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Standard Guide for Selection of Chemicals to Evaluate Protective Clothing Materials¹

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INTRODUCTION

Workers involved in the production, use, and transportation of chemicals can be exposed to numerous compounds capable of causing harm upon contact with the human body. The deleterious effects of these chemicals can range from acute trauma, such as dermatitis or burns, to chronic degenerative disease, such as cancer or pulmonary fibrosis. Because engineering controls may not eliminate all possible exposures, attention is often given to reducing the potential for direct skin contact through the use of protective clothing that resists degradation, penetration, and permeation.

Standard test methods are being established to measure degradation, penetration, and permeation chemical resistance of protective clothing materials. Chemical resistance information for a number of chemicals often accompanies many protective clothing articles. However, because there are so many possible protective clothing and chemical combinations, the number and type of chemicals appearing in chemical resistance tables vary extensively.

This guide establishes a standardized list of chemicals to be used in evaluating protective clothing materials. The list of chemicals includes a broad range of representative chemical classes and properties. This guide is intended to provide a minimum set of chemicals in generating test results for protective clothing users and to aid in screening new materials.

1. Scope

1.1 The purpose of this guide is to provide a recommended list of both liquid and gaseous chemicals for evaluating protective clothing materials in testing programs.

1.2 Results derived from testing programs using these lists of ~~challenge~~test chemicals are not intended for the definitive characterization of protective clothing materials.

1.3 This list of ~~challenge~~test chemicals is not inclusive of all chemical challenges; the chemicals were chosen to represent broad ranges of liquid and gaseous chemical classes and properties. Not all chemical classes are represented. Other chemicals, especially those of interest to the manufacturer or user, should be tested in addition to those recommended in this guide.

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.* A specific hazards statement is given in Section 7.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:²

F739 [Test Method for Permeation of Liquids and Gases through Protective Clothing Materials under Conditions of Continuous Contact](#)

F903 [Test Method for Resistance of Materials Used in Protective Clothing to Penetration by Liquids](#)

F1052 [Test Method for Pressure Testing Vapor Protective Suits](#)

F1494 [Terminology Relating to Protective Clothing](#) Terminology Relating to Protective Clothing

F2588 [Test Method for Man-In-Simulant Test \(MIST\) for Protective Ensembles](#)

¹ This guide is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee F23 on [Personal Protective Clothing and Equipment](#) and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee F23.30 on Chemicals.

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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.

2.2 OSHA Standards:³

- 29 CFR 1910.1047 Ethylene Oxide
- 29 CFR 1910.1051 1,3-Butadiene
- 29 CFR 1910.1052 Dichloromethane

2.3 Other Standards:

Compressed Gas Association Publication P-1 Safe Handling of Compressed Gases in Containers⁴

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions:

3.1.1 *challenge chemical, n*—a chemical used to contact a protective clothing material sample to determine chemical/protective clothing material interactions or compatibility.

3.1.2 *degradation, n*—the deleterious change in one or more properties of a material.

3.1.3

3.1.2 *penetration, n*—in a protective clothing material or item, the process by which a solid, liquid, or gas moves through closures, seams, interstices, and pinholes or other imperfections on a non-molecular level.

3.1.4 for chemical protective clothing, the movement of substances through voids in protective clothing materials or items on a non-molecular level.

3.1.2.1 *Discussion*—Voids include gaps, pores, holes and imperfections in closures, seams, interfaces and protective clothing materials. Penetration does not require a change of state; solid chemicals move through voids in materials as solids, liquids as liquids and gases as gases. Penetration is a distinctly different mechanism from permeation.

3.1.3 *permeation, n*—the process by which a chemical moves through a protective clothing material on a molecular level.

3.1.4.1 *Discussion*—Permeation involves the following: (for chemical protective clothing, the movements of chemicals as molecules through protective clothing materials by the processes of (1) sorption of molecules of the chemical into the contacted (challenge side) surface of a material; (2) absorption of the chemical into the contact surface of the materials, (2) diffusion of the absorbed molecules in throughout the material; material, and (3) desorption of the molecules from the opposite (collection side) surface of the material.

3.1.5) *desorption of the chemical from the opposite surface of the material.*

3.1.3.1 *Discussion*—Permeation is a distinctly different mechanism from penetration.

3.1.4 *protective clothing material, n*—any material or combination of materials used in an item of clothing for the purpose of isolating parts of the body from a potential hazard.

3.1.5 *test chemical, n*—the solid, liquid, gas or mixture thereof, used to evaluate the performance of a protective clothing material.

3.1.6 *totally encapsulating chemical protective suit, n*—a full body garment that is constructed of protective clothing materials; covers the wearer's torso, head, arms, and legs; may cover the wearer's hands and feet with permanently or tightly attached gloves and boots; completely encloses the wearer by itself or in combination with the wearer's respiratory equipment, gloves, and boots.

3.1.7 For definitions of protective clothing terms used in this guide, refer to Terminology F1494.

4. Summary of Guide

4.1 In this guide, two lists of ~~challenge~~ test chemicals are recommended to be used in testing programs to evaluate chemical/protective clothing material interactions or compatibility. One list includes 15 liquid chemicals while the other list includes six gaseous chemicals. Users of this guide may evaluate protective clothing materials against either list or both lists in combination.

4.2 Types of testing programs are not specified. However, when a protective clothing material is tested in accordance with this guide and any appropriate test method, all results and documentation required by the test method should be reported for *each* chemical tested.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 This guide establishes a recommended list of challenge chemicals to encourage those who evaluate chemical protective clothing to test a minimum number of chemicals in common. This list will simplify the comparison of data from different sources.

5.2 This guide may also serve material developers or evaluators in screening candidate protective clothing materials.

5.3 Test methods applicable to the use of this guide include, but are not limited to, Test Methods F903 and F739.

5.3.1 The battery of chemical gases shall not be used for testing material penetration resistance because Test Method F903 has been designed for measuring liquid penetration only.

5.3.2 ~~Evaluation of materials against the gaseous chemical battery is primarily intended for those materials used in the construction of totally-encapsulating protective suits or other clothing items that are designed to prevent exposure to chemical vapors or gases.~~

³ Available from Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), 200 Constitution Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20210.

⁴ Available from Compressed Gas Association (CGA), 1725 Jefferson Davis Hwy., Suite 1004, Arlington, VA 22202-4102.