



Designation: E 778 – 87 (Reapproved 2004)

Standard Test Methods for Nitrogen in the Analysis Sample of Refuse-Derived Fuel¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation E 778; 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 These test methods cover the determination of total Kjeldahl nitrogen in (prepared analysis) samples of (solid forms) of refuse-derived fuel (RDF). The procedures measure free ammonia or ammonia formed from the conversion of organic nitrogenous compounds such as amino acids and proteins. However, the procedures may not convert the nitrogenous compounds of some wastes to ammonia. Examples of such compounds that may not be measured are nitro compounds, hydrozones, oxines, nitrates, semicarbazones, pyridines, and some refractory tertiary amines.

1.2 Two alternatives are described for the final determination of the ammonia, the Kjeldahl-Gunning Test Method and the Acid-Titration Test Method.

1.3 The analytical data from these test methods are to be reported as part of the ultimate analysis where ultimate analysis is requested.

1.4 These test methods may be applicable to any waste material from which a laboratory analysis sample can be prepared.

1.5 *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 statements see 8.4.1 and Section 9.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*²

D 1193 Specification for Reagent Water

E 180 Practice for Determining the Precision of ASTM

¹ These test methods are under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D34 on Waste Management and are the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D34.03.02 on Municipal Recovery and Reuse.

Current edition approved Aug. 28, 1987. Published October 1987. Originally published as E 778 – 81. Last previous edition E 778 – 81.

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.

Methods for Analysis and Testing of Industrial Chemicals
E 200 Practice for Preparation, Standardization, and Storage of Standard and Reagent Solutions for Chemical Analysis

E 790 Test Method for Residual Moisture in Refuse-Derived Fuel Analysis Sample

E 791 Test Method for Calculating Refuse-Derived Fuel Analysis Data from As-Determined to Different Bases

E 829 Practice for Preparing Refuse-Derived Fuel (RDF) Laboratory Samples for Analysis

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.1.1 *refuse-derived fuel*—solid forms of refuse-derived fuels from which appropriate analytical samples may be prepared are defined as follows in *ASTM STP 832*:³

RDF-1—Wastes used as a fuel in as-discarded form with only bulky wastes removed.

RDF-2—Wastes processed to coarse particle size with or without ferrous metal separation.

RDF-3—Combustible waste fraction processed to particle sizes, 95 % passing 2-in. square screening.

RDF-4—Combustible waste fraction processed into powder form, 95 % passing 10-mesh screening.

RDF-5—Combustible waste fraction densified (compressed) into the form of pellets, slugs, cubettes, or briquettes.

4. Summary of Test Methods

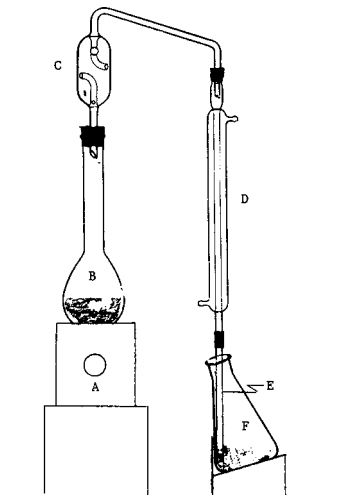
4.1 The determination of nitrogen is made by either the Kjeldahl-Gunning Test Method (Section 11) or the Acid-Titration Test Method (Section 12). In both these methods the nitrogen in the sample is converted into ammonium salts by destructive digestion of the sample with a hot, catalyzed mixture of concentrated sulfuric acid and potassium sulfate. The salts are subsequently decomposed in a hot alkaline solution from which the ammonia is recovered by distillation, and finally determined by alkalimetric or acidimetric titration.

³ *Thesaurus on Resource Recovery Terminology*, ASTM STP 832, ASTM, 1983, p. 72.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 The standard sample is available to producers and users of RDF as a method for determining the weight percent of nitrogen in the analysis sample.

5.2 Nitrogen is part of the ultimate analysis and can be used for calculation of combustion parameters.



- A = electric heater
 B = Kjeldahl digestion flask
 C = Kjeldahl connecting bulb
 D = condenser
 E = connecting tube
 F = receiving flask

FIG. 1 Kjeldahl Distillation Apparatus

6. Interferences and Limitations

6.1 Because of the nature of RDF, nitrogenous compounds may be present which will not readily be converted to ammonia by this test method (1.1). Modifications to the digestion of the waste may enhance the conversion of these nitrogenous compounds to the ammonium salts.⁴

7. Apparatus

7.1 *Digestion Unit*—An electrical heater of approximately 500-W minimum rating or a gas burner of comparable capacity. Either type of heater shall be provided with adequate means of control to maintain digestion rates as described in 11.1 (Note 1). Commercially made, multiple-unit digestion racks provided with fume exhaust ducts may be used.

NOTE 1—If commercially made electrical heaters are used, auxiliary voltage control equipment, such as an autotransformer, may be needed to maintain the specified rates of digestion and distillation.

7.2 *Distillation Unit* (Fig. 1)—An electrical heater or gas burner as described in 7.1. Either type shall be provided with adequate means of control to maintain rates as described in 11.2. Commercially made, multiple-unit distillation racks provided with water-cooled glass or block tin condensers may be used.

7.3 *Condenser*, glass, water-cooled, having a minimum jacket length of 500 mm.

7.4 *Kjeldahl Digestion Flask*, of heat-resistant glass, having a capacity of 500 or 800 mL. Borosilicate glass has been found satisfactory for this purpose.

7.5 *Kjeldahl Connecting Bulb*, cylindrical type, 45 mm in diameter by 100 mm long, or larger, with curved inlet and outlet tubes.

7.6 *Receiving Flasks*—Erlenmeyer flask having a capacity of 250 or 300 mL.

7.7 *Connecting Tube*—Glass tubing approximately 10 mm in outside diameter by 200 mm in length.

7.8 *Pure Gum Rubber Tubing*.

8. Reagents

8.1 *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.⁵ 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.

8.2 *Purity of Water*—Unless otherwise indicated, reference to water shall be understood to mean reagent water, Type II, conforming to Specification D 1193, prepared by the passage through an ion-exchange column containing a strongly acid cation resin in the hydrogen form.

8.3 *Potassium Sulfate* (K_2SO_4), crystals.

NOTE 2—Other satisfactory and permissible catalysts for the digestion, together with the quantities of K_2SO_4 required in their use, are as follows:

(1) Five grams of a mixture containing 32 parts by weight of K_2SO_4 , 5 parts by weight of mercuric sulfate ($HgSO_4$), and 1 part by weight of selenium.

(2) Three-tenths gram of mercuric selenite ($HgSeO_3$) with 7 to 10 g of K_2SO_4 .

(3) Three-tenths gram of cupric selenite dihydrate ($CuSeO_2 \cdot 2H_2O$) with 7 to 10 g of K_2SO_4 . When this mixture is used, the addition of a sulfide to the alkali solution is not necessary.

8.4 *Mercury*, metal (see Note 2).

8.4.1 **Warning**—Appropriate safety precautions should be used when handling and disposing of mercury and selenium compounds.

8.5 *Sulfuric Acid* (sp gr 1.84)—Concentrated sulfuric acid (H_2SO_4).

8.6 *Potassium Permanganate* ($KMnO_4$), crystals.

8.7 *Zinc*, mossy or granular.

8.8 *Alkali Solution*—Dissolve 8.0 g of potassium sulfide (K_2S) and 500 g of sodium hydroxide ($NaOH$) in water and dilute to 1 L. The use of appropriate amounts of sodium sulfide (Na_2S) or potassium hydroxide (KOH) may be substituted for the above, if desired (Note 2 (c)).

⁴ Kolthoff, I. M., and Stenger, V. A., *Volumetric Analysis II*, Intersciences Publishers, Inc., New York, NY, pp. 173–176.

⁵ "Reagent Chemicals, American Chemical Society Specifications," Am. Chemical Soc., Washington, DC. For suggestions on the testing of reagents not listed by the American Chemical Society, see "Analar Standards for Laboratory U.K. Chemicals," BDH Ltd., Poole, Dorset, and the "United States Pharmacopoeia".