API Screen Designation — Field Quick Guide

Based on the published API RP 13C / ISO 13501 designation system. “Mesh” is obsolete — screens are compared by tested separation (D100) and labelled with an API number. Always read the API number off the RP 13C label, never the vendor’s marketing name.

API number	D100 separation (µm)	Typical duty
API 20	~850	Very coarse / scalping
API 30	~600	Coarse, top-hole
API 40	~425	Coarse
API 50	~300	Surface / large cuttings
API 60	~250	Intermediate
API 70	~212	Intermediate
API 80	~180	Intermediate
API 100	~150 (137.5–165)	Mid-section workhorse
API 120	~125 (116.5–137.5)	Mid-to-fine
API 140	~106	Fine
API 170	~90	Fine
API 200	~75	Fine, late section
API 230	~63	Very fine
API 270	~53	Very fine
API 325	~45	Finest practical
API 400	~38	Finest practical

How to use it in the field

1) Record the API number of every panel on the deck, every tour — not “mesh”. 2) Screen to the finest API number that keeps roughly 75–80% of the deck wet without flooding. 3) When comparing vendors, compare the RP 13C label values only: same API number = comparable tested cut. 4) A torn or holed panel bypasses more solids than the whole screen removes — change it, don’t nurse it.

Full interactive chart & guidance: scdrilltech.com/articles/shaker-screen-api-mesh-micron-chart.html