
**Selection of methods for the
determination of trace elements in coal**

*Sélection des méthodes de détermination des éléments en traces dans
le charbon*

iTeh STANDARD PREVIEW
(standards.iteh.ai)

[ISO 23380:2008](https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/sist/dade5ea6-18b6-46f7-86dd-cd1d98f0b000/iso-23380-2008)

[https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/sist/dade5ea6-18b6-46f7-86dd-
cd1d98f0b000/iso-23380-2008](https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/sist/dade5ea6-18b6-46f7-86dd-cd1d98f0b000/iso-23380-2008)



PDF disclaimer

This PDF file may contain embedded typefaces. In accordance with Adobe's licensing policy, this file may be printed or viewed but shall not be edited unless the typefaces which are embedded are licensed to and installed on the computer performing the editing. In downloading this file, parties accept therein the responsibility of not infringing Adobe's licensing policy. The ISO Central Secretariat accepts no liability in this area.

Adobe is a trademark of Adobe Systems Incorporated.

Details of the software products used to create this PDF file can be found in the General Info relative to the file; the PDF-creation parameters were optimized for printing. Every care has been taken to ensure that the file is suitable for use by ISO member bodies. In the unlikely event that a problem relating to it is found, please inform the Central Secretariat at the address given below.

iTeh STANDARD PREVIEW
(standards.iteh.ai)

ISO 23380:2008

<https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/sist/dade5ea6-18b6-46f7-86dd-cd1d98f0b000/iso-23380-2008>

© ISO 2008

All rights reserved. Unless otherwise specified, no part of this publication may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and microfilm, without permission in writing from either ISO at the address below or ISO's member body in the country of the requester.

ISO copyright office
Case postale 56 • CH-1211 Geneva 20
Tel. + 41 22 749 01 11
Fax + 41 22 749 09 47
E-mail copyright@iso.org
Web www.iso.org

Published in Switzerland

Contents

Page

Foreword.....	iv
Introduction	v
1 Scope	1
2 Normative references	1
3 Definitions	1
4 Abbreviations	1
5 Discussion of methods	2
6 Use of certified reference materials.....	4
7 Calculation of results	4
8 Sensitivity	5
9 Reporting of results.....	6
10 Precision.....	6
11 Test report	6
Annex A (informative) Scheme of analysis for trace elements.....	7
Annex B (informative) Alternative dissolution procedures for coal	8
Bibliography	9

iTeh STANDARD PREVIEW
 (standards.iteh.ai)
 ISO 23380:2008
<https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/sist/dade5ea6-18b6-46f7-86dd-cd1d98f0b000/iso-23380-2008>

Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

The main task of technical committees is to prepare International Standards. Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

ISO 23380 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 27, *Solid mineral fuels*, Subcommittee SC 5, *Methods of analysis*.

iTeh STANDARD PREVIEW (standards.iteh.ai)

[ISO 23380:2008](https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/sist/dade5ea6-18b6-46f7-86dd-cd1d98f0b000/iso-23380-2008)

<https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/sist/dade5ea6-18b6-46f7-86dd-cd1d98f0b000/iso-23380-2008>

Introduction

The determination of trace elements in coal and coke is becoming more important due to the considerable emphasis being placed on the effect of these elements on the environment. In order to have accurate and precise results for the analysis of trace elements, it is imperative that standard methods be available and that these methods be based on reliable procedures.

The objective of this International Standard is to assist in the selection of the appropriate methods available to determine the common trace elements in coal.

iTeh STANDARD PREVIEW (standards.iteh.ai)

ISO 23380:2008

<https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/sist/dade5ea6-18b6-46f7-86dd-cd1d98f0b000/iso-23380-2008>

iTeh STANDARD PREVIEW
(standards.iteh.ai)

ISO 23380:2008

<https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/sist/dade5ea6-18b6-46f7-86dd-cd1d98f0b000/iso-23380-2008>

Selection of methods for the determination of trace elements in coal

1 Scope

This International Standard provides guidance on the selection of methods used for the determination of trace elements in coal. The trace elements of environmental interest include antimony, arsenic, beryllium, boron, cadmium, chlorine, chromium, cobalt, copper, fluorine, lead, manganese, mercury, molybdenum, nickel, selenium, thallium, vanadium and zinc. To this list can be added the radioactive trace elements, thorium and uranium.

This International Standard does not prescribe the methods used for the determination of individual trace elements. The analysis of appropriate CRMs is essential to confirm the accuracy of any method used (see ISO Guide 33).

2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

- ISO 1213-2, *Solid mineral fuels — Vocabulary — Part 2: Terms relating to sampling, testing and analysis*
- ISO 5725 (all parts), *Accuracy (trueness and precision) of measurement methods and results*
- ISO Guide 33, *Uses of certified reference materials*

3 Definitions

For the purpose of this document, the definitions given in ISO 1213-2 apply.

4 Abbreviations

AAS	atomic absorption spectrometry
AFS	atomic fluorescence spectrometry
CVAAS	cold-vapour atomic absorption spectrometry
GFAAS	graphite-furnace atomic absorption spectrometry
IC	ion chromatography
ICP-AES	inductively coupled plasma atomic emission spectrometry—often referred to as ICP-OES, i.e. inductively coupled plasma optical emission spectrometry
ICP-MS	inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry
INAA	instrumental neutron activation analysis
ISE	ion selective electrode
XRF	X-ray fluorescence spectrometry

5 Discussion of methods

5.1 General

A summary of techniques applicable to the determination of each of the trace elements are discussed below. A schematic of procedures used for trace element determinations is given in Annex A.

It is critical that moisture be determined on the sample to enable calculation to bases other than “air-dried”.

NOTE 1 There are digestion procedures applicable to unashed coal. The application of these is discussed in Annex B.

NOTE 2 Boron, chlorine, fluorine, mercury and selenium are released if coal is ashed; thus, it is not possible to estimate the concentration of these elements in coal by analysing a laboratory-prepared ash.

Where digestion procedures require ashing of the coal, it is critical to determine the ash yield to enable calculation of trace elements content in the coal sample; see Clause 7. Ashing procedures are described in ISO 15238^[6]. Coals are ashed in silica or quartz dishes, or in platinum or platinum alloy crucibles/basins, in a conventional ashing furnace. The furnace temperature is ramped from ambient to a maximum of 500 °C over 1 h to 3 h and held at this temperature until the carbonaceous material is completely oxidized or for a maximum of 18 h. The ramp rate is selected to avoid ignition and mechanical loss of sample.

5.2 Arsenic and selenium

Arsenic and selenium are determined by hydride generation/atomic absorption or atomic fluorescence techniques following the ashing of the coal at 800 °C in the presence of Eschka mixture and dissolution with hydrochloric acid. ISO 11723^[3] is the recommended method for the determination of arsenic and selenium in coal.

Arsenic can be determined in coal by the analysis of ash prepared in a laboratory at a temperature no greater than 500 °C. Selenium is vaporized at quite low temperatures and is not recovered in ash. There is no International Standard for the determination of arsenic in coal ash. A suitable procedure is the dissolution of the ash either by lithium metaborate/tetraborate fusion or by mixed acids (nitric, hydrochloric and hydrofluoric acids) and determination of the analyte by hydride/AAS or hydride/AFS. This element can also be determined by ICP-MS if the interference caused by argon chloride is eliminated.

5.3 Boron

Boron is determined by ICP-AES following the ashing of the coal at 800 °C in the presence of Eschka mixture and dissolution with hydrochloric acid; see AS 1038.10.3^[7]. This dissolution procedure is the same as that used for arsenic and selenium. The procedure is set out in ISO 11723^[3].

5.4 Antimony, beryllium, cadmium, chromium, cobalt, copper, lead, manganese, molybdenum, nickel, thallium, vanadium, zinc, thorium and uranium

5.4.1 General

Antimony, beryllium, cadmium, chromium, cobalt, copper, lead, manganese, molybdenum, nickel, thallium, vanadium, zinc, thorium and uranium are determined by various spectrometric techniques (see ASTM D6357^[10]).

NOTE 1 A number of these trace elements can be determined by XRF; however, in general, the sensitivity is too low to accurately determine beryllium, cadmium, thallium, thorium and uranium by XRF.

Recommended procedures are summarized below.

- a) The coal sample is ashed at a maximum temperature of 500 °C to remove the carbonaceous matter.
- b) The laboratory-prepared ash is dissolved either by fusion with a mixture of lithium metaborate and tetraborate (see AS 1038.14.1^[8]) or by mixed acids (nitric, hydrochloric and hydrofluoric acids). These dissolution procedures are applicable to the analysis of coal ash. Note that thorium and uranium can form insoluble fluorides and precautions shall be taken to prevent this in the presence of hydrofluoric acid. Thorium and uranium can be determined within 2 h of the preparation of a mixed acid solution of the coal ash or the fluoride can be removed by evaporation.

The solution obtained by dissolution procedures in which fluoride is complexed with boric acid, can be used for the determination of trace elements by ICP-AES and ICP-MS.

- c) The concentrations of the analytes in solution are determined by spectrometric techniques. Traditionally, AAS has been used. This has generally been replaced by ICP-AES, which is used to determine the majority of these elements with the exception of antimony, cadmium, lead, thallium, thorium and uranium. These latter six elements occur in coals at concentrations too low to be determined by ICP-AES but can be accurately determined by ICP-MS.

NOTE 2 Cadmium (see ISO 15238) and lead can also be determined by GFAAS.

5.4.2 Radionuclides

Radionuclides are naturally present in coal. The radioactivity of these can be measured using high-resolution gamma spectrometry; refer to Fardy, *et al.*^[14]. This radioactivity is due to the decay of ²³⁸U, ²³⁵U and ²³²Th and their daughters, as well as ⁴⁰K and ⁸⁷Rb.

5.5 Chlorine

Chlorine can be determined by a number of methods, including ISO 5871^[1] and ASTM D4208^[9]. These procedures require that the coal be burnt and the chlorine trapped either in Eschka mixture or in an alkaline solution. The methods lack sensitivity and, with these procedures, repeatability levels are high. The solution obtained by pyrohydrolysis (see 5.6) can be used for the measurement of chlorine by IC or ICP-AES. The use of XRF can provide a practical and accurate method for the determination of chlorine directly on the coal.

NOTE Chlorine is generally reported not as a trace element but as a minor element and expressed as a percentage.

5.6 Fluorine

Fluorine is determined using ISO 11724^[4]. This method is a pyrohydrolysis/ISE or pyrohydrolysis/IC procedure. This procedure can be used for the analysis of coal ash. There is significant evidence in the scientific literature that methods based on the decomposition of coal with an oxygen bomb combustion procedure can give low results.

5.7 Mercury

Mercury is determined using ISO 15237^[5]. In this procedure, coal is combusted in an oxygen bomb and the released mercury absorbed in a solution of dilute nitric acid. A number of accurate alternative procedures exist for the determination of mercury. It is possible to digest coal with acids, either in a pressure vessel in a microwave oven or closed vessel in a heated water bath, or by refluxing with a mixture of nitric and sulfuric acids; see ASTM D6414^[11]. There are instrumental techniques in which the coal is combusted and the released mercury adsorbed onto a gold collector; the mercury is subsequently thermally released and the mercury concentration determined by CVAAS; see ASTM D6722^[12].