



Designation: C999 – 05

Standard Practice for Soil Sample Preparation for the Determination of Radionuclides¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation C999; 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 the preparation of surface soil samples collected for chemical analysis of radionuclides, particularly uranium and plutonium. This practice describes one acceptable approach to the preparation of soil samples for radiochemical analysis.

1.2 *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.* A specific hazard statement is given in [Note 1](#).

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*²

[C998 Practice for Sampling Surface Soil for Radionuclides](#)

[E11 Specification for Woven Wire Test Sieve Cloth and Test Sieves](#)

3. Summary of Practice

3.1 Guidance is provided for the preparation of a homogeneous soil sample from ten composited core samples (aggregate weight of 4 to 5 kg) collected as to be representative of the area.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 Soil samples prepared for radionuclide analyses by this practice can be used to monitor fallout distribution from nuclear facilities. This practice is intended to produce a homogeneous sample from which a relatively small aliquot (10 g) may be drawn for radiochemical analyses.

¹ This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee C26 on Nuclear Fuel Cycle and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee C26.05 on Test Methods.

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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.

4.2 Most nuclear facilities fulfill major requirements of their monitoring programs by gamma-ray spectrometry measurements of soil. A widely used practice for these measurements is to fill a calibrated sample container, such as a Marinelli beaker (~600-mL volume), with a homogenized soil sample. By preparing the entire soil core collection, sufficient homogeneous sample is available for radiochemical and gamma-ray spectrometry measurements.

5. Apparatus

5.1 *Scale*, capacity of 10 kg.

5.2 *Drying Oven*, able to maintain $\pm 2^\circ\text{C}$.

5.3 *Pans*, disposable aluminum.

5.4 *Jar Mill*, capacity for 7.57-L (2-gal) cans.

5.5 *Steel Cans and Lids*, 7.57-L (2-gal).

5.6 *Ceramic Rods*, 21 by 21-mm ($1\frac{3}{16}$ by $1\frac{3}{16}$ -in.) or steel grinding balls, 25.4-mm (1-in.) diameter.

5.7 *Sieve*, U.S. Series No. 35 (500- μm or 32 mesh).

5.8 *Plastic Bottles*, 7.57-L (2-gal).

6. Procedure

6.1 Label a cleaned 7.57-L (2-gal) steel can and lid with a unique laboratory code number.

6.2 Weigh the labeled steel can and lid. Record the weight.

6.3 Transfer the ten soil cores (including vegetation) from the field collection containers into the labeled, preweighed steel can. Do not pack the can full. Place the steel lid loosely on the can.

NOTE 1—**Warning:** Wear gloves throughout the preparation procedure to minimize the possibility of fungus infection.

6.4 Weigh the sample cores, steel can, and lid to ± 50 g. Record the weight.

6.5 Remove the lid and place the sample in a 110°C drying oven for 24 h or longer, depending on the depth of soil in the can, until the sample has reached constant weight.

6.6 Remove the sample from the oven, cap the can with its lid, and cool to room temperature.

6.7 Weigh the dried sample cores, steel can, and lid to ± 50 g. Record the weight.

6.8 Remove the can lid and add 10 to 12 ceramic rods (21 by 21-mm) or steel balls (25.4-mm diameter) to the can.