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Standard Practice for Sampling of Process Vents with a Portable Gas Chromatograph¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This practice describes a method for direct sampling and analysis of process vents for volatile organic compound (VOC) vapors and permanent gases using a portable gas chromatograph (GC).

1.2 This practice is applicable to analysis of permanent gases such as oxygen (O₂), carbon dioxide (CO₂) and nitrogen (N₂), as well as vapors from organic compounds with boiling points up to 125°C.

1.3 The detection limits obtained will depend on the portable gas chromatograph and detector used. Detectors available include thermal conductivity, photoionization, argon ionization, and electron capture. For instruments equipped with thermal conductivity detectors, typical detection limits are one to two parts per million by volume (ppm(v)) with an applicable concentration range to high percent by volume levels. For instruments with photoionization detectors detection limit of one to ten parts per billion by volume (ppb(v)) are obtainable with a concentration range from 1000 to 2000 ppm(v). The argon ionization detector has an achievable detection limit of one (ppb(v)), while the electron capture detector has an achievable detection limit of one part per trillion by volume (ppt(v)) for chlorinated compounds.

1.4 The applicability of this practice should be evaluated for each VOC by determining stability, reproducibility, and linearity.

1.5 The appropriate concentration range must also be determined for each VOC, as the range will depend on the vapor pressure of the particular VOC.

1.6 *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.* Refer to Section 8 on Hazards for additional safety precautions.

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D22 on Sampling and Analysis of Atmospheres and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D22.03 on Ambient Atmospheres and Source Emissions.

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2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*²

D1356 Terminology Relating to Sampling and Analysis of Atmospheres

D3464 Test Method for Average Velocity in a Duct Using a Thermal Anemometer

D3154 Test Method for Average Velocity in a Duct (Pitot Tube Method)

E355 Practice for Gas Chromatography Terms and Relationships

2.2 *Other Document:*

NFPA 496 Standard for Purged and Pressurized Enclosures for Electrical Equipment³

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—For the definition of terms used in this practice, refer to Terminology D1356 and Practice E355.

3.2 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.2.1 *portable*—refers to gas chromatograph with internal battery, internal sample pump, and internal/rechargeable carrier gas supply cylinder.

4. Summary of Practice

4.1 One end of a sampling line (typically 6 mm (¼ in.) outside diameter TFE-fluorocarbon tubing) is connected to a tee in a process vent and the other end to a condensation trap (see 6.1), which is connected to a gas sampling bulb. The outlet of the gas sampling bulb is connected to a sampling pump set at a flow rate of 0.5 to 2 L/min. The sample line from the portable gas chromatograph is inserted through the septum port of the gas sampling bulb. At user selected intervals, the internal pump of the portable gas chromatograph is activated and process vapors drawn through the injection valve of the gas chromatograph and analyzed.

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 Available from National Fire Protection Assn., 1 Batterymarch Park, P.O. Box 9101, Quincy, MA 02269-9101.

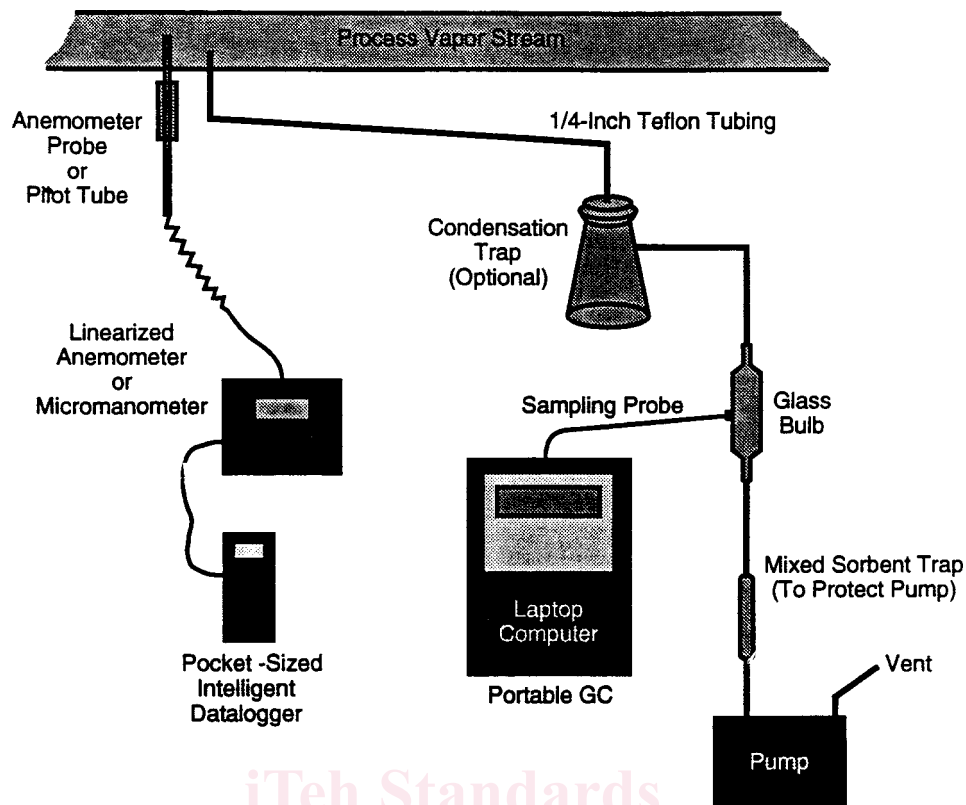


FIG. 1 Schematic of Process Sampling Equipment

5. Significance and Use

5.1 This practice has been widely used to obtain mass balance data for process scrubbers, to determine the efficiency of VOC emission control equipment, and to obtain data to support air permit applications.

5.2 This practice will have applications to the MACT Rule and may have applications to Compliance Assurance Monitoring verification required by the 1990 Clean Air Act Title III Amendments.

5.3 This practice, when used with Test Methods D3464 or D3154 or on-line process flow meter data, can be used to calculate detailed emission rate profiles for VOCs from process vents.

5.4 This practice provides nearly real time results that can detect process changes or upsets that may be missed using conventional sorbent tube or integrated gas sampling bag sampling.

6. Interferences

6.1 Water or liquid in the process line will plug the sample line of the gas chromatograph, since the injection valve of most portable GCs is not heated. The condensation trap is designed to protect the portable gas chromatograph if liquids are present or occur during process upset.

6.2 Interferences sometimes result from analytes having similar retention times during gas chromatography.

6.3 General approaches which can be followed to resolve such interferences are given below:

6.3.1 Change the type of column, length of column, or operating conditions.

6.3.2 Analyze using a nonpolar methyl silicone column which separates according to boiling point of the compounds and a polar column whose separations are influenced by the polarity of the compounds.⁴

6.3.3 Use a mass spectrometer to verify the identity of peaks.

7. Apparatus

7.1 A schematic drawing of a typical sampling setup is shown in Fig. 1. The laptop computer may be physically located near the gas chromatograph as shown in Fig. 1, or located remotely. In addition, some portable gas chromatographs have an integral computer. Use a short piece of 1.5 mm (1/16 in.) outside diameter by 1 mm (0.04 in.) inside diameter stainless steel tubing as the sampling probe line from the gas sampling bulb to the GC inlet.

7.2 *Portable Gas Chromatograph (GC)*, with a thermal conductivity, photoionization, argon ionization, electron capture or appropriate detector, internal/rechargeable carrier gas supply, and internal sampling pump.

7.2.1 Portable gas chromatographs are typically equipped with particulate filters which should be replaced periodically.

7.3 *Data Logger*, device used for automated storage of output from a flow measurement device.

7.4 *Gas Sampling Bulb*, 125 mL capacity with septum port.

7.5 *Personal Sampling Pump*.

⁴ The columns in most portable gas chromatographs are easily interchanged. One manufacturer has an instrument that simultaneously injects onto two user selected column modules.

7.6 *Gas-Tight Syringe*, 1, 10, 100, 500 mL capacity or other convenient sizes for preparing standards.

7.7 *Microlitre Syringes*, 10, 25, 50, 100 μL or other convenient sizes for preparing standards.

7.8 *Gas Sampling Bags*, for preparation of gas standards. Bags constructed of various polymer films, such as polyvinylidene fluoride, fluorinated ethylenepropylene, (tetrafluoroethylene)-fluorocarbon, polyvinylidene chloride, polyethylene and mixed polymer multilayers, with a variety of fittings and capacities (typically 1 to 200 L) are available.

7.9 *Thermal Anemometer, Vane Anemometer, Mass Flowmeter or Pitot Tube*, for measurement of vent velocity.

7.10 *Condensation Trap, Filtering Flask*, 250 or 500 mL polypropylene fitted with a stopper.

7.11 *TFE-Fluorocarbon Tubing*, 6 mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in.) outside diameter by 5 mm ($\frac{3}{16}$ in.) inside diameter.

7.12 *Data System*, an integral or external computer used for control of operation of a portable gas chromatograph, data reduction, and storage of results.

8. Hazards

8.1 See **NFPA 496** for use of electrical equipment in areas classified as hazardous by Article 500 of NFPA 70, National Electrical Code. A purged and pressurized enclosure is required.

9. Calibration

9.1 Suitable knowns may be prepared by the filling of a gas sampling bag with a known volume of air. Inject a known volume of gas or liquid into the bag and knead the bag to mix. Permeation tubes or rigid chambers may also be used for preparation of gas standards. Reference standards in compressed gas cylinders certified as to concentration by the manufacturer are also available. Refer to *Methods of Air Sampling and Analysis*⁵ for applicable guidelines for all of these gas standard preparation techniques.

9.2 Although standards of some compounds prepared in gas bags are very stable, others show sample loss during storage due to permeation or surface adsorption. As a general guideline prepare standards fresh daily.

9.3 Prepare at least two reference standards containing varying concentrations of each component. Bracket the expected concentrations of each component in the testing of the process vent, if known.

9.3.1 Connect the gas sampling bag to the inlet or the calibration port of the GC and initiate the analysis. Perform at least triplicate injections of each standard.

9.3.2 The quantitative response of a GC detector may be determined by the measurement of the peak height or peak area using the Data System or electronic integrator.⁶

9.3.3 Following the standard analyze a gas sampling bag containing air only (blank). If carryover is $>1\%$ increase the sampling period (internal GC pump time). Typical sampling

periods are 20 to 45 s, however, this parameter must be optimized for each VOC analyzed.

10. Procedure

10.1 Preparation of the Gas Chromatograph:

10.1.1 Fill the internal carrier gas reservoir as described by the manufacturer.

10.1.2 Select a carrier gas flow or column pressure and column temperature compatible with the column selected for the separation.

10.1.3 Calibrate the chromatographic column to determine the relative retention times and response of the various compounds of interest.

10.2 Preparation of the Sampling Train:

10.2.1 Assemble the sampling train as shown in **Fig. 1**. Stainless steel or glass may be substituted for the TFE-fluorocarbon transfer line.⁷

10.2.2 For process vents containing high concentrations of higher boiling ($>125^\circ\text{C}$) low vapor pressure ($<2\text{ kPa}$) VOCs a heated transfer line may be necessary. A portable GC with a heated injector is also required.

10.2.3 Recheck the calibration after assembly of the sampling train by connecting an appropriate standard to the inlet of the sample line. If results obtained for the analysis of the standard are not within 15 % relative standard deviation of the expected concentration, check the sampling train for leaks. Flow rate through sampling train is typically 0.5 to 2 L/min.

10.3 Analysis:

10.3.1 Set the gas chromatograph at a desired automated sampling interval and sampling period. At the desired time interval, activate the internal vacuum pump of the GC and pull the sample vapors from the sampling bulb. Inject and analyze. It is recommended that the flow rate through the sampling train be set at 2 L/min if the optional condensation trap is installed to minimize sample transfer time and the dilution effect caused by the additional volume of the flask (250 to 500 mL). This ensures that the sample analyzed at the GC is representative of what is currently in the process vent. Permeability of the TFE-fluorocarbon tubing is minimal and can be neglected.⁵

10.3.2 If flow data are not available from the process flowmeter, measure the flow in the vent using a pitot tube, thermal anemometer, or suitable device. If the flow device does not automatically correct readings to standard conditions of 25°C and 101.3 kPa pressure, vent temperature and pressure will also have to be measured. Refer to **2.1** for applicable guidelines.

10.3.3 For continuous monitoring of flow, install the flow probe in center of the vent and send the output signal of the flow measuring device to the data logger for data storage. The center of the vent typically shows the maximum flow rate.

10.3.4 At the end of the sampling period recheck the instrument performance by connecting gas standard to the sample line.⁸ If a separate calibration port is available on the portable GC, reanalyze the gas standard every hour during the

⁵ Lodge, James P., ed., *Methods of Air Sampling and Analysis*, Intersociety Committee, Lewis Publishers, Inc., 3rd ed., 1988, pp. 15–26.

⁶ Most portable GCS are equipped with data systems that automatically generate a calibration curve.

⁷ Heated steel lines will degrade or destroy chlorinated organic compounds.

⁸ Method 18—Measurement of Gaseous Organic Compound Emissions by Gas Chromatography, 40 CFR 60, App. A, 1994, pp. 792–821.