



Standard Test Method for Distillation of Crude Petroleum (15-Theoretical Plate Column)¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D 2892; 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.

1. Scope

1.1 This test method covers the procedure for the distillation of stabilized crude petroleum² to a final cut temperature of 400°C AET (Atmospheric Equivalent Temperature). The test method employs a fractionating column having an efficiency of 14 to 18 theoretical plates operated at a reflux ratio of 5:1. Performance criteria for the necessary equipment is specified. Some typical examples of acceptable apparatus are presented in schematic form. This test method offers a compromise between efficiency and time in order to facilitate the comparison of distillation data between laboratories.

1.2 The test method details procedures for the production of a liquified gas, distillate fractions, and residuum of standardized quality on which analytical data can be obtained, and the determination of yields of the above fractions by both mass and volume. From the above information, a graph of temperature versus mass % distilled can be produced. This distillation curve corresponds to a laboratory technique, which is defined at 15/5 (15 theoretical plate column, 5:1 reflux ratio) or TBP (true boiling point).

1.3 This test method can also be applied to any petroleum mixture except liquified petroleum gases, very light naphthas, and fractions having initial boiling points above 400°C.

1.4 This test method contains the following Annexes:

1.4.1 Annex A1—Test Method for the Determination of the Efficiency of a Distillation Column,

1.4.2 Annex A2—Test Method for the Determination of the Dynamic Holdup of a Distillation Column,

1.4.3 Annex A3—Test Method for the Determination of the Heat Loss in a Distillation Column (Static Conditions),

1.4.4 Annex A4—Test Method for the Verification of Temperature Sensor Location,

1.4.5 Annex A5—Test Method for Determination of the Temperature Response Time,

1.4.6 Annex A6—Practice for the Calibration of Sensors,

1.4.7 Annex A7—Test Method for the Verification of Reflux Dividing Valves,

1.4.8 Appendix X1—Test Method for Dehydration of a

Sample of Wet Crude Oil,

1.4.9 Annex A8—Practice for Conversion of Observed Vapor Temperature to Atmospheric Equivalent Temperature (AET), and

1.4.10 Annex A9—Practice for Performance Check.

1.5 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as standard. The values given in parentheses are provided for information purposes only.

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.* For specific precautionary notes, see Section 9.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*

D 941 Test Method for Density and Relative Density (Specific Gravity) of Liquids by Lipkin Bicapillary Pycnometer³

D 1217 Test Method for Density and Relative Density (Specific Gravity) of Liquids by Bingham Pycnometer⁴

D 1298 Test Method for Density, Relative Density (Specific Gravity), or API Gravity of Crude Petroleum and Liquid Petroleum Products by Hydrometer Method⁴

D 2427 Test Method for Determination of C₂ through C₅ Hydrocarbons in Gasolines by Gas Chromatography⁴

D 4006 Test Method for Water in Crude Oil by Distillation⁵

D 4052 Test Method for Density and Relative Density of Liquids by Digital Density Meter⁵

D 4057 Practice for Manual Sampling of Petroleum and Petroleum Products⁵

D 4177 Practice for Automatic Sampling of Petroleum and Petroleum Products⁵

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions:*

3.1.1 *adiabaticity*—the condition in which there is no significant gain or loss of heat throughout the length of the column.

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D-2 on Petroleum Products and Lubricants and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D02.08 on Volatility.

Current edition approved Nov. 10, 1999. Published January 2000. Originally published as D 2892 – 70 T. Last previous edition D 2892 – 99.

² Defined as having a Reid vapor pressure less than 82.7 kPa (12 psi).

³ Discontinued; see 1993 *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 05.01.

⁴ *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 05.01.

⁵ *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 05.02.

3.1.1.1 *Discussion*—When distilling a mixture of compounds as is the case of crude petroleum, there will be a normal increase in reflux ratio down the column. In the case where heat losses occur in the column, the internal reflux is abnormally greater than the reflux in the head. The opposite is true when the column gains heat, as with an overheated mantle.

3.1.2 *boilup rate*—the quantity of vapor entering the column per unit of time.

3.1.2.1 *Discussion*—It is expressed in millilitres of liquid per hour for a given column or in millilitres per hour per square centimetre of cross-sectional area for comparative purposes. In the latter case, it refers to the test mixture of *n*-heptane and methylcyclohexane in the efficiency evaluation (see Annex A1) and is measured at the bottom of the column. The maximum boilup of the *n*-heptane-methylcyclohexane test mixture is that which the column can handle under stable conditions without flooding. In routine adiabatic operation, the boilup rate can be estimated roughly from the takeoff rate multiplied by the reflux ratio plus one.

3.1.3 *debutanization of crude petroleum*—the removal of the light hydrocarbons up to and including *n*-butane, and retention of the heavier hydrocarbons.

3.1.3.1 *Discussion*—In practice, a crude petroleum is regarded as debutanized if the light hydrocarbon cut collected in the cold trap contains more than 95 % of the C₂ to C₄ hydrocarbons and less than 5 % of the C₅ hydrocarbons initially present in the sample.

3.1.4 *distillation pressure*—the pressure measured as close as possible to the point where the vapor temperature is taken,

normally at the top of the condenser.

3.1.5 *distillation temperature*—the temperature of the saturated vapor measured in the head just above the fractionating column.

3.1.5.1 *Discussion*—It is also known as the head temperature or the vapor temperature.

3.1.6 *dynamic hold-up*—the quantity of liquid held up in the column under normal operating conditions.

3.1.6.1 *Discussion*—It is expressed as a percentage of the packed volume for packed columns so that the data can be compared. For real plate columns, it is expressed in millilitres per plate. The data can only be compared with others of the same diameter because of different tray spacing. Data for packed columns cannot be compared with those of real plate columns except in absolute units of milliliters per theoretical plate (see Table 1). Dynamic hold-up increases with increasing distillation rate up to the flood point and varies from one kind of fractionator to another.

3.1.7 *flood point*—the point at which the velocity of the upflowing vapors obstructs the downcoming reflux and the column suddenly loads with liquid.

3.1.7.1 *Discussion*—Under these conditions no vapor can reach the head and the heat to the distillation flask must be reduced to establish normal operations again. The flood point is normally determined during the efficiency evaluation of a column using the *n*-heptane-methylcyclohexane test mixture (see Annex A1).

3.1.8 *internal reflux*—the liquid normally running down inside the column.

TABLE 1 Data for *n*-Heptane-Methylcyclohexane Test Mixture at 75 % of Maximum Boilup and 101.3 kPa (760 mm Hg)

	Propak ^{A,B,C,D,E}			Helipak ^{F,G,H}		Perforated Plates ^{E,I,J}		Wire Mesh ^{E,K}	
Column diameter, mm	25	50	70	25	50	25	50	25	50
Packing size, mm	4	6	6	No. 2917	No. 2918	NA ^L	NA ^L	NA ^L	NA ^L
Boilup, mL/h × cm ²	650	670	675	300	350	640	660	810	1050
Dynamic holdup									
% of packed volume	17	15.3	17.0	15	14.3	NA ^L	NA ^L	8.0	10.0
mL/theoretical plate	3.2	16	39	1.6	8.7	2.8	12.3	2.0	12.9
Pressure drop									
kPa/m	1.2	1.05	0.94	1.53	1.41	NA ^L	NA ^L	0.97	0.75
mm Hg/m	9.0	7.9	7.1	11.5	10.6	NA ^L	NA ^L	7.3	5.6
kPa/theoretical plate	0.045	0.056	0.06	0.03	0.045	0.15	0.16	0.05	0.05
mm Hg/theoretical plate	0.34	0.42	0.43	0.24	0.34	1.1	1.2	0.35	0.37
HETP, mm (% of real plates)	38	53	61	21	32	(60 %)	(65 %)	48	66
For 15-plate Towers									
Packed height, cm (plates)	57	80	91	31.5	48	(25)	(23)	72	99
Packed volume, mL	280	1570	3460	155	917	NA ^L	NA ^L	353	1940
Dynamic holdup, mL	47	240	590	23	131	42	184	28	194
Pressure drop									
kPa	0.68	0.84	0.86	0.48	0.68	2.2	2.4	0.70	0.73
mm Hg	5.1	6.3	6.5	3.6	5.1	16.5	18.0	5.3	5.5
Charge volume, L									
Min (4 % Holdup)	1.2	6.0	15	0.575	3.3	1.0	4.6	0.7	4.9
Max (1 % Holdup)	4.8	24.0	60	2.3	13.0	4.2	10.4	2.8	19.4

^ACooke, G. M. and Jameson, B. G. *Analytical Chemistry*, Vol 27, 1955, p. 1798.

^BStruck, R. T. and Kinner, C. R. *Industrial and Engineering Chemistry*, Vol 42, 1950, p. 77.

^CCannon, M. R. *Industrial and Engineering Chemistry*, Vol 41, No. 9, 1949, p. 1953.

^DBulletin 23, Scientific Development Co. P.O. Box 795, State College, PA 16801.

^ECooke, G. M. *Analytical Chemistry*, Vol 39, 1967, p. 286.

^FBulletin of Podbielniak Div. of Reliance Glass Works, P.O. Box 825, Bensenville, IL 60106.

^GFeldman, J., et al, *Industrial and Engineering Chemistry*, Vol 45, January 1953, p. 214.

^HHelipak Performance Characteristics, Begemear, C. R. and Turkal, P. J. (Laboratory Report of Podbielniak Inc.), 1950.

^IUmholtz, C. L. and Van Winkle, M. *Petroleum Refiner*, Vol 34, 1955, p. 114 for NH:MCH.

^JPressure Drop Calculated from data obtained on *o*- and *m*-xylene binary.

^KOldershaw, C. F. *Industrial and Engineering Chemistry*, Vol 13, 1941, p. 265.

^LBragg, L. B. *Industrial and Engineering Chemistry*, Vol 49, 1957, p. 1062.

^LNA = not applicable.

3.1.8.1 *Discussion*—In the case of an adiabatic column when distilling a pure compound, the internal reflux is constant from top to bottom and is equal to the reflux at the reflux divider. When distilling crude petroleum, the fractionation occurring in the dynamic holdup will cause a temperature gradient to be established with attendant greater amount of internal reflux at the bottom of the column.

3.1.9 *pressure drop*—the difference between the pressure measured in the condenser and the pressure measured in the distillation flask.

3.1.9.1 *Discussion*—It is expressed in kilopascals (mm Hg) per metre of packed height for packed columns, or kilopascals (mm Hg) overall for real plate columns. It is higher for aromatics than for paraffins, and for higher molecular weights than for lighter molecules, at a given boilup rate.

3.1.10 *reflux ratio, R*—the ratio of reflux to distillate.

3.1.10.1 *Discussion*—The vapor reaching the top of the column is totally condensed and the resulting liquid is divided into two parts. One part *L* (reflux), is returned to the column and the other part, *D* (distillate), is withdrawn as product. The reflux ratio ($R = L/D$), can vary from zero at total takeoff ($L = 0$) to infinity at total reflux ($D = 0$).

3.1.11 *static hold-up or wettag*e—the quantity of liquid retained in the column after draining at the end of a distillation.

3.1.11.1 *Discussion*—It is characteristic of the packing or the design of the plates, and depends on the composition of the material in the column at the final cut point and on the final temperature.

3.1.12 *takeoff rate*—the rate of product takeoff from the reflux divider expressed in millilitres per hour.

3.1.13 *theoretical plate*—the section of a column required to achieve thermodynamic equilibrium between a liquid and its vapor.

3.1.13.1 *Discussion*—The height equivalent to one theoretical plate (HETP) for packed columns is expressed in millimetres. In the case of real plate columns, the efficiency is expressed as the percentage of one theoretical plate that is achieved on one real plate.

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 A weighed sample of 1 to 30 L of stabilized crude petroleum is distilled to a maximum temperature of 400°C AET in a fractionating column having an efficiency at total reflux of at least 14, but not greater than, 18 theoretical plates.

4.2 A reflux ratio of 5:1 is maintained at all operating pressures, except that at the lowest operating pressures between 0.674 and 0.27 kPa (5 and 2 mmHg), a reflux ratio of 2:1 is optional. In cooperative testing or in cases of dispute, the stages of low pressure, the reflux ratios, and the temperatures of cut points must be mutually agreed upon by the interested parties prior to beginning the distillation.

4.3 Observations of temperature, pressure, and other variables are recorded at intervals and at the end of each cut or fraction.

4.4 The mass and density of each cut or fraction are obtained. Distillation yields by mass are calculated from the mass of all fractions, including liquified gas cut and the residue. Distillation yields by volume of all fractions and the residue at 15°C are calculated from mass and density.

4.5 From these data the TBP curves in mass or volume %, or both, versus AET are drawn.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 This test method is one of a number of tests conducted on a crude oil to determine its value. It provides an estimate of the yields of fractions of various boiling ranges and is therefore valuable in technical discussions of a commercial nature.

5.2 This test method corresponds to the standard laboratory distillation efficiency referred to as 15/5. The fractions produced can be analyzed as produced or combined to produce samples for analytical studies, engineering and product quality evaluations. The preparation and evaluation of such blends is not part of this test method.

5.3 This test method can be used as an analytical tool for examination of other petroleum mixtures with the exception of LPG, very light naphthas, and mixtures with initial boiling points above 400°C.

6. Apparatus

6.1 *Distillation at Atmospheric Pressure*—All components must conform to the requirements specified below. Automatic devices can be employed provided they meet the same requirements. A typical apparatus is illustrated in Fig. 1.

6.1.1 *Distillation Flask*—The distillation flask shall be of a size that is at least 50 % larger than the volume of the charge. The size of the charge, between 1.0 and 30 L, is determined by the holdup characteristics of the fractionating column, as shown in Table 1 and described in Annex A2. The distillation flask shall have at least one sidearm.

6.1.1.1 The sidearm is used as a thermowell. It shall terminate about 5 mm from the bottom of the flask to ensure its immersion at the end of the distillation. When a second sidearm is present, it can be used for pressure drop detection with a nitrogen bleed or for mechanical stirring, or both.

6.1.1.2 If a magnetic stirrer is used with a spherical flask, the flask shall have a slightly flattened or concave area at the bottom on which the magnetic stirrer can rotate without grinding the glass. In this case, termination of the thermowell shall be off center 40 ± 5 mm to avoid the magnetic stirring bar. Boiling chips can be used as an alternative to a stirrer.

6.1.1.3 **Warning**—While the advantage of visibility in glass distillation flasks is desirable, flasks of glass may become hazardous the larger the charge they contain. For this reason, glass flasks of a volume greater than 10 L are not recommended.

6.1.2 *Heating System*—Heating of the flask shall be provided in such a way that full boilup can be maintained at a steady rate at all pressure levels. An electric heating mantle covering the lower half of the flask and having one third of the heat in an element located in the bottom central area and the remaining two thirds in the rest of the hemisphere is recommended. While proportioning controllers are preferred, heat input can be manually adjusted by use of a variable auto transformer on each circuit, the smaller heater being automatically controlled by an instrument sensing the pressure drop of the column as registered in a differential pressure instrument or alternatively by direct measurement of distillation rate.

6.1.2.1 Minimum wattage required to provide full boilup of

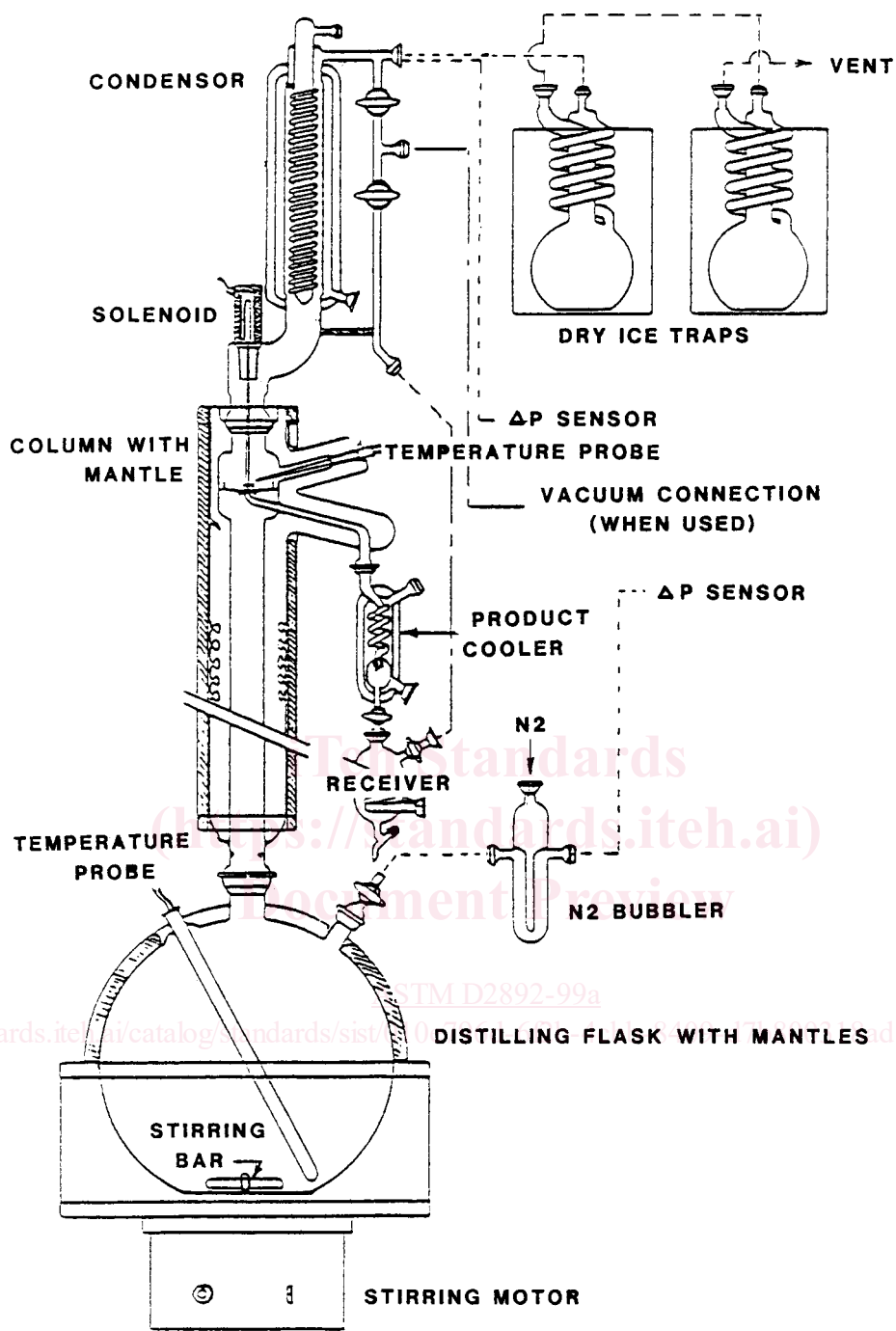


FIG. 1 Apparatus

crude petroleum is approximately 0.125 W/mL of charge. Twice this amount is recommended for quick heat-up.

6.1.2.2 The heat density in the flask heaters is approximately equal to 0.5 to 0.6 W/cm². This requires the use of nickel reinforced quartz fabric to ensure a reasonable service life.

6.1.2.3 Immersion heaters can be employed in a similar way and have the advantage of faster response, but they are more fragile and require a specially designed flask to ensure that the heating elements remain immersed at the end of the run. When used, their heat density should be approximately equal to 4 W/cm².

6.1.2.4 The upper half of the flask shall be covered with a mantle to avoid unnecessary heat losses from the upper surface and shall have an electric heater supplying about 0.25 W/cm² at full-rated voltage.

6.1.3 *Fractionating Column*—The fractionating column must contain either particulate packing or real plates similar to those whose performance characteristics are summarized in Table 1 and meet the specifications stated in 6.1.3.1 through 6.1.3.4. Table 2 lists current North American suppliers of suitable packings.

6.1.3.1 The internal diameter shall be between 25 and 70 mm.

TABLE 2 North American Sources of Commercially Available Packing Materials

Name	Size	Source
Propak	6 by 6 mm	Scientific Development Co. P.O. Box 795 State College, PA 16801
Helipak	2.5 by 4 mm	Reliance Glass Works Inc. P.O. Box 825 Bensenville, IL 60106
Perforated plates	25 and 50 mm	Reliance Glass Works Inc. P.O. Box 825 Bensenville, IL 60106 W.A. Sales Inc. 419 Harvester Ct. Wheeling, IL 60090
Knitted wire mesh- Goodloe multiknit		Pegasus Industrial Specialties Ltd. P.O. Box 319 Agincourt, Ontario MIS 3B9 Canada Packed Column Co. 970 New Durham Rd. Edison, NJ 08817

6.1.3.2 The efficiency shall be between 14 and 18 theoretical plates at total reflux when measured by the procedure described in Annex A1.

6.1.3.3 The fractionating column shall be comprised of a integral glass column and reflux divider totally enclosed in a highly reflective vacuum jacket having a permanent vacuum of less than 0.1 mPa ($\sim 10^{-6}$ mm Hg). It shall be essentially adiabatic when tested in accordance with Annex A3.

6.1.3.4 The column shall be enclosed in a heat insulating system, such as a glass-fabric mantle, capable of maintaining the temperature of the outer wall of the glass vacuum jacket equal to that of the internal vapor temperature. To verify this, the vacuum jacket shall have a temperature sensor, such as a thermocouple, soldered to about 6 cm² of thin copper or brass sheet and fastened to the outer wall of the glass jacket at a level just below the reflux divider.

NOTE 1—For certain types of columns there is no significant difference in yields and fraction qualities between an uncompensated and a heat compensated column. In such a case, by mutual agreement between parties concerned, the application of a heated insulating system can be omitted.

6.1.3.5 The adjustable reflux divider shall be located about one column diameter above the top of the packing or topmost plate. It must be capable of dividing the condensate with an accuracy of better than 90 % between the column and the takeoff line over a range of rates between 25 and 95 % of the maximum boilup rate of the column when determined in accordance with Annex A7.

6.1.4 *Condenser*—The condenser shall have sufficient capacity to condense essentially all the C₄ and C₅ vapors from the crude at the specified rate, using a coolant temperature of -20°C .

6.1.5 *Cold Traps*—Two efficient traps of adequate capacity cooled by dry ice and alcohol mixture shall be connected in series to the vent line of the condenser when light hydrocarbons are present, as at the beginning of the distillation. For vacuum distillation, a Dewar style trap also cooled by dry ice is used to protect the vacuum gage from vapors.

6.1.6 *Gas Collector*—If uncondensed gas is to be measured, a gas meter can be connected to the outlet of the cold trap but

with a calcium chloride drying tube between them to keep moisture from collecting in the traps. When analysis of the gas sample is required, the gas can be collected in an empty plastic balloon of suitable size either in place of the meter or following it. The volume of its contents can be determined by calculation from the rise in pressure after expanding the sample into an evacuated vessel of known volume.

6.1.7 *Fraction Collector*—This part of the apparatus permits the collection of the distillate without interruption during withdrawal of product from the receiver under atmospheric or reduced pressure. It also permits removal of product from the vacuum system, without disturbing conditions in the column.

6.1.8 *Product Receivers*—The receivers shall be of suitable size for the quantity of crude petroleum being distilled. The recommended capacity is from 100 to 500 mL. They shall be calibrated and graduated to permit reading to the nearest 1 %.

6.2 *Distillation Under Reduced Pressure*—In addition to the apparatus listed in 6.1, the apparatus for distillation under reduced pressure shall include the following:

6.2.1 *Vacuum Pump*—The vacuum system shall be capable of maintaining smooth pressure operation at all pressure levels. It shall have the capacity to draw down the pressure in the receiver(s) from atmospheric to 0.25 kPa (2 mm Hg) in less than 30 s so as to avoid disturbance of the system during emptying of receivers under vacuum. Alternatively, a separate pump can be employed for this purpose.

6.2.2 *Vacuum Gage*—The point of connection of the vacuum gage to the system shall be as close as practical to the reflux dividing head. The connecting tubing shall be of sufficient diameter to ensure that no measurable pressure drop occurs in the line. In no case shall the vacuum gage connection be near the vacuum pump.

6.2.2.1 All gages shall be carefully protected from condensable vapors, especially water vapor, by a cold trap maintained at the temperature of dry ice.

6.2.3 *Pressure Regulator*—The regulator shall maintain the pressure in the system essentially constant at all operating pressures. Automatic regulation can be achieved by a device that regulates the demand on the vacuum source. A satisfactory device is a solenoid valve positioned between the vacuum source and a surge tank of at least 10-L capacity. Alternatively, a manual bleed valve can be maintained by a trained operator with a minimum of attention.

6.3 *Sensing and Recording Apparatus:*

6.3.1 *Temperature Sensors*—Only temperature measurement systems meeting the requirements of 6.3.1.1 and 6.3.1.2 shall be used.

6.3.1.1 The vapor temperature sensor can be a platinum resistance thermometer, a Type J thermocouple with the junction head fused to the lower tip of the thermowell, or any other device that meets the requirements in this paragraph and 6.3.1.2. The tip of the sensor shall be located above the top of the packing or the topmost glass plate and in close proximity to the reflux divider but not in contact with the liquid reflux. The location of the vapor temperature sensor shall be proved by the method described in Annex A4. The sensor shall have a cooling time of not more than 175 s, as described in Annex A5.

6.3.1.2 The vapor temperature measuring device shall have

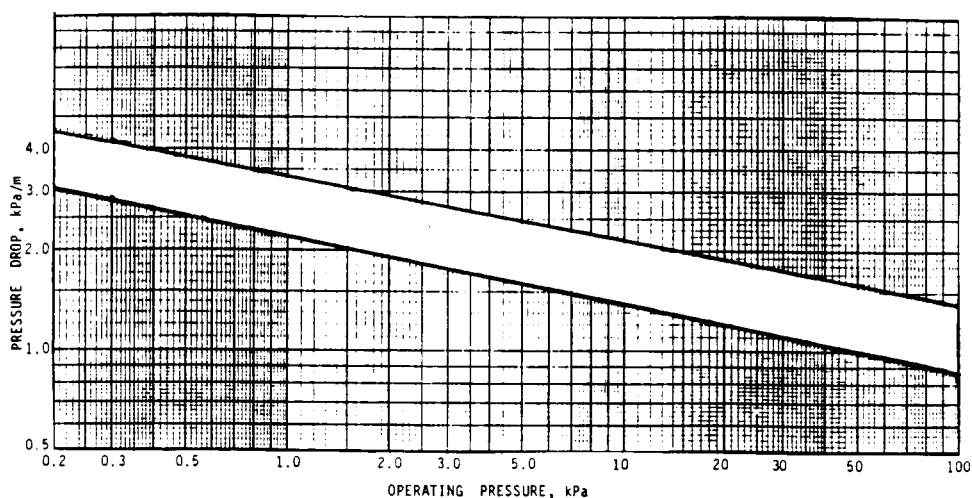


FIG. 2 Approximate Pressure Drop-Fractionators Using Propak

an accuracy of 0.5°C or better and be measured with a resolution of 0.1°C or better. The liquid temperature measuring device shall have an accuracy of 1.0°C or better and be measured with a resolution of 0.5°C or better. Temperatures are recorded either manually or automatically.

6.3.1.3 Temperature sensors shall be calibrated as described in Annex A6. Alternatively certified sensors may be used, provided the calibration of the sensor and its associated recording instrument can be traced back to a primary temperature standard. Temperature sensors are calibrated over the full range of temperature (0 to 400°C) at the time of first use of the sensor in combination with its associated instrument. Recalibrate when either the sensor or the instrument is repaired or serviced. Verification of the calibration of the temperature sensors is to be made on a regular basis. For vapor temperature sensors, verification at least once a month is recommended and for liquid temperature sensors once every six months. Verification of the calibration of the sensors can be accomplished potentiometrically by the use of standard precision resistance or by distilling a pure compound with accurately known boiling point.

6.3.2 *Vacuum Gage*—A nontilting McLeod gage or a mercury manometer are primary standards and can be used without calibration when properly used and maintained. A mercury manometer, however, will only be of satisfactory accuracy down to a pressure of about 1 kPa and then only when read with a good cathetometer (an instrument based on a telescope mounted on a vernier scale to determine levels very accurately). Alternatively, a tensimeter or certified electronic sensors may be used, provided the calibration of the sensor and its associated recording instrument can be traced back to a primary pressure standard. Sensors of the diaphragm type have been found satisfactory. Vacuum gages based on hot wires, radiation, or electrical conductivity detectors are not recommended.

6.3.2.1 The gage for measuring subatmospheric pressures shall have an accuracy at least equal to that stated below:

Distillation Pressure		Accuracy	
kPa	mmHg	kPa	mmHg
100-13.3	760 to 100	0.13	1.0

13.3-1.33	99 to 10	0.013	0.1
1.33-0.266	9 to 2	0.006	0.06

6.3.2.2 Noncertified gages shall be calibrated from a nontilting McLeod gage or a secondary electronic standard traceable to a primary standard. A basic calibration procedure is described in Annex A6. Recalibrate when either the sensor or the instrument is repaired or serviced. Verification of the calibration of the electronic pressure sensors is to be made on a regular basis. A frequency of at least once a month is recommended. Verification of the calibration of the sensors can be accomplished using the procedures described in Annex A6 or against a certified reference system.

6.3.3 *Boilup Rate*—The boilup rate is normally controlled by sensing the pressure drop in the column. The pressure drop during operation is measured by means of a manometer or pressure transducer connected between the flask and the condenser. Prevention of condensation in the connecting tube can be accomplished by injecting a very small flow of nitrogen (8 cm³/s) between the pressure drop sensor manometer and the flask (see Fig. 1) or by placing a small water cooled condenser between the flask and the pressure drop sensor. Alternatively, the boilup rate can be controlled from the measurement of take off rate.

7. Sampling

7.1 Obtain a sample for distillation in accordance with instructions given in Practice D 4057 or D 4177. The sample must be received in a sealed container and show no evidence of leakage.

7.2 Cool the sample to between 0 and 5°C by placing it in a refrigerator for several hours (preferably overnight) before opening.

7.3 If the sample appears waxy or too viscous, raise the temperature to 5°C above its pour point.

7.4 Agitate the sample by whatever means are appropriate to its size to ensure that it is well-mixed.

7.5 Determine the water content of the sample by Test Method D 4006 or any other suitable method. If the water content exceeds 0.3 % volume, the sample shall be dehydrated

prior to fractional distillation. A suitable practice for dehydration of wet crude oil samples is described in Appendix X1.

NOTE 2—Attempts to distill wet crude oil samples in glass columns might result in breakage of the glassware, which poses a potential fire hazard. Moreover, the presence of water will effect the accuracy of distillation yield in the naphtha region. These effects are more pronounced for heavy crude oils, containing low amounts of hydrocarbons boiling below 100°C, than for light crudes where there is usually sufficient hydrocarbon vapor generated to form an azeotrope and drive the water vapors through the column without problems.

8. Preparation of Apparatus

8.1 Clean and dry the distillation column and all the ancillary glass apparatus before the distillation begins.

8.2 Ensure that the system is leak-free and all heaters, control devices, and instruments are on and in working order. A clock or other timing device should be ready for use.

9. Procedure

9.1 Charging:

9.1.1 The charge size shall be such that the dynamic hold-up as determined in accordance with Annex A2 is between 1 and 4 % of the charge when operating at 75 % of maximum boilup (see Table 1). Chill the flask to a temperature not lower than 0°C.

9.1.2 Insert the stirring device or place some pieces of glass or porcelain into the flask to control bumping.

9.1.3 Determine the density of the sample by Test Method D 941, D 1217, or D 1298.

9.1.4 Calculate to within ± 5 % the mass of crude petroleum corresponding to the desired volume of the charge. Weigh to the nearest 1 % this quantity of sample into the flask.

9.1.5 Attach the flask to the column and connect the pressure drop measuring device. Install the heating system, stirrer, and support device. (**Warning**—Poisonous H₂S gas is frequently evolved from crude oil and precautions must be taken either to absorb the gas that passes through the cold trap or to vent it to a safe place.)

9.2 Debutanization:

9.2.1 For necessary apparatus refer to 6.1.5 and 6.1.6.

9.2.2 Begin circulation of refrigerant at a temperature no higher than -20°C in the condenser, distillate cooler, and receiver, if so equipped.

9.2.3 Record the barometric pressure at the beginning and periodically throughout the distillation.

9.2.4 Apply heat to the flask at such a rate that vapors reach the top of the column between 20 and 50 min after startup. Adjust heat input so as to achieve a pressure drop of less than 0.13 kPa/m (1.0 mm Hg/m) in packed columns or less than 0.065 kPa (0.5 mm Hg) in real plate columns. Program automated equipment in accordance with the above directions. Turn on the stirring device if used.

9.2.5 Allow the column to operate at total reflux until the vapor temperature reaches equilibrium but not longer than 15 min after the first drop of condensate appears in the reflux divider.

9.2.6 Record the vapor temperature as the initial vapor temperature.

9.2.7 Stop the circulation of the refrigerant and observe the vapor temperature. When the vapor temperature reaches 15°C,

start the circulation of refrigerant again.

9.2.8 If the vapor temperature drops below 15°C, continue refluxing for at least 15 min. Repeat 9.2.7. If the vapor temperature remains at 15°C or rises, continue with the atmospheric distillation. (**Warning**—The following three steps should not be done until after the first naphtha cut has been removed to ensure that all the light gases have been recovered.)

9.2.9 Remove and weigh the dry ice traps containing light hydrocarbon liquid after carefully wiping them dry.

9.2.10 Sample the contents of the first dry ice trap using a 10 to 50 mL pressure vessel evacuated to no lower than 26.6 kPa (200 mm Hg). Keep all containers at the temperature of dry ice to ensure no loss of volatiles. The first trap next to the condenser should contain all of the sample. If condensate is found in the second trap, sample both traps or else combine the contents before sampling.

9.2.11 Submit the trap sample and gas balloon, if used, for analysis by Test Method D 2427 to be reported on a fixed-gas free basis.

9.3 Distillation at Atmospheric Pressure:

9.3.1 Maintain a temperature below -20°C in the lines of the distillate cooler and receiver as well as in the condenser. Turn on the column mantle heat controller and maintain the column jacket temperature 0 to 5°C below the vapor temperature.

9.3.2 Regulate the heat input as necessary to establish and maintain a boilup rate approximately 75 % of maximum. Fig. 3 and Fig. 4 can be used as a guide for Propak. Rates for other sizes can be estimated by multiplying the boilup rate in Table 1 by the cross-sectional area of the column and dividing by the sum of the reflux ratio + 1.

9.3.3 Commence takeoff at a reflux ratio of 5:1 and total cycle time of not over 30 s nor less than 18 s.

9.3.4 Take off distillate in separate and consecutive fractions of suitable size. The recommended size of fraction is that

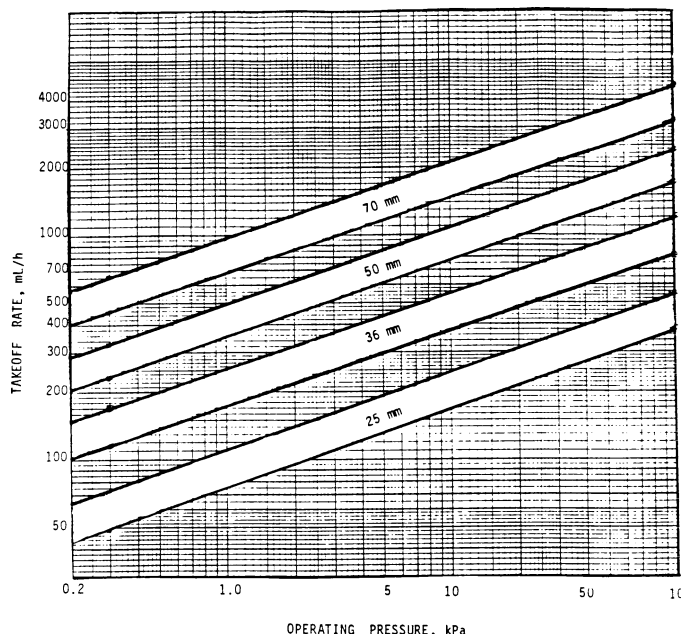


FIG. 3 Expected Takeoff Rates at 5:1 Reflux Ratio for Fractionators Using Propak

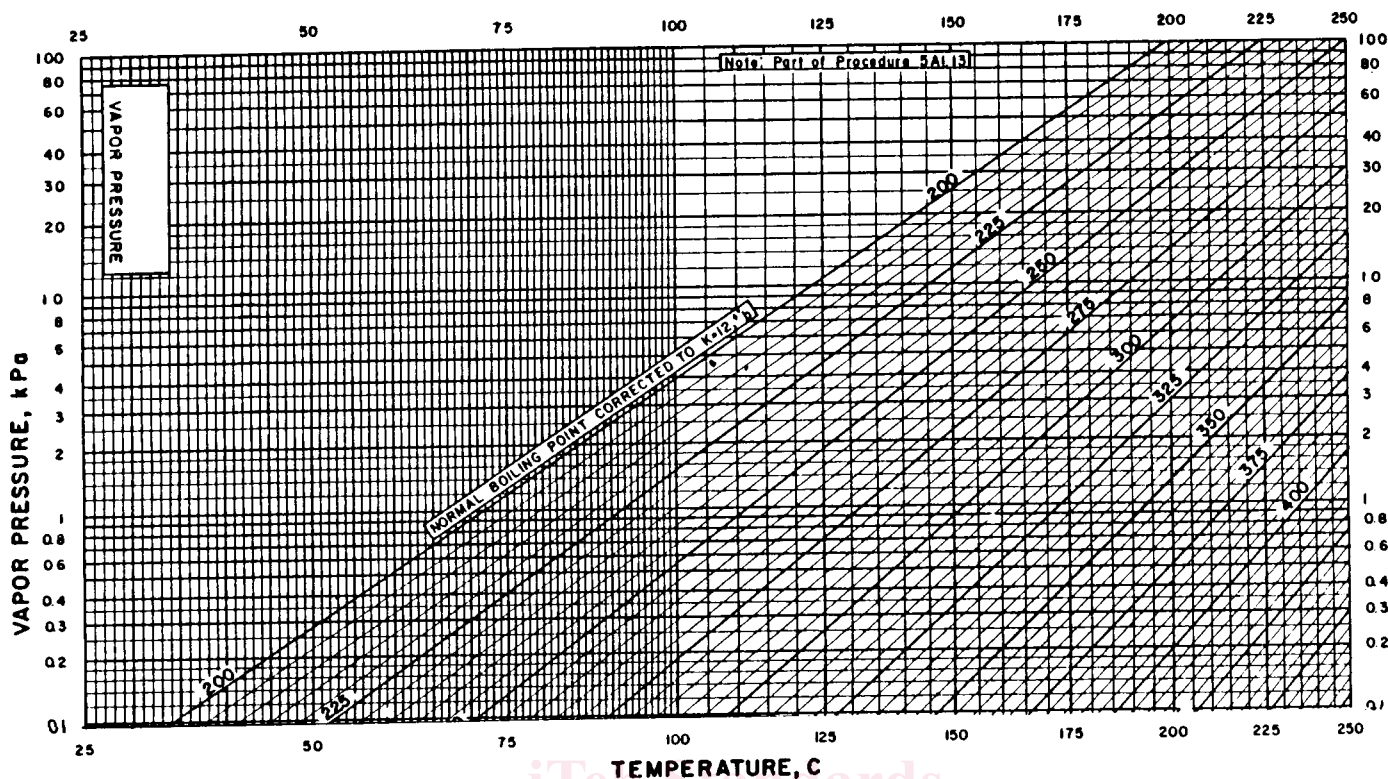


FIG. 4 Vapor Correction Chart

corresponding to 5 or 10°C in vapor temperature. Collect fractions boiling below 65°C in receivers cooled to 0°C or below. When the vapor temperature reaches 65°C, refrigerant in the condenser and related coolers can be discontinued and water at ambient temperature substituted.

9.3.5 At the end of each fraction and at each cut point, record the following observations:

- 9.3.5.1 Time in hours and minutes,
- 9.3.5.2 Volume in millilitres,
- 9.3.5.3 Vapor temperature in °C to the nearest 0.5°C,
- 9.3.5.4 Temperature of the boiling liquid in °C to the nearest 1°C,
- 9.3.5.5 Atmospheric pressure in kPa (mm Hg), and
- 9.3.5.6 Pressure drop in the column in kPa (mm Hg).

9.3.6 If signs of flooding are observed, reduce the heating rate while continuing takeoff until steady conditions are restored. If a cut point is encountered during this period, stop the distillation, cool the charge, and recombine the off-condition cuts. Restart the distillation with a period at total reflux, not to exceed 15 min, to restore operating conditions before continuing takeoff. Do not make a cut within 5°C of startup.

9.3.7 Continue taking cuts until the desired maximum vapor temperature is reached or until the charge shows signs of cracking. Pronounced cracking is evidenced by a fog appearing in the flask and later at the reflux divider. Do not allow the vapor temperature to exceed 210°C nor the temperature of the boiling liquid to exceed 310°C.

9.3.8 Shut off the reflux valve and the heating system. Allow the contents to cool to such a temperature that the distillation can be commenced at 13.3 kPa (100 mm Hg) without flooding.

This temperature can be estimated by adding the ΔT between the liquid and vapor temperatures found for the column during atmospheric operation to the expected initial vapor temperature at the reduced pressure, or by subtracting the ΔT from the last recorded liquid temperature.

NOTE 3—Cooling of the liquid in the flask can be accelerated by blowing a gentle stream of compressed air onto the flask after its heating mantle has been removed. Avoid strong jets of cold air. Alternately, turn on coolant in the quench coil of the flask, if used.

- 9.3.9 Weigh all fractions and determine their densities.
- 9.3.10 Submit the first distillate fraction for analysis by gas chromatography.

9.4 Distillation at 13.3 kPa (100 mm Hg):

9.4.1 If further cuts at higher temperatures are required, distillation can be continued at reduced pressures, subject to the maximum temperature that the boiling liquid will stand without significant cracking. This is about 310°C in most cases. Notable exceptions are crude oils containing heat-sensitive sulfur compounds. In any case, do not make a cut within 5°C of the temperature at startup because the column will not be at equilibrium.

9.4.2 Connect a vacuum pumping and control system to the apparatus as shown in Fig. 1.

9.4.3 Start the vacuum pump and adjust the pressure downward gradually to the value of 13.3 kPa (100 mm Hg) or set the pressure regulator at this value. The temperature of the liquid in the flask must be below that at which it will boil at 13.3 kPa (100 mm Hg). If the liquid boils before this pressure is reached, increase the pressure and cool further until the desired pressure can be achieved without boiling.

9.4.4 Apply heat to the boiler and reestablish reflux at any moderate rate in the reflux divider for about 15 min to reheat the column to operating temperature. Momentarily stop heat input and raise the pressure with N₂ for 1 min to drop the holdup into the distillation flask.

9.4.5 Reapply heat to the distillation flask and adjust the rate of heating to maintain a constant pressure drop equivalent to the boilup rate of approximately 75 % of the maximum rate for this pressure and begin takeoff without delay. The approximate pressure drops required for this purpose are indicated in Fig. 3. Maintain a column insulation temperature 0 to 5°C below the vapor temperature throughout the operation.

9.4.6 Remove separately, cuts of suitable size as in 9.3.4.

9.4.7 At the end of each distillate fraction and at each cut point, record the following observations:

9.4.7.1 Time in hours and minutes,

9.4.7.2 Volume in millilitres observed at ambient temperature,

9.4.7.3 Vapor temperature in °C to the nearest 0.5°C with correction, if any,

9.4.7.4 Temperature of the boiling liquid in °C to the nearest 1°C,

9.4.7.5 Pressure drop in the column in kPa (mm Hg),

9.4.7.6 Operating pressure measured at the top of the column in kPa (mm Hg) absolute with correction, if any, and

9.4.7.7 AET using Table 3. If AET cannot be obtained from Table 3, it must be calculated from the equation in Annex A8. Fig. 5 is provided only as a guide in estimating the cut points during distillation.

9.4.8 Continue taking cuts until the desired maximum point is reached or until the charge shows signs of cracking. Pronounced cracking is evidenced by the evolution of gases as indicated by rising pressure as well as a fog appearing in the flask (see Note 3). Do not allow the temperature of the boiling liquid to exceed 310°C. (**Warning**—Automatic vacuum controllers could mask a slight rise in pressure due to cracking. Vigilance is required to avoid this.)

9.4.9 Shut off the reflux valve and the heating system. Allow

the contents to cool to such a temperature that the distillation can be commenced at a lower pressure without boiling. This temperature can be estimated by adding the ΔT between the liquid and vapor temperatures found for the column during operation to the expected initial vapor temperature at the lower pressure, or by subtracting the ΔT from the last recorded liquid temperature.

9.4.10 Weigh all fractions and determine their densities at 15°C.

9.5 Distillation at Lower Pressures:

9.5.1 If the final cut point has not been reached, distillation can be continued at a lower pressure subject to the same limitation as before (see 9.4.1). Only one pressure level between 13.3 kPa (100 mm Hg) and 0.266 kPa (2 mm Hg) is permitted. Where the maximum cut point is 400°C AET, the minimum pressure is recommended.

9.5.2 Adjust the pressure to the desired level. If the liquid boils before the pressure is reached, increase the pressure and cool further until the desired pressure can be achieved without boiling. Follow the procedure in 9.4.4.

9.5.3 Circulate cooling water in the condenser and liquid cooler either at ambient temperature or warmed to a temperature that will ensure that wax does not crystallize in the condenser or takeoff lines. Alternatively, leave the cooling coils full of water but vented and not circulating, or else circulate a stream of air instead of water as a coolant.

9.5.4 Continue vacuum operation as in 9.4.5 through 9.4.8. During this operation, a reflux ratio of 2:1 is allowed if mutually agreed upon in advance and noted in the report. Convert observed and corrected vapor temperatures to atmospheric equivalents using Table 4 or Table 5 or Annex A8. Fig. 5 is provided only as a guide in estimating the cut points during distillation.

9.5.5 Check periodically that the condensate drips normally in the condenser and that the distillate flows smoothly into the takeoff line. If crystallization is observed, allow the coolant in the condenser to warm as in 9.5.3.

9.5.6 When the final cut point has been reached, or when

TABLE 3 Conversion of Temperatures to Atmospheric Equivalent from Measurements at 13.3 kPa (100 mm Hg)

Temperature, °C	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
50	108.5	109.7	110.8	112.0	113.1	114.2	115.4	116.5	117.6	118.8
60	119.9	121.0	122.2	123.3	124.4	125.6	126.7	127.9	129.0	130.1
70	131.3	132.4	133.5	134.7	135.8	136.9	138.0	139.2	140.3	141.4
80	142.6	143.7	144.8	146.0	147.1	148.2	149.4	150.5	151.6	152.7
90	153.9	155.0	156.1	157.2	158.4	159.5	160.6	161.8	162.9	164.0
100	165.1	166.3	167.4	168.5	169.6	170.8	171.9	173.0	174.1	175.3
110	176.4	177.5	178.6	179.7	180.9	182.0	183.1	184.2	185.4	186.5
120	187.6	188.7	189.8	191.0	192.1	193.2	194.3	195.4	196.6	197.7
130	198.8	199.9	201.0	202.1	203.3	204.4	205.5	206.6	207.7	208.8
140	210.0	211.1	212.2	213.3	214.4	215.5	216.6	217.8	218.9	220.0
150	221.1	223.2	223.3	224.4	225.6	226.7	227.8	228.9	230.0	231.1
160	232.2	233.3	234.4	235.6	236.7	237.8	238.9	240.0	241.1	242.2
170	243.3	244.4	245.5	246.6	247.7	248.9	250.0	251.1	252.2	253.3
180	254.4	255.5	256.6	257.7	258.8	259.9	261.0	262.1	263.2	264.3
190	265.4	266.5	267.6	268.7	269.8	270.9	272.0	273.2	274.3	275.4
200	276.5	277.6	278.7	279.8	280.9	282.0	283.1	284.2	285.3	286.4
210	287.5	288.5	289.6	290.7	291.8	292.9	294.0	295.1	296.2	297.2
220	298.4	299.5	300.6	301.7	302.8	303.9	305.0	306.1	307.2	308.6
230	309.4	310.5	311.6	312.7	313.7	314.8	315.9	317.0	318.1	319.2
240	320.3	321.4	322.5	323.6	324.7	325.8	326.8	327.9	329.0	330.1
250	331.2	332.3	333.4	334.5	335.6	336.6	337.7	338.8	339.9	341.0

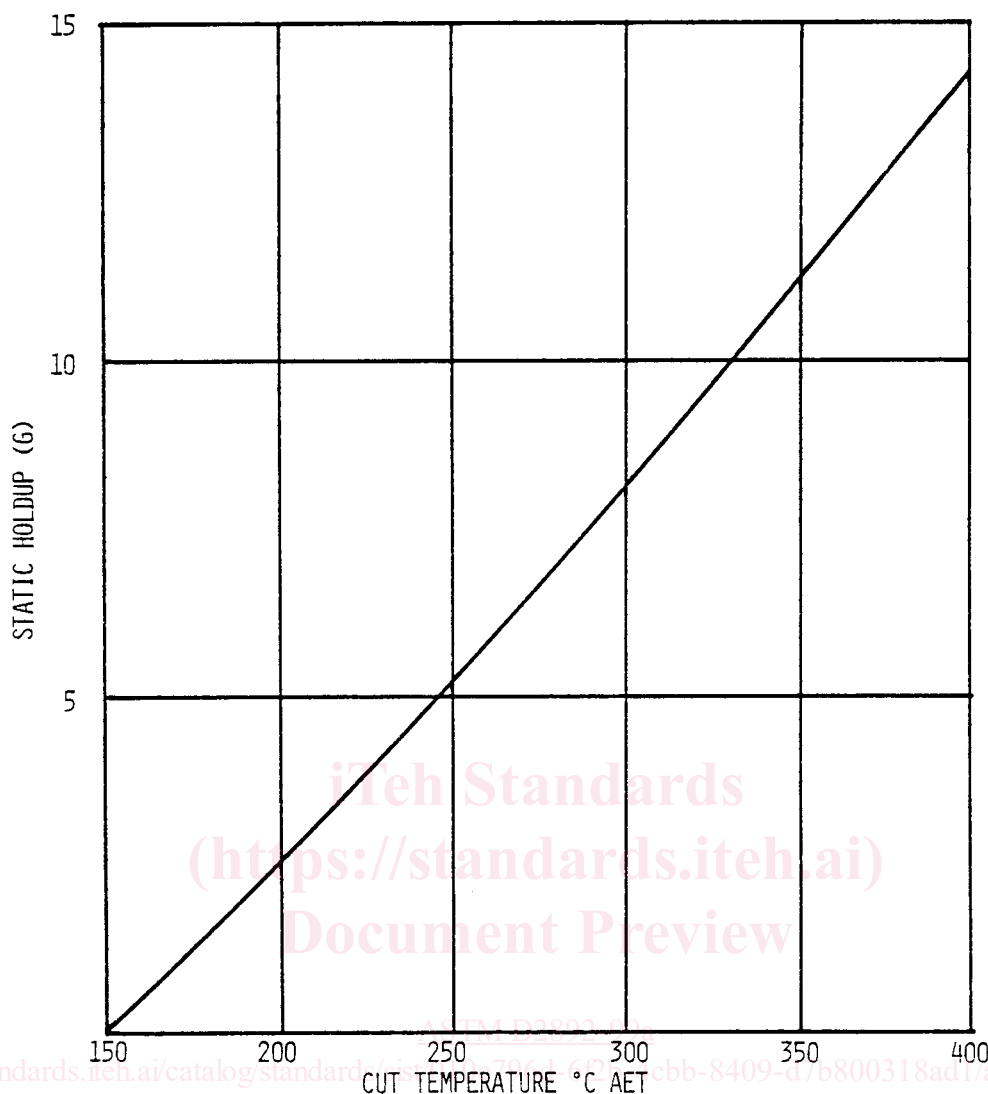


FIG. 5 Approximate Static Holdup for Average Crude Oil Using 4 mm Propak in a 25-mm ID × 570-mm Column

limits of boiling liquid temperature and column pressure prevent further distillation, turn off the reflux valve and heating system and allow to cool with the vacuum still applied.

9.5.7 When the temperature of the residue in the flask has fallen below 230°C, shut off the vacuum pump. Vent the fractionating unit with nitrogen or other inert gas. Do not use air. (**Warning**—Air is suspected of initiating explosions in fractionating units that are vented while too hot, such as at the end of a run.)

9.5.8 Stop circulation of coolant in the condenser and ancillary equipment. Disconnect the flask. Recover the static holdup of the column (wettage) by distilling a small quantity of solvent such as toluene in a separate flask to wash the column, condenser, and takeoff system. Evaporate the solvent from the collected residue at 10°C above the boiling point of the solvent, using a small purge of nitrogen. For distillations not involving disagreement, or by mutual consent, the holdup can be estimated using a graph similar to Fig. 5. The density of the holdup is estimated by extrapolation of the density line for the preceding cuts. The static holdup can be treated as a separate small cut or blended into the bottoms before inspections are

made. The latter must be done if other analyses besides density are to be performed on the residue.

9.5.9 Weigh all fractions and the residue in the flask and determine their densities at 15°C by Test Method D 4052 or by another suitable method. Convert the density to 15°C, if necessary.

NOTE 4—Heavier flasks, such as those for 50 and 70-mm diameter columns, are not normally removed for weighing. In these cases the residue can be discharged at a temperature not over 200°C into a tared container for weighing. Nitrogen pressure of approximately 6.7 kPa (50 mm Hg) will be sufficient for this. Wettage in these cases will include that of the column and the flask together.

10. Calculation

10.1 Calculate the mass % of each distillate fraction and the residue to the 0.1 mass %, using Eq 1.

$$\text{mass \%} = 100(m / M) \quad (1)$$

where:

m = mass of fraction or residue, g, and
 M = mass of dry crude oil charged, g.