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Standard Test Methods for Determination of Organic Chloride Content in Crude Oil¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D4929; 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^{*Scope}

1.1 These test methods cover the determination of organic chloride (above 1 $\mu\text{g/g}$ organically-bound chlorine) in crude oils, using either distillation and sodium biphenyl reduction or distillation and microcoulometry.

1.2 These test methods involve the distillation of crude oil test specimens to obtain a naphtha fraction prior to chloride determination. The chloride content of the naphtha fraction of the whole crude oil can thereby be obtained. See Section 5 regarding potential interferences.

1.3 Test Method A covers the determination of organic chloride in the washed naphtha fraction of crude oil by sodium biphenyl reduction followed by potentiometric titration.

1.4 Test Method B covers the determination of organic chloride in the washed naphtha fraction of crude oil by oxidative combustion followed by microcoulometric titration.

1.5 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as standard. No other units of measurement are included in this standard. The preferred concentration units are micrograms of chloride per gram of sample.

1.6 *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

[D86 Test Method for Distillation of Petroleum Products at Atmospheric Pressure](#)

[D1193 Specification for Reagent Water](#)

[D4057 Practice for Manual Sampling of Petroleum and Petroleum Products](#)

[D4177 Practice for Automatic Sampling of Petroleum and Petroleum Products](#)

[D6299 Practice for Applying Statistical Quality Assurance and Control Charting Techniques to Evaluate Analytical Measurement System Performance](#)

3. Summary of Test Method

3.1 A crude oil distillation is performed to obtain the naphtha cut at 204°C (400°F). The distillation method was adapted from Test Method [D86](#) for the distillation of petroleum products. The naphtha cut is washed with caustic, repeatedly when necessary, until all hydrogen sulfide is removed. The naphtha cut, free of hydrogen sulfide, is then washed with water, repeatedly when necessary, to remove inorganic halides (chlorides).

3.2 There are two alternative test methods for determination of the organic chloride in the washed naphtha fraction, as follows.

3.2.1 *Test Method A, Sodium Biphenyl Reduction and Potentiometry*—The washed naphtha fraction of a crude oil specimen is weighed and transferred to a separatory funnel containing sodium biphenyl reagent in toluene. The reagent is an addition compound of sodium and biphenyl in ethylene glycol dimethyl ether. The free radical nature of this reagent promotes very rapid conversion of the organic halogen to inorganic halide. In effect this reagent solubilizes metallic sodium in organic compounds. The

¹ These test methods are under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee [D02](#) on Petroleum Products-Products, Liquid Fuels, and Lubricants and are the direct responsibility of Subcommittee [D02.03](#) on Elemental Analysis.

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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.

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

excess reagent is decomposed, the mixture acidified, and the phases separated. The aqueous phase is evaporated to 25 to 30 mL, acetone is added, and the solution titrated potentiometrically.

3.2.2 *Test Method B, Combustion and Microcoulometry*—The washed naphtha fraction of a crude oil specimen is injected into a flowing stream of gas containing about 80 % oxygen and 20 % inert gas, such as argon, helium, or nitrogen. The gas and sample flow through a combustion tube maintained at about 800°C. The chlorine is converted to chloride and oxychlorides, which then flow into a titration cell where they react with the silver ions in the titration cell. The silver ions thus consumed are coulometrically replaced. The total current required to replace the silver ions is a measure of the chlorine present in the injected samples.

3.2.3 The reaction occurring in the titration cell as chloride enters is as follows:



3.2.4 The silver ion consumed in the above reaction is generated coulometrically thus:



3.2.5 These microequivalents of silver are equal to the number of microequivalents of titratable sample ion entering the titration cell.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 Organic chloride species are potentially damaging to refinery processes. Hydrochloric acid can be produced in hydrotreating or reforming reactors and the acid accumulates in condensing regions of the refinery. Unexpected concentrations of organic chlorides cannot be effectively neutralized and damage can result. Organic chlorides are not known to be naturally present in crude oils and usually result from cleaning operations at producing sites, pipelines, or tanks. It is important for the oil industry to have common methods available for the determination of organic chlorides in crude oil, particularly when transfer of custody is involved.

5. Interferences

5.1 *Test Method A*—Other titratable halides will also give a positive response. These titratable halides include HBr and HI.

5.2 *Test Method B*—Other titratable halides will also give a positive response. These titratable halides include HBr and HI (HOBr and HOI do not precipitate silver). Since these oxyhalides do not react in the titration cell, approximately 50 % microequivalent response is detected.

5.2.1 This test method is applicable in the presence of total sulfur concentration of up to 10 000 times the chlorine level.

6. Purity of Reagents

6.1 *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.³ 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.

6.2 *Purity of Water*—Unless otherwise indicated, references to water shall be understood to mean reagent water as defined by Type III of Specification **D1193**.

DISTILLATION AND CLEANUP PROCEDURE

7. Apparatus

7.1 *Round-Bottom Boiling Flask*, borosilicate, 1 L, single short neck with 24/40 outer ground-glass joint.

7.2 *Tee Adapter*, borosilicate, 75° angle side-arm, 24/40 ground-glass joints.

7.3 *Thermometer*, ASTM thermometer 2C (–5 to 300°C) or 2F, (20°F to 580°F).

7.3.1 Other temperature measuring devices, such as thermocouples or resistance thermometers, may be used when the temperature reading obtained by these devices is determined to produce the same naphtha fraction that is obtained when mercury-in-glass thermometers are used.

7.4 *Thermometer Adapter*, borosilicate, 24/40 inner ground-glass joint.

7.5 *Liebig Condenser*, borosilicate, 300-mm length, 24/40 ground-glass joints.

7.6 *Vacuum Take-Off Adapter*, borosilicate, 105° angle bend, 24/40 ground-glass joints.

7.7 *Receiving Cylinder*, borosilicate, 250-mL capacity, 24/40 outer ground-glass joint.

³ *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.

7.8 *Wire Clamps*, for No. 24 ground-glass joints, stainless steel.

7.9 *Receiver Flask*, for ice bath, 4 L.

7.10 *Copper Tubing*, for heat exchanger to cool condenser water, 6.4-mm outside diameter, 3-m length.

7.11 *Electric Heating Mantle*, Glas-Col Series 0, 1-L size, 140-W upper heating element, 380-W lower heating element.

7.12 *Variacs*, 2, for temperature control of upper and lower heating elements, 120 V, 10 amps.

8. Reagents and Materials

8.1 *Acetone*, chloride-free. (**Warning**—Extremely flammable, can cause flash fires. Health hazard.)

8.2 *Caustic Solution*, 1 M potassium hydroxide (**Warning**—Can cause severe burns to skin.) prepared in distilled/deionized water.

8.3 *Distilled/Deionized Water*.

8.4 *Filter Paper*, Whatman No. 41 or equivalent.

8.5 *Stopcock Grease*.^{4,5}

8.6 *Toluene*, chloride-free. (**Warning**—Flammable. Health hazard.)

9. Sampling

9.1 Obtain a test unit in accordance with Practice [D4057](#) or [D4177](#). To preserve volatile components, which are in some samples, do not uncover samples any longer than necessary. Samples should be analyzed as soon as possible, after taking from bulk supplies, to prevent loss of organic chloride or contamination due to exposure or contact with sample container. (**Warning**—Samples that are collected at temperatures below room temperature may undergo expansion and rupture the container. For such samples, do not fill the container to the top; leave sufficient air space above the sample to allow room for expansion.)

9.2 If the test unit is not used immediately, then thoroughly mix in its container prior to taking a test specimen. Some test units can require heating to thoroughly homogenize. (**Warning**— When heating is required, care should be taken so that no organic chloride containing hydrocarbons are lost.)

10. Preparation of Apparatus

10.1 Clean all glassware by rinsing successively with toluene and acetone. After completing the rinse, dry the glassware using a stream of dry nitrogen gas. Obtain and record the masses of the round-bottom flask and receiving cylinder. Assemble the glass distillation apparatus using stopcock grease to seal all joints and wire clamps to prevent loosening of the joints. Adjust the thermometer position within the adapter tee such that the lower end of the capillary is level with the highest point on the bottom of the inner wall of the adapter tee section that connects to the condenser.

NOTE 1—A diagram illustrating the appropriate positioning of the thermometer can be found in Test Method [D86](#).

10.2 Form the copper tubing into a coil to fit inside the receiver flask, leaving room in the center of the flask for the receiving cylinder. With the PVC tubing, connect one end of the copper coil to the water source, and connect the other end of the coil to the lower fitting of the Liebig condenser cooling jacket. Connect the upper condenser fitting to the water drain. Fill the receiver flask with an ice/water mixture, and turn on the water. Maintain the temperature of the condenser below 10°C.

11. Procedure

11.1 Add a 500-mL crude oil test specimen to tared round bottom flask. Obtain and record the mass of the crude oil-filled flask to the nearest 0.1 g. Connect the flask to the distillation apparatus. Place the heating mantle around the flask, and support the heating mantle/flask from the bottom. Connect the heating mantle to the variacs. Turn on the variacs and start the distillation. During the distillation, adjust the variac settings to give a distillation rate of approximately 5 mL/min. Continue the distillation until a thermometer reading of 204°C (400°F) is attained. When the temperature reaches 204°C (400°F), end the distillation by first disconnecting and removing the receiving cylinder. After the receiving cylinder has been removed, turn off the variacs and remove the heating mantle from the flask. Obtain and record the mass of the receiving cylinder and distillate.

11.1.1 The precision and bias statements were determined using mercury-in-glass thermometers only. Therefore, when alternate temperature measuring devices are used, the cut-off temperature so obtained shall be that which will produce a naphtha cut similar to what would be yielded when mercury-in-glass thermometers are used. Such alternate temperature measuring devices shall not be expected to exhibit the same temperature lag characteristics as mercury-in-glass thermometers.

⁴ The sole source of supply of the stop-cock grease known to the committee at this time is Dow Corning silicone, available from Dow Corning Corporation, Corporate Center, PO Box 994, Midland, MI.

⁵ If you are aware of alternative suppliers, please provide this information to ASTM International Headquarters. Your comments will receive careful consideration at a meeting of the responsible technical committee, ¹ which you may attend.

11.2 Transfer the naphtha fraction from the receiving cylinder to the separatory funnel. Using the separatory funnel, wash the naphtha fraction three times with equal volumes of the caustic solution (1 M KOH). Follow the caustic wash with a water wash, again washing three times with equal volumes. The caustic wash removes hydrogen sulfide, while the water wash removes traces of inorganic chlorides either originally present in the crude or from impurities in the caustic solution. After the washings are complete, filter the naphtha fraction to remove residual freestanding water. Store the naphtha fraction in a clean glass bottle. This naphtha fraction can now be analyzed for organic chlorides by either sodium biphenyl or combustion/microcoulometric techniques.

11.3 Measure the density of the crude oil specimen and the naphtha fraction by obtaining the mass of 10.0 mL (using a 10-mL volumetric flask) of each to the nearest 0.1 g.

12. Calculation

12.1 Calculate naphtha fraction as follows:

$$f = M_n/M_c \quad (3)$$

where:

f = mass fraction of naphtha collected,

M_n = mass of naphtha collected, and

M_c = mass of crude oil specimen.

12.2 Calculate the density as follows:

$$\text{Density, g/mL} = m/v \quad (4)$$

where:

m = mass of sample specimen, g, and

v = volume of sample specimen, mL.

TEST METHOD A—SODIUM BIPHENYL REDUCTION AND POTENTIOMETRY

13. Apparatus

13.1 *Electrodes*—The cleaning and proper care of electrodes are critical to the accuracy of this test. Manufacturer's instructions for the care of electrodes shall be followed.

13.1.1 *Glass*, general purpose. When glass electrodes are in continuous use, weekly cleaning with chrome-sulfuric acid (**Warning**—Strong oxidizer; can cause severe burns; recognized carcinogen), or other strongly oxidizing cleaning solution, is recommended.

13.1.2 *Silver-Silver Chloride*, billet-type.

13.2 *Titrat*or, potentiometric. The titrator is equipped with a 5-mL or smaller buret and a magnetic stirring motor.

14. Reagents and Materials

14.1 *Acetone*, chloride-free. (**Warning**—Extremely flammable, can cause flash fires. Health hazard.)

14.2 *Congo Red Paper*.

14.3 *2,2,4, trimethyl pentane (isooctane)*, reagent grade. (**Warning**—Flammable. Health hazard.)

14.4 *Nitric Acid*, approximately 5 M. (**Warning**—Corrosive, causes severe burns.) Add 160 mL of concentrated nitric acid to about 200 mL of water and dilute to 500 mL.

14.5 *2-Propanol*, chloride-free. (**Warning**—Flammable. Health hazard.)

14.6 *Silver Nitrate*, 0.01 M, standard aqueous solution.

14.7 *Sodium Biphenyl Reagent*^{5,6}—This is packed in 0.5-oz French square bottles (hereafter referred to as vials). The entire contents of one vial are used for each analysis. One vial contains 13 to 15 meq of active sodium. Store the sodium biphenyl reagent in a cool storage area, but do not refrigerate. Prior to using, warm the reagent to approximately 50°C and shake thoroughly to ensure a homogeneous liquid.

14.8 *Toluene*, chloride-free. (**Warning**—Flammable. Health hazard.)

15. Preparation of Apparatus

15.1 *Recoating Silver-Silver Chloride Electrodes*—Clean the metal surfaces of a pair of silver-silver chloride electrodes with mild detergent and scouring powder. Rinse the electrodes in distilled water. Immerse the metallic tips in saturated potassium chloride solution. Connect one electrode to the positive pole of a 1.6-V battery and the other to the negative pole. Reverse the

⁶ The sole source of supply of the sodium biphenyl reagent known to the committee at this time is Southwestern Analytical Chemicals, P.O. Box 485, Austin, TX.

polarity for several intervals of a few seconds each to alternately clean and recoat the receptor electrode (connected to the positive pole). When adequately coated, the receptor electrode tip will turn violet in color. This results from the action of light on the fresh silver chloride.

16. Procedure

16.1 Use extreme care to prevent contamination. Reserve all glassware for the chloride determination. Rinse glassware with distilled water followed by acetone just prior to use. Avoid using chlorine-containing stopcock greases such as chlorotri-fluoroethylene polymer grease.

16.2 Place 50 mL of toluene in a 250-mL separatory funnel and add the contents of one vial of sodium biphenyl reagent. Swirl to mix and add about 30 g, obtaining the mass to the nearest 0.1 g of the washed naphtha fraction of crude oil sample. Obtain the mass of the sample bottle to determine the exact amount taken. Stopper the separatory funnel and swirl to mix the contents thoroughly. The solution or suspension that results should be blue-green in color. When it is not, add more sodium biphenyl reagent (one vial at a time) until the solution or suspension is blue-green.

16.3 Allow 10 min after mixing for the reaction to be completed, then add 2 mL of 2-propanol and swirl gently with the funnel unstoppered for a time until the blue-green color changes to white, indicating that no free sodium remains. Stopper the funnel and rock it gently, venting pressure frequently through the stopcock. Then add 20 mL of water and 10 mL of 5 M nitric acid. Shake gently, releasing the pressure frequently through the stopcock. Test the aqueous phase with Congo red paper. If the paper does not turn blue, add additional 5 M nitric acid in 5-mL portions until the blue color is obtained.

16.4 Drain the aqueous phase into another separatory funnel containing 50 mL of *isooctane* and shake well. Drain the aqueous phase into a 250-mL titration beaker. Make a second extraction of the *isooctane* phase with 25 mL of water that has been acidified with a few drops of 5 M nitric acid. Add this second extract to the 250-mL titration beaker. Evaporate the solution on a hot plate kept just below the boiling point of the liquid until 25 to 30 mL remains. Do not boil or evaporate to less than 25 mL as loss of chloride may occur.

16.5 Cool the solution and add 100 mL of acetone. Titrate the solution potentiometrically with standard 0.01 M silver nitrate, using glass versus silver-silver chloride electrodes. If an automatic titrator, such as a Metrohm, is available, use the semi-micro 5-mL piston buret. If the titration is carried out with a manually-operated pH meter, use a 5-mL semi-micro buret that can be estimated to three decimal places in millilitres.

16.6 Determine the endpoint for the manual titration by plotting the data showing emf versus volume of silver nitrate solution used. Determine the endpoint for the automatic titrator from the midpoint of the inflection of the titration curve.

16.7 Determine a blank for each group of test specimens by using all of the reagents, including the sodium biphenyl, and following all the operations of the analysis except that the sample itself is omitted.

17. Calculation

17.1 Calculate chloride concentration in the naphtha fraction as follows:

$$\text{Chloride, } \mu\text{g/g} = \frac{(A - B) (M) (35\ 460)}{W} \quad (5)$$

where:

A = volume of titrant for the sample specimen, mL,

B = volume of titrant for the blank, mL,

M = molarity of silver nitrate, and

W = mass of sample specimen, g.

17.2 The concentration of organic chloride in the original crude oil sample specimen can be obtained by multiplying the chloride concentration in the naphtha fraction (see 17.1) by the naphtha fraction (see 12.1).

TEST METHOD B—COMBUSTION AND MICROCOULOMETRY

18. Apparatus

18.1 *Combustion Furnace*—The sample specimen is to be oxidized in an electric furnace capable of maintaining a temperature of 800°C to oxidize the organic matrix.

18.2 *Combustion Tube*—Fabricated from quartz and constructed so a sample, which is vaporized completely in the inlet section, is swept into the oxidation zone by an inert gas where it mixes with oxygen and is burned. The inlet end of the tube shall hold a septum for syringe entry of the sample and side arms for the introduction of oxygen and inert gases. The center section is to be of sufficient volume to ensure complete oxidation of the sample.

18.3 *Titration Cell*—Containing a sensor-reference pair of electrodes to detect changes in silver ion concentration and a generator anode-cathode pair of electrodes to maintain constant silver ion concentration and an inlet for a gaseous sample from

the pyrolysis tube. The sensor, reference, and anode electrodes shall be silver electrodes. The cathode electrode shall be a platinum wire. The reference electrode resides in a saturated silver acetate half-cell. The electrolyte contains 70 % acetic acid in water.

18.4 *Microcoulometer*, having variable gain and bias control, and capable of measuring the potential of the sensing-reference electrode pair, and of comparing this potential with a bias potential, and of applying the amplified difference to the working-auxiliary electrode pair so as to generate a titrant. The microcoulometer output signal shall be proportional to the generating current. The microcoulometer may have a digital meter and circuitry to convert this output signal directly to nanograms or micrograms of chloride.

18.5 *Sampling Syringe*—A microlitre syringe of 50- μ L capacity capable of accurately delivering 5 to 50 μ L of sample into the pyrolysis tube. A 3- or 6-in. (76.2- or 152.4-mm) needle is recommended to reach the inlet zone of approximately 500°C in the combustion zone.

18.6 A constant rate syringe pump or manual dispensing adaptor may be used to facilitate slow injection of the sample into the combustion tube. It is recommended that the injection rate not exceed 0.5 μ L/s.

19. Reagents and Materials

19.1 *Acetic Acid*, glacial acetic acid. (**Warning**—Corrosive, causes severe burns.)

19.2 *Argon, Helium, Nitrogen, or Carbon Dioxide*, high purity grade (HP) used as the carrier gas. (**Warning**—These gases are normally stored in cylinders under high pressure. These gases also dilute the oxygen content of the surrounding air when they leak.)

19.3 *Cell Electrolyte Solution*, 70 % acetic acid, combine 300 mL reagent water (see 6.2) with 700 mL acetic acid (see 19.1) and mix well.

19.4 *Chloride, Standard Stock Solution*, 1000 mg chloride per litre. Accurately dispense 1.587 g of chlorobenzene into a 500-mL volumetric flask and dilute to volume with 2,2,4,trimethyl pentane (*isooctane*).

NOTE 2—The exact concentration of chloride may be determined by multiplying the mass of chlorobenzene by the product of the atomic mass of chlorine divided by the molecular mass of chlorobenzene and then multiplying that result by 2000.

$$\text{Cl (mg/L)} = \frac{w \times m_1 \times 2000}{m_2} \quad (6)$$

where:

w = mass of chlorobenzene weighed,
 m_1 = atomic mass of chlorine, and
 m_2 = molecular mass of chlorobenzene.

19.5 *Chlorine, Standard Solution*, 10 mg chloride per litre. Pipet 1.0 mL of chloride stock solution (see 19.4) into a 100-mL volumetric flask and dilute to volume with 2,2,4,trimethyl pentane (*isooctane*).

19.6 *Chlorobenzene*, reagent grade.

19.7 *Gas Regulators*, two-stage gas regulator must be used on the reactant and carrier gas.

19.8 *Isooctane*, 2,2,4-trimethylpentane, reagent grade.

19.9 *Oxygen*, high purity grade, used as the reactant gas.

19.10 *Silver Acetate*, powder purified for saturated reference electrode.

20. Preparation of Apparatus

20.1 Set up the analyzer in accordance with the equipment manufacturer instructions.

20.2 The typical operational conditions are as follows:

Reactant gas flow, O ₂	160 mL/min
Carrier gas flow	40 mL/min
Furnace temperature:	
Inlet zone	700°C
Center and outlet zones	800°C
Coulometer:	
Bias voltage, mV	240–265
Gain	ca. 1200

20.3 Optimize the bias voltage setting for the titration cell null-point by injecting 30 μ L of chloride-free water directly into the titration cell using a 6-in. needle. Adjust bias up or down to minimize the total integrated value due to this dilution effect.

21. Procedure

21.1 Fill a 50- μ L syringe with about 30 to 40 μ L of the sample of washed naphtha fraction of crude oil, being careful to eliminate bubbles. Then retract the plunger so that the lower liquid meniscus falls on the 5- μ L mark, and record the volume of liquid in the