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Standard Practice for Sampling Unconsolidated Solids in Drums or Similar Containers¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This practice covers typical equipment and methods for collecting samples of unconsolidated solids in drums or similar containers. These methods are adapted specifically for sampling drums having a volume of 110 U.S. gal (416 L) or less. These methods are applicable to hazardous material, product, or waste. Specific sample collection and handling requirements should be described in the site-specific work plan.

~~1.2 The values stated in inch-pound units are to be regarded as the standard. The values given in parentheses are for information only.~~

1.2 The values stated in inch-pound units are to be regarded as standard. The values given in parentheses are mathematical conversions to SI units that are provided for information only and are not considered 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

C702 [Practice for Reducing Samples of Aggregate to Testing Size](#)

D4547 [Guide for Sampling Waste and Soils for Volatile Organic Compounds](#)

D4687 [Guide for General Planning of Waste Sampling](#)

D4700 [Guide for Soil Sampling from the Vadose Zone](#)

D6009 [Guide for Sampling Waste Piles](#)

D6044 [Guide for Representative Sampling for Management of Waste and Contaminated Media](#)

D6051 [Guide for Composite Sampling and Field Subsampling for Environmental Waste Management Activities](#)

D6063 [Guide for Sampling of Drums and Similar Containers by Field Personnel](#)

D6311 [Guide for Generation of Environmental Data Related to Waste Management Activities: Selection and Optimization of Sampling Design](#)

D6323 [Guide for Laboratory Subsampling of Media Related to Waste Management Activities](#)

D5088 [Practice for Decontamination of Field Equipment Used at Waste Sites](#)

D5283 [Practice for Generation of Environmental Data Related to Waste Management Activities: Quality Assurance and Quality Control Planning and Implementation](#)

D5451 [Practice for Sampling Using a Trier Sampler](#)

E300 [Practice for Sampling Industrial Chemicals](#)

D5633 [Practice for Sampling with a Scoop](#)

2.2 NSC Document:

~~Accident Prevention Manual for~~ [Prevention Manual for Industrial Operations, 1992](#)³

2.3 Government Documents:⁴

~~EPA/600/2-86/013~~ [Drum Handling Practices at Hazardous Waste Sites, EPA/600/2-86/013, January 1986](#)

¹ This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D34 on Waste Management and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D34.01.02 on Sampling Techniques.

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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 Available from National Safety Council, P.O. Box 558, Itasca, IL 60143-0558.

⁴ Available from the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402.

, January 1986

EPA/540/4-91/001 *Soil Sampling and Analysis for Volatile Compounds*, EPA/540/4-91/001, February 1991

, February 1991

Occupational Safety and Health Guidance Manual ~~*Occupational Safety and Health Guidance Manual for Hazardous Waste Site Activities*~~, for Hazardous Waste Site Activities, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), October 1985

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions:

3.1.1 *bonding*—touching the sample equipment to the drum to form an electrically conductive path to minimize potential electrical differences between the sampling equipment and the drum, reducing the buildup of static electricity.

3.1.2 *bung*—usually a 2-in. (5.1-cm) or 3/4-in. (1.3-cm) diameter threaded plug designed specifically to close a bung hole.

3.1.3 *bung hole*—an opening in a barrel or drum through which it can be filled, emptied, or vented.

3.1.4 *deheading*—removal of the lid of a closed-head drum; usually accomplished with a drum deheader.

3.1.5 ~~*drum*~~—~~implies any drum, barrel, or~~ a cylindrical non-bulk container of 5 to 110 U.S. gal (19 to 416 L) capacity.

3.1.6 *pail*—a small container, usually with a capacity of 5 U.S. gal. Pails typically have bungs or spouts, or the entire lid can be removed.

3.1.7 *paperwork*—all required site documentation, which may include the manifests, waste profiles, material safety data sheets (MSDS), site forms, sample labels, custody seals, and chain of custody forms.

3.1.8 *unconsolidated*—for solid material, the characteristic of being uncemented or uncompacted, or both, and separated easily into smaller particles.

3.1.9 *work plan*—a plan specific to a particular site; for conducting activities specified in the plan.

4. Summary of Practice

4.1 The drum and its contents are inspected, and appropriate sampling equipment is selected. A clean sampling device is then used to auger, shovel, scoop, or core into the unconsolidated solid material to be sampled. The sample is collected and placed in a sample container. ~~The~~ After use the sampling device is then either disposed of or cleaned and decontaminated before re-use.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 This practice is intended for use in collecting samples of unconsolidated solid materials from drums or similar containers, including those that are unstable, ruptured, or compromised otherwise. Special handling procedures (for example, remote drum opening, over pressurized drum opening, drum deheading, etc.) are described in EPA/600/2-86/013 *Drum Handling Practices at Hazardous Waste Sites*.

6. Interferences

6.1 The condition of the materials to be sampled and the condition and accessibility of the drums will have a significant impact on the selection of sampling equipment and techniques used to recover representative samples.

7. Pre-Sampling

7.1 General Principles and Precautions:

7.1.1 Samples should be collected in accordance with an appropriate work plan (Practice D5283 and Guides D4687, D6044, D6051, D6063, and D6311). This plan must include a worker health and safety section because there are potential hazards associated with opening drums as well as potentially hazardous contents. See *Occupational Safety and Health Guidance Manual for Hazardous Waste Site Activities* for information on health and safety at hazardous waste sites.

7.1.2 Correct sampling procedures must be applied to the conditions as they are encountered. It is impossible to specify rigid rules describing the exact manner of sample collection because of unknowns associated with each solid sampling situation. It is essential that the samples be collected by a trained and experienced sampler because of the various conditions under which drummed solids must be sampled.

7.1.3 To be able to make probability or confidence statements concerning the properties of a sampled lot, the sampling procedure must allow for some element of randomness in selection because of the possible variations in the material. The sampler should always be on the alert for possible biases arising from the use of a particular sampling device or from unexpected segregation within the material.

7.1.4 All auger, trier, thief, shovel and scoop methods may fail a prime sampling requirement: that of random selection of sample fractions. Scoops and shovels are limited to use at or near the top surface. Augers, triers, and thieves are normally inserted in a present preset pattern. Particles on the bottom or along the sides of the drum may consequently never have an opportunity to be included in a sample. Sample particles should be selected by techniques that will minimize variation in measured characteristics between the available fractions and the resulting sample (Practice C702).

7.1.5 The sampling equipment, sample preparation equipment, sample containers, etc. must be clean, dry, and inert to the material being sampled. All equipment, including sample containers, shall be inspected before use to ensure that they are clear of obvious dirt and contamination and are in good working condition. Visible contamination shall be removed, and the equipment shall be decontaminated with the appropriate rinse materials. Decontaminated sampling equipment should be protected from contamination. This may include, but not be limited to, storage in aluminum foil, plastic bags, polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) film, or other means of protection that will not impact the sample quality of intended analysis. Many of these disadvantages may be eliminated if the drum contents can be emptied onto a protected flat surface, allowing representative sampling of the disturbed pile using techniques described in Guides D6009 and D6323.

7.1.5 The “Alternate Shovelling Technique” may be considered for representative sampling of the unconsolidated contents of drums or similar containers. If the investigation objectives require statistically representative data to define the average properties of drummed contents, the sampling technique used should ensure that every particle size and type is available for sampling. In the case of an open headed drum of unconsolidated solid materials, the materials from the drum should be removed completely using a scoop or shovel, counting the number of scoop or shovel fulls required to do so. Material from the drum should be placed either on plastic sheeting or into another comparably sized clean drum. Based on the total number of scoop or shovel fulls removed, various scoop/shovels should be selected systematically or randomly to sample as the material is being returned to the original container. These sample portions/aliquots from the scoops or shovels, corresponding to the systematic or random numbers, should be placed into the sample container. The number of portions/aliquots needed is a function of the container size, particle size and sample size.

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7.2 Basic Pre-Sampling Practices:

7.2.1 Review all paperwork.

7.2.2 Select the sampling equipment and sample containers appropriate for the material in the drum, as detailed in the work plan.

7.2.3 Enter the work zone.

7.2.4 Inspect all drums to be sampled visually. Note any abnormal conditions, including rust marks, stains, bulges, or other signs of pressurization or leaks that may require special handling. The work plan should define clearly the limiting condition under which special handling procedures shall be initiated. See EPA/600/2-86/013 *Drum Handling Practices at Hazardous Waste Sites* for information on opening overpressurized drums and the use of remotely operated drum opening equipment.

7.2.5 Stage the drums to be sampled in a designated work area if they cannot be sampled in their current location. See EPA/600/2-86/013 *Drum Handling Practices at Hazardous Waste Sites* for further information on staging turns.

7.2.5.1 Move the drums to upright, stable positions if necessary. Sufficient space shall be left between drums to prevent movement hazards.

7.2.5.2 Number or identify uniquely all drums to be sampled.

7.2.6 Perform a detailed inspection of individual drums.

7.2.6.1 Record all relevant information from drum labels, markings, data sheets, etc. in the field log book or on forms specified in the work plan.

7.2.6.2 Make sure there are no discrepancies with existing paperwork.

7.2.7 Slowly loosen the ring that secures the lid, or loosen the bung allowing any pressure or vacuum to equalize.

7.2.7.1 Precautionary Notes:

(1) If the drum or pail appears to be under positive or negative pressure (that is, a slight bulge or dimple in the lid), control the release of pressure until it has equalized. For example, if the drum or pail is equipped with bungs, loosen the smaller bung first since doing so will make it easier to control the release of pressure.

(2) If the top of the drum is dished inward (dimpled), it may “pop” when equalizing pressure, spraying the sampler with any material that is sitting on top of the drum.

(3) If there is evidence of a chemical reaction or sudden pressure buildup, the sampler should leave the area immediately and evaluate whether remote drum opening equipment should be used.

(4) For flammable or explosive materials, the drum and sampling equipment should be grounded if the generation of static electricity while opening or sampling the drum is a possibility. The drum and sampling equipment should be grounded to a ground stake or to an existing ground (building ground, grounded water pipes, etc.). New sampling equipment may have some residual static electrical charge due to the materials in which they are packed and shipped. The work plan should specify whether grounding is necessary. See *Accident Prevention Manual for Industrial Operations* for information on grounding and bonding.

7.2.7.2 Drums should be opened, sampled, and closed individually to minimize the risk of exposure.

7.2.7.3 *Drums (or Pails) with Bungs*—Loosen the large bung slowly. Use non-sparking tools.

7.2.7.4 *Drums with Removable Lids*—Loosen the ring slowly with a manual wrench or air impact wrench. Use non-sparking tools.

7.2.7.5 *Pails with Removable Lids (Side-Lever Lock Ring)*—Release the lever slowly.

7.2.7.6 *Pails with Removable Lids (Snap-On)*—Pry the lid loose slowly with a pail lid opener.

7.2.8 Manual or remote puncturing or deheading will be required if the drum (or pail) has a stuck bung or the lid cannot be removed. See [EPA/600/2-86/013 Drum Handling Practices at Hazardous Waste Sites](#) for further information on manual or remote drum opening.

7.2.9 Any discrepancy discovered (such as evidence of free liquid) upon opening the drum should be recorded in the field log book.

7.3 *Sampling Equipment—Selection :*

7.3.1 Table 1 summarizes selection criteria for equipment by the material to be sampled.

7.3.2 *Sampling Equipment, Materials of Construction*—Sampling devices will usually be made of stainless steel, brass, or aluminum. Devices using permanent coatings or liners (such as PTFE) may be subject to abrasion, leading to contamination of the sample.

7.3.3 *Generic Equipment List*—A general list of equipment used for sampling unconsolidated solids follows:

7.3.3.1 Scoop.

7.3.3.1 Scoop and Shovel.

7.3.3.2 Trier.

7.3.3.3 Auger.

7.3.3.4 Concentric tube thief (single slot, multi-slot, grain probe, and missouri trier).

7.3.3.4 Concentric tube thief (single slot/partition, multi-slot/partitioned, grain thief/probe, double tube, open-sleeved trier and Missouri D tube Sampler).

7.3.3.5 Thin-walled tube.

7.3.3.6 Scissors.

7.3.3.7 Tongs.

7.3.3.8 Hammer and chisel.

7.3.3.9 Cloths or wipes, or both.

7.3.3.10 Spatula.

7.3.3.11 Sample containers, lids, and liners.

7.3.3.12 Chain of custody forms.

7.3.3.13 Field log books.

7.3.3.14 Sample labels.

7.3.3.15 Sample cooler.

7.3.3.16 Ice or gel ice.

7.3.3.17 Grounding cables with alligator clips and emery cloth.

7.3.3.18 Portable monitoring equipment (combustible gas indicator, organic vapor detectors, radiation survey meter, etc.).

7.3.4 Equipment needed to open drums should be non-sparking (brass or beryllium copper) and include, but not be limited to, the following:

7.3.4.1 Bung wrenches (one straight and one bent),

7.3.4.2 Flat blade screwdriver,

7.3.4.3 Breaker bar (½ in. (1.3 cm)),

7.3.4.4 Ratchet (½ in. (1.3 cm)),

7.3.4.5 Speed handle (½ in. (1.3 cm)),

7.3.4.6 Adjustable wrenches (10 and 12 in. (25 and 30 cm)),

7.3.4.7 Air impact wrench and sockets, and

TABLE 1 Selection Criteria for Equipment

Equipment	ASTM Standard	Cohesive Solid	Sheet, Cloth, or Chunk Material	Dry Flowable Solids	Moist Flowable Solids
Scoop	D5633	—X ^A	×	×	×
Scoop and shovel	D5633	X ^A	X	X	X
Auger	D4700	X	... ^B	...	...
Trier	D5451	X	...	...	X
Thin-walled tube	D4700	...	X ^C	X ^C	...
Hammer and chisel		N ^D	N	...	...
Scissors and tongs		...	X	...	...
Concentric tube thief	E300	...	...	X	...

^A X = equipment may be used with this type of waste.

^B Equipment is probably unsuitable.

^C Sampling equipment with retaining device.

^D N = not equipment of choice, but may be used.