



Designation: F303 – 08 (Reapproved 2023)^{ε1}

Standard Practices for Sampling for Particles in Aerospace Fluids and Components¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation F303; 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.

^{ε1} NOTE—Editorially updated formatting in 13.1 and 20.3.3 in September 2023.

1. Scope

1.1 These practices cover sampling procedures for use in determining the particle cleanliness of liquids and liquid samples from components. Three practices, A, B, and C, have been developed on the basis of component geometry in order to encompass the wide variety of configurations. These practices establish guidelines to be used in preparing detailed procedures for sampling specific components.

NOTE 1—The term cleanliness used in these practices refers to solid particles in the liquid. It does not generally cover other foreign matter such as gases, liquids, and products of chemical degradation. Cleanliness with respect to particulate contamination does not necessarily give any indication of the other types of contamination.

1.2 All components, regardless of application, may be tested provided (1) the fluid medium selected is completely compatible with the materials, packing and fluid used in the test component, and test apparatus, and (2) the fluid is handled in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and precautions. A liquid shall be used as the test fluid medium. These test fluids may be flushing, rinsing, packing, end use operating, or suitable substitutes for end use operating fluids. (Warning—Practices for sampling surface cleanliness by the vacuum cleaner technique (used on clean room garments and large storage tanks) sampling gaseous fluids and handling hazardous fluids such as oxidizers, acids, propellants, and so forth, are not within the scope of the practices presented; however, they may be included in addendums or separate practices at a later date.

Substitute fluids are recommended in place of end item fluids for preassembly cleanliness determinations on components using hazardous end item fluids. After obtaining the sample, the substitute fluid must be totally removed from the test part with particular caution given to the possibility of trapped fluid.

¹ These practices are under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee E21 on Space Simulation and Applications of Space Technology and are the direct responsibility of Subcommittee E21.05 on Contamination.

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It is hazardous to use a substitute fluid for testing assembled parts where the fluid can be trapped in dead ends, behind seals, and so forth.)

NOTE 2—The word fluid used in these practices shall be assumed to be a liquid, unless otherwise stated.

1.3 The cleanliness of assemblies with or without moving parts may be determined at the time of test; however, movement of internal component parts during the test will create unknown quantities of contamination from wear. Practice B covers configurations requiring dynamic actuation to achieve a sample. The practice does not differentiate between built-in particles and wear particles.

NOTE 3—Defining allowable cleanliness limits is not within the scope of these practices.

1.4 The three practices included are as follows:

	Sections
Practice A—Static Fluid Sampling (Method for extracting fluid from the test article for analysis. This applies to components that have a cavity from which fluid may be extracted)	5 – 13
Practice B—Flowing Fluid Sampling (Method for flushing contaminants from the test article for analysis. This applies to components which fluid can pass (1) directly through, or (2) pass into and out of by cycling)	14 – 22
Practice C—Rinse Fluid Sampling (Method for rinsing contaminants from the test article's surfaces. The rinse fluid is analyzed for contamination. This applies to components that do not have a fluid cavity or for other reasons are not adaptable to Practices A and B)	23 – 31

1.5 *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.*

1.6 *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.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:²

- D1836 Specification for Commercial Hexanes
- F311 Practice for Processing Aerospace Liquid Samples for Particulate Contamination Analysis Using Membrane Filters
- F312 Test Methods for Microscopical Sizing and Counting Particles from Aerospace Fluids on Membrane Filters
- F313 Test Method for Insoluble Contamination of Hydraulic Fluids by Gravimetric Analysis (Withdrawn 1988)³

2.2 Military Standards:

- MIL-T-27602 Trichlorine Oxygen Propellant Compatibles⁴
- MIL-H-6083 Hydraulic Fluid Petroleum Base for Pressure⁴
- MIL-H-5606 Hydraulic Fluid Petroleum Base for Aircarrier Missiles and Ordnance⁴

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions:

3.1.1 analytical membrane, *n*—a membrane filter used to collect the contaminant particles for analysis.

3.1.2 azeotropic mixture, *n*—a solution of two or more liquids, the composition of which does not change upon distillation. Also known as azeotrope.

3.1.3 blank analysis, *n*—sometimes referred to as “fluid tare,” “control level,” “reference contamination level,” or “background level.” The blank analysis is the particulate contamination level of the test fluid when the test part is omitted.

3.1.4 cleanup membrane, *n*—a membrane used to filter the contaminant particles from the fluid medium.

3.1.5 component, *n*—an individual piece or a complete assembly of individual pieces.

3.1.6 field filter holder, *n*—a throw-away or reusable cartridge containing an analytical membrane filter.

3.1.7 initial cleanliness, *n*—the measure of contamination removed from the test component at the time of test, excluding that defined by operating cleanliness.

3.1.8 membrane tare, *n*—sometimes referred to as “blank count” or “control filter.” When applied to microscope methods, the membrane tare is the quantity of particles determined to be on the filter before the test fluid is filtered. When applied to gravimetric methods, the membrane tare is an amount of weight increase imparted to the control filter when uncontaminated test fluid is passed through.

3.1.9 operating cleanliness, *n*—the measure of contaminants generated by moving parts in the component during a specified period of dynamic operation.

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.

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

⁴ Available from Standardization Documents Order Desk, Bldg. 4 Section D, 700 Robbins Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19111-5098, Attn: NPODS.

3.1.10 solvent filtering dispenser, *n*—an apparatus to dispense a stream of 2.0 μm or finer membrane filtered fluid.

3.1.11 system tare, *n*—The measure of contamination determined by replacing the test component with a connecting fitting and following the cleanliness test procedure as if checking the test component.

4. Summary of Practices

4.1 Cleanliness is determined by sampling and analyzing fluid that has been in contact with the surface being analyzed. Specific methods are recommended; however, other methods have been recognized due to the wide variety of components and different test equipment used by industry. Recommended and alternative methods are given in Fig. 1, Fig. 2, and Fig. 3.

PRACTICE A—STATIC FLUID SAMPLING

5. Scope

5.1 This practice covers procedures for determining the particulate contamination level of fluids from components that have a cavity from which fluid may be extracted.

6. Summary of Practice

6.1 Fluid is extracted from the component and analyzed to determine the particulate contamination level. Recommended and alternative methods are given in Fig. 1.

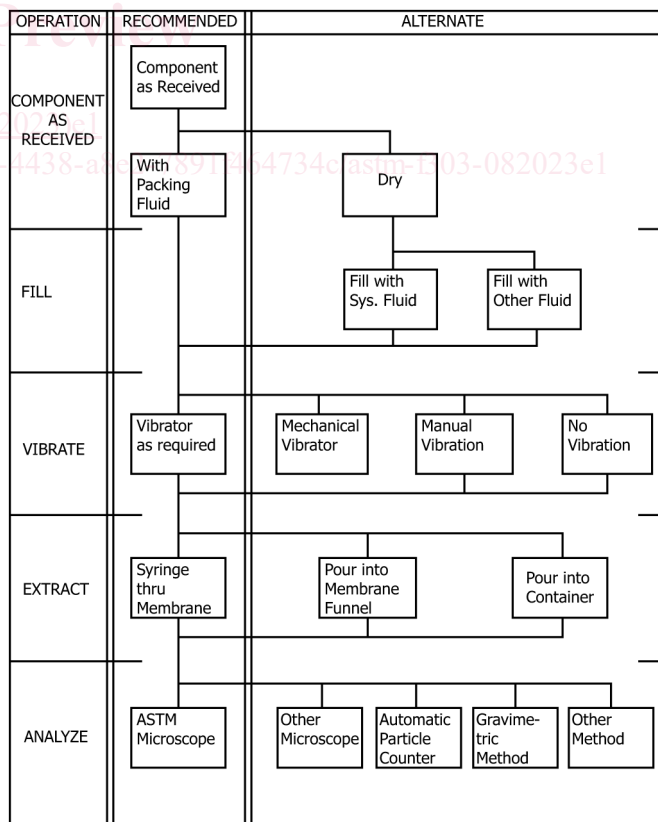


FIG. 1 Recommended and Alternative Methods for Static Fluid Sampling (Practice A)

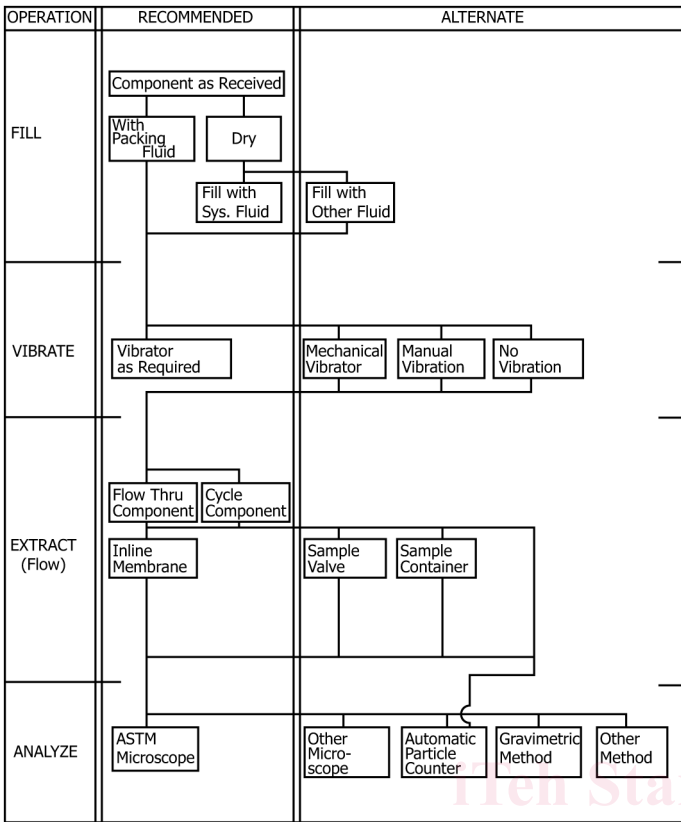


FIG. 2 Recommended and Alternative Methods for Flow Through Sampling (Practice B)

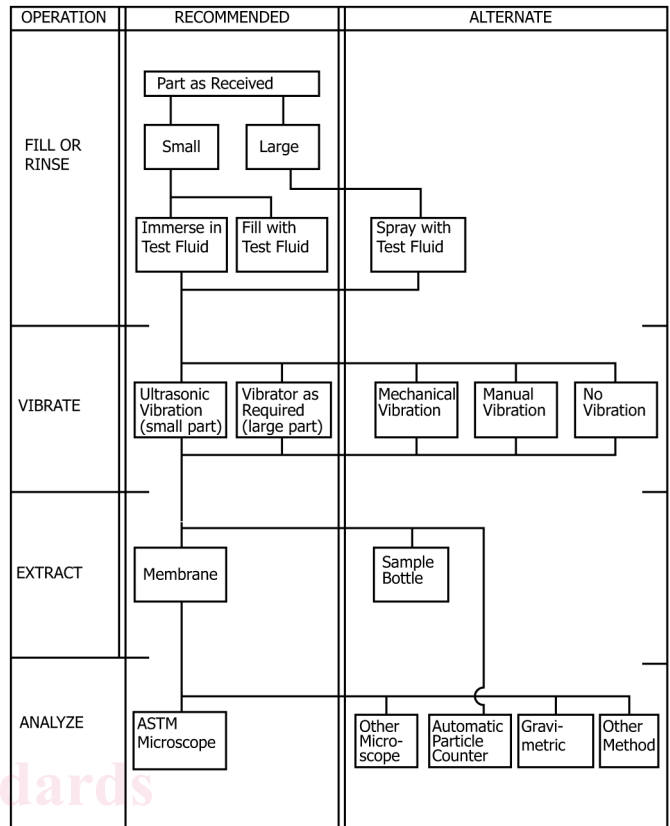


FIG. 3 Recommended and Alternative Methods for Rinse Fluid Sampling (Practice C)

6.2 It is recommended that all operations of this practice be conducted in a dust controlled area. Cleanliness level of the dust controlled area shall be consistent with the component contamination limits.

7. Significance and Use

7.1 Although a cleaning action is imparted to the test component, it is not the intent of this practice to serve as a cleaning procedure. Components are normally cleaner after each consecutive test; thus repeated tests may be used to establish process limits for a given component (Fig. 4). A specific set of test parameters must be supplied by the agency specifying cleanliness limits. Fig. 1, Fig. 2, and Fig. 3 may be used as a guide to establish the desired parameters of test fluid, vibration, extraction, and analysis.

7.2 The curve in Fig. 4 shows the typical behavior of a component when tested for cleanliness several consecutive times. Stabilization generally occurs before the fifth successive run. The stabilized region starts where a horizontal line through the maximum stabilized value intersects the curve.

7.3 The allowable cleanliness limit of a test component should be based on the cleanliness requirements of the system in which it will be used, and the assigned value should be greater than the maximum stabilized value. When defining the allowable cleanliness limits, an important consideration is that the accuracy of the results decreases as the allowable limit value approaches the stabilized value.

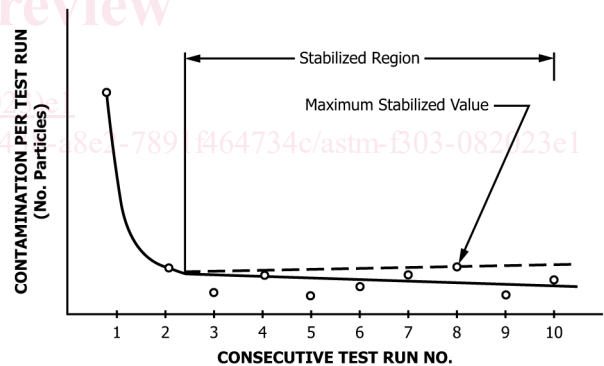


FIG. 4 Contamination per Test Run Versus Consecutive Test Run Number

8. Apparatus

- 8.1 Apparatus, as described in Practice F313.
- 8.2 Apparatus, as described in Test Methods F312 or as described in Practice F311.
- 8.3 Automatic Particle Counter, as required.
- 8.4 Vibration Equipment, as specified.
- 8.5 Apparatus Setup for Removing Component Fluid Sample, as shown in Fig. 4.

NOTE 4—Any suitable syringe and solvent dispensing devices may be used.

