
Hydraulic fluid power — Calibration of automatic particle counters for liquids

*Transmissions hydrauliques — Étalonnage des compteurs
automatiques de particules en suspension dans les liquides*

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ISO copyright office
Ch. de Blandonnet 8 • CP 401
CH-1214 Vernier, Geneva, Switzerland
Tel. +41 22 749 01 11
Fax +41 22 749 09 47
copyright@iso.org
www.iso.org

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see www.iso.org/patents).

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For an explanation on the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see the following URL: www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

The committee responsible for this document is ISO/TC 131, *Fluid power systems*, Subcommittee SC 6, *Contamination control*.

This third edition cancels and replaces the second edition (ISO 11171:2010), of which it constitutes a minor revision.

This edition includes the following significant changes with respect to the previous edition:

- 6.8: defining μm equation, Table 3 – revised to show $\mu\text{m}(\text{b})$ and $\mu\text{m}(\text{c})$ to be reported;
- 7.1: revised to show how to report $\mu\text{m}(\text{b})$ and $\mu\text{m}(\text{c})$.

Introduction

In hydraulic fluid power systems, power is transmitted and controlled through a liquid under pressure within an enclosed circuit. The fluid is both a lubricant and a power-transmitting medium. Reliable system performance requires control of the contaminants in the fluid. Qualitative and quantitative determination of the particulate contaminants in the fluid medium requires precision in obtaining the sample and in determining the contaminant particle size distribution and concentration. Liquid automatic particle counters (APCs) are an accepted means of determining the concentration and size distribution of the contaminant particles. Individual APC accuracy is established through calibration.

This International Standard establishes a recommended standard calibration procedure for determining particle sizing and counting accuracy. The primary particle-sizing calibration is conducted using NIST SRM 2806 suspensions with particle size distribution certified by the United States' National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). A secondary calibration method with traceability to NIST uses suspensions of ISO MTD which are independently analysed using an APC calibrated by the primary method. Concentration limits are determined through the use of serial dilutions of a concentrated suspension. Operation and performance limits are also established using this International Standard.

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Hydraulic fluid power — Calibration of automatic particle counters for liquids

1 Scope

This International Standard specifies procedures for the following:

- a) primary particle-sizing calibration, sensor resolution and counting performance of automatic particle counters (APCs) for liquids capable of analysing bottle samples;
- b) secondary particle-sizing calibration using suspensions verified with a primary calibrated APC;
- c) establishing acceptable operation and performance limits;
- d) verifying particle sensor performance using a truncated test dust;
- e) determining coincidence and flow rate limits.

2 Normative references

The following documents, in whole or in part, are normatively referenced in this document and are indispensable for its application. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 3722, *Hydraulic fluid power — Fluid sample containers — Qualifying and controlling cleaning methods*

ISO 5598, *Fluid power systems and components — Vocabulary*

ISO 12103-1, *Road vehicles — Test dust for filter evaluation — Part 1: Arizona test dust*

ISO 16889, *Hydraulic fluid power — Filters — Multi-pass method for evaluating filtration performance of a filter element*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 5598 and the following apply.

3.1

automatic particle counter

APC

instrument that automatically counts and sizes individual particles suspended in a fluid, typically relying on optical light scattering or light extinction principles of particle sizing

Note 1 to entry: An APC consists of, at a minimum, a particle sensor, a means for delivering a known volume of sample to the sensor at a controlled rate, a signal processor, an analyser that compiles the sensor output for the sizes of individual particles into particle size distribution and a means for outputting particle size distribution results for the sample.

3.2

threshold noise level

minimum voltage setting of an automatic particle counter at which the observed pulse-counting frequency does not exceed 60 counts/min due to electrical noise in the absence of flow in the sensing volume

3.3

sensing volume

portion of the illuminated region of the sensor through which the fluid stream passes and from which the light is collected by the optical system

3.4

resolution

measure of the ability of an automatic particle counter to distinguish between particles of similar, but different, sizes

3.5

coincidence error limit

highest concentration of NIST RM 8632 that can be counted with an automatic particle counter with an error of less than 5 % resulting from the presence of more than one particle in the sensing volume at one time

3.6

working flow rate

flow rate through the sensor used for sizing calibration and sample analysis

3.7

particle size

projected area equivalent diameter of particles as determined using scanning electron microscopy or as determined using a calibrated liquid optical single particle automatic particle counter

Note 1 to entry: Unless otherwise stated, an APC used for particle size determination is calibrated in accordance with this International Standard.

Note 2 to entry: NIST uses scanning electron microscopy to determine the projected area equivalent diameter of particles in its reference materials.

3.8

particle size distribution

number concentration of particles, expressed as a function of particle size

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primary calibration

sizing calibration conducted using NIST standard reference material 2806x

Note 1 to entry: The procedure is specified in [Clause 6](#).

Note 2 to entry: For details of NIST standard reference material 2806x, see [4.4](#).

3.10

secondary calibration

sizing calibration conducted using calibration suspensions

Note 1 to entry: The procedure is specified in [Clause 6](#) and the calibration suspensions are prepared in accordance with [Annex F](#).

4 Materials and equipment

4.1 Polystyrene latex spheres, nearly monodispersed in aqueous suspension. Polystyrene latex spheres with a nominal diameter of 10 µm are required in [Annex D](#) for resolution determination and polystyrene latex spheres with other nominal diameters larger than 50 µm are required in [Clause 6](#), if size calibration for particle sizes of 50 µm and larger is performed. In certain situations, it may also be useful to use additional sphere sizes. Regardless, the coefficient of variation of each polystyrene latex sphere size shall be less than 5 %. The supplier of the polystyrene latex spheres shall provide a certificate

of analysis with each batch, which indicates that the sphere particle size has been determined using techniques with traceability to National or International Standards.

Once opened, suspensions of polystyrene latex spheres shall be used within three months unless the size distribution and cleanliness of the suspension have been verified.

NOTE 1 The size distribution and cleanliness of polystyrene latex spheres can be verified using the method described in [D.13](#).

NOTE 2 Polystyrene latex spheres in aqueous suspension have a limited shelf-life. Shelf-life is a function of a variety of factors including temperature and microbial contamination of the suspension.

4.2 Clean dilution fluid, consisting of the test fluid used in ISO 16889 and an antistatic additive that gives a conductivity of $2\,500\text{ pS/m} \pm 1\,000\text{ pS/m}$ at room temperature. The fluid shall contain less than 0,5 % of the number of particles equal to or larger than the smallest particle size of interest expected to be observed in the samples.

4.3 Clean aerosol OT dilution fluid, to determine sensor resolution in [Annex D](#) (the clean dilution fluid specified in [4.2](#) is used for all other operations in this International Standard). It is prepared from a concentrate made by adding 120 g of aerosol OT to each litre of clean dilution fluid ([4.2](#)). Heat the concentrate to about 60 °C and stir until the aerosol OT has completely dissolved. Prepare the aerosol OT dilution fluid by diluting the concentrate with clean dilution fluid ([4.2](#)) to a final concentration of 12 g of aerosol OT per litre. The clean aerosol OT dilution fluid shall meet the same cleanliness levels as the dilution fluid specified in [4.2](#).

CAUTION — Follow the precautions for safe handling and usage described in the materials safety data sheet (available from the supplier of the aerosol OT).

Aerosol OT (dioctyl sulfosuccinate, sodium salt) is a waxy, hygroscopic solid. If it appears to be damp or has absorbed water prior to use, dry it first for at least 18 h at about 150 °C.

4.4 NIST standard reference material 2806_x (SRM 2806_x) primary calibration suspension, where *x* is the letter used by NIST to designate the batch number of the certified primary calibration suspension, available from NIST. Primary calibrations shall use SRM 2806.

NOTE ISO/TR 16144 describes the procedures used to certify the standard reference material SRM 2806.

4.5 NIST reference material 8631 (RM 8631) dust, prepared by drying the dust for at least 18 h at a temperature between 110 °C and 150 °C, required if secondary calibration is to be performed (see [6.1](#)).

4.6 ISO medium test dust (MTD) in accordance with ISO 12103-1, dried for at least 18 h at a temperature between 110 °C and 150 °C before use.

4.7 NIST reference material 8632 (RM 8632) dust, prepared by drying the dust for at least 18 h at a temperature between 110 °C and 150 °C before use, if required for determination of coincidence error limit or in [Annexes B, C](#) and [E](#).

NOTE The reference materials specified in [4.4](#), [4.5](#), [4.6](#) and [4.7](#) are created using “living” documents that may change as new batches are produced. Users of this International Standard are advised to ensure that they are using the latest batch available.

4.8 Automatic particle counter (APC) for liquids, with bottle sampler.

4.9 Clean sample containers, with closures (appropriate bottle caps, for example), and **volumetric glassware** of at least class B. The cleanliness levels of the sample containers, closures and glassware shall be less than 0,5 % of the number of particles (larger than the smallest particle size of interest) expected to be observed in the samples. The cleanliness levels shall be confirmed by ISO 3722.

4.10 Mechanical shaker, such as a paint or laboratory shaker, suitable for dispersing suspensions.

4.11 Ultrasonic cleaner, with a power density of 3 000 W/m² to 10 000 W/m² of bottom area.

4.12 Linear-linear graph paper or computer software for generating graphics.

4.13 Log-log graph paper or computer software for generating graphics.

4.14 Analytical or electronic balance with the following minimum specifications:

- a) readability: 0,05 mg;
- b) accuracy (agreement with true mass): $\pm 0,05$ mg;
- c) precision (repeatability): $\pm 0,05$ mg;
- d) front or side doors and a covered top to eliminate the effect of air currents.

5 Sequence of APC calibration procedures

5.1 See [Figure 1](#) for a recommended sequence of steps to be followed when performing a full calibration on a new APC. Conduct the procedures of this clause when a new APC is received or following the repair or readjustment of an APC or sensor (see [Table 1](#)). Proceed to [Clause 6](#) if neither the APC nor the sensor has been repaired or readjusted, if no detectable change in the operating characteristics has occurred since the last sizing calibration was performed, or if the APC has been subjected to the procedures in [Annexes A, B, C, D, and E](#) and the results have been documented. The specific order of Annexes and Clauses specified in [Figure 1](#) and [Table 1](#) are recommendations. The operator may follow a different order, as long as all required parts are performed.

NOTE 1 [Annexes A, B, C, and D](#) can be performed by an individual laboratory or by the manufacturer of the APC prior to delivery.

A change in the operating characteristics of the APC can be detected by several different methods, including but not limited to the following:

- a) using particle data from control samples collected over time and a statistical process control chart, such as an individuals moving range (IMR) chart, to detect significant changes in calibration;
- b) comparing calibration curves over time to detect a significant change in calibration;
- c) returning the APC to its manufacturer for evaluation and assessment of the change in calibration;
- d) analysing a primary or secondary calibration suspension in accordance with [6.2](#) and [6.3](#), then comparing the resulting particle concentration data to the corresponding particle size distribution for the sample. If the results agree within the limits for the maximum allowable D_Q given in [Table C.2](#), the ability of the APC to size and count particles has not been significantly affected. If the results do not agree, a significant change has occurred and the operator is instructed to proceed as indicated in [Table 1](#);
- e) analysing a primary or secondary calibration suspension and resulting data as described in item d), then analysing an ISO UFTD sample prepared in accordance with [Annex A](#), then comparing the resulting particle concentration data with the limits given in [Table A.1](#). If the results agree within the limits given in [Table A.1](#), the ability of the APC to size and count particles has not been significantly affected. If the results do not agree with the limits of [Table A.1](#), the APC has experienced a significant change and the operator is instructed to proceed as indicated in [Table 1](#).

NOTE 2 For the purposes of this subclause, repair or readjustment of an APC refers to service or repair procedures that affect the ability of the APC to accurately size and count particles.

If the light source or any part of the optics is adjusted, repaired or replaced, the procedures of [Clause 6](#) and [Annexes A, B, D, and E](#) shall be repeated.

If the sensor or counting electronics is adjusted, repaired or replaced, the procedures of [Clause 6](#) and [Annexes A, B, C, D, and E](#) shall be repeated.

If the volume measurement system is repaired, replaced or readjusted, the procedures of [Annex A](#) shall be repeated.

It is not necessary to repeat these procedures following normal cleaning procedures, the attachment of cables or peripheral equipment, the replacement of plumbing lines or connections, or following other operations that do not involve disassembly of the APC, sensor or volume measurement system.

5.2 Perform the preliminary APC check, which includes volume accuracy, in accordance with [Annex A](#).

5.3 Determine the coincidence error limits of the APC in accordance with [Annex B](#).

5.4 Perform the sizing calibration procedure in accordance with [Clause 6](#).

5.5 Determine the flow rate limits of the APC in accordance with [Annex C](#).

5.6 Determine the APC resolution in accordance with [Annex D](#).

5.7 Verify the particle-counting accuracy in accordance with [Annex E](#).

5.8 In order to conform to the requirements of this International Standard, the APC shall include the following:

- a) be calibrated in accordance with [5.4](#);
- b) meet the volume accuracy, resolution and sensor performance specifications determined in [5.2](#), [5.6](#) and [5.7](#);
- c) be operated using the calibration curve determined in [5.4](#) within the coincidence error and flow rate limits determined in [5.3](#) and [5.5](#).

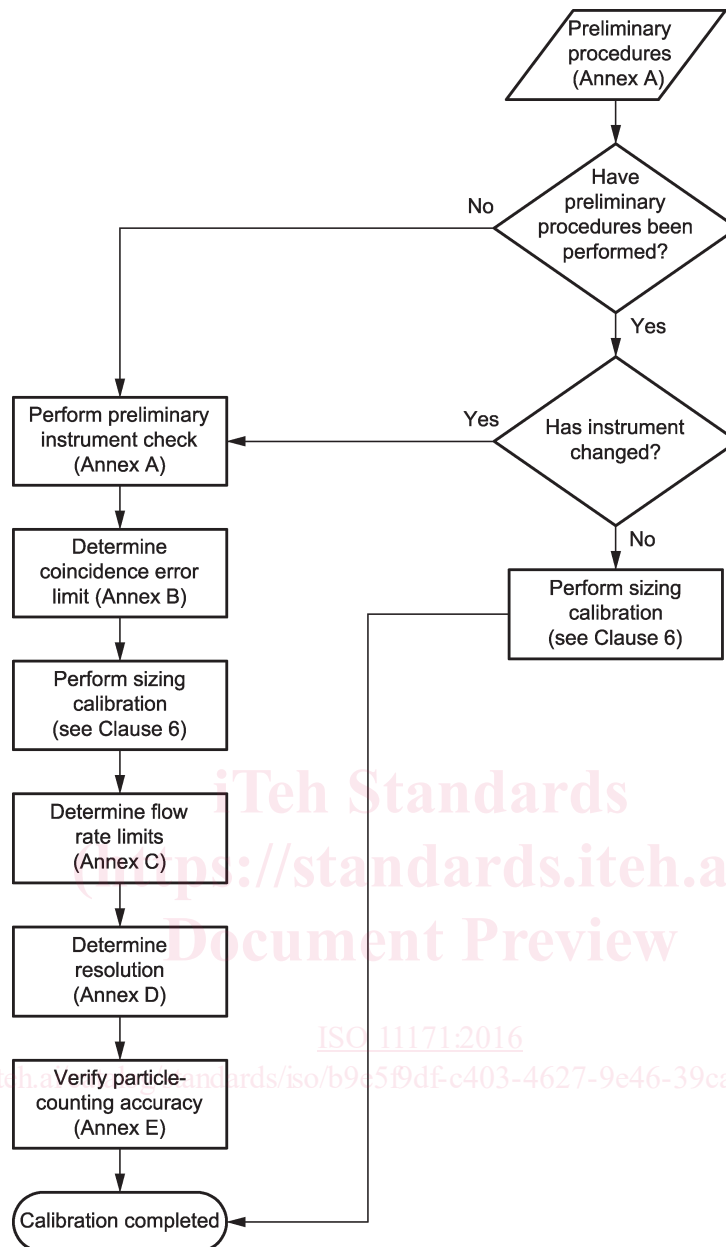


Figure 1 — Sequence of APC calibration procedures

Table 1 — Schedule of APC calibration procedures

APC status ^a	Relevant Clause and Annexes of this International Standard					
	Clause 6	Annex A	Annex B	Annex C	Annex D	Annex E
	Sizing calibration procedure	Preliminary APC check	Coincidence error limits	Flow rate limits	Resolution	Accuracy
New APC or existing APC not calibrated to this International Standard	x	x	x	x	x	x
Last calibration was more than 6 m to 12 m ago	x	—	—	—	—	—
Suspicion that calibration has changed significantly	x	—	—	—	—	—
Optics (including light source) repaired or readjusted	x	x	x	—	x	x
Sensor or counting electronics repaired or readjusted	x	x	x	x	x	x
Volume measurement components (e.g. flowmeter, burette, level detectors) repaired or readjusted	—	x	—	—	—	—
Sensor cleaned	No action necessary					
Cables or peripheral equipment attached	No action necessary					
Plumbing lines and connections replaced	No action necessary					
Operation performed that does not involve disassembly of APC, sensor or volume measurement system	No action necessary					

^a Repair or readjustment refers only to service or repair procedures that affect the ability of the APC to accurately size and count particles. In order to verify the ability of an APC to accurately size and count particles, analyse a primary or secondary calibration suspension in accordance with [6.2](#) and [6.3](#), then compare the resulting particle concentration data to the corresponding particle size distribution for the sample. If the results agree within the limits given for the maximum allowable D_Q in [Table C.2](#), the ability of the APC to size and count particles has not been significantly affected. If the results do not agree, proceed as indicated in this table.

6 Sizing calibration procedure

6.1 Refer to Figure 2 for a flow chart describing the sizing calibration procedure. Conduct the sizing calibration every three to six months, when a new APC is received, or after the repair or readjustment

of an APC or sensor. For primary calibrations, use NIST calibration suspensions (see 4.4). For secondary calibrations, use calibration suspensions prepared in accordance with Annex F.

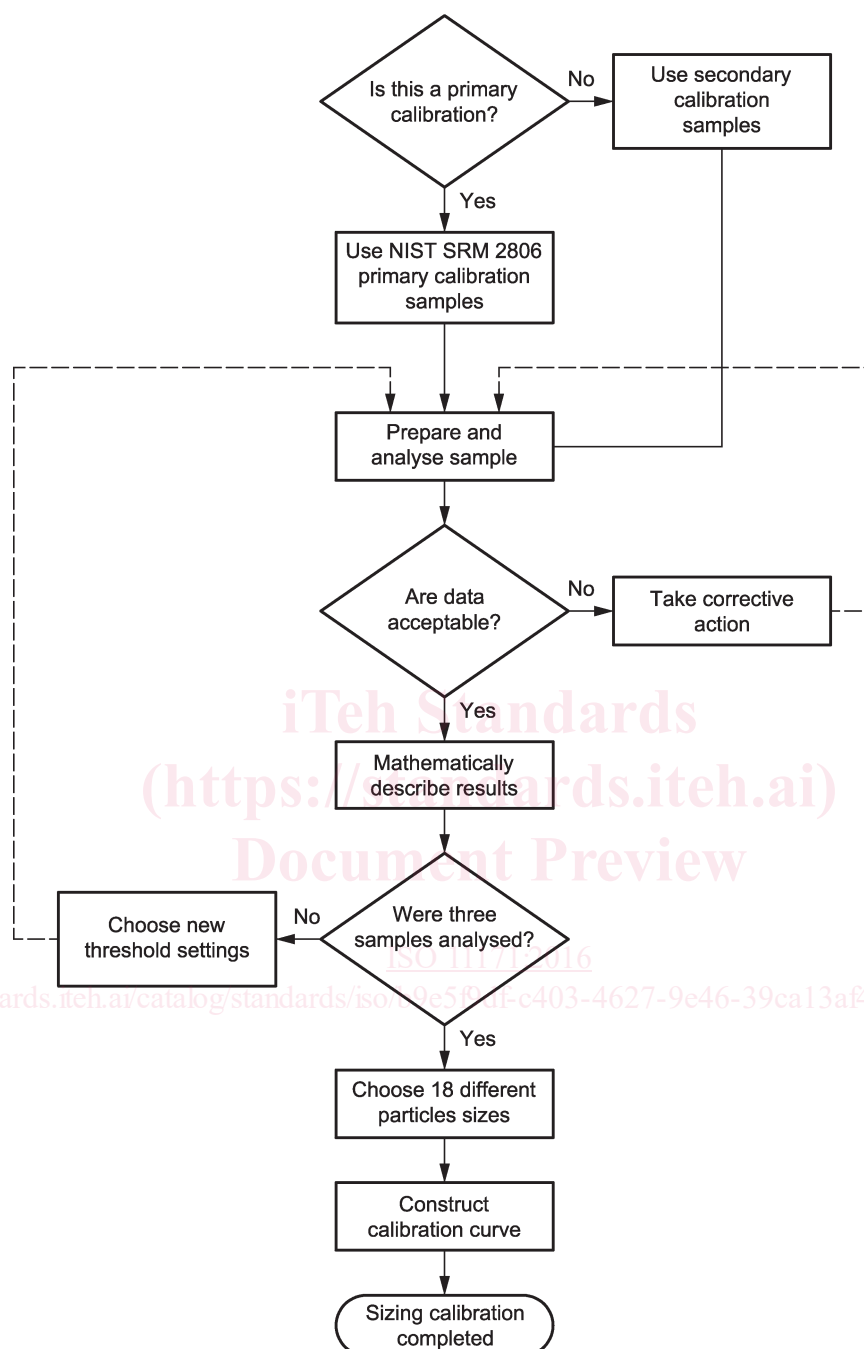


Figure 2 — Sizing calibration procedure

After a suitable calibration history for an APC and sensor has been developed, the frequency of calibration can gradually decrease, but the time interval between successive calibrations shall not exceed one year.

All phases of the calibration shall be conducted at the same flow rate. The flow rate limits of the APC are determined in Annex C. Any data obtained at flow rates outside these limits shall be discarded and the corresponding part of the procedure repeated using the proper flow rate.

Conduct the sizing calibration using the same sample volume used in 5.2. If a different volume is used, the procedure in 5.2 shall be repeated using the new sample volume to avoid volume measurement errors.