



Designation: **D2268 – 93 (Reapproved 2017) D2268 – 21**

Standard Test Method for Analysis of High-Purity *n*-Heptane and *Isooctane* by Capillary Gas Chromatography¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D2268; 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 (ϵ) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

This standard has been approved for use by agencies of the U.S. Department of Defense.

1. Scope—Scope*

1.1 This test method covers and provides for the analysis of high-purity (greater than 99.5 % by volume) *n*-heptane and *isooctane* (2,2,4-trimethylpentane), which are used as primary reference standards in determining the octane number of a fuel. Individual compounds present in concentrations of less than 0.01 % can be detected. Columns specified by this test method may not allow separation of all impurities in reference fuels.

1.2 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as the standard.

1.2.1 *Exception*—The values given in parentheses are for information only.

1.3 *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.*

1.4 *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:²

[D4175 Terminology Relating to Petroleum Products, Liquid Fuels, and Lubricants](#)

[E355 Practice for Gas Chromatography Terms and Relationships](#)

[E594 Practice for Testing Flame Ionization Detectors Used in Gas or Supercritical Fluid Chromatography](#)

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions:

3.1.1 This test method makes reference to common gas chromatographic procedures, terms, and relationships. Detailed definitions of these can be found in Practices [E355](#) and [E594](#), and Terminology [D4175](#).

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D02 on Petroleum Products, Liquid Fuels, and Lubricants and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D02.04.01 on Gas Chromatography Methods.

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² For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

*A Summary of Changes section appears at the end of this standard

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 The sample is injected into a capillary gas chromatographic column consisting of at least 61 m (200 ft) of stainless steel tubing (0.25 mm (0.010 in.) inside diameter), the inner walls of which are coated with a thin film of stationary liquid. An inert gas transports the sample through the column, in which it is partitioned into its individual components. As each component is eluted from the column, it is detected with a hydrogen flame ionization detector and recorded on a conventional strip-chart recording potentiometer. The detector response from each impurity is then compared with that of a known quantity of an internal standard. After determining the total impurity concentration, the *n*-heptane, or *isooctane* purity is obtained by difference.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 This test method is used for specification analysis of high-purity *n*-heptane and *isooctane*, which are used as ASTM Knock Test Reference Fuels. Hydrocarbon impurities or contaminants, which can adversely affect the octane number of these fuels, are precisely determined by this method.

6. Apparatus

6.1 *Chromatograph*—Gas chromatograph should be equipped with a split-stream inlet device for introducing minute quantities of sample without fractionation, a capillary column, and a hydrogen flame ionization detector. An electrometer to amplify the low output signal of the hydrogen flame ionization detector, and a strip-chart recorder for recording the detector signal are needed. The time constant of neither the electrometer nor the recorder should exceed 1 s. A ball and disk integrator or electronic integrator for peak area measurements should be used. The detection system must have sufficient sensitivity to produce a recorder deflection for cyclohexane of at least 8 divisions on a standard 0–100 scale chart using 0.10 % by volume of cyclohexane in *n*-heptane as defined in [7.49.1](#).

6.2 *Microsyringe*—A microsyringe is needed for injecting the sample into the split-stream inlet device.

6.3 *Volumetric Pipet*, 0.1 mL capacity.

6.4 *Analytical Balance*, 200 g capacity.

7. Reagents and Materials

7.1 *Carrier Gas*—Argon, Nitrogen, or Helium; 99.99 % or greater purity. (**Warning**—Compressed gases under high pressure.)

7.2 *Fuel Gas*—Hydrogen; 99.99 % or greater purity. (**Warning**—Compressed gas under high pressure. Extremely flammable gas.)

7.3 *Oxidant Gas*—Air; 99.99 % or greater purity. (**Warning**—Compressed gases under high pressure.)

7.4 *Cyclohexane*—At least 99 mol % pure, to be used as internal standard. (**Warning**—Flammable liquid and harmful if ingested or inhaled.)

7.5 *n*-Pentane—Commercial grade. (**Warning**—Volatile and flammable liquid, and harmful if ingested or inhaled.)

7.6 *Isooctane (2,2,4-trimethylpentane)*—(**Warning**—Flammable liquid and harmful if ingested or inhaled.)

7.7 *Squalane*—Liquid phase for gas chromatographic columns.

7.8 *Tubing*—Type 316, 321, or 347 stainless steel; 0.25 mm (0.010 in.) inside diameter.

8. Preparation of Resolving Column

NOTE 1—There are many different procedures for coating capillary columns. A suitable procedure is given in [6.48.1](#) through [6.38.3](#). Other columns may be used provided they meet resolution and repeatability requirements of the method.

8.1 Connect a 229 mm (9 in.) section of stainless steel tubing 6.4 mm (¼ in.) outside diameter, total volume of approximately

5 mL) to a high-pressure cylinder of argon, helium, or nitrogen through a pressure regulator. Connect at least 61 m (200 ft) of Type 316, 321, or 347 stainless steel tubing (0.25 mm (0.010 in.) inside diameter) to the 229 mm section of 64 mm tubing which is to be used as a reservoir for the coating solution. The capillary column is generally coiled on a suitable mandrel before coating. To the other end of the capillary column, connect an additional 30 m to 9 m to 12 m (40 ft) of capillary tubing through a 1.6 mm (1/16 in.) Swagelok union.

8.2 Clean the tubing by passing 25 mL to 30 mL (5 to 6 reservoir volumes) of *n*-pentane through the tubing with about 1.7 MPa to 2.1 MPa (250 psig to 300 psig gage) of inert gas. After the column has been cleaned, disconnect the upstream end of the reservoir tube and allow the pressure in the tubing to return to atmospheric.

8.3 Prepare a solution containing 6–6 % by volume percent of squalane in *n*-pentane. Fill the reservoir tube with the coating solution and promptly connect to the gas cylinder. Pass the coating solution through the column at 500 psig (3.5 MPa gage) until the solution begins issuing from the end of the capillary tubing; gradually reduce the inlet pressure in order to keep the flow of the solution at a relatively even rate of 40 drops/min to 60 drops/min. When the coating solution has been expelled from the column, reduce the inlet pressure to 345 kPa (50 psig gage) and allow gas to pass through the column for 1 h to 2 h. Disconnect the 9 m to 12 m (30 ft to 40 ft) tail section and then mount the column in the chromatograph.

8.4 To test column resolution use Fig. 1 and calculate *R*, from the distance between the cyclohexane and *n*-heptane peaks at the peak maxima, *d*, and the widths of the peaks at the baseline, *Y*₁ and *Y*₂.

$$R = 2(d_1 - d_2)/(Y_1 + Y_2) \tag{1}$$

Resolution (*R*), using the above equation, must exceed a value of 10.

9. Sample Preparation

9.1 Place 20 mL to 30 mL of the reference fuel (*n*-heptane or *isooctane*) into a 100 mL volumetric flask which has been previously weighed.

9.2 Weigh the sample. Using a 0.10 mL volumetric pipet, add 0.10 mL of the internal standard cyclohexane (99 mol %, min) and reweigh. Dilute to the mark with the *n*-heptane or *isooctane* sample and weigh. Use a 200 g analytical balance accurate to ±0.0002 g. From these weights (masses) and the relative density (specific gravities) of cyclohexane and *n*-heptane or *isooctane*, calculate the volume percent of the cyclohexane internal standard to the nearest 0.001 volume percent; 0.001 % by volume. (Relative density (specific gravity) of cyclohexane at 20 °C = 0.7786; *n*-heptane = 0.6838, and 2,2,4-trimethylpentane = 0.6919.)

$$\text{Cyclohexane, volume \%} = \text{wt cyclohexane/rel dens cyclohexane} \tag{2}$$

$$\div (\text{wt reference fuel/rel dens reference fuel}) \times 100$$

10. Procedure

10.1 Adjust the operating variables to optimum conditions. Temperatures should be as follows: Injection port and splitter 150 °C to 250 °C, column at optimum temperature and detector greater than 100 °C. Adjust the excess gas flow through the splitter to provide a proper sample size to the column.

10.2 Using the microsyringe, inject sufficient sample containing the internal standard. Both the sample volume and the split ratio must be considered in choosing the correct volume of sample to inject. Volumes entering the column in the range of 0.002 μL to 0.005 μL have been found satisfactory.

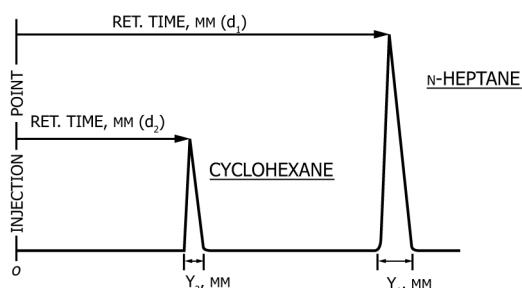


FIG. 1 Column Resolution (*R*).

10.3 The various impurities present in the primary reference standards can be identified from retention time data obtained at the same gas chromatographic conditions. Typical chromatograms of ASTM *n*-heptane and ASTM *isooctane* are shown in Fig. 2. Relative retention time data for a number of hydrocarbons over squalane at 30 °C are given in Table 1. The retention time data of Table 1 are corrected for the gas holdup of the column and are relative to *n*-heptane. Argon was used as the carrier gas.

10.4 Hydrocarbons that are commonly found as impurities in ASTM *n*-heptane and ASTM *isooctane* are listed in Table 2.

11. Calculation

11.1 After identifying the various impurities, measure the peak area of each impurity peak and that of the internal standard, cyclohexane, by ball and disk integrator or electronic integrator. Calculate the volume percent of each impurity as follows:

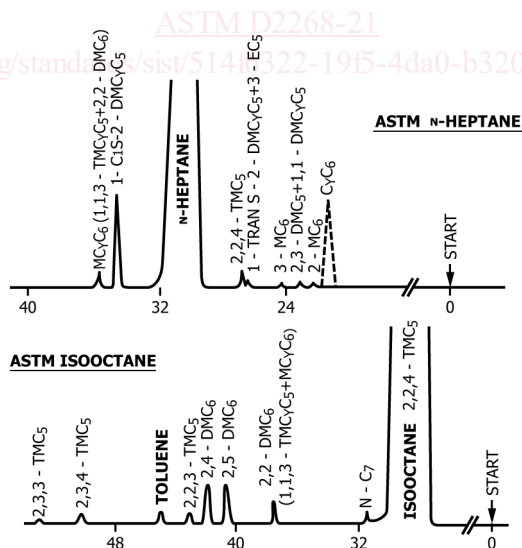
$$V_I = \frac{V_S \times PA_I}{PA_S \times S_I \times (100 - V_S)} \times 100 \quad (3)$$

where:

- V_I = volume percent of the impurity to be determined,
- V_S = volume percent of the internal standard, cyclohexane,
- PA_I = peak area of the impurity to be determined,
- PA_S = peak area of the internal standard, cyclohexane, and
- S_I = the response per unit volume of the hydrogen flame ionization detector to the impurity relative to the response per unit volume to cyclohexane.

11.2 Hydrogen flame ionization detector response is given for several hydrocarbons relative to cyclohexane in Table 3. Report the volume percent of each impurity.

11.3 Total the concentrations of the individual impurities and then calculate the purity of the *n*-heptane or *isooctane* sample by difference.



Column: 0.25 mm (0.010 in.) inside diameter by 61 m (200 ft) stainless steel
 Coating: squalane
 Temperature: 30 °C
 Inlet Pressure: 110 kPa (16 psi gage) argon
 Flow Rate: 0.85/min
 Linear Velocity: 150 mm
 Detector: hydrogen flame ionization
 Sample Size: 0.2 µL split 100 to 1

FIG. 2 Chromatogram of ASTM *n*-Heptane and ASTM *isooctane*