



Designation: C1111 – 10 (Reapproved 2020)

# Standard Test Method for Determining Elements in Waste Streams by Inductively Coupled Plasma-Atomic Emission Spectroscopy<sup>1</sup>

This standard is issued under the fixed designation C1111; 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 ( $\epsilon$ ) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

## 1. Scope

1.1 This test method covers the determination of trace, minor, and major elements in waste streams by inductively coupled plasma-atomic emission spectroscopy (ICP-AES) following an acid digestion of the sample. Waste streams from manufacturing processes of nuclear and non-nuclear materials can be analyzed. This test method is applicable to the determination of total metals. Results from this test method can be used to characterize waste received by treatment facilities and to formulate appropriate treatment recipes. The results are also usable in process control within waste treatment facilities.

1.2 This test method is applicable only to waste streams that contain radioactivity levels that do not require special personnel or environmental protection.

1.3 A list of the elements determined in waste streams and the corresponding lower reporting limit is found in [Table 1](#).

1.4 This test method has been used successfully for treatment of a large variety of waste solutions and industrial process liquids. The composition of such samples is highly variable, both between waste stream types and within a single waste stream. As a result of this variability, a single acid digestion scheme may not be expected to succeed with all sample matrices. Certain elements may be recovered on a semi-quantitative basis, while most results will be highly quantitative.

1.5 This test method should be used by analysts experienced in the use of ICP-AES, the interpretation of spectral and non-spectral interferences, and procedures for their correction.

1.6 No detailed operating instructions are provided because of differences among various makes and models of suitable ICP-AES instruments. Instead, the analyst shall follow the instructions provided by the manufacturer of the particular instrument. This test method does not address comparative

accuracy of different devices or the precision between instruments of the same make and model.

1.7 This test method contains notes that are explanatory and are not part of the mandatory requirements of the method.

1.8 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as standard. No other units of measurement are included in this standard.

1.9 *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, health, and environmental practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

1.10 *This international standard was developed in accordance with internationally recognized principles on standardization established in the Decision on Principles for the Development of International Standards, Guides and Recommendations issued by the World Trade Organization Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Committee.*

## 2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*<sup>2</sup>

- C859 Terminology Relating to Nuclear Materials
- C1109 Practice for Analysis of Aqueous Leachates from Nuclear Waste Materials Using Inductively Coupled Plasma-Atomic Emission Spectroscopy
- C1234 Practice for Preparation of Oils and Oily Waste Samples by High-Pressure, High-Temperature Digestion for Trace Element Determinations
- D1193 Specification for Reagent Water
- E135 Terminology Relating to Analytical Chemistry for Metals, Ores, and Related Materials
- E177 Practice for Use of the Terms Precision and Bias in ASTM Test Methods

2.2 *ISO and European Standards:*<sup>3</sup>

- ISO 1042 Laboratory Glassware—One-mark Volumetric Flasks

<sup>1</sup> This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee C26 on Nuclear Fuel Cycle and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee C26.05 on Methods of Test.

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<sup>2</sup> For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, [www.astm.org](http://www.astm.org), or contact ASTM Customer Service at [service@astm.org](mailto:service@astm.org). For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

<sup>3</sup> Available from American National Standards Institute (ANSI), 25 W. 43rd St., 4th Floor, New York, NY 10036, <http://www.ansi.org>.

**TABLE 1 Analytical Wavelengths and Applicable Concentration Ranges<sup>A</sup>**

| Element    | Lower Limit, <sup>B</sup><br>mg/L | Upper Limit, mg/L | Wavelength, nm |
|------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Aluminum   | 0.02                              | 5000              | 308.22, 237.01 |
| Barium     | 0.001                             | 100               | 493.41         |
| Beryllium  | 0.0003                            | 100               | 313.04         |
| Boron      | 0.004                             | 200               | 249.68         |
| Cadmium    | 0.003                             | 200               | 226.50         |
| Calcium    | 0.004                             | 1000              | 317.93, 393.37 |
| Chromium   | 0.01                              | 5000              | 267.72, 298.92 |
| Cobalt     | 0.005                             | 150               | 228.62         |
| Copper     | 0.004                             | 150               | 324.75         |
| Iron       | 0.004                             | 5000              | 271.44, 259.94 |
| Lead       | 0.05                              | 200               | 220.35         |
| Lithium    | 0.004                             | 150               | 670.78         |
| Magnesium  | 0.0005                            | 5000              | 293.65, 279.55 |
| Manganese  | 0.001                             | 150               | 257.61         |
| Nickel     | 0.01                              | 5000              | 231.60, 341.48 |
| Phosphorus | 0.2                               | 250               | 178.29         |
| Potassium  | 0.6                               | 1000              | 766.49         |
| Silver     | 0.006                             | 150               | 328.07         |
| Sodium     | 0.02                              | 200               | 330.29, 588.99 |
| Strontium  | 0.0004                            | 100               | 421.55         |
| Thorium    | 0.2                               | 250               | 283.73         |
| Titanium   | 0.003                             | 150               | 334.94         |
| Uranium    | 0.03                              | 1000              | 409.01         |
| Vanadium   | 0.005                             | 250               | 292.40         |
| Zinc       | 0.001                             | 250               | 213.86         |
| Zirconium  | 0.005                             | 250               | 339.20         |

<sup>A</sup> The estimated upper and lower concentration limits are to be used only as a general guide. These values are instrument and sample dependent, and as the sample matrix varies, these concentrations may be expected to vary also.

<sup>B</sup> These limits obtained using a Jarrell-Ash ICAP-9000 ICP Spectrometer.

(<https://standards.iteh.ai>)

ISO 3585 Borosilicate Glass 3.3—Properties  
 ISO 8655 Piston-Operated Volumetric Instruments (6 parts)

2.3 US EPA Standard:<sup>4</sup>

Method 6010, Inductively Coupled Plasma Method, SW-846, Test Methods for Evaluating Solid Waste

### 3. Terminology

#### 3.1 Definitions:

3.1.1 For definitions of terms used in this test method, refer to Terminology C859, Terminology E135, and Practice C1109.

### 4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 The general principles of emission spectrometric analysis are given in *ASTM Methods for Emission Spectrochemical Analysis*.<sup>5</sup> In this test method, elements are determined, either sequentially or simultaneously, by ICP-AES (Method 6010, SW-846).

4.2 If the sample is a clear acidified solution, the elements are determined with no further pretreatment. If the sample

contains undissolved solids, the elements are determined using an aliquot of the thoroughly mixed sample after a nitric acid digestion.

### 5. Significance and Use

5.1 This test method is useful for the determination of concentrations of metals in many waste streams from various nuclear and non-nuclear manufacturing processes. The test method is useful for characterizing liquid wastes and liquid wastes containing undissolved solids prior to treatment, storage, or stabilization. It has the capability for the simultaneous determination of up to 26 elements.

5.2 The applicable concentration ranges of the elements analyzed by this procedure are listed in Table 1.

### 6. Interferences

6.1 *Spectral interferences* in ICP-AES, and ways to compensate for them, include the following:

6.1.1 *Interelement Interferences*—Interelement interferences are characterized by spectral overlap of one element line over another. This interference can be compensated for by correction of the raw data, which requires measurement of the interfering element at the wavelength of interest. Table 2 lists some interference effects for the recommended wavelengths given in Table 1. The data in Table 2 are intended for use only

<sup>4</sup> Available from U.S. Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, 732 N. Capitol St., NW, Washington, DC 20401-0001, <http://www.access.gpo.gov>.

<sup>5</sup> *ASTM Methods for Emission Spectrochemical Analysis*, ASTM International, 1967.

**TABLE 2 Analyte Concentration Equivalents Arising from Interferents at 1000 mg/L Level**

| Analyte    | Wave-lengths, nm | Interferent, mg/L |          |        |         |         |          |         |        |         |          |
|------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|--------|---------|---------|----------|---------|--------|---------|----------|
|            |                  | Aluminum          | Chromium | Copper | Iron    | Nickel  | Antimony | Silicon | Tin    | Uranium | Vanadium |
| Aluminum   | 308.22           |                   |          |        |         |         |          | 0.0020  |        | 0.0044  | 0.0199   |
| Aluminum   | 237.21           |                   | -0.0022  |        | -0.0084 |         |          |         |        | 0.0350  |          |
| Barium     | 493.41           |                   |          |        |         |         |          |         |        |         |          |
| Beryllium  | 313.04           |                   |          |        |         |         |          |         |        |         | 0.0013   |
| Boron      | 249.68           |                   |          |        | 0.0015  |         |          |         |        |         |          |
| Cadmium    | 226.50           |                   |          |        | 0.0002  | -0.0004 |          |         |        |         |          |
| Calcium    | 317.93           |                   |          |        |         |         |          |         |        | -0.0018 |          |
| Calcium    | 393.37           |                   |          |        |         |         | 0.0002   |         |        |         |          |
| Chromium   | 267.72           |                   |          |        |         |         |          |         |        | 0.0025  | 0.0018   |
| Chromium   | 298.92           |                   |          |        |         |         |          |         |        | 0.0560  |          |
| Cobalt     | 228.62           |                   | 0.0001   |        |         |         |          |         |        | 0.0001  |          |
| Copper     | 324.75           |                   |          |        |         |         |          |         |        |         |          |
| Iron       | 259.94           | 0.0001            |          |        |         | -0.0001 |          |         |        | -0.0002 |          |
| Iron       | 271.44           |                   | 0.0039   |        |         | -0.0015 |          |         |        | 0.0220  |          |
| Lead       | 220.35           | -0.0012           | -0.0028  |        | 0.0002  | 0.0006  |          |         |        | 0.0016  |          |
| Lithium    | 670.78           |                   |          |        |         |         | 0.0003   |         |        |         |          |
| Magnesium  | 279.55           |                   |          |        |         |         |          |         |        |         |          |
| Magnesium  | 293.65           |                   | -0.0270  |        | -0.1390 |         |          |         |        | 0.0350  |          |
| Manganese  | 257.61           |                   |          |        |         |         |          |         |        | 0.0002  |          |
| Nickel     | 231.60           |                   |          |        | -0.0002 |         | 0.0003   |         | 0.0001 | 0.0003  |          |
| Nickel     | 341.48           |                   |          |        |         |         |          |         |        | 0.0027  |          |
| Phosphorus | 178.29           | 0.0002            |          |        | -0.0079 | 0.0120  | 0.0004   |         |        | 0.0044  |          |
| Potassium  | 766.49           |                   | 0.0010   |        |         |         |          |         |        | -0.0005 | 0.0014   |
| Silver     | 328.07           |                   |          |        |         |         |          |         |        | 0.0003  |          |
| Sodium     | 330.29           | 0.0035            | -0.0220  |        | -0.0145 |         |          |         |        | -0.1580 |          |
| Sodium     | 588.99           |                   |          |        |         |         | 0.0006   |         | 0.0017 | 0.0002  |          |
| Strontium  | 421.55           |                   |          |        |         |         |          |         |        |         |          |
| Thorium    | 283.73           |                   | 0.0007   |        | 0.0005  | 0.0049  |          |         |        | 0.0500  |          |
| Titanium   | 334.94           |                   | 0.0003   |        |         |         |          |         |        |         |          |
| Vanadium   | 292.40           |                   | -0.0029  |        |         |         |          |         |        |         | -0.0014  |
| Zinc       | 213.85           |                   |          | 0.0034 | 0.0001  | 0.0038  |          |         |        |         |          |
| Zirconium  | 339.20           |                   |          |        | -0.0003 | -0.0002 |          |         |        |         | -0.0005  |

as a rudimentary guide for indicating potential spectral interferences. Various analytical systems may exhibit somewhat different levels of interferences. Therefore, the interference effects must be evaluated for each individual system.

**6.1.2 Molecular Band Interference**—Molecular band interference arising from overlap of molecular band spectra at the wavelength of interest can be eliminated by careful selection of wavelength.

**6.1.3 High Background**—High background effects from scattered light, etc., can be compensated for by background correction adjacent to the analyte line.

**6.2 Non-spectral Interferences**—These include physical or chemical effects, such as high solids content or high acid concentration, that affect nebulization or the transport of the sample to the plasma and its vaporization, atomization, or excitation in the plasma. Effects due to high solids content or high acid concentration can be reduced by a tenfold dilution of the sample and the use of a peristaltic pump in conjunction with a high-solids nebulizer.

## 7. Apparatus

**7.1 Ordinary laboratory apparatus** are not listed, but are assumed to be present.

**7.2 Glassware**, volumetric flasks complying with the requirements of ISO 1042, made of borosilicate glass complying with the requirements of ISO 3585. Glassware should be

cleaned before use by soaking in nitric acid and then rinsing thoroughly with water.

**7.3 Filters**, inert membrane, having pore size of 2.5  $\mu\text{m}$ .

**7.4 Piston-operated Volumetric Pipettors and Dispensers**, complying with the requirements of ISO 8655, for pipetting and dispensing of solutions, acids, and so forth.

**7.5 Bottles**, tetrafluoroethylene or polyethylene, for storage of calibration and check solutions.

**7.6 Disposable Gloves**, impermeable, for protection from corrosive substances. Polyvinyl chloride (PVC) gloves are suitable.

**7.7 Inductively Coupled Plasma—Atomic Emission Spectrometer**, computer controlled, with a spectral bandpass of 0.05 nm or less.

**NOTE 1**—A bandpass of 0.05 nm or less is required to provide the necessary spectral resolution.

**NOTE 2**—The spectrometer may be of the simultaneous multielement or sequential scanning type. The spectrometer may be of the air path, inert gas path, or vacuum type, with spectral lines selected appropriately for use with the specific instrument.

**NOTE 3**—An autosampler having a flowing rinse is recommended.

## 8. Reagents

**8.1 Purity of Reagents**—Chemicals used in the preparation of the standards must be of ultrahigh purity grade. Chemicals

used in the preparation of the samples shall conform to the specifications of the Committee on Analytical Reagents of the American Chemical Society,<sup>6</sup> where such specifications are available.

8.2 *Purity of Water*—Unless otherwise indicated, references to water shall be understood to mean reagent water as defined by Specification D1193, Type I, or water exceeding these specifications.

8.3 *Nitric Acid (sp gr 1.42)*—Concentrated nitric acid (HNO<sub>3</sub>).

8.4 *Nitric Acid, 10 Volume %*—One volume of concentrated nitric acid (specific gravity 1.42) brought to ten volumes with water.

8.5 *Stock Solutions*—Standard stock solutions may be purchased or prepared from ultrahigh purity grade metals or metal salts (Method 6010, SW-846). All salts must be dried for 1 h at 105 °C unless otherwise specified. Stock solutions should contain approximately 1000 to 10 000 mg/L of the element of interest to ensure long term stability in dilute nitric acid.

8.6 *Multielement Working Calibration Standards*—Multielement working calibration standards are prepared from the single element stock solutions at appropriate concentration levels for each element. Prior to preparing the mixed standards, each stock solution should be analyzed separately to determine possible spectral interference or the presence of impurities. Care should be taken when preparing each multielement calibration standard solution that the elements be compatible and stable. An appropriate amount of concentrated nitric acid is added to stock standard aliquots and final volume brought to 100 mL with water to ensure that the final nitric acid concentration is 10 volume %. Transfer each multielement calibration standard solution to a FEP fluorocarbon or new polyethylene bottle for storage. Fresh calibration standards should be prepared as needed with the realization that concentration can change with time; the recommended maximum shelf-life for these solutions is one month. Calibration standards must be initially verified using a quality control sample monitored weekly for stability. The actual number of calibration standards needed will be a function of both chemical compatibility and the restrictions of the computer system used to control the spectrometer. Additional calibration standards may be needed if a second, less sensitive emission line is used to extend the linear range of one or more elements. Although not specifically required, some typical standard combinations are given below when using the specific analytical wavelengths listed in Table 1.

8.6.1 *Mixed Standard Solution I*—Aluminum, barium, chromium, copper, iron, potassium, magnesium, manganese, nickel, and sodium.

<sup>6</sup> *Reagent Chemicals, American Chemical Society Specifications*, American Chemical Society, Washington, DC. For suggestions on the testing of reagents not listed by the American Chemical Society, see *Analar Standards for Laboratory Chemicals*, BDH Ltd., Poole, Dorset, U.K., and the *United States Pharmacopeia and National Formulary*, U.S. Pharmacopeial Convention, Inc. (USPC), Rockville, MD.

8.6.2 *Mixed Standard Solution II*—Beryllium, calcium, lithium, silver, strontium, thorium, titanium, vanadium, and zirconium.

8.6.3 *Mixed Standard Solution III*—Boron, cadmium, cobalt, lead, phosphorus, and zinc.

8.6.4 *Single Element Standard*—A single element standard solution is suggested for uranium due to the high probability of spectral interference with other elements.

8.7 *Interference Check Sample*—The interference check sample is prepared from single element stock standard solutions to contain elements and concentrations appropriate to the sample type.

8.8 *Calibration Blank*—The calibration blank is prepared by adding one volume of nitric acid (specific gravity 1.42) to nine volumes of water. Prepare a sufficient quantity to be used for flushing the system between standards and samples.

8.9 *Reagent Blank*—The reagent blank must contain all of the reagents and in the same volumes as used in the processing of the samples. The reagent blank must be carried through the complete procedure and contain the same acid concentration in the final solution as the sample solution used for analysis.

## 9. Calibration and Standardization

9.1 After a warm-up time of at least 30 min, operate the spectrometer according to the operation manual for the instrument.

9.2 Calibrate the instrument by aspirating the blank and standards. A flush-out time of approximately 1½ to 2 min should be allowed between standards, during which a calibration blank [10 volume % HNO<sub>3</sub>] is aspirated. The computer establishes the slope, intercept, and correlation statistics for each element. Suggested analytical wavelengths are listed in Table 1.

9.3 To minimize physical interferences caused by changes in sample transport processes (due to variations in sample viscosity and concentration), it may be necessary to use a peristaltic pump in conjunction with certain nebulizers.

## 10. Sample Preparation

10.1 Samples that are clear, without solids, and have a pH <5 require no sample pretreatment.

10.2 Samples that contain undissolved solids are treated as follows:

10.2.1 Pipette 10 mL of the well-mixed sample to 100 mL beaker and add 10 mL of HNO<sub>3</sub> (sp gr 1.42).

NOTE 4—This test method is written for analysis of solutions containing 10 % (v/v) nitric acid. This test method can be modified to accommodate the use of another mineral acid at a different concentration. The user must determine the operating parameters and precision and bias under the modified conditions.

10.2.2 Heat the sample on a hotplate until the volume has been reduced to <2 mL.

10.2.3 Quantitatively transfer the contents of the beaker to a 100 mL volumetric flask while filtering undissolved solids using a 2.5 µm filter paper, add 10 mL of HNO<sub>3</sub>, and dilute to volume with water.