



Designation: D 5503 – 94 (Reapproved 2003)

Standard Practice for Natural Gas Sample-Handling and Conditioning Systems for Pipeline Instrumentation¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D 5503; 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 practice covers sample-handling and conditioning systems for typical pipeline monitoring instrumentation (gas chromatographs, moisture analyzers, and so forth). The selection of the sample-handling and conditioning system depends upon the operating conditions and stream composition.

1.2 This practice is intended for single-phase mixtures that vary in composition. A representative sample cannot be obtained from a two-phase stream.

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.*

1.4 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as standard. The values stated in English units are for information only.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:

D 1142 Test Method for Water Vapor Content of Gaseous Fuels by Measurement of Dew-Point Temperature²

D 3764 Practice for Validation of Process Stream Analyzers³

2.2 Other Documents:

ANSI/API 2530 (AGA Report Number 3)⁴

AGA Report Number 8⁵

NACE Standard MR-01-75⁶

¹ This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D03 on Gaseous Fuels and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D03.01 on Collection and Measurement of Gaseous Samples.

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² *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 05.06.

³ *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 05.02.

⁴ Available from American National Standards Institute (ANSI), 25 W. 43rd St., 4th Floor, New York, NY 10036.

⁵ Available from American Gas Association, 1515 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, VA 22209.

⁶ Available from National Association of Corrosion Engineers, 1440-T S. Creek Dr., Houston, TX 77084.

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions:

3.1.1 *compressed natural gas*—natural gas compressed to approximately 3600 psi.

3.1.2 *density*—mass per unit volume of the substance being considered.

3.1.3 *dew point*—the temperature and pressure at which the first droplet of liquid forms from a vapor.

3.1.4 *lag time*—time required to transport the sample to the analyzer.

3.1.5 *natural gas*—mixture of low molecular weight hydrocarbons obtained from petroleum-bearing regions.

3.1.6 *sample probe*—device to extract a representative sample from the pipeline.

3.1.7 *system turnaround time*—the time required to transport the sample to the analyzer and to measure the desired components.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 A well-designed sample-handling and conditioning system is essential to the accuracy and reliability of pipeline instruments. Approximately 70 % of the problems encountered are associated with the sampling system.

5. Selection of Sample-Handling and Conditioning System

5.1 The sample-handling and conditioning system must extract a representative sample from a flowing pipeline, transport the sample to the analyzer, condition the sample to be compatible with the analyzer, switch sample streams and calibration gases, transport excess sample to recovery (or disposal), and resist corrosion by the sample.

5.2 The sample probe should be located in a flowing pipeline where the flow is fully developed (little turbulence) and where the composition is representative. In areas of high turbulence, the contaminates that normally flow along the bottom or the wall of the pipeline will form aerosols.

5.3 The purpose of the sample probe is to extract a representative sample by obtaining it near the center of the pipeline where changes in stream composition can be quickly detected.

5.3.1 The tip in the sample probe should be positioned in the center one third of the pipeline, away from the pipeline wall where large particles accumulate.

5.3.2 The probe should be a minimum of five pipe diameters from any device that could produce aerosols or significant pressure drop.

5.3.3 The sample probe should not be located within a defined meter tube region (see ANSI/API 2530 AGA Report Number 3 and AGA Report Number 8 for more information).

5.3.4 The sample probe should be mounted vertically from the top on horizontal pipelines. The sample probe should not be located on vertical pipelines.

5.4 The sampling-handling system must transport the sample to the analyzer and dispose of excess sample. Since the sampling point and the analyzer may be separated by some distance, the time required to transport the sample to the analyzer can contribute significantly to the system turnaround time.

5.4.1 The analyzer should be located as close to the sampling point as is practical to minimize the sample lag time.

5.4.2 The sample-handling system should be equipped with a full open ball valve and a particular filter.

5.5 The sizing of the sample transport line will be influenced by a number of factors:

5.5.1 The sample point pressure and the location of the pressure reduction regulator.

5.5.2 The acceptable lag time between the sample point and the analyzer.

5.5.3 The requirements of the analyzer, such as flow rate, pressure, and temperature for the analysis. For multistream systems, the sample line and associated manifold tubing should be flushed with sufficient sample to assure a representative sample of the selected stream.

5.5.4 The presence of sample-conditioning elements will contribute to the lag time and must be considered in the calculation of the minimum sample flow rate.

5.5.4.1 Each element could be considered as an equivalent length of sample line and added to the length of line from the sample point to the analyzer.

5.5.4.2 The purge time of each element is calculated as the time necessary for five volumes of sample to flow through the element.

5.5.5 A vapor sample must be kept at least 10°C above the hydrocarbon dew point temperature to prevent condensation of the sample. The sample line should be heat traced and insulated when appropriate.

5.5.5.1 For compressed natural gas (CNG), the pressure must be reduced in two stages to avoid condensation of liquids caused by the Joule-Thompson effect. In a heated zone at approximately 50°C, the pressure should be dropped to approximately 10 MPa (1500 psig) and then to a suitable pressure for the analyzer. Any conditioning of the sample must be completed in the heated zone.

5.5.5.2 The sample line from the heated zone to the analyzer must be heat traced to avoid partial condensation of the sample.

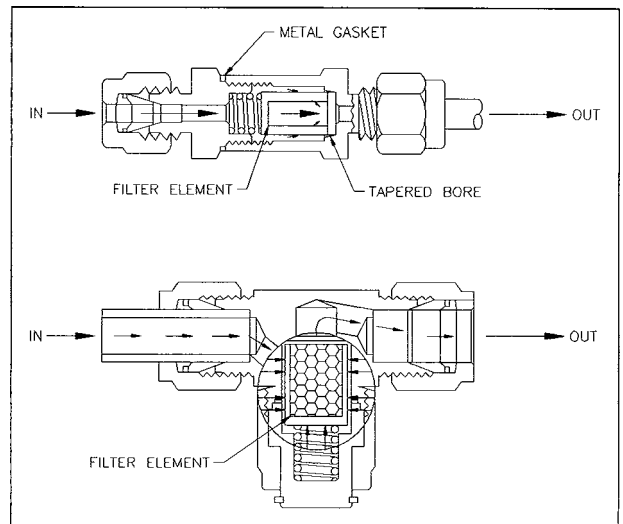


FIG. 1 Cross Section of Common In-Line Filters

6. Apparatus

6.1 The following are common components of a sample-handling and conditioning system (see Refs (1) and (2)⁷ for more information).

6.1.1 Ball valves, needle valves, and solenoid valves are typically used for stream switching, sample shutoff, calibration gas introduction, or sample vent and bypass systems.

6.1.2 Most pipeline samples require some filtering. Since all filter elements eventually plug, they should be replaced on a regular maintenance schedule. There are several types of filter designs.

6.1.2.1 *In-Line Filter*—All of the sample passes through an in-line filter. The active filter elements are available in Teflon polypropylene, copolymer, or stainless steel. (See Fig. 1.)

6.1.2.2 *Bypass Filter*—Only a small portion of the sample passes through a bypass filter, while a majority of the sample passes across its surface keeping it clean. The active filter element is either a disposable cartridge or a reusable sintered metal element. (See Fig. 2.)

6.1.2.3 *Cyclone Filter*—The cyclone filter is a centrifugal cleanup device. The sample enters at high velocity tangentially to the wall of a cylindrical-shaped vessel with a conical-shaped bottom. The centrifugal force developed by the spinning action of the gas as it follows the shape of the vessel forces particles and droplets to the wall where they are removed through the vent flow. (See Fig. 3.)

6.1.2.4 *Coalescing Filter*—Coalescers, also known as membrane separators, are used to force finely divided liquid droplets to combine into larger droplets so they can be separated by gravity. The design of the coalescer body forces the heavier phase out the bottom and the lighter phase out the top. The flow rates out the top and the bottom are critical for proper operation. (See Fig. 4.)

(1) Since this process removes part of the sample, the impact on sample composition must be considered.

⁷ The boldface numbers in parentheses refer to the list of references at the end of this practice.