smooth grade and compact the soils using appropriate compaction equipment. Swampland, peat, muskeg or marshes may be difficult to smooth grade and/or compact. In these situations, create a surface that is as uniformly smooth as possible. Grade or crown the surface for positive drainage away from the construction zone.
- ▶ Place the rolls of Tensor® Geogrid\* in position, cut the roll bands and manually unroll the material over the prepared surface (Image 3). In subgrade stabilization improvement applications, this surface will always be the subgrade. In pavement optimization applications, it may be the subgrade, the subbase or at an elevation (e.g., mid-depth) within the aggregate base course.
- ▶ Fine grained non-cohesive soils such as silts present unique challenges, especially with the presence of excessive moisture. Tensor recommends that a Tensor representative be contacted so that site conditions can be analyzed to ensure that geogrid performance is optimized.

*\*Tensor manufactures several different types of geogrids. Selection and optimization depends on structural performance requirements, subgrade and fill parameters, economic considerations and local availability.*

**NOTE:** Routine construction procedures are normally recommended for site preparation. Special measures are rarely required to accommodate Tensor Geogrids.

### Summary of Tensor® Geogrid Installation Parameters

Subgrade Strength	Clear All Vegetation?	Geogrid Orientation <sup>3</sup>	Geogrid Overlap <sup>4</sup>	Nylon Zip Ties? <sup>1,2</sup>	Direct Traffic? <sup>5</sup>	Geotextile? <sup>6</sup>
CBR ≤ 0.5	N	T or L	3 ft	Y	N	Analysis Req'd
0.5 ≤ CBR ≤ 2	Usually	L	2-3 ft	N	N	Analysis Req'd
2 ≤ CBR ≤ 4	Y	L	1-2 ft	N	Limited	Analysis Req'd
4 ≤ CBR	Y	L	1 ft	N	Y	N

**NOTES:**

1. Summary is a generalized presentation; see text for specifics.
2. Y = Yes, normally required; N = No, normally not required.
3. Geogrid Orientation (roll axis in relation to traffic): T = Transverse, L = Longitudinal.
4. General Geogrid Overlap Rule: Overlap = 3 ft for CBR ≤ 1; Overlap = 1 ft for CBR ≥ 4; interpolate between.
5. Direct Traffic pertains only to conventional rubber-tired equipment.
6. Analysis Required = Geotextile required only if filtration criteria is not met by aggregate fill.

**TABLE 1**



### 3. Placing and Overlapping Geogrid

- ▶ Unroll the geogrid in the direction of travel so that the long axis of the roll is parallel with channelized traffic patterns. For very soft subgrades (CBR < 0.5), unrolling geogrid transversely or perpendicular to the roadway embankment alignment, may be preferred, particularly if lateral spreading and separation of overlaps is a concern (Table 1).
- ▶ Overlap adjacent rolls along their sides and ends in accordance with Table 1.
- ▶ Overlap (“shingle”) geogrids in the direction the fill placement will be spread (Image 4) to avoid “peeling” of geogrid at overlaps by the advancing fill. To expedite “shingling,” consider placing rolls at the far end of the coverage area first, and work toward the near end from where the fill will be advanced. Weaker subgrades that are easily rutted with conventional construction traffic will require an “end-dumping” operation. Please refer to page 7 “Dumping and Spreading Aggregate Fill” for more information.
- ▶ Adjacent geogrid rolls are not normally mechanically connected to one another, particularly if fill is placed and spread as described herein (Table 1). A notable exception is over very soft subgrades (CBR < 0.5) where nylon cable

ties (or “zip ties”) can be effective in helping maintain overlap dimensions. These ties are not considered structural connections, but rather construction aids. In most applications their use is not required.

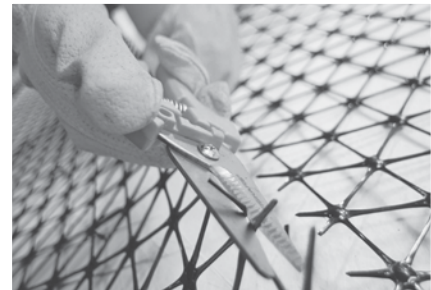
- ▶ Cut and overlap the geogrid to accommodate curves (Image 5). Cutting may be done with sharp shears, a knife-like implement or handheld power (i.e., “cutoff”) saws (Image 6). (Wear appropriate safety equipment such as gloves and eye protection.) Cut grid to conform to manhole covers and other immovable protrusions.
- ▶ Place geogrids in daily work sections so that proper alignment is maintained.
- ▶ In some cases, especially on cooler days, Tensar Geogrid will exhibit “roll memory” where the product may roll back upon cutting or reaching the end of the roll. It is recommended that the installer take appropriate measures to ensure that the product lies flat during fill placement. This can be easily achieved by using sod staples, zip ties or simply adding a shovelful of fill to weigh down the product.
- ▶ **Gloves should be worn when handling and cutting Tensar Geogrid.**



**IMAGE 4:** Geogrid should overlap in the direction of advancing fill.



**IMAGE 5:** Placing Geogrid to accommodate curves.



**IMAGE 6:** Cutting Tensar® TriAx® Geogrid is easily achieved.

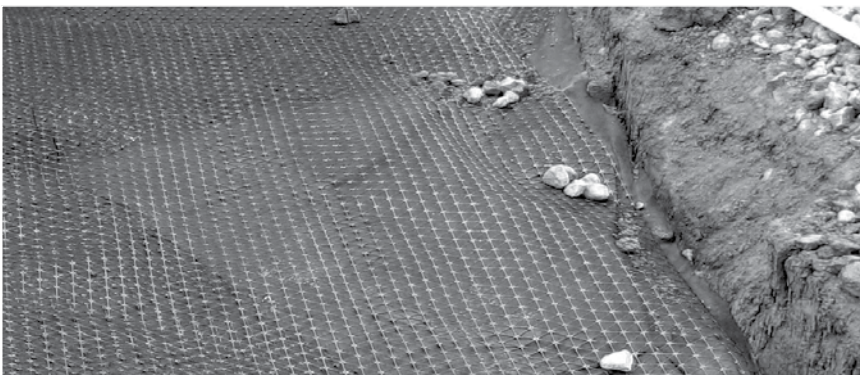


*Overlapping Tensar TriAx Geogrid in the field is quick and easy.*

## 4. Tensioning and Pinning

Tensar® Geogrids may be anchored in place to maintain overlaps and alignment over the coverage area.

- ▶ Before fully unrolling the geogrid, anchor the beginning of the roll, in the center and at the corners, to the underlying surface.
- ▶ Anchor the Tensar Geogrid with small piles of aggregate fill or a washer and pin (Image 7). Large, heavy-gauge staples may also be used by driving them into the subsoil through the apertures of the grid.
- ▶ Unroll the Tensar Geogrid. Align it and pull it taut to remove wrinkles and laydown slack with hand tension, then secure in place. Because of the unique manufacturing process of Tensar Geogrid, maneuvering an unrolled sheet of geogrid is very easy. **Gloves should be worn while handling and cutting Tensar Geogrids.**
- ▶ Additional shoveled piles of aggregate fill, pins or staples may be required to hold the geogrid in place prior to placement of the aggregate fill.
- ▶ When aggregate fill is spread by pushing it over the Tensar Geogrid with heavy equipment, such as bulldozers, the shoving action may create a “wave” in the sheet of geogrid ahead of the advancing fill. Shoveled fill or pins can trap this wave and force the geogrid up into the aggregate layer where it can be damaged by the spreading equipment. Pulling the geogrid taut will mitigate laydown slack, thereby removing “waving.” If significant waving occurs, the pins or shoveled material should be removed to allow the waves to dissipate at the ends and edges of the roll.



**IMAGE 7:** Anchoring geogrid with piles of aggregate.



**IMAGE 8:** Dumping aggregate fill on top of Tensor® Geogrid over competent subgrade.

## 5. Dumping and Spreading Aggregate Fill

- ▶ Generally, at least 6 in. is required for the initial lift thickness of aggregate fill over Tensor® Geogrids. However, for very soft conditions, a significantly thicker fill layer will be required to prevent excessive rutting and/or bearing capacity failure of the underlying subgrade soils.
- ▶ Over relatively competent subgrades (CBR > 4, see Table 1), aggregate fill may be dumped directly onto the geogrid (Image 8). **Standard, highway-legal, rubber-tired trucks (end dumps and belly dumps) may drive over the geogrid at very slow speeds (less than 5 mph) and dump aggregate fill as they advance, provided this construction traffic will not cause significant rutting upon bare subgrade. Turns and sudden starts and stops should be avoided.**
- ▶ Over softer subgrades, back trucks up and dump fill upon previously placed fill (Image 9a). For very soft subgrades (CBR < 0.5), extreme caution should be taken to avoid overstressing the subgrade soil both during and after fill placement. Please contact a Tensor representative at **800-TENSAR-1** for guidance with constructing over very soft subgrade soils (CBR < 0.5).
- ▶ Do not drive tracked equipment directly on Tensor Geogrid. Ensure at least 6 in. of aggregate fill (or required minimum design fill thickness) is spread between the geogrid and tracked equipment (Image 9b).
- ▶ Also, only operate rubber-tired equipment directly on the geogrid if the underlying subsoil is not prone to rutting under limited construction traffic.
- ▶ Over softer subgrades (CBR < 2), a lightweight, low ground pressure (LGP) dozer is recommended to evenly push out the fill over the exposed geogrid.
- ▶ Care should be taken not to catch the dozer blade or other equipment on Tensor Geogrid. The dozer blade should be raised gradually as each lift is pushed out over the geogrid. The desired effect is fill that cascades onto the geogrid, rather than being pushed into it.
- ▶ When building over a soft subgrade, it is desirable to work from stronger to weaker areas.
- ▶ Be aware of Tensor Geogrid overlaps and advance the aggregate fill with the shingle pattern.



**IMAGE 9A:** End dumping aggregate fill on top of Tensor Geogrid over soft subgrade.



**IMAGE 9B:** Spreading aggregate fill over Tensor Geogrid.



**IMAGE 11:** Compacting the aggregate fill.

## 6. Compacting

- ▶ Standard compaction methods may be used unless the soils are very soft. In these cases, static instead of vibratory compaction is prudent, particularly over fine-grained, noncohesive soils such as silt. Compaction is then achieved using a light roller. Keeping the moisture content of the fill material near optimum will make compaction more efficient. Water spray is most effective with sand fill (see Image 10). For construction over very soft soils, compaction requirements are normally reduced for the initial lift as the primary intent of the initial lift is to achieve a suitable working surface.
- ▶ If rutting or severe pumping occurs under truck or dozer traffic, fill should be added immediately to strengthen the section. Silty subgrades are particularly prone to pumping. In some cases, it may be prudent to cease operations for a period of time, allowing pore pressures to dissipate and the subgrade to stabilize. Otherwise, de-watering measures such as “bleeder ditches” should be considered to reduce the moisture content of the uppermost silty subgrade layer. Please contact a Tensar representative for more information.
- ▶ Compact aggregate fill to project specifications, after it has been graded smooth and before it is subject to accumulated traffic (Image 11). Inadequate compaction will result in surface rutting under wheel loads. This rutting reduces the total effective thickness of the fill and increases stress on the subgrade. Compaction equipment and methods should be appropriate for the type of fill being used, its thickness and the underlying subgrade conditions.
- ▶ If the aggregate fill thickness is insufficient to support imposed load(s) when constructing over soft soil, excessive subgrade and surface rutting will result. Measures should be taken to ensure the proper thickness of granular fill is placed atop the geogrid to maximize support and minimize movement at the surface.



**IMAGE 10:** Moistening the fill before compaction.





**IMAGE 13:** A backhoe excavation through Tensar Geogrid.

## Excavating Through Tensar® Geogrid

When confined beneath and within compacted fill, the geogrid should pose no significant threat to post-construction activities like utility trenching or driving/auguring supports for rails, signs or standards. Conventional excavation equipment will shear directly through the geogrid leaving a clean cut as represented in Image 13.

## 7. Special Considerations

### MAKE REPAIRS

- ▶ If Tensar® Geogrids become damaged during or after installation, repair them by patching the area with the following measures:
  1. Remove fill from the surface of the damaged geogrid and clear a 3 ft area around the damage.
  2. The geogrid patch should cover the damaged area and extend 3 ft beyond it in all directions.

### SURFACE RUTTING

- ▶ If deep rutting occurs beneath truck wheels, do not grade out the ruts. Rutting is normally indicative of fill that is too thin, too wet or inadequately compacted. Grading out the rut will reduce aggregate fill thickness between the wheel paths and may lead to geogrid exposure.
- ▶ Fill in the ruts with additional specified aggregate fill and compact. This places extra fill where it's needed and may prevent further rutting under channelized traffic.
- ▶ Crown the fill during the grading process to ensure rainfall runoff and to prevent fill saturation.

### COLD WEATHER

- ▶ At sub-freezing temperatures, Tensar Geogrid is less impact resistant and can be fractured with dynamic force (i.e., striking with a hammer). Other aspects of dynamic loading associated with very cold temperatures should be avoided. For example, direct trafficking by rubber-tired equipment atop geogrid is permissible when the subgrade is competent. However, it's not advisable at very cold temperatures.

### TRENCHING

- ▶ Tensar geogrids are routinely excavated through and punched through in order to place guardrail posts, bridge piers, and underground utilities.
- ▶ The patented process used to manufacture Tensar geogrids results in a structure with full strength junctions and stiff ribs. This process includes stretching the material, which pre-stresses the geogrid, ultimately optimizing its strength properties. The resulting stiffness allows Tensar geogrids to easily shear when subjected to the excavation equipment typically used in trenching operations. **This results in a "clean" cut and will not unravel into the zone outside the trench cut.** The same may not be possible for "flexible" woven and non-woven geotextiles and flexible geogrids.
- ▶ Tensar geogrids provide aggregate reinforcement by transferring the loads from the unbound aggregate into the stiff geogrid. The inherent features of Tensar geogrids such as improved stiffness and confinement, in effect form a bridge within the pavement structure to help mitigate the differential settlement around the trench cut. **Since the geogrid works through interlock, and not tension membrane, excavation through the geogrid does not ruin its benefit.**

*continued on next page*



*Geogrid can be trafficked directly by rubber-tired equipment.*

### AGGREGATE FILL CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ The preferred gradation for paved base reinforcement applications is well-graded crushed aggregate fill with a maximum particle size of 1½ in. and less than 10% fines (passing #200 sieve). The gradations listed in Table 2 (below) provide good stability and low moisture susceptibility. **For unpaved subgrade improvement applications, any clean granular fill may be acceptable.**
- ▶ Tensar Geogrids will structurally enhance coarser or finer fill gradations, as long as the aggregate fill is compacted and placed at, or just below, optimum moisture content. For coarser fill, a graded filter analysis is recommended to guard against potential contamination from the underlying subgrade (see Table 1 on pg. 4). If the aggregate fill does not meet the requirement(s) of a graded filter over soft and saturated clays and silts it is recommended that a sand filter layer be placed at a minimum depth of 6 in. on top of the geogrid layer. This sand fill may need to be increased in the event the design fill thickness requires a thicker initial lift. It is not recommended that a non-woven geotextile be used when constructing over saturated silts. However, non-woven geotextiles are recommended in conjunction with Tensar® TriAx® Geogrids when:

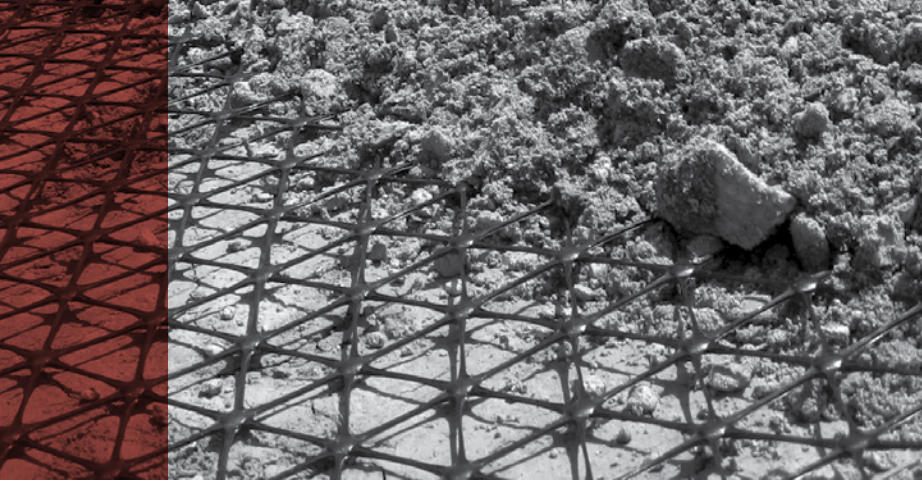
1. The filter criteria of the fill when compared to the subgrade soil does not pass the piping ratio requirement, and
  2. Significant clay content is present that will limit the mobilization of fine particles with excessive stress and moisture.
- ▶ Do not use uniformly sized coarse fill as it does not compact well and will rut under wheel loading, despite the improved stability brought about by Tensar Geogrids.
  - ▶ The moisture content of the fill should not exceed optimum. Wet fill is not easy to compact and will rut under wheel loading.

### PREFERRED EQUIPMENT

- ▶ **Soft Ground** – the preferred equipment imposes low contact pressure on the ground surface. This may be done with smaller machinery, wide tires and/or LGP tracks. Equipment that concentrates heavy loads over relatively small contacts, such as front-end loaders, are not recommended. In all soft ground cases, fill must be sufficiently thick to avoid overstressing the underlying soils and Tensar Geogrid.
- ▶ **Competent Ground** – the preferred equipment maximizes productivity for specific construction requirements. Over competent ground, geogrids can be trafficked directly by rubber-tired equipment, making hauling equipment (i.e., dump trucks) and spreading equipment (i.e., motor graders) ideal (Image 12). Spreader boxes are not recommended – wrinkling in the geogrid between the screed and wheels of the box and dump trucks can cause slack to become trapped, raising the geogrid up into the aggregate layer.

Preferred Fill Gradation	
Size	% Passing
1½ in.	100
¾ in.	50–100
#4	25–50
#40	10–20
#100	5–15
#200	less than 10

**TABLE 2**



## Tensor® Geogrid Roll Characteristics

Product	Roll Width		Roll Length		Roll Area		Roll Weight	
	(m)	(ft)	(m)	(ft)	(m <sup>2</sup> )	(SY)	(kg)	(lb)
TX130S-475	4	13.1	75	246	300	358	52.1	115
TX140-475	4	13.1	75	246	300	358	58.5	129
TX5-475	4	13.1	75	246	300	358	64.8	143
TX160-475	4	13.1	75	246	300	358	72.1	159
TX7-450	4	13.1	50	164	200	239	58.1	128
TX190L-450	4	13.1	50	164	200	239	63.5	140
TX130S-375	3	9.8	75	246	225	269	39.0	86
TX140-375	3	9.8	75	246	225	269	43.9	97
TX5-375	3	9.8	75	246	225	269	48.5	107
TX160-375	3	9.8	75	246	225	269	53.9	119
TX7-350	3	9.8	50	164	150	179	43.5	96
TX140-16	5	16.0	100	328	500	583	88.9	196
TX5-16	5	16.0	100	328	500	583	111.5	246
TX160-16	5	16.0	100	328	500	583	104.3	230
TX7-16	5	16.0	100	328	500	583	135.6	299

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