



Designation: D4190 – 08

# Standard Test Method for Elements in Water by Direct-Current Plasma Atomic Emission Spectroscopy<sup>1</sup>

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D4190; 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 ( $\epsilon$ ) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

## 1. Scope

1.1 This test method covers the determination of dissolved and total recoverable elements in water, which includes drinking water, lake water, river water, sea water, snow, and Type II reagent water by direct current plasma atomic emission spectroscopy (DCP).

1.2 The information on precision and bias may not apply to other waters.

1.3 This test method is applicable to the 15 elements listed in **Annex A1 (Table A1.1)** and covers the ranges in **Table 1**.

1.4 This test method is not applicable to brines unless the sample matrix can be matched or the sample can be diluted by a factor of 200 up to 500 and still maintain the analyte concentration above the detection limit.

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

1.6 *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:*<sup>2</sup>

[D1066 Practice for Sampling Steam](#)

[D1129 Terminology Relating to Water](#)

[D1193 Specification for Reagent Water](#)

[D2777 Practice for Determination of Precision and Bias of Applicable Test Methods of Committee D19 on Water](#)

[D3370 Practices for Sampling Water from Closed Conduits](#)

[D4841 Practice for Estimation of Holding Time for Water Samples Containing Organic and Inorganic Constituents](#)

[D5810 Guide for Spiking into Aqueous Samples](#)

[D5847 Practice for Writing Quality Control Specifications for Standard Test Methods for Water Analysis](#)

[E1097 Guide for Determination of Various Elements by Direct Current Plasma Atomic Emission Spectrometry](#)

## 3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—For definitions of terms used in this test method, refer to Terminology [D1129](#).

3.2 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.2.1 *LCS, n*—laboratory control standard.

3.2.2 *total recoverable element, n*—a term relating to forms of each element that are determinable by the digestion method that is included in this test method.

## 4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 Elements are determined, either sequentially or simultaneously, by DCP.

4.2 Matrix enhancement or suppression of the emission signal can be minimized by the addition of 2000 mg/L of lithium ion to all standards, samples, and blanks.

4.3 Dissolved elements are determined by atomizing a filtered and acidified sample directly with no pretreatment.

4.4 If the sample is clear, total recoverable elements are determined in the same manner as dissolved elements except that sample is unfiltered and acidified.

4.5 If there are large particles (non-colloidal) the total recoverable elements are determined on a portion of the sample after a hydrochloric-nitric acid digestion ([12.2 – 12.5](#)). The same digestion procedure is used to determine all total recoverable elements in this test method.

<sup>1</sup> This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee [D19](#) on Water and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee [D19.05](#) on Inorganic Constituents in Water.

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<sup>2</sup> 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.

**TABLE 1 Solutions for Analysis**

Element P	Solutions for Analysis, µg/L		
	1	2	3
Al	50	100	190
Be	50	500	1000
B	50	500	1000
Cd	1000	50	500
Cr	500	1000	50
Co	50	500	1000
Cu	1000	50	500
Fe	500	1000	50
Pb	500	200	1000
Mn	800	50	300
Hg	500	1000	200
Ni	50	300	800
Sr	600	50	300
V	1000	50	400
Zn	500	1000	50

NOTE 1—The volatility of mercury<sup>3,4</sup> compounds, especially the chlorides, makes it necessary to use considerable care in digesting samples containing these elements. The samples must not be boiled unless provision is made to prevent loss by volatilization.

## 5. Significance and Use

5.1 This test method is useful for the determination of element concentrations in many natural waters. It has the capability for the simultaneous determination of up to 15 separate elements. High analysis sensitivity can be achieved for some elements, such as boron and vanadium.

## 6. Interferences

6.1 For commonly occurring matrix elements the following spectral interferences have been observed:

- 6.1.1 Calcium, magnesium, and boron interfere with lead at 405.78 nm.
- 6.1.2 Calcium interferes with chromium at 425.43 nm.
- 6.1.3 Magnesium interferes with cadmium at 214.44 nm.
- 6.1.4 Iron interferes with cobalt at 345.35 and 240.73 nm.
- 6.1.5 Cobalt interferes with nickel at 341.48 nm.

NOTE 2—The exact magnitude of these interferences has not been determined since it depends on the concentration of the calibration standards used and the sample matrix.

6.2 Some additional possible interferences are listed in **Annex A2 (Table A2.1)** so that the analyst may be aware of and test for them.

## 7. Apparatus

7.1 See the manufacturer's instruction manual for installation and operation of DCP spectrometers, refer to Guide **E1097** for information on DCP spectrometers.

## 8. Reagents

8.1 *Purity of Reagents*—Reagent grade chemicals shall be used in all tests. Unless otherwise indicated, it is intended that reagents shall conform to the specifications of the Committee

on Analytical Reagents of the American Chemical Society<sup>5</sup> where such specifications are available. 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.

8.2 *Purity of Water*—Unless otherwise indicated, reference to water shall be understood to mean reagent water conforming to Type I of Specification **D1193**. Other reagent water types may be used, provided it is first ascertained that the water is of sufficiently high purity to permit its use without lessening the bias and precision of the determination. Type II water was specified at the time of round robin testing of this test method.

8.3 *Stock Solutions*—Preparation of stock solutions for each element is listed in **Annex A3 (Table A3.1)** or use commercially available, ICP Grade, stock standards.

8.4 *High Purity Hydrochloric Acid, (HCl)*, (sp gr 1.19), concentrated hydrochloric acid.

8.5 *Hydrochloric Acid, (1 + 1)*—Add one volume of HCl (sp gr 1.19) to one volume of water.

8.6 *Lithium Carbonate*, ultrapure.

8.7 *Lithium Solution (40 000 mg/L)*—Dissolve 213 g of ultrapure lithium carbonate in a minimum amount of HCl (sp gr 1.19) and dilute to 1 L with water.

8.8 *Concentrated Nitric Acid, (HNO<sub>3</sub>)*, (sp gr 1.42)—High-purity acid can be prepared by distillation of concentrated nitric acid from a sub-boiling quartz still or it can be commercially purchased.

8.9 *Dilute Nitric Acid, (1+1)*—Add one volume of HNO<sub>3</sub> (sp. gr. 1.42) to one volume of water.

8.10 *Dilute Nitric Acid, (1 + 499)*—Add one volume of HNO<sub>3</sub> (sp gr 1.42) to 499 volumes of water.

NOTE 3—If a high reagent blank is obtained on either HNO<sub>3</sub> or HCl, distill the acid or use high purity acid. When HCl is distilled, an azeotropic mixture is obtained (approximately 6 N HCl); therefore, whenever concentrated HCl is specified in the preparation of a reagent or in the procedure, use double the amount if distilled acid is used.

## 9. Precautions

9.1 Emission intensities are affected by changing viscosity so it is important to control the viscosity of blanks, standards, and samples within reasonable limits. Reagent water standards should not be used to analyze oil field brines. Alternatively, matrix matching or the method of additions can be used.

9.2 Organic solvents, such as alcohol, acetone, and methyl ethyl ketone have been observed to enhance emission intensity. This enhancement effect must be compensated for when organic solvents are known to be present. Alternatively, matrix matching or the method of additions can be used.

<sup>3</sup> *Standard Methods of Chemical Analysis*, Editor, N. H. Furman, Vol 1, Sixth Edition, pp. 107 and 657.

<sup>4</sup> Smith, G. F., *The Wet Chemical Oxidation of Organic Compositions*, The G. Frederick Smith Chemical Co., 1965.

<sup>5</sup> *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 *Annual 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.

## 10. Sampling

10.1 Collect the samples in accordance with the applicable standards, Practice D1066 or Practices D3370.

10.2 Preserve the samples by immediately adding high purity nitric acid to adjust the pH to two at the time of collection. Normally 2 mL of HNO<sub>3</sub> is required per liter of sample. If only dissolved elements are to be determined, (Note 4) filter the sample through a 0.45 μm membrane filter before acidification. The holding time for the sample may be calculated in accordance with Practice D4841.

NOTE 4—Depending on the manufacturer, these filters have been found to be contaminated to various degrees with heavy metals. Care should be exercised in selecting a source of these filters. A good practice is to wash the filters with nitric acid and reagent water before filtering a sample.

## 11. Calibration and Standardization

11.1 Prepare 100 mL of a blank and at least four standard solutions to bracket the expected concentration range of the samples to be analyzed by diluting 5.0 mL of lithium solution (see 8.7) and an appropriate volume of stock solution with HNO<sub>3</sub> (1 + 499). Prepare the blank and standards each time the test is to be run.

11.2 Atomize the blank and standards and record the emission intensity or concentration. Atomize HNO<sub>3</sub> (1 + 499) between each standard.

11.3 Using the instrument software verify that the instrument calibration is within user acceptable QC limits.

## 12. Procedure

12.1 To determine dissolved elements, add 5.0 mL of lithium solution (see 8.7) to a 100.0 mL volumetric flask and bring to volume with the well-mixed acidified sample. Proceed with 12.6.

12.2 When determining total recoverable elements in solutions containing suspended matter or large particles (that is, noncolloidal), add 5.0 mL of HNO<sub>3</sub> (sp. gr. 1.42) and 5.0 mL of lithium solution to a 100.0-mL sample.

NOTE 5—When digestion is necessary, subject the standards, sample, and blank to the same procedure.

12.3 Add 5.0 mL of HCl (sp. gr. 1.19) to each sample.

12.4 Heat the samples in a covered beaker on a steam bath or hot plate until the volume has been reduced to 15 or 20 mL. Take care to see that the samples do not boil. Loss of sample could result from bumping or spattering.

NOTE 6—For samples with high levels of dissolved solids, the amount of reduction in volume is left to the discretion of the analyst.

12.5 Cool and filter the samples, if necessary, through a fine ashless filter paper into 100.0 mL volumetric flasks. Wash the filter paper three times with water and adjust to volume.

12.6 Atomize each solution and record its emission intensity or concentration. Atomize HNO<sub>3</sub> (1 + 499) between samples.

## 13. Calculation

13.1 Calculate the concentration of elements in each sample, in mg/L, using the calibrations established in 11.3.

Modern DCP instruments will provide the results in the calibrated concentration units.

13.2 Multiply the results for dissolved elements by the dilution factor of 1.05 to correct for the required addition of lithium solution (12.1).

## 14. Precision and Bias<sup>6</sup>

14.1 To facilitate handling and distribution for round robin testing, three concentrated solutions were prepared. These were acidified solutions of 15 elements.

14.2 The concentrated solutions, when diluted according to directions, yielded solutions for analysis with the composition as shown in Table 1. A total of eight laboratories and thirteen operators participated in this study.

14.2.1 Type II water was specified at the time of round robin testing of this test method.

14.3 Precision—The precision of this test method for the elements tested within their respective ranges of concentration given in Table 1 may be expressed as given in Table 2.

14.4 Bias—See Table 3.

14.5 This section on precision and bias conforms to Practice D2777 – 77 which was in place at the time of collaborative testing. Under the allowances made in 1.4 of Practice

<sup>6</sup> Supporting data have been filed at ASTM International Headquarters and may be obtained by requesting Research Report RR:D19-1079. Contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org.

TABLE 2 Precision

Element	Reagent Water	Water of Choice
Al	$S_T = 0.093X - 0.301$ $S_O = 0.051X + 0.497$	$S_T = 0.108X + 0.424$ $S_O = 0.044X + 3.18$
Be	$S_T = 0.066X + 0.354$ $S_O = 0.025X - 0.250$	$S_T = 0.059X + 2.15$ $S_O = 0.042X + 1.43$
B	$S_T = 0.045X + 9.34$ $S_O = 0.022X + 3.70$	$S_T = 0.045X + 2.87$ $S_O = 0.021X + 5.12$
Cd	$S_T = 0.044X + 6.08$ $S_O = 0.025X + 4.96$	$S_T = 0.066X + 2.99$ $S_O = 0.037X + 7.99$
Cr	$S_T = 0.060X + 2.13$ $S_O = 0.032X + 1.20$	$S_T = 0.038X + 4.56$ $S_O = 0.027X + 3.86$
Co	$S_T = 0.062X + 4.59$ $S_O = 0.032X + 4.11$	$S_T = 0.085X + 9.55$ $S_O = 0.040X + 3.99$
Cu	$S_T = 0.038X + 5.58$ $S_O = 0.031X + 0.956$	$S_T = 0.049X + 2.75$ $S_O = 0.039X + 0.644$
Fe	$S_T = 0.051X + 14.3$ $S_O = 0.013X + 10.7$	$S_T = 0.053X + 15.7$ $S_O = 0.034X + 12.2$
Pb	$S_T = 0.038X + 9.69$ $S_O = 0.027X + 5.36$	$S_T = 0.037X + 18.3$ $S_O = 0.016X + 20.7$
Mn	$S_T = 0.058X + 2.35$ $S_O = 0.023X + 3.30$	$S_T = 0.034X + 1.98$ $S_O = 0.018X + 3.79$
Hg	$S_T = 0.008X + 22.3$ $S_O = 0.003X + 14.7$	$S_T = 0.009X + 28.0$ $S_O = 0.009X + 23.7$
Ni	$S_T = 0.078X + 5.47$ $S_O = 0.029X + 7.17$	$S_T = 0.088X + 3.38$ $S_O = 0.039X + 5.54$
Sr	$S_T = 0.073X + 1.47$ $S_O = 0.034X + 1.72$	$S_T = 0.024X + 3.56$ $S_O = 0.021X + 1.27$
V	$S_T = 0.053X + 1.74$ $S_O = 0.038X + 0.794$	$S_T = 0.050X + 3.97$ $S_O = 0.048X - 0.156$
Zn	$S_T = 0.025X + 8.38$ $S_O = 0.011X + 6.67$	$S_T = 0.022X + 10.9$ $S_O = 0.014X + 9.47$

where:

$S_T$  = overall precision, μg/L,

$S_O$  = single-operator precision, μg/L, and

$X$  = concentration of element determined, μg/L.