



Designation: D5742 – 16 (Reapproved 2023)

# Standard Test Method for Determination of Butane Activity of Activated Carbon<sup>1</sup>

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D5742; 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.

## 1. Scope

1.1 This test method covers determination of the activation level of activated carbon. Butane activity (BA) is defined herein as the ratio (in percent) of the mass of butane adsorbed by an activated carbon sample to the mass of the sample, when the carbon is saturated with butane under the conditions listed in this test method.

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, health, and environmental practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.* For a specific warning statement, see 7.1.

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:*<sup>2</sup>

- D2652 Terminology Relating to Activated Carbon
- D2854 Test Method for Apparent Density of Activated Carbon
- D2867 Test Methods for Moisture in Activated Carbon
- D3195 Practice for Rotameter Calibration
- D3467 Test Method for Carbon Tetrachloride Activity of Activated Carbon
- E177 Practice for Use of the Terms Precision and Bias in

<sup>1</sup> This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D28 on Activated Carbon and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D28.04 on Gas Phase Evaluation Tests.

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<sup>2</sup> 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.

[ASTM Test Methods](#)

[E300 Practice for Sampling Industrial Chemicals](#)

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

## 3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—For definitions of terms used in this test method, refer to Terminology [D2652](#).

## 4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 An activated carbon bed of known volume and mass is saturated with butane vapor. The mass adsorbed at saturation is noted and reported as mass of butane per unit mass of carbon.

## 5. Significance and Use

5.1 The butane activity as determined by this test method is a measure of the ability of an activated carbon to adsorb butane from dry air under specified conditions. It is useful for the quality control and evaluation of granular activated carbons. The butane activity is an indication of the micropore volume of the activated carbon sample. This activity number does not necessarily provide an absolute or relative measure of the effectiveness of the tested carbon for other adsorbates or at other conditions of operation.

5.2 The butane activity test can be used as a non-ozone depleting substitute for the carbon tetrachloride activity test in Test Method [D3467](#). [Fig. 1](#) shows an experimental correlation of activity values obtained using the two adsorbates.

NOTE 1—This test has not been designed for use with powdered activated carbon, but it has been used successfully when the flow rate or time are adjusted or the sample volume is decreased to keep the pressure drop at an acceptable value.

## 6. Apparatus

6.1 *Water Bath*, capable of maintaining a temperature of 25 °C ± 0.2 °C and of sufficient depth so that the entire carbon bed in the sample tube is immersed in the water.

6.2 *Sample Tube*, with the options shown in [Fig. 2](#).

6.3 *Flowmeter*, capable of delivering butane at 0 mL/min to 500 mL/min, calibrated in accordance with Practice [D3195](#).

6.4 *Balance*, capable of weighing to within ±0.01 g.

6.5 *Fill Device*—The vibration feed device used in Test Method [D2854](#).

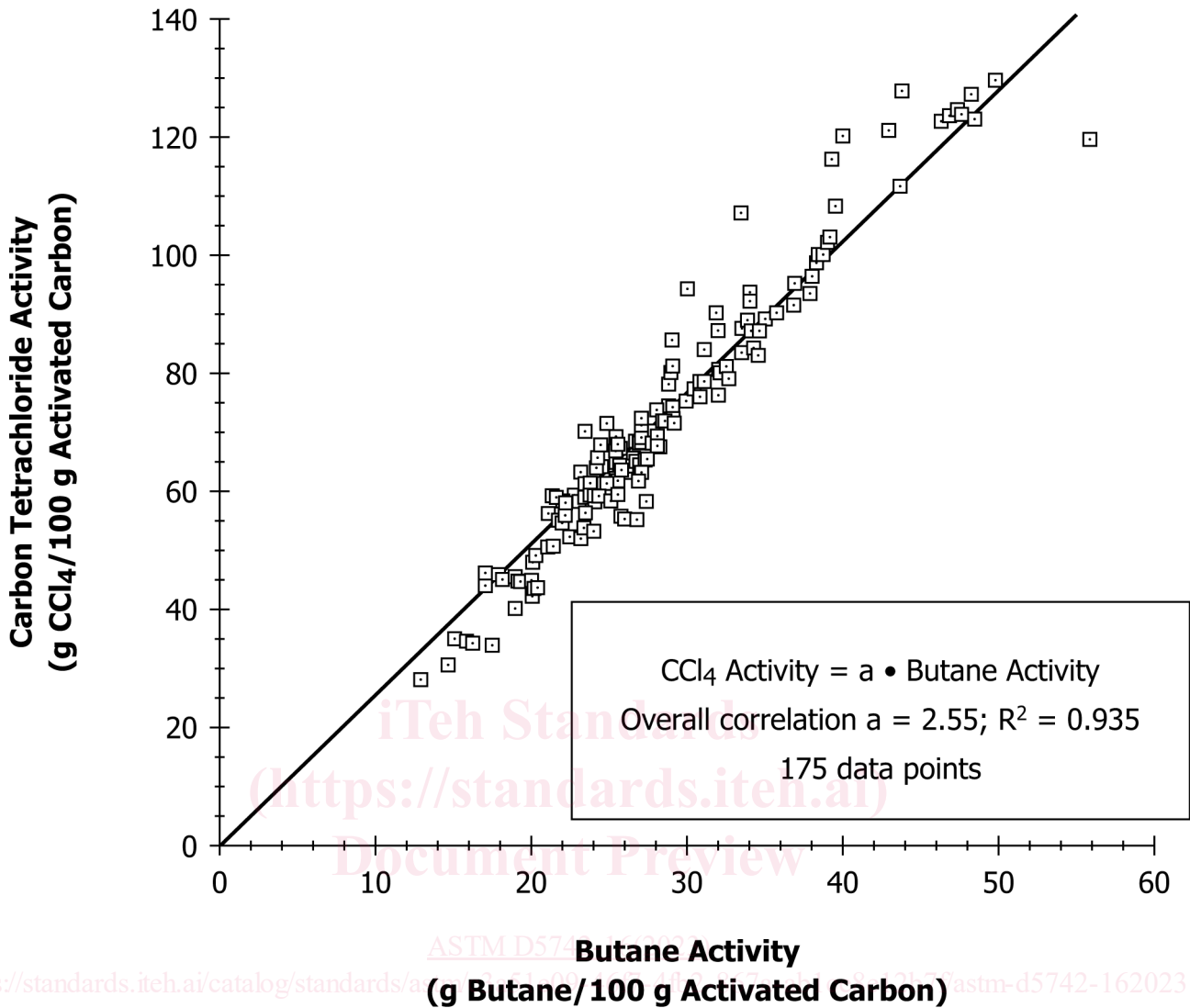


FIG. 1 Butane Versus Carbon Tetrachloride Correlation

6.6 Apparatus Assembly, shown in Fig. 3.

## 7. Reagents

7.1 *n*-Butane, C. P. Grade. (**Warning**—Butane is a flammable gas with a flash point of  $-138\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$  and a boiling point of  $0.5\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ . Its specific gravity is 2.046 relative to air. Butane may be narcotic in high concentrations and is considered a simple asphyxiant. If the entire apparatus is not set up in a fume hood, provision must be made to vent the gas coming from the discharge stem of the sample tube.)

## 8. Sampling

8.1 Refer to Practice E300 for guidance in sampling granular activated carbon.

## 9. Maintenance of Bath Water

9.1 The bath water should be changed periodically in order to prevent mold formation.

## 10. Procedure

10.1 Dry the sample using the procedure described in Test Methods D2867.

10.2 Determine the apparent density in accordance with Test Method D2854 and record.

10.3 Accurately weigh the empty, dry sample tube and stoppers to the nearest 0.01 g and record.

10.4 Weigh a representative sample of the carbon equivalent to  $16.70\text{ mL} \pm 0.05\text{ mL}$  based on the apparent density determined in 10.2. Transfer the weighed sample into the sample tube using the filling technique described in Test Method D2854 through a funnel modified to accommodate the adsorption tube.

10.5 Weigh the filled sample tube and stoppers to the nearest 0.01 g and record.

10.6 Set the water bath control to maintain a temperature of  $25\text{ }^\circ\text{C} \pm 0.2\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ .