



Designation: D3329 – 03 (Reapproved 2023)

Standard Test Method for Purity of Methyl Isobutyl Ketone by Gas Chromatography^{1,2}

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D3329; 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

1.1 This test method covers the determination of the purity of methyl isobutyl ketone (MIBK) by gas chromatography and in addition provides a means for measuring certain impurities such as methyl isobutyl carbinol which are of interest. Impurities such as water and acidity are measured by other appropriate ASTM procedures and the results are used to normalize the chromatographic value.

1.2 The following applies to all specified limits in this standard; for purposes of determining conformance with this standard, an observed value or a calculated value shall be rounded off “to the nearest unit” in the last right-hand digit used in expressing the specification limit, in accordance with the round-off method of Practice E29.

1.3 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as the standard. The values given in parentheses are for information only.

1.4 *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.*

1.5 For specific hazard information and guidance, see the supplier’s Safety Data Sheet for the materials listed in this test method.

1.6 *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.*

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D01 on Paint and Related Coatings, Materials, and Applications and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D01.35 on Solvents, Plasticizers, and Chemical Intermediates.

Current edition approved July 1, 2023. Published August 2023. Originally approved in 1974. Last previous edition approved in 2017 as D3329 – 03 (2017). DOI: 10.1520/D3329-03R23.

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.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:²

D1364 Test Method for Water in Volatile Solvents (Karl Fischer Reagent Titration Method)

D1613 Test Method for Acidity in Volatile Solvents and Chemical Intermediates Used in Paint, Varnish, Lacquer, and Related Products

D2593 Test Method for Butadiene Purity and Hydrocarbon Impurities by Gas Chromatography

E29 Practice for Using Significant Digits in Test Data to Determine Conformance with Specifications

E180 Practice for Determining the Precision of ASTM Methods for Analysis and Testing of Industrial and Specialty Chemicals (Withdrawn 2009)³

E260 Practice for Packed Column Gas Chromatography

3. Summary of Test Method

3.1 A representative specimen is introduced onto a gas-liquid partition column. Methyl isobutyl ketone is separated from impurities such as acetone, 2-propanol, pentanone, mesityl oxide, methyl isobutyl carbinol, and several unidentified compounds as the components are transported through the column by an inert carrier gas. The separated components are measured in the effluent by a detector and recorded as a chromatogram. The chromatogram is interpreted by applying component attenuation and detector response factors to the peak areas, and the relative concentrations are determined by relating the individual peak responses to the total peak response. Water and acidity are measured in accordance with Test Methods D1364 and D1613 and the results are used to normalize the values obtained by gas chromatography.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 This test method provides a measurement of commonly found impurities in commercially available methyl isobutyl ketone. The measurement of these impurities and the results thereof can individually or when totaled and subtracted from 100 (assay) be used for specification acceptance.

³ The last approved version of this historical standard is referenced on www.astm.org.

5. Apparatus

5.1 *Chromatograph*—Any gas liquid chromatographic instrument having either a thermal conductivity or flame ionization detector provided the system has sufficient sensitivity and stability to obtain for 0.01 % of impurity a recorder deflection of at least 2 mm at a signal-to-noise ratio of at least 5 to 1. The specimen size used in judging the sensitivity must be such that the column is not overloaded, which would result in peak broadening, loss of resolution, shifting retention times and formation of leading peaks.

5.2 *Column*—Any column capable of resolving methyl isobutyl ketone from the impurities that may be present. Possible impurities are hydrocarbons, acetone, 2-propanol, 2-pentanone, 3-pentanone, mesityl oxide, mesityl oxide isomer, and methyl isobutyl carbinol. Columns that meet this requirement are described in **Table 1**. Other columns, including capillary columns, may be used, provided the user establishes that a column gives the required separation and the peak shapes are satisfactory for measurement so that the precision requirements of Section 12 are met.

5.3 *Specimen Introduction System*—Any system capable of introducing a representative specimen onto the column. Microtitre syringes have been used successfully.

5.4 *Recorder*—A recording potentiometer with a full-scale deflection of 5 mV or less, full-scale response time of 2 s or less, and sufficient sensitivity and stability to meet the requirements of 5.1.

6. Reagents and Materials

6.1 *Carrier Gas*—Carrier gas appropriate to the type of detector used. Helium or hydrogen may be employed with thermal conductivity detectors and nitrogen, helium, or argon with flame ionization detectors. The minimum purity of the

carrier gas used should be 99.95 mol %. (**Warning**—If hydrogen is used, take special safety precautions to ensure that the system is free from leaks and that the effluent is vented properly.)

6.2 Column Materials:

6.2.1 *Liquid Phase*—The materials successfully used in cooperative test work are listed in **Table 1**. (See **Note 1**.)

NOTE 1—Suppliers of liquid phases and supports can be found in Research Report RR:D01-1042, available from ASTM International Headquarters.

6.2.2 *Solid Support*—The materials and their mesh sizes successfully used in cooperative work are shown in **Table 1**. (See **Note 1**.)

6.2.3 *Tubing Material*—Copper, stainless steel, and aluminum have been found satisfactory for column tubing. The tubing must be nonreactive with the substrate, sample, and carrier gas and be of uniform internal diameter.

6.3 *Standards for Calibration and Identification*—Standard samples of all components present are needed for identification by retention time and for calibration for quantitative measurements.

7. Preparation of Apparatus

7.1 *Column Preparation*—The method used to prepare the column is not critical provided that the finished column produces the required separation (**Note 2**). Partitioning liquids, supports, and loading levels used successfully in cooperative work are listed in **Table 1**.

NOTE 2—A suitable method for column preparation is described in Test Method **D2593**. Additional useful information may be found in Practice **E260**.

TABLE 1 Columns and Conditions Used Successfully in Cooperative Work (See Note 1)

	Case I	Case II	Case III	Case IV	Case V	Case VI
<i>Column:</i>						
Liquid phase	polyethylene glycol, MW 1450	polyethylene glycol, MW 540	ethylene oxide/propylene oxide copolymer	polyethylene glycol, MW 20M	polyethylene glycol, MW 3350	polyethylene glycol
Liquid phase, weight %	15	20	20	25	25	1.2 µm film
Support	diatomaceous earth, acid washed	diatomaceous earth	diatomaceous earth, acid washed	diatomaceous earth	diatomaceous earth	capillary
Support mesh size	60 to 80	60 to 80	45 to 60	60 to 80	60 to 80	N/A
Length, m (ft)	6.1 (20)	5.5 (18)	6.1 (20)	3.0 (10)	3.7 (12)	10 (33)
Diameter, mm (in.)	3.2 (1/8)	6.4 (1/4)	6.4 (1/4)	3.2 (1/8)	6.4 (1/4)	0.53 (0.021)
Temperature, °C	90	100	160	75 to 200 programmed at 4°/min	145	40 to 180 at 5°/min
Carrier gas:	helium	helium	helium	helium	helium	helium
Flow rate, mL/min	30	50	60	20	80	5
Typical retention time, min:						
Methyl isobutyl ketone	9.3	27.2	8.1	11.2	7.7	1.84
Relative retention time, MIBK = 1.00:						
Acetone	0.42	0.39	0.52	0.42	0.39	0.36
2-propanol	0.66		0.57	0.65	0.56	0.59
2- and 3-pentanone	0.85	0.82	0.78	0.79
Methyl isobutyl ketone	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
α-Mesityl oxide	1.45	1.41	1.27
β-Mesityl oxide	1.89	1.85	1.63	1.24	1.52	...
Methyl isobutyl carbinol	2.11	2.07	1.48	1.42	1.95	2.24

7.1.1 Prepacked columns conforming to requirements listed in [Table 1](#) and in [5.2](#) and [6.2](#) may be obtained from any reputable chromatography supply company.

7.2 *Chromatograph*—Install the column in the chromatograph and establish the operating conditions required to give the desired separation. Allow sufficient time for the instrument to reach equilibrium as indicated by a stable recorder baseline. Control the detector temperature so that it is constant to within 1 °C without thermostat cycling that causes an uneven baseline. Adjust the carrier-gas flow rate to a constant value.

8. Calibration and Standardization

8.1 *Identification*—Select the conditions of column temperature and carrier gas flow that will give the necessary resolution of the components. Determine the retention time of each component by injecting small amounts either separately or in known mixtures. Relative component retention times along with the typical retention time for methyl isobutyl ketone are given in [Table 1](#).

8.2 *Standardization*—The area under each peak of the chromatogram is considered a quantitative measure of the corresponding compound. The relative area is proportional to concentration if the detector responds equally to all the sample components. When flame ionization detectors are used the response to different components is generally significantly different. Differences in detector response may be corrected by use of relative response factors obtained by injecting and measuring the response to pure (99 weight % minimum) components or known blends. When thermal conductivity detectors are used for the analysis of high-purity methyl isobutyl ketone, the difference between area percent and weight percent is within the precision of the test method.

NOTE 3—Much data on thermal conductivity and flame ionization detector responses may be found in the literature. Useful information is given by Messner, et al⁴ and by Dietz.⁵

9. Procedure

9.1 Introduce a representative specimen into the chromatograph using a microlitre syringe. Use sufficient specimen to ensure a minimum of 10 % recorder deflection for a 0.1 % concentration of impurity at the most sensitive setting of the instrument.

9.2 Using the same conditions as for component identification and standardization, record the peaks of all components at attenuation settings that provide maximum peak heights.

10. Calculation

10.1 Measure the area of all peaks ([Note 4](#)) and multiply each area by the appropriate attenuation factor to express the peak areas on a common basis. If a flame ionization detector was used, apply the appropriate detector response factors to correct for the difference in response to the components. Calculate the weight percent composition by dividing the

individual corrected component areas by the total corrected area. Make corrections to account for water and acidity present as determined in accordance with Test Methods [D1364](#) and [D1613](#).

NOTE 4—Peak areas may be determined by any method that meets the precision limits given in Section 12. Methods found to be acceptable are planimetry and integration.

10.2 Calculate the weight percent W of each component as follows:

$$W = (A/B) \times (100 - C) \quad (1)$$

where:

- A = corrected peak response,
- B = sum of corrected peak responses, and
- C = sum of water and acidity.

11. Report

11.1 Report the following information: weight percent of methyl isobutyl ketone and any impurities of interest to the nearest 0.01 % absolute. Duplicate runs for major components that agree within 0.05 % absolute are acceptable for averaging (95 % confidence level).

12. Precision and Bias⁶

12.1 *Precision*—The precision statements are based upon an interlaboratory study in which one operator in six different laboratories analyzed two samples of methyl isobutyl ketone in duplicate on two days. One sample represented commercial material having a purity of 99.8 % and containing 0.03 % methyl isobutyl carbinol and the other was prepared by adding 0.28 % of methyl isobutyl carbinol to the first sample. The results were analyzed in accordance with Practice [E180](#). Because one laboratory failed to report trace impurities, their results were omitted from the calculation of the precision statements. The within-laboratory standard deviation and between-laboratory standard deviation were found to be as follows:

	Within Laboratory	Between Laboratory
Methyl isobutyl ketone	0.014	0.078
Methyl isobutyl carbinol	0.011	0.044
Degrees of freedom	10	4

Based upon these standard deviations, the following criteria should be used for judging the acceptability of results at the 95 % confidence level for methyl isobutyl ketone having a purity of 99 % to 100 % and containing from 0.0 % to 0.5 % of the impurity methyl isobutyl carbinol.

12.1.1 *Repeatability*—Two results, each the mean of duplicates, obtained by the same operator on different days should be considered suspect if they differ by more than 0.05 % absolute for methyl isobutyl ketone or 0.03 % absolute for methyl isobutyl carbinol.

12.1.2 *Reproducibility*—Two results, each the mean of duplicates, obtained by operators in different laboratories should be considered suspect if they differ by more than 0.30 %

⁴ Messner, A. E., et al, *Analytical Chemistry*, Vol 31, 1959, pp. 230–233.

⁵ Dietz, W. A., *Journal of Gas Chromatography*, Vol 5, No. 2, February 1967, pp. 68–71.

⁶ Supporting data have been filed at ASTM International Headquarters and may be obtained by requesting Research Report RR:D01-1042. Contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org.