



Designation: ~~D4192-03~~ Designation: D 4192 - 08

Standard Test Method for Potassium in Water by Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometry¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D 4192; 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 test method covers the determination of low amounts of potassium in waters~~

1.1 This test method covers the determination of low amounts of potassium in waters² having low solids content. The applicable range of this test method is 0.20 to 4.0 mg/L when using the 766.5-nm resonance line. The range may be extended upward by dilution of an appropriate aliquot of sample or by using the less-sensitive 404.4-nm resonance line. Many workers have found that this test method is reliable for potassium levels to 0.02 mg/L, but use of this test method at this low level is dependent on the configuration of the aspirator and nebulizer systems available in the atomic absorption spectrophotometer as well as the skill of the analyst. The precision and bias data presented are insufficient to justify use of this test method in the 0.02-mg/L range.

1.2 This test method has been used successfully with spiked reagent water. It is the analyst's responsibility to ensure the validity of this test method to other low dissolved solids matrices.

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

1.4 *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.* For a specific precautionary statement, see Note 3.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*³

D 1066 Practice for Sampling Steam

D 1129 Terminology Relating to Water³

~~D 1192 Specification for Equipment for Sampling Water and Steam in Closed Conduits³~~ Terminology Relating to Water

D 1193 Specification for Reagent Water

D 2777 Practice for Determination of Precision and Bias of Applicable Test Methods of Committee D19 on Water

D 3370 Practices for Sampling Water from Closed Conduits

D 5810 Guide for Spiking into Aqueous Samples

D 5847 Practice for the Writing Quality Control Specifications for Standard Test Methods for Water Analysis

3. Terminology

3.1 ~~Definitions—~~*For definitions of terms used in this test method, refer to Terminology D 1129.*

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 Potassium is determined by flame atomic absorption spectrophotometry. The potassium content is determined by aspirating the low solids sample directly with no sample pretreatment.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 Potassium occurs in rocks in a form that is not easily solubilized; therefore, the potassium content of natural waters is usually low. Most natural waters contain less than 20 mg/L of potassium, but waters containing several hundred milligrams per litre are occasionally found. Potassium is essential to animal nutrition, but a concentration of 1000 to 2000 mg/L in stock water is regarded as the extreme limit permissible.

¹ 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. Current edition approved Jan. 10, 2003. Published January 2003. Originally approved in 1982. Last previous edition approved in 1997 as D4192-97.

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² Platte, J. A., and Marcy, V. M., "A New Tool for the Water Chemist," *Industrial Water Engineering*, May 1965 .

³ 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*, Vol 11.01, volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

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

6. Interferences

6.1 In the analysis of low-solids water, interferences are usually negligible.

7. Apparatus

7.1 *Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometer* for use at 766.5 nm.

NOTE 1—The manufacturer's instructions should be followed for all instrumental parameters. Wavelengths other than 766.5 nm may be used only if they have been determined to be equally suitable.

7.2 *Potassium Hollow-Cathode Lamps*—Multielement hollow cathode lamps are available and also have been found satisfactory.

7.3 *Pressure-Reducing Valves*—The supplies of fuel and oxidant shall be maintained at pressures somewhat higher than the operating pressure of the instrument by using suitable valves.

8. Reagents and Materials

8.1 *Purity of Reagents*—Reagent grade chemicals shall be used in all tests. Unless otherwise indicated, it is intended that all reagents shall conform to the specifications of the Committee on Analytical Reagents of the American Chemical Society where such specifications are available.⁴ Other grades may be used, provided it is first ascertained that the reagent is of sufficiently high 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 Specification D 1193, Type I. 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 adversely affecting the bias and precision of the test method. Type II water was specified at the time of round robin testing of this test method.

8.3 *Potassium Solution, Stock (1.0 mL = 1.0 mg K)*—Dry potassium chloride to constant weight at 105°C. Dissolve 1.907 g of the dry potassium chloride (KCl) in water and dilute to 1 L with water.

NOTE 2—Certified potassium stock solutions are commercially available through chemical supply vendors.

8.4 *Potassium Solution, Standard (1.00 mL = 0.1 mg K)*—Dilute 100.0 mL of potassium stock solution to 1 L with water.

8.5 *Oxidant: Air*, which has been passed through a suitable filter to remove oil, water, and other foreign substances is the usual oxidant.

8.6 *Fuel: Acetylene*—Standard, commercially available acetylene is the usual fuel. Acetone, always present in acetylene cylinders can affect analytical results. The cylinder should be replaced at 50 psig (345 kPa) to avoid acetone carry over.

NOTE 3—**Warning:** "Purified" grade acetylene containing a special proprietary solvent rather than acetone should not be used with poly(vinyl chloride) tubing as weakening of the tubing walls can cause a potentially hazardous situation.

9. Sampling

9.1 Collect the samples in accordance with the applicable ASTM standard as follows: Practices D 3370, ~~Practice D 1066~~, and ~~Specification D 1192~~ and Practice D 1066.

10. Standardization

10.1 Prepare 100 mL each of a blank and at least four standard solutions to bracket the expected potassium concentration range of the samples to be analyzed by diluting the standard potassium solution 8.4 with water. Prepare the standards each time the test is to be performed. Select the standards to give zero, middle, median, and maximum points for an analytical curve.

10.2 Aspirate the blank and the standards and record the instrument readings. Aspirate water between standards.

⁴ "Reagent Chemical, American Chemical Society Specifications," Am. Chemical Soc., Washington, DC. For suggestions on the testing of reagents not listed by the American Chemical Society see "Analar Standards for Laboratory Chemicals," BDH Ltd., Poole, Dorset, U.K., and the "United States Pharmacopeia."

⁴ *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.

TABLE 1 Determination of Bias for Potassium in Reagent Water by Atomic Absorption

Amount Added, mg/L	Amount Found, mg/L	S_i	S_o	Bias %
0.15	0.164	0.037	0.014	+ 9.33
1.50	1.62	0.085	0.044	+ 8.00
3.00	3.03	0.179	0.062	+ 1.13