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## Standard Test Method for Determination of Low Surface Area of Catalysts and Catalyst Carriers by Multipoint Krypton Adsorption<sup>1</sup>

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D4780; 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.

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<sup>ε1</sup> NOTE—Subsection 8.1 was corrected editorially in February 2017.

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### 1. Scope

1.1 This test method covers the determination of the specific surface area of catalysts and catalyst carriers in the range from ~~0.050.05 m<sup>2</sup> to 10 m<sup>2</sup>/g~~ to 10 m<sup>2</sup>/g. A volumetric measuring system is used to obtain at least three data points which fall within the linear *BET* region.

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

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

### 2. Referenced Documents

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

[D3663 Test Method for Surface Area of Catalysts and Catalyst Carriers](#)

[D3766 Terminology Relating to Catalysts and Catalysis](#)

[E105 Guide for Probability Sampling of Materials](#)

[E122 Practice for Calculating Sample Size to Estimate, With Specified Precision, the Average for a Characteristic of a Lot or Process](#)

[E177 Practice for Use of the Terms Precision and Bias in ASTM Test Methods](#)

[E456 Terminology Relating to Quality and Statistics](#)

[E691 Practice for Conducting an Interlaboratory Study to Determine the Precision of a Test Method](#)

### 3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—Consult Terminology [D3766](#).

3.2 *Symbols*:

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<sup>1</sup> This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee [D32](#) on Catalysts and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee [D32.01](#) on Physical-Chemical Properties.

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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.

$P_{H1}$	= initial helium pressure, torr.
$P_{H2}$	= helium pressure after equilibration, torr.
$T_{H1}$	= temperature of manifold at initial helium pressure, °C.
$T_{H2}$	= temperature of manifold after equilibration, °C.
$P_1$	= initial Kr pressure, torr.
$T'_1$	= manifold temperature at initial Kr pressure, K.
$T_1$	= manifold temperature at initial Kr pressure, °C.
$P_2$	= Kr pressure after equilibration, torr.
$T'_2$	= manifold temperature at $P_2$ , K.
$T_2$	= manifold temperature at $P_2$ , °C.
$P_{o,N}$	= liquid nitrogen vapor pressure, torr.
$P_{o,krypton}$	= calculated krypton vapor pressure, torr.
$T'_s$	= liquid nitrogen temperature, K.
$X$	= relative pressure, $P_2/P_{o,krypton}$ .
$V_d$	= volume of manifold, cm <sup>3</sup> .
$V_s$	= the apparent dead-space volume, cm <sup>3</sup> .
$W_s$	= weight of sample, g.
$W_1$	= tare weight of sample tube, g.
$W_2$	= weight of sample plus tare weight of tube, g.
$V_{ds}$	= volume of krypton in the dead space, cm <sup>3</sup> .
$V_1$	= See <a href="#">11.3.5</a> .
$V_1$	= See <a href="#">12.3.5</a> .
$V_2$	= See <a href="#">11.3.6</a> .
$V_2$	= See <a href="#">12.3.6</a> .
$V_i$	= See <a href="#">11.3.7</a> .
$V_i$	= See <a href="#">12.3.7</a> .
$V_a$	= See <a href="#">11.3.9</a> .
$V_a$	= See <a href="#">12.3.9</a> .
$V_m$	= See <a href="#">11.6</a> .
$V_m$	= See <a href="#">12.6</a> .

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#### 4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 A catalyst or catalyst carrier sample is degassed by heating in vacuum to remove absorbed vapors from the surface. The quantity of krypton adsorbed at various low pressure levels is determined by measuring pressure differentials after introduction of a fixed volume of krypton to the sample at liquid nitrogen temperature. The specific surface area is then calculated from the sample weight and adsorption data using the *BET* equation.

#### 5. Significance and Use

5.1 This test method has been found useful for the determination of the specific surface area of catalysts and catalyst carriers in the range from ~~0.050~~ 0.05 m<sup>2</sup> to 10 m<sup>2</sup>/g to 10 m<sup>2</sup>/g for materials specification, manufacturing control, and research and development in the evaluation of catalysts. The determination of surface area of catalysts and catalyst carriers above ~~10 m<sup>2</sup>/g~~ 10 m<sup>2</sup>/g is addressed in Test Method [D3663](#) – Surface Area of Catalyst and Catalyst Carriers – and is appropriate for most samples with specific surface areas above 1 m<sup>2</sup>/g.

#### 6. Apparatus

6.1 A schematic diagram of the apparatus is shown in [Fig. 1](#). It may be constructed of glass or of metal and may operate manually or automatically. It has the following features:

6.1.1 *Vacuum System*, capable of attaining pressures below 10<sup>-4</sup> torr (1 torr = 133.3 Pa). This will include a vacuum gage (not shown in [Fig. 1](#)). Access to the distribution manifold is through the valve *V*.

6.1.2 *Distribution Manifold*, having a volume between ~~55 cm<sup>3</sup>~~ 40 cm<sup>3</sup> and ~~40 cm<sup>3</sup>~~ 40 cm<sup>3</sup> ( $V_d$ ) known to the nearest ~~0.01 cm<sup>3</sup>~~ 0.01 cm<sup>3</sup>. This volume is defined as the volume between the stopcocks or valves and it includes the volume within the pressure gage.

6.1.3 *Constant Volume Gages*, capable of measuring ~~1 to 10 torr~~ 1 torr to 10 torr to the nearest ~~0.001 torr~~ 0.001 torr and ~~0 to 1000 torr~~ 0.001 torr and 0 torr to 1000 torr to the nearest torr (1 torr = 133.3 Pa).

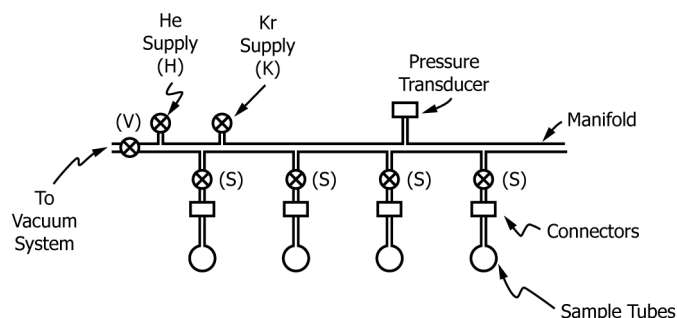


FIG. 1 Schematic Diagram of Surface Area Apparatus

6.1.4 Valve (H), from the helium supply to the distribution manifold.

6.1.5 Valve (K), from the krypton supply to the distribution manifold.

6.1.6 Sample Tube(s), with volume between  $5 \text{ cm}^3$  and  $25 \text{ cm}^3$ , depending on the application. The sample tube(s) may be connected to the distribution manifold with standard taper joints, glass-to-glass seals, or compression fittings provided they are rated for vacuum service.

NOTE 1—Modern commercial instruments may employ simple sample tubes with volumes outside of this range, and may be capable of testing multiple samples simultaneously rather than separately as stated in 9.10.1.

6.1.7 Dewar Flask(s) for immersion of the sample tube(s) in liquid nitrogen. The nitrogen level should be fixed at a constant height by means of an automatic level controller or manually refilled to a predetermined mark on the sample tube(s) about  $30$  to  $50 \text{ mm}$  below the distribution manifold connectors.

6.1.8 Thermometer for measuring the temperature of the distribution manifold ( $T_1(i)$  or  $T_2(i)$ ) in degrees Celsius. (Alternatively, the distribution manifold may be thermostatted a few degrees above ambient to obviate the necessity of recording this temperature.)

6.1.9 Heating Mantle(s) or Small Furnace(s) for each sample tube to allow outgassing samples at elevated temperatures.

6.1.10 Laboratory Balance with  $0.1 \text{ mg}$  ( $10^{-7} \text{ kg}$ ) sensitivity.

6.1.11 Thermometer for measuring the temperature of the liquid nitrogen bath ( $T_s(i)$ ) in kelvins. This will preferably be a nitrogen vapor-pressure-thermometer that gives  $P_{o,N}(i)$  directly and has greater precision, or a resistance thermometer from which  $P_{o,N}(i)$  values may be derived.

## 7. Reagents

7.1 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.<sup>3</sup> Other grades may be used, provided it is first ascertained that the reagent is of sufficiently high purity to permit its use without lessening the accuracy of the determination.

7.2 Helium Gas, at least 99.9 % pure.

7.3 Krypton Gas, at least 99.9 % pure.

7.4 Liquid Nitrogen, of such purity that the saturation vapor pressure  $P_{o,N}$  is not more than 20 torr above barometric pressure. A fresh daily supply is recommended.

<sup>3</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 Annual 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. Sampling

8.1 A test sample shall be obtained from larger composites by riffing or splitting in accordance with subsection 5.12 of STP 447A<sup>4</sup>, with the aim of obtaining a representative sample that represents shape and size distribution of the larger composite. Guide E105 can provide guidance on constructing a sampling plan with the representative sample can be determined by Practice E122.

## 9. Procedure—Sample Preparation and Degassing

9.1 Select a sample tube of the desired size. A 5 cm<sup>3</sup> tube is preferred for small samples to minimize dead space. However, larger tubes may be required for larger samples or for finely powdered samples, to avoid *elutriation of the powder* when degassing is started.

9.2 Evacuate the sample tube and then fill to atmospheric pressure with helium. This may be done on the surface area unit, or on a separate piece of equipment.

9.3 Remove the sample tube, cap, and weigh. Record the weight as  $W_1$ .

9.4 Place the sample, whose weight is known approximately, into the sample tube. If possible, choose the sample size to provide an estimated total surface area of  $\pm 1 \text{ m}^2$  to  $5 \text{ m}^2$ .

9.5 Attach the sample tube to the apparatus. If other samples are to be run, attach them at this time to the other ports.

9.6 Open the *S* valves where there are samples.

9.7 Slowly open the *V* valve, monitoring the rate of pressure decrease to avoid too high a rate, which might lead to excessive fluidization of powdered samples.

9.7.1 If a diffusion pump is used, it may be necessary to close the *V* valve system periodically to protect the diffusion pump fluid from exposure to pressures above 0.1 torr for periods of more than 30 s. Close the valve off for 2 min each time.

9.8 Install a heating mantle or furnace around each sample and raise the temperature to about ~~300°C (573 K)~~ 300 °C (573 K). (**Warning**—Take special precautions if the moisture content exceeds approximately 5 % to avoid “bumping” of powdered catalyst, and to avoid surface area loss by self-steaming. It is recommended that the heating rate not exceed ~~100 K /h~~ 100 K /h under these circumstances.)

9.9 Continue degassing at about ~~300°C (573 K)~~ 300 °C (573 K) for a minimum of ~~3 h~~ 3 h, at a pressure not to exceed  $10^{-3}$  ~~torr~~ torr. Overnight degassing is permissible.

NOTE 2—Certain materials decompose or sinter at ~~300°C~~ 300 °C. Lower degassing temperatures are permissible for such materials; however, the degassing temperature should be specified when reporting the results.

9.10 Remove the heating mantles, and allow the samples to cool.

9.11 Close the *S* valves.

9.12 It is permissible to exercise the option of preliminary degassing on an external unit. In such a case, follow the procedures of ~~8.49.4 – 8.119.11~~ and then repeat on the adsorption unit, except that the degassing on the adsorption unit can be at room temperature and need not exceed ~~1 h~~ 1 h.

9.13 If it is desired to weigh the sample after preliminary degassing on an external unit, backfill with helium to slightly above atmospheric pressure. Close the *S* valve.

<sup>4</sup> Manual on Test Sieving Methods, ASTM STP 447A, ASTM International, 2005.