



Standard Test Method for Determination of Free and Total Glycerin in B-100 Biodiesel Methyl Esters By Gas Chromatography¹

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1. Scope*

1.1 This test method covers the quantitative determination of free and total glycerin in B-100 methyl esters by gas chromatography. The range of detection for free glycerin is 0.005 to 0.05 mass %, and total glycerin from 0.05 to 0.5 mass %. This procedure is not applicable to vegetable oil methyl esters obtained from lauric oils, such as coconut oil and palm kernel oil.

1.2 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as standard. No other units of measurement are included in this standard.

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.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:²

D 4307 Practice for Preparation of Liquid Blends for Use as Analytical Standards

E 355 Practice for Gas Chromatography Terms and Relationships

E 594 Practice for Testing Flame Ionization Detectors Used in Gas or Supercritical Fluid Chromatography

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions:

3.1.1 *biodiesel (B-100), n*—fuel comprised of mono-alkyl esters of long chain fatty acids derived from vegetable oils or animal fats.

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D02 on Petroleum Products and Lubricants and is the direct responsibility of D02.04.0L on Gas Chromatography 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.

3.1.2 *bonded glycerin, n*—is the glycerin portion of the mono-, di-, and triglyceride molecules.

3.1.3 *total glycerin, n*—is the sum of free and bonded glycerin.

3.2 This test method makes reference to many common gas chromatographic procedures, terms, and relationships. Detailed definitions can be found in Practices **E 355** and **E 594**.

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 The sample is analyzed by gas chromatography, after silylating with N-methyl-N-trimethylsilyltrifluoroacetamide (MSTFA). Calibration is achieved by the use of two internal standards and four reference materials. Mono-, di-, and triglycerides are determined by comparing to monoolein, diolein, and triolein standards respectively. Average conversion factors are applied to the mono-, di-, and triglycerides to calculate the bonded glycerin content of the sample.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 Free and bonded glycerin content reflects the quality of biodiesel. A high content of free glycerin may cause problems during storage, or in the fuel system, due to separation of the glycerin. A high total glycerin content can lead to injector fouling and may also contribute to the formation of deposits at injection nozzles, pistons, and valves.

6. Apparatus

6.1 *Chromatographic System*—See Practice **E 355** for specific designations and definitions.

6.1.1 *Gas Chromatograph (GC)*—The system must be capable of operating at the conditions given in **Table 1**.

6.1.2 *Column*, open tubular column with a 5 % phenylpolydimethylsiloxane bonded and cross linked phase internal coating. The column should have an upper temperature limit of at least 400°C. Columns, either 10 m or 15 m in length, with a 0.32 mm internal diameter, and a 0.1 μm film thickness have been found satisfactory. Any column with better or equivalent chromatographic efficiency and selectivity can be used. It is recommended that a 2 to 5 metre 0.53 mm high temperature

*A Summary of Changes section appears at the end of this standard.

TABLE 1 Operating Conditions

Injector		
Cool on column injection		
Sample size	1 μL	
Column Temperature Program		
Initial temperature	50°C	hold 1 min
Rate 1	15°C / min to 180°C	
Rate 2	7°C / min to 230°C	
Rate 3	30°C / min	380°C hold 10 min
Detector		
Type	Flame ionization	
Temperature	380°C	
Carrier Gas		
Type	Hydrogen or helium measured at 50°C	
Flow rate	3 mL/min	

guard column be installed from the injector to the analytical column. This allows the use of autoinjectors and also increases column life.

6.2 Electronic Data Acquisition System:

6.2.1 *Integrator or Computer*, capable of providing real time graphic and digital presentation of the chromatographic data is recommended for use. Peak areas and retention times shall be measured by computer or electronic integration.

6.2.2 This device must be capable of performing multilevel internal-standard-type calibrations and be able to calculate the correlation coefficient (r^2) and internal standard calculations for each data set.

7. Reagents and Materials

7.1 *Purity of Reagents*—Reagent grade chemicals shall be used in all tests. Unless otherwise indicated, it is intended that all reagents conform to the specifications of the Committee on Analytical Reagents of the American Chemical Society where such specifications are available.³ Other grades may be used provided it is first ascertained that the reagent is of sufficient purity to permit its use without lessening the accuracy of the determination.

7.2 *n-Heptane*, reagent grade.

7.3 *N-Methyl-N-trimethylsilyltrifluoroacetamide (MSTFA)*, reagent grade.

7.4 *Pyridine*, reagent grade.

7.5 *Carrier Gas*, hydrogen or helium of high purity. Additional purification is recommended by the use of molecular sieves or other suitable agents to remove water, oxygen, and hydrocarbons. Available pressure must be sufficient to ensure a constant carrier gas flow rate.

7.6 *Microtitre Syringes*, 100 μL and 250 μL capacity.

7.7 *Screw Cap Vials*, with polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE)-faced septa, 10 mL capacity.

8. Preparation of Apparatus

8.1 Install and condition the column in accordance with manufacturer or supplier's instructions. After conditioning, attach column outlet to flame ionization detector inlet and

check for leaks throughout the system. If leaks are found, tighten or replace fittings and recheck for leaks before proceeding.

9. Calibration and Standardization

9.1 *Preparation of Calibration Standards*—Prepare standards using fresh compounds listed in Table 2 according to Practice D 4307. Weigh the components directly into the volumetric flasks specified and record the mass to the nearest 0.1 mg. Dilute the volumetric flasks to mark with pyridine. Store the calibration standards in a refrigerator when not in use.

9.2 *Standard Solutions*—Prepare the five standard solutions in Table 3 by transferring the specified volumes by means of microlitre syringes to 10 mL septa vials. Add to each of the five standard solutions 100 μL of MSTFA. Close the vial and shake. Allow the vial to stand for 15 to 20 min at room temperature. Add approximately 8 mL n-Heptane to the vial and shake.

9.3 *Chromatographic Analysis*—If using an automatic sampler, transfer an aliquot of the solution into a glass GC vial and seal with a TFE-fluorocarbonlined cap.

9.4 *Standardization*—Analyze the calibration standards under the same operating conditions as the sample solutions. Inject 1 μL of the reaction mixture into the cool on-column injection port and start the analysis. Obtain a chromatogram and peak integration report. For each reference substance, determine the response ratio (rsp_i) and amount ratio (amt_i) for each component using Eq 1 and 2.

$$rsp_i = (A_i / A_s) \quad (1)$$

where:

A_i = area of reference substance, and

A_s = area of internal standard.

$$amt_i = (W_i / W_s) \quad (2)$$

where:

W_i = mass of reference substance, and

W_s = mass of internal standard.

9.4.1 Prepare a calibration curve for each reference component by plotting the response ratios (rsp_i), as the y-axis, versus the amount ratios (amt_i), as the x-axis.

9.5 Calculate the correlation coefficient r^2 value for each reference component in the calibration set using Eq 3. The r^2 value should be at least 0.99 or greater. If the above criteria for r^2 are not met, rerun the calibration or check instrument parameters and hardware.

TABLE 2 Stock Solutions

Compound	CAS No.	Approximate Mass (mg)	Volumetric Flask Size (mL)
Glycerin	56-81-5	25	50
1-Mono [<i>cis</i> -9-octadecenoyl]- <i>rac</i> -glycerol (monoolein)	111-03-5	50	10
1,3-Di [<i>cis</i> -octadecenoyl]glycerol (diolein)	2465-32-9	50	10
1,2,3-Tri [<i>cis</i> -octadecenoyl]glycerol (triolein)	122-32-7	50	10
(S) - (-) -1,2,4-Butanetriol - (Internal Standard 1)	42890-76-6	25	25
1,2,3-Tridecanolylglycerol (tricaprin) - (Internal Standard 2)	621-71-6	80	10

³ Reagent Chemicals, American Chemical Society Specifications, American Chemical Society, Washington, DC. For suggestions on the testing of reagents not listed by the American Chemical Society, see Analard Standards for Laboratory Chemicals, BDH Ltd., Poole Dorset, U.K., and the United States Pharmacopeia and National Formulary, U.S. Pharmacopeial Convention, Inc. (USPC), Rockville, MD.