



Designation: ~~D8252 – 19~~^{e1} D8252 – 23

Standard Test Method for Vanadium and Nickel in Crude and Residual Oil by X-ray Spectrometry¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D8252; 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.

^{e1} NOTE—The title of Table 7 was corrected editorially in October 2019.

1. Scope—Scope*

1.1 This test method covers the quantitative determination of total vanadium and nickel in crude and residual oil in the concentration ranges shown in **Table 1** using X-ray fluorescence (XRF) spectrometry.

1.2 Sulfur is measured for analytical purposes only for the compensation of X-ray absorption matrix effects affecting the vanadium and nickel X-rays. For measurement of sulfur by standard test method use Test Methods **D4294**, **D2622** or other suitable standard test method for sulfur in crude and residual oils.

1.3 This test method is limited to the use of X-ray fluorescence (XRF) spectrometers employing an X-ray tube for excitation in conjunction with wavelength dispersive detection system or energy dispersive high resolution semiconductor detector with the ability to separate signals of adjacent and near-adjacent elements.

1.4 This test method uses inter-element correction factors calculated from XRF theory, the fundamental parameters (FP) approach, or best fit regression.

1.5 Samples containing higher concentrations than shown in **Table 1** must be diluted to bring the elemental concentration of the diluted material within the scope of this test method.

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

1.6.1 The preferred concentrations units are mg/kg for vanadium and nickel.

1.7 *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.*

1.8 *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 **D02** on Petroleum Products, Liquid Fuels, and Lubricants and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee **D02.03** on Elemental Analysis.

Current edition approved Aug. 1, 2019/Nov. 1, 2023. Published August 2019/November 2023. Originally approved in 1919. Last previous edition approved in 2019 as **D8252 – 19^{e1}**. DOI: ~~10.1520/D8252-19E01~~ 10.1520/D8252-23.

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

TABLE 1 Elements and Ranges of Applicability

Element	PLOQ in mg/kg	Max Concentration in mg/kg
Vanadium	1.9	50
Nickel	2.2	50

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:²

- [D2622 Test Method for Sulfur in Petroleum Products by Wavelength Dispersive X-ray Fluorescence Spectrometry](#)
- [D4057 Practice for Manual Sampling of Petroleum and Petroleum Products](#)
- [D4177 Practice for Automatic Sampling of Petroleum and Petroleum Products](#)
- [D4294 Test Method for Sulfur in Petroleum and Petroleum Products by Energy Dispersive X-ray Fluorescence Spectrometry](#)
- [D6259 Practice for Determination of a Pooled Limit of Quantitation for a Test Method](#)
- [D6299 Practice for Applying Statistical Quality Assurance and Control Charting Techniques to Evaluate Analytical Measurement System Performance](#)
- [D7343 Practice for Optimization, Sample Handling, Calibration, and Validation of X-ray Fluorescence Spectrometry Methods for Elemental Analysis of Petroleum Products and Lubricants](#)
- [E1621 Guide for Elemental Analysis by Wavelength Dispersive X-Ray Fluorescence Spectrometry](#)

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions:

3.1.1 *alpha corrections, n*—influence correction factors that compensate for inter-element X-ray matrix effects; alpha corrections may be determined by best-fit regression, XRF Fundamental Parameters (FP), or XRF theory (called theoretical alphas).

3.1.2 *Bremsstrahlung, n*—the component of X-ray tube source beam due to radiation emitted when electrons from the tube cathode stop their motion (also called the continuum or white noise).

3.1.3 *channel, n*—in *WDXRF*, the wavelength channel used to measure X-ray intensity for an element of interest.

3.1.4 *concentration, n*—mass fraction wt/wt%, mass%, or mg/kg.

3.1.5 *energy dispersive X-ray fluorescence spectrometry, n*—XRF spectrometry applying energy dispersive detection of radiation.

3.1.6 *fundamental parameters, n*—calibration approach based on XRF theory in which the fundamental constants and equations relating element concentration and X-ray intensity are used to model how X-ray move in and out of matter.

3.1.7 *matrix effects, n*—X-ray absorption and enhancement that occurs in the sample due to the interaction of X-rays and the atoms of the materials.

3.1.8 *monochromatic source excitation, n*—Bremsstrahlung component of background is negligible and typically ignored; a secondary target is used in the X-ray source beam between X-ray tube and sample that virtually removes Bremsstrahlung component of the source beam.

3.1.9 *polychromatic source excitation, n*—Bremsstrahlung component of background is significant and cannot be ignored; the X-ray tube may irradiate the sample directly in an open position, or use primary filters in the X-ray source beam between X-ray tube and sample that selectively shape or remove Bremsstrahlung in an energy or wavelength range.

3.1.10 *region of interest, n*—in *EDXRF*, the energy region used to measure X-ray intensity for an element of interest.

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.

3.1.11 *wavelength dispersive X-ray fluorescence spectrometry, n*—XRF spectrometry applying wavelength dispersive detection of radiation.

3.1.12 The terms *apparatus*, *spectrometer*, and *instrument* are often used interchangeably.

3.2 *Abbreviations:*

3.2.1 *cps*—count per second, the unit used for X-ray intensity

3.2.2 *EDXRF*—energy dispersive X-ray fluorescence

3.2.3 *LLOQ*—laboratory limit of quantification, the limit of quantification of a single spectrometer as defined as three times the instrument 3σ detection limit (see Practice [D6259](#))

NOTE 1—See Sections 3, 5, and 6 of Practice [D6259](#) relating to LLOQ.

3.2.4 *MXRF*—monochromatic XRF (can be MEDXRF or MWDXRF)

3.2.5 *PLOQ*—pooled limited of quantification based on pooled data of instrumentation used in the ILS (see Practice [D6259](#))

3.2.6 *PXRF*—polychromatic XRF (can be EDXRF or WDXRF)

3.2.7 *ROI*—region of interest

3.2.8 *WDXRF*—wavelength dispersive X-ray fluorescence

3.2.9 *XRF*—X-ray fluorescence

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 A sample is placed in the X-ray beam and is irradiated by the source X-ray beam, causing characteristic fluorescent X-ray intensities for all excited elements to be emitted from the sample. The characteristic fluorescent X-rays from vanadium and nickel are then related to concentration based on the apparatus calibration.

4.2 The resultant net element intensities are obtained after subtracting the background intensities measured during the analysis and correcting for overlapping lines from elements having transitions at the same or close to the elemental lines being measured. (The detection resolution exhibited by WDXRF, or EDXRF using a semiconductor detector, minimizes or obviates the need for peak overlap corrections in this test method.) Various standard algorithms are used to compensate for background and elemental peak overlaps, depending on use of WDXRF or EDXRF and polychromatic or monochromatic source X-rays; see manufacturer's guidelines.

4.3 Net element intensities are then correlated to known concentration values and corrected for X-ray absorption/enhancement effects. X-ray absorption/enhancement correction factors, also called alpha corrections, are determined by best-fit regression, fundamental parameters, or theoretical means. See manufacturer's guidelines for algorithms calculating matrix absorption/enhancement correction factors.

4.4 Measurement of net element intensities for unknown samples are then compared to the stored calibration to determine elemental concentration of the unknown samples.

4.5 *Wavelength Dispersive XRF (WDXRF):*

4.5.1 WDXRF excitation type may be polychromatic or monochromatic.

4.5.2 Appropriate crystals that diffract each element's X-rays to the detector are chosen to isolate each desired element peak and

any required background signals, and these intensities are measured by the detection system of the WDXRF spectrometer. The appropriate background intensity in each element peak is calculated and subtracted from the initial gross peak intensity. See manufacturer's guidelines for selection of crystals, peak positions, background signals, and background correction method.

4.5.3 **Table 2** shows typical peak position in nm for the elements of interest; see manufacturer's guidelines.

4.6 *Energy Dispersive XRF (EDXRF):*

4.6.1 EDXRF excitation type may be polychromatic or monochromatic.

4.6.2 The X-ray intensity in the ROI of each desired element peak and any required background regions is measured by the detector of the EDXRF spectrometer. The appropriate background intensity in each element peak is calculated and subtracted from the initial gross peak intensity. See manufacturer's guidelines for selection of element ROI, any appropriate background regions, and background correction method.

4.6.3 **Table 3** shows typical peak centroid position in keV for the elements of interest; see manufacturer's guidelines.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 This test method provides a rapid and precise elemental measurement with simple sample preparation. Typical analysis times are approximately 4 min to 5 min per sample with a preparation time of approximately 1 min to 3 min per sample.

5.2 The quality of crude oil is related to the amount of sulfur present. Knowledge of the vanadium and nickel concentration is necessary for processing purposes as well as contractual agreements.

5.3 The presence of vanadium and nickel presents significant risks for contamination of the cracking catalysts in the refining process.

5.4 This test method provides a means of determining whether the vanadium and nickel content of crude meets the operational limits of the refinery and whether the metal content will have a deleterious effect on the refining process or when used as a fuel.

6. Interferences

6.1 XRF exhibits inter-element X-ray absorption/enhancement matrix effects in which the atoms present in the material can affect the fluorescent X-ray intensities. Instrument software includes absorption/enhancement correction adjustments to the calibration employing theoretical means, FP, or empirical best-fit regression.

6.2 XRF spectrometers may exhibit element peak overlaps depending on the full-width half-max resolution of the detection system. Instrument software typically includes procedures to measure and subtract spectral peak overlap interferences.

6.3 Crude and residual oil contain relatively high concentrations of sulfur, typically 0.1 % to 5 %. The sulfur signal is measured and appropriate corrections are employed to compensate for sulfur's absorption of V and Ni X-rays. See manufacturer's guidelines.

6.4 Crude and residual oil may contain other elements including chlorine, calcium, and iron typically less than 0.1 % each and may exhibit spectral overlap and/or X-ray absorption/enhancement effects.

6.5 Crude oils may have trace amounts of sodium and magnesium in addition to phosphorus introduced through hydraulic fractionation liquids in the form of phosphate or phosphonate esters. Levels of these elements are generally less than 0.01 % and may have no significant influence on the estimation of the elements of interest.

TABLE 2 Peak Position Wavelengths for Elements of Interest

Element Line	Peak Position (nm)
S-K α	0.5373
V-K α	0.2505
Ni-K α	0.1659

TABLE 3 Energy Positions for Peak Centroids for Elements of Interest

Element Line	Centroid Peak of Region of Interest (keV)
S-K α	2.307
V-K α	4.949
Ni-K α	7.472

6.6 Crude oils containing high amounts of water greater than ~~3.1 mass% (approximately 2.8 mass%)~~ 3.1 % by mass (approximately 2.8 % by mass oxygen) can have a high oxygen content leading to significant absorption of sulfur X-rays and corresponding low results. It may be necessary to remove excess water by centrifuging the sample, or other suitable means of removing the excess water.

7. Apparatus

7.1 WDXRF analyzer may be used if its design incorporates, as a minimum, the following features. Required design features include (unless otherwise specified):

7.1.1 *Pulse-Height Analyzer*, or other means of energy discrimination.

7.1.2 *Detector*, for the detection of X-rays with wavelengths in the range of interest (from about 0.1 nm to about 0.6 nm or optimized for single element analyzers). Typically sealed gas proportional counter, flow gas proportional counter, or scintillation counter is used.

7.1.3 *Analyzing Crystals*—The choice of analyzing crystals is made based on the element to be determined. The same crystals must be used for measuring calibration standards and unknown samples.

7.1.4 *Excitation Source*, X-ray tube and any required primary filters or monochromator, capable of exciting sulfur K α , vanadium K α , and nickel K α radiation.

7.2 EDXRF analyzer may be used if its design incorporates, as a minimum, the following features. Required design features include (unless otherwise specified):

7.2.1 *X-ray Tube*, capable of exciting sulfur K α , vanadium K α , and nickel K α radiation.

7.2.1.1 *Monochromator(s) (Optional)*, for analyzers utilizing monochromatic excitation of sulfur K α , vanadium K α , and nickel K α radiation. See manufacturer's guidelines.

7.2.2 *X-ray Detector*, with high sensitivity and a resolution value (Full Width at Half Maximum, FWHM) not to exceed 350 eV at 5.9 keV.

7.3 The following apply to both WDXRF and EDXRF instrumentation.

7.3.1 *X-ray Transparent Film*, for containing and supporting the test specimen in the sample cell while providing a low-absorption window for X-rays to pass to and from the sample. Sample cup and safety window film must be resistant to chemical attack by the sample, and should be free of sulfur, vanadium, and nickel. Film corrections will need to be applied if these elements are present in the film used. See spectrometer manufacturer's guidelines for film type and thickness that gives X-ray transparency required to achieve PLOQ and statistics of this test method. Typical films include 4 μm polypropylene, 6.0 μm or 3.5 μm Mylar (polyester), or 3 μm Etnom (trademarked).

7.3.2 *Sample Cup* specimen holder compatible with the sample and the geometry of the XRF spectrometer. A disposable cell is recommended. The sample cell should not leak when fitted with X-ray transparent film.

7.3.3 *Analytical Scale or Balance*, weight units in grams (g), accurate to 1 decimal (± 0.05 g), if spectrometer manufacturer requires a consistent, measured amount of sample.

7.4 It is recommended that an instrument be used that exhibits LLOQ (laboratory limit of quantification) less than or equal to the PLOQ stated in this test method. LLOQ is defined in Practice [D6259](#). (See also [Note 1](#) for pertinent sections in Practice [D6259](#).)

7.5 *Drift Correction Monitors (Optional)*—To correct for instrumental drift. At least two samples are necessary to correct both sensitivity and possible changes in background, one sample containing sulfur, vanadium, and nickel at the high end of the calibration range, and one sample at the low end of the calibration range. Drift monitors are typically solid, stable, and known not to change, such as XRF fusion bead, pressed pellet, or sample stabilized in resin.

7.5.1 Drift correction is typically implemented automatically in software, although the calculation can readily be done manually. For XRF instruments that are highly stable, the magnitude of the drift correction factor may not differ significantly from unity.

7.6 *Quality Control Samples*—Samples for use in establishing and monitoring the stability and precision of an analytical measurement system. Use homogeneous materials, similar to the samples of interest, and available in sufficient quantities to be analyzed regularly for a long period of time.

7.7 For additional information, refer also to Practice [D7343](#).

8. Reagents and Materials

8.1 *Purity of Reagents*—Reagent grade chemicals shall be used in all tests. Unless otherwise indicated, it is intended that all reagents shall conform to the specifications of the committee on Analytical Reagents of the American Chemical Society, where such specifications are available.³ Other grades may be used, provided it is pure enough to be used without lessening the accuracy of the determination. See also Section [9](#).

8.2 Calibration Standards:

8.2.1 Commercially available certified calibration standards can be used. Calibration standards can also be prepared by careful mixing of certified reference materials (CRM), so long as the sulfur, vanadium and nickel values of the resulting blends and their uncertainties are characterized by the certifying body. Calibration standards may also be made in-house using careful gravimetric procedure and verifying final mass fraction concentrations using an acceptable alternative method.

<https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/sist/0b772aa3-4c03-467a-a062-f7d76def8753/astm-d8252-23>

8.2.2 *Diluent Solvent*—If calibration standards are made in-house rather than purchased commercially, a suitable oil is used, such as Mineral Oil, White (MOW), ACS Reagent Grade containing less than 10 mg/kg S and less than 0.1 mg/kg each of V and Ni. When the S, V, and/or Ni content of the solvent or reagent is not certified, verify the absence of these elements. Use the purest grades for the preparation of calibration standards.

8.2.3 *Calibration Diluents*—The following materials have been found suitable for use. Other diluents may be used, provided that the certified or vendor assayed content and material purity are used when calculating the exact concentrations of the calibration standards.

8.2.3.1 *Di-n-butyl sulfide*, 97 % minimum purity, approximately ~~21.9 mass %~~ **21.9 % by mass** sulfur. Use the certified or vendor assayed sulfur content and the material purity when calculating the exact concentrations of the calibration standards.

8.2.3.2 *Vanadium 2-ethylhexanoate*, approximately ~~4.42 mass %~~ **4.42 % by mass** vanadium. Use the vendor certified vanadium content and the material purity when calculating the exact concentrations of the calibration standards.

8.2.3.3 *Nickel 2-ethylhexanoate*, approximately ~~7.91 mass %~~ **7.91 % by mass** nickel. Use the vendor certified nickel content and the material purity when calculating the exact concentrations of the calibration standards.

³ *Reagent Chemicals, American Chemical Society Specifications, ACS Reagent Chemicals, Specifications and Procedures for Reagents and Standard-Grade Reference Materials*, 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.