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Standard Practice for Sampling Workplace Atmospheres to Collect Gases or Vapors with Solid Sorbent Diffusive Samplers¹

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^{ε1}Note—Reapproved with editorial changes in October 2009.

1. Scope

1.1 This practice covers the sampling of workplace atmospheres for the presence of certain gases or vapors by means of diffusion across a specified quiescent region and subsequent sorption on a solid sorbent (1).²

1.2 A list of organic compounds which are applicable to solid sorbent sampling where the sorbent is contained in a bed through which air is passed is given in Annex A1 of Practice D3686. Diffusive samplers may be applicable to a similar range of compounds but this must be confirmed by reference to the individual sampler manufacturers' literature.

1.3 The valid use of diffusive samplers depends on the existence of actual laboratory or field validation, or both. Guidance on validation can be obtained from published protocols (2-6). This practice is not designed to cover the verification, validation, or specific test procedures used to assess the accuracy or precision of diffusive samplers.

1.4 The values stated in SI units shall be regarded as the standard.

1.5 *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:*³

D1356 Terminology Relating to Sampling and Analysis of Atmospheres

D3686 Practice for Sampling Atmospheres to Collect Organic Compound Vapors (Activated Charcoal Tube Adsorption Method)

D3687 Practice for Analysis of Organic Compound Vapors Collected by the Activated Charcoal Tube Adsorption Method

D6306 Guide for Placement and Use of Diffusion Controlled Passive Monitors for Gaseous Pollutants in Indoor Air

2.2 *Other Document:*⁴

Title 29CFR 1910.1000 Subpart Z Occupational Health and Safety Standard

3. Terminology

3.1 Terminology D1356 contains definitions of terms used in this practice.

3.2 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.2.1 *diffusion*—the movement of gas or vapor molecules from a region of high concentration to a region of low concentration as described by Fick's first law (8.1).

3.2.2 *diffusive sampler*—assembly used for sampling gas or vapor molecules from the atmosphere.

3.2.3 *sampling rate*—the ratio of mass of a given compound collected by a diffusive sampler per unit time of exposure to the concentration of that compound in the atmosphere being sampled. The sampling rate is sometimes referred to as the uptake rate. Units are ng (or mg)/ mg/m³/min (or h), which are dimensionally equivalent to a volume flow-rate (for example cm³/min).

¹ This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D22 on Air Quality and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D22.04 on Workplace Air Quality. Current edition approved Oct. 1, 2009. Published December 2009. Originally approved in 1987. Last previous edition approved in 2003 as D4597-03. DOI: 10.1520/D4597-03R09E01.

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² The boldface numbers in parentheses refer to the list of references at the end of this practice.

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

⁴ Code of Federal Regulations, available from U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402.

4. Summary of Practice

4.1 Molecules (gases and vapors) are sampled from the atmosphere by a diffusive sampler. During the sampling process, the molecules diffuse from the environment adjacent to the sampler through a region of defined geometric structure and into a region containing the sorbent medium. The theory of diffusive sampling is given in this practice.

4.2 Instructions are given for the correct use of the sampling devices to enable their field application.

4.3 Information on the calculation of environmental concentration based on sampler assay is given.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 Regulations such as those promulgated by the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration in 29 CFR 1910.1000 designate that certain hazardous gases and vapors must not be present in the workplace air at concentrations above specific values.

5.2 This practice, when used in conjunction with an analytical technique, such as that given for organic compounds in Practice D3687, may provide a means for the determination of time-weighted airborne concentrations of many of the hazardous gases and vapors in applicable regulations (for example, 29CFR 1919.1000.), as well as others.

5.3 The manufacturer's literature should be consulted for the appropriate list of chemicals which may be sampled by a particular device.

6. Interferences

6.1 The diffusive sampling process can be jeopardized by physical blockage of entrances to the interior of the device such as by liquid droplets or dust particles.

6.2 The diffusive sampling process can be jeopardized by structural damage to any membranes or other elements used to control either the geometry of the diffusion path or turbulence within the diffusion path.

6.3 The diffusive sampling process can be jeopardized by air movement within the diffusion path. Recent sampler designs have incorporated elements to decrease this possibility.

6.4 The diffusive sampling process can be jeopardized by insufficient mixing of the air external to the sampler. This is known as starvation. The manufacturer should provide a recommended minimum ambient air velocity, below which the sampler should not be used.

6.5 The diffusive sampling process can be jeopardized if the concentration in air at the sorbent interface becomes sufficient to significantly alter the diffusion gradient within the diffusion path. This can occur through sorbent saturation, either from the presence of competing species (which may include water vapor molecules), or the selection of an inappropriate sorbent material for the concentration and time of exposure, or by increased temperature. The manufacturer should provide, or the user should determine, the range of conditions over which significant bias from sorbent saturation will not occur.

6.6 Errors may arise in estimating exposure using diffusive samplers in instances in which the concentration of the gas or vapor being sampled varies significantly over time.

6.7 Where multiple gases or vapors are sampled simultaneously, care must be exercised to ensure there is no mutual interference in the analytical method chosen.

7. Apparatus

7.1 *Diffusive Sampling Devices:*

7.1.1 A diffusive sampler consists of a cavity or group of cavities containing air and terminated at one end by a sorbent substrate and opening at the other to the environment. The cavity or group of cavities form a region of defined geometry which acts as a control on the rate of gaseous diffusion from the external environment to the sorbent substrate. Barriers to the entry of external air movements are common. Samplers where the diffusion of gas or vapor is through materials other than air are covered by this practice, but it should be noted that the influence of temperature on diffusion may be more pronounced.

7.1.2 Diffusive samplers are equipped with a means of attachment to the body for personal sampling or to a suitable support for area sampling. Samplers are contained in vapor impermeable packages or are sealed with vapor impermeable caps both before and after sampling. Labels for unique identification of a collected sample are required.

8. Diffusive Sampling Theory

8.1 Fick's first law of diffusion states that for a constant concentration gradient, the mass of material transferred to the sampling layer can be expressed as follows:

$$M = \frac{DA}{L} (C - C_0)t \quad (1)$$

where:

M = mass of material, ng,

D = diffusion co-efficient, cm^2/min (Note 1),

A = cross sectional area of diffusion cavity(ies), cm^2 (Note 2),

L = length of diffusion path, cm (Note 3),