



Standard Practice for Calculation and Adjustment of the Stiff and Davis Stability Index for Reverse Osmosis¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This practice covers the calculation and adjustment of the Stiff and Davis Stability Index (S & DSI) for the concentrate stream of a reverse osmosis device. This index is used to determine the need for calcium carbonate scale control in the operation and design of reverse osmosis installations. This practice is applicable for concentrate streams containing more than 10 000 mg/L of total dissolved solids. For concentrate streams containing less than 10 000 mg/L of total dissolved solids, refer to Practice D 3739.

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.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:

- D 511 Test Methods for Calcium and Magnesium in Water²
- D 1067 Test Methods for Acidity or Alkalinity of Water²
- D 1129 Terminology Relating to Water²
- D 1293 Test Methods for pH of Water²
- D 1888 Test Methods for Particulate and Dissolved Matter in Water³
- D 3739 Practice for Calculation and Adjustment of Langelier Saturation Index for Reverse Osmosis⁴
- D 4194 Test Methods for Operating Characteristics of Reverse Osmosis Devices⁴
- D 4195 Guide for Water Analysis for Reverse Osmosis Application⁴

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—For definitions of terms used in the practice, refer to Terminology D 1129.

3.2 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

¹ This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D19 on Water and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D19.08 on Membranes and Ion Exchange Materials.

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² *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 11.01.

³ Discontinued; see 1990 *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 11.01.

⁴ *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 11.02.

3.2.1 For description of terms relating to reverse osmosis, refer to Test Methods D 4194.

3.2.2 *Stiff and Davis Stability Index (S & DSI)*⁵—an index calculated from total dissolved solids, calcium concentration, total alkalinity, pH, and solution temperature that shows the tendency of a water solution to precipitate or dissolve calcium carbonate.

4. Summary of Practice

4.1 This practice consists of calculating the S & DSI index for a reverse osmosis concentrate stream from the total dissolved solids, calcium ion content, total alkalinity, pH, and temperature of the feed solution and the recovery of the reverse osmosis system.

4.2 This practice also presents techniques to lower the S & DSI by decreasing the recovery; decreasing the calcium and alkalinity concentrations; or by changing the ratio of total alkalinity to free carbon dioxide in the feedwater.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 In the design and operation of reverse osmosis installations, it is important to predict the calcium carbonate scaling properties of the concentrate stream. Because of the increase in total dissolved solids in the concentrate stream and the differences in salt passages for calcium ion, bicarbonate ion, and free CO₂, the calcium carbonate scaling properties of the concentrate stream will generally be quite different from those of the feed solution. This practice permits the calculation of the S & DSI for the concentrate stream from the feed water analyses and the reverse osmosis operating parameters.

5.2 A positive S & DSI indicates the tendency to form a calcium carbonate scale, which can be damaging to reverse osmosis performance. This practice gives procedures for the adjustment of the S & DSI.

6. Procedure

6.1 Determine the calcium concentration in the feed solution in accordance with Test Methods D 511 and express as CaCO₃.

⁵ Stiff, H. A. and Davis, L. E., "A Method for Predicting the Tendency of Oil Field Waters to Deposit Calcium Carbonate," *Petroleum Transactions*, Vol 195, 1952.

6.2 Determine the total dissolved solids of the feed solution using Test Methods D 1888.

6.3 Determine the total alkalinity of the feed solution using Test Methods D 1067 and express as CaCO₃.

6.4 Measure the pH of the feed solution using Test Methods D 1293.

6.5 Measure the temperature of the feed solution.

6.6 Measure the concentration of all major ions using the methods cited in Guide D 4195. At a minimum, measure the concentration of Mg⁺⁺, Na⁺, K⁺, SO₄⁼, and Cl⁻.

7. Calculation

7.1 Calculate the calcium concentration in the concentrate stream from the calcium concentration in the feed solution, the recovery of the reverse osmosis system, and the calcium ion passage as follows:

$$Ca_c = Ca_f \times \frac{1 - y(SP_{Ca})}{1 - y}$$

where:

Ca_c = calcium concentration in concentrate as CaCO₃, mg/L,

Ca_f = calcium concentration in feed as CaCO₃, mg/L,

y = recovery of the reverse osmosis system, expressed as a decimal, and

SP_{Ca} = calcium ion passage, expressed as a decimal.

NOTE 1—SP_{Ca} can be obtained from the supplier of the specific reverse osmosis system. For most reverse osmosis devices, SP_{Ca} can be considered to be zero, in which case the equation simplifies to:

$$Ca_c = Ca_f \times \left(\frac{1}{1 - y} \right)$$

This assumption will introduce only a small error.

7.2 Calculate the alkalinity in the concentrate stream from the alkalinity in the feed solution, the recovery of the reverse osmosis system, and the passage of alkalinity by:

$$Alk_c = Alk_f \times \frac{1 - y(SP_{Alk})}{1 - y}$$

where:

Alk_c = alkalinity in concentrate as CaCO₃, mg/L,

Alk_f = alkalinity in feed as CaCO₃, mg/L,

y = recovery of the reverse osmosis system, expressed as a decimal, and

SP_{Alk} = alkalinity passage, expressed as a decimal.

NOTE 2—SP_{Alk} may be dependent on the pH of the feed solution, and its value should be obtained from the supplier of the specific reverse osmosis system.

7.3 Calculate the ionic strength of the feed stream by:

$$I_f = 1/2 \sum m_i z_i^2$$

where:

I_f = ionic strength of the feed stream,

m_i = molal concentration of ion, i (moles/1000 g of water) in the feed solution, and

z_i = ionic charge of ion, i.

To calculate I_f use at least all major ions: Ca⁺⁺, Mg⁺⁺, Na⁺, K⁺, HCO₃⁼, SO₄⁼, and Cl⁻.

7.4 Calculate the ion strength of the concentrate stream from the ionic strength of the feed solution, the recovery, and the total dissolved solids of the feed solution by:

$$I_c = I_f \left[\frac{10^6 - TDS_f}{10^6 - (TDS_f) \left(\frac{1}{1 - y} \right)} \right] \left[\frac{1}{1 - y} \right]$$

where:

I_c = ionic strength of the concentrate stream and

TDS_f = total dissolved solids of the feed solution, mg/L.

7.5 From Fig. 1, obtain pCa as a function of Ca_c and pAlk as a function of Alk_c. From Fig. 2 obtain the constant K as a function of concentrate ionic strength and feed temperature.

7.5.1 Calculate the pH at which the concentrate stream is saturated with CaCO₃(pH_s) as follows:

$$pH_s = pCa + pAlk + K$$

7.6 Calculate the free carbon dioxide content (C) in the concentrate stream by assuming that the CO₂ concentration in the concentrate is equal to the CO₂ concentration in the feed: C_c = C_f. The concentration of free carbon dioxide in the feed solution is obtained from Fig. 3 as a function of the alkalinity and the pH of the feed solution.

7.7 Calculate the pH of the concentrate stream (pH_c) using the ratio of alkalinity (from 7.2) to free CO₂ in the concentrate (from 7.6), Fig. 3.

NOTE 3—For seawater systems, the calculated pH of the concentrate stream can be 0.1 to 0.2 higher than measured pH values if the feed pH is above 7.0. In these cases, empirical correlations between the feed pH and the concentrate pH as a function of conversion can be used to more accurately calculate the concentrate pH. Check with the supplier of the reverse osmosis (RO) device to determine if empirical correlations should be used.

7.8 Calculate the Stiff and Davis Stability Index of the concentrate (S & DSI_c) as follows:

$$S \text{ \& DSI}_c = pH_c - pH_s$$

7.8.1 *Adjustments of S & DSI_c*—If the S & DSI_c is unacceptable based on the supplier's recommendation, adjustments can be made by one of the following means. A new S & DSI_c can then be calculated.

7.8.1.1 The recovery (y) can be lowered and the S & DSI_c can be calculated as above by substituting a new value for the recovery.

7.8.1.2 Decreasing the calcium and alkalinity concentrations in the feed solution by means of lime or lime soda ash softening will increase the pCa and pAlk and will therefore decrease the pH_s.

7.8.2 Addition of acid (HCl, CO₂, H₂SO₄, etc.) to the feed solution either with or without lime or lime soda ash softening changes the Alk_f, C_f, pH and may change the SP_{Alk}. The slight change in I_f can usually be neglected. Acid addition will decrease the S & DSI_c; however, since many variables change with acidification, trial and error computations are required to determine the amount of acid needed to determine the amount of acid needed to obtain the desired S & DSI_c.

7.8.2.1 For an assumed pH (pH acid), obtained from addition of acid to the feed solution, obtain the ratio of Alk_{Acid}/C_{Acid} from Fig. 3. From this ratio, Alk_f and C_f, calculate the