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# Standard Guide for the Selection of Cleaning Agents for Oxygen-Enriched Systems<sup>1</sup>

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## 1. Scope

1.1 The purpose of this guide is to establish a procedure to select cleaning agents, both solvents and water-based detergents, for oxygen-enriched systems. This includes laboratory-scale tests for cleaning effectiveness, materials compatibility, and oxygen compatibility.

1.2 The effectiveness of a particular cleaning agent depends upon the method by which it is used, the nature and type of the contaminants, and the characteristics of the article being cleaned, such as size, shape, and material. Final evaluation of the cleaning agent should include testing of actual products and production processes.

1.3 Different cleaning agents may be required for different cleaning activities, such as aqueous ultrasonic cleaning, spray cleaning, hand wiping, and flushing of oxygen lines in field applications.

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.*

## 2. Referenced Documents

### 2.1 ASTM Standards:<sup>2</sup>

- D471 Test Method for Rubber Property—Effect of Liquids
- D543 Practices for Evaluating the Resistance of Plastics to Chemical Reagents
- D1193 Specification for Reagent Water
- D1460 Test Method for Rubber Property—Change in Length During Liquid Immersion
- D2512 Test Method for Compatibility of Materials with Liquid Oxygen (Impact Sensitivity Threshold and Pass-Fail Techniques)

<sup>1</sup> This guide is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee G04 on Compatibility and Sensitivity of Materials in Oxygen Enriched Atmospheres and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee G04.02 on Recommended Practices.

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<sup>2</sup> For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, [www.astm.org](http://www.astm.org), or contact ASTM Customer Service at [service@astm.org](mailto:service@astm.org). For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

- D2863 Test Method for Measuring the Minimum Oxygen Concentration to Support Candle-Like Combustion of Plastics (Oxygen Index)
- D4809 Test Method for Heat of Combustion of Liquid Hydrocarbon Fuels by Bomb Calorimeter (Precision Method)
- F483 Practice for Total Immersion Corrosion Test for Aircraft Maintenance Chemicals
- G5 Reference Test Method for Making Potentiodynamic Anodic Polarization Measurements
- G31 Guide for Laboratory Immersion Corrosion Testing of Metals
- G59 Test Method for Conducting Potentiodynamic Polarization Resistance Measurements
- G63 Guide for Evaluating Nonmetallic Materials for Oxygen Service
- G72 Test Method for Autogenous Ignition Temperature of Liquids and Solids in a High-Pressure Oxygen-Enriched Environment
- G74 Test Method for Ignition Sensitivity of Nonmetallic Materials and Components by Gaseous Fluid Impact
- G86 Test Method for Determining Ignition Sensitivity of Materials to Mechanical Impact in Ambient Liquid Oxygen and Pressurized Liquid and Gaseous Oxygen Environments
- G93 Practice for Cleaning Methods and Cleanliness Levels for Material and Equipment Used in Oxygen-Enriched Environments
- G94 Guide for Evaluating Metals for Oxygen Service
- G121 Practice for Preparation of Contaminated Test Coupons for the Evaluation of Cleaning Agents
- G122 Test Method for Evaluating the Effectiveness of Cleaning Agents

### 2.2 CGA Document:

- CGA Pamphlet G-4.1 Cleaning Equipment for Oxygen Service

### 2.3 Other ASTM Documents:

- MNL36 Safe Use of Oxygen and Oxygen Systems: Handbook for Design, Operation, and Maintenance<sup>2</sup>

## 3. Significance and Use

3.1 The purpose of this guide is to provide information that may be considered when selecting and qualifying a cleaning agent for oxygen-enriched systems.

3.2 Insufficient cleanliness can result in the ignition of contaminants or components by a variety of mechanisms. Therefore, an acceptable level of contamination for each condition of use in oxygen-enriched service should be defined. The acceptable level of contamination may depend on various factors, such as:

- 3.2.1 The nature and type of the contaminants,
- 3.2.2 The location and degree of contamination,
- 3.2.3 The type of substrate material,
- 3.2.4 The configuration and end use of the equipment or part to be cleaned, and
- 3.2.5 The operating parameters of the oxygen-enriched system (pressure, temperature, phase, concentration, fluid velocity, etc.).

#### 4. Selection of Cleaning Agent

4.1 Before a specific cleaning agent is selected for testing, the following attributes should be considered.

- 4.1.1 Toxicity,
- 4.1.2 Carcinogenicity,
- 4.1.3 Stability and recyclability,
- 4.1.4 Waste disposal,
- 4.1.5 Environmental impacts and associated regulatory restrictions (ozone depletion potential, global warming potential, volatile organic compound contribution to ground level ozone, etc.),
- 4.1.6 Inertness (flammability and combustibility),
- 4.1.7 Corrosivity and compatibility with metallic and non-metallic engineering materials,
- 4.1.8 Availability and technical support from supplier,
- 4.1.9 Cost effectiveness, and
- 4.1.10 Compliance with local, state and federal regulations.

4.2 It is desirable that the cleaning agent could be applied by a variety of methods, such as wiping, immersion, spraying, etc. Consequently, the cleaning agent manufacturer's instructions for applying the cleaner should be considered.

#### 5. Selection of Substrate Materials

5.1 Substrate materials used for cleaning effectiveness and compatibility tests should be representative of those used in the end application, including both the parts to be cleaned and the cleaning system itself.

##### 5.2 *Metallic Materials:*

5.2.1 Metallic materials commonly used in oxygen-enriched systems are listed in Guide G94 and Handbook MNL36.

5.2.2 Materials compatibility tests should include those metals used in the oxygen-enriched system that are expected to come in contact with the candidate cleaning agent. As a minimum, alloys representative of each family of metals used in the system should be tested. The alloy and finish expected to be used in the oxygen-enriched system that is most susceptible to corrosion within the metal family should be tested.

##### 5.3 *Nonmetallic Materials:*

5.3.1 Nonmetallic materials commonly used in oxygen-enriched systems are discussed in Guide G63 and Handbook MNL36.

5.3.2 Materials compatibility tests should include those nonmetallic materials used in the oxygen-enriched system that

are expected to come in contact with the candidate cleaning agent. As a minimum, materials representative of each family of these nonmetals should be tested.

#### 6. Cleaning Effectiveness Tests

##### 6.1 *Selection of Test Contaminants:*

6.1.1 Numerous contaminants encountered in oxygen-enriched systems that could result from manufacturing, assembly, fabrication, and construction processes are listed in Practice G93. Typical contaminant types include:

- 6.1.1.1 Hydrocarbon oils and greases (mineral oil, hydraulic fluids, lubricants, water-displacing compounds),
- 6.1.1.2 Fluorinated fluids and greases,
- 6.1.1.3 Inks,
- 6.1.1.4 Machine cutting oils (hydrocarbon- or water-based),
- 6.1.1.5 Carbon deposits,
- 6.1.1.6 Silicone oils and greases,
- 6.1.1.7 Phosphate esters (fire-resistant hydraulic fluids),
- 6.1.1.8 Waxes,
- 6.1.1.9 Dye penetrants,
- 6.1.1.10 Chlorotrifluoroethylene based oils and greases,
- 6.1.1.11 Pariculate (sand, metal shavings, fibers, etc.), and
- 6.1.1.12 Tape residue.

NOTE 1—Some contaminants are more difficult to remove after aging or exposure to heat. Selection of a cleaning agent should consider removal efficiency for both the type and condition of contaminants typically encountered at the facility.

6.1.2 Among typical contaminants, hydrocarbons are the prime candidates for the test protocol. When dealing with other contaminants, the user should attempt to classify the type of contamination expected on the equipment to be cleaned.

6.1.3 As a preliminary test, mineral oil or a mixture of common cutting oils may be used as a contaminant. It may be carried in a suitable volatile solvent as a means to introduce it into a system. In addition, vacuum pump oil, or a compressor oil are suggested as contaminants for the evaluation program. In a more refined test at later stages, fluorinated oils/greases, dye penetrants, or a mixture of as many contaminants as necessary may be prepared in a suitable solvent. Eventually, actual contaminants encountered on an engineering component or system for oxygen-enriched service should be evaluated for removal efficiency.

##### 6.2 *Test Methods:*

6.2.1 A suggested starting level of contamination is 1000 mg/m<sup>2</sup>. This is a hydrocarbon level that is consistent with contamination levels associated with final cleaning and it is twice the acceptable level specified for oxygen service in CGA pamphlet G-4.1. Heavily contaminated surfaces with levels in excess of 1000 mg/m<sup>2</sup> must be precleaned using more aggressive cleaning agents with mechanical scrubbing (Practice G93). Precleaning is not a cleaning step with which this guide is concerned.

6.2.2 Contaminants may be applied to the specimens by any of the means specified in Practice G121.

6.2.3 The cleaning effectiveness of a cleaning agent may be evaluated using the test method outlined in Test Method G122.

6.2.4 A test basis should be established for each contaminated sample by using an acceptable solvent as a control cleaning agent.

## 7. Material Compatibility Tests

7.1 If a cleaning agent's ability to remove the selected contamination is deemed promising, additional testing (see Sections 8.2.2 and 8.3) should be performed to evaluate its compatibility with the oxygen-enriched systems.

### 7.2 *Metallic Materials:*

7.2.1 Significant corrosion damage may occur during cleaning operations. Corrosion rates may be affected by temperature, contaminants, degree of aeration, concentration and presence of residual stress (see Note 2). To avoid this, assessments should be made of the corrosion severity of cleaning environments for the engineering materials of interest. Weight gain-loss measurements can be performed as per Practice F483 or G31. Where applicable, Test Method G5 can be applied (see Note 3).

7.2.2 The electrochemical technique of potentiodynamic polarization resistance (Practice G59) can be used to determine the corrosion rate of conductive cleaning agents on metal substrates. The corrosion rate (in mils per year, mpy) should be determined using the solution parameters which would be used in actual cleaning practices. The cleaning solution may be tested: (1) as is; (2) aerated; or (3) de-aerated. It is recommended, however, that the corrosion test be performed under as-is conditions in order to simulate the actual cleaning process. The pH and conductivity of the cleaning agent should be measured both before and after the corrosion test. If these values change, the test is considered invalid. A separate experiment should be performed.

7.2.3 Corrosion rates of less than 32.5 micrometre per year (0.0025 in. per year) are usually desirable. However, to avoid setting up unduly conservative criteria that may eliminate potential cleaning agents, estimation of corrosion rate can be made based upon realistic, total accumulated contact time of the cleaner with a component or system throughout its service life. The rate of corrosion should be determined based upon the maximum allowable dimensional variations of the component or system.

NOTE 2—The presence of residual stresses may promote stress corrosion cracking in susceptible materials. Information in the technical literature on corrosion rates and stress corrosion cracking may be used in evaluating corrosion susceptibility. Further testing, as outlined later in this guide, may be necessary.

NOTE 3—In order to reflect the actual material property, samples for corrosion tests should not be wet ground with 600-grit SiC papers to expose fresh surface. The surface roughness of test samples should be either in compliance with that recommended in Practice G121, or, if possible, commensurate with that of the actual engineering components.

### 7.3 *Nonmetallic Materials:*

7.3.1 When exposed to the cleaning agent under actual use conditions of temperature, time, concentration etc., some nonmetallics are susceptible to degradation and may experience physical, mechanical, and chemical changes. Physical and mechanical changes can be reversible or irreversible, while chemical changes are generally irreversible. Depending on the material-solvent pair, these changes can be characterized by

swelling, distortion, weight gain or loss, cracking, crazing, blistering, embrittlement, decomposition temperature shift, or leaching of additives and low-molecular-weight species (e.g. unreacted monomer, catalyst residues). To evaluate the compatibility of cleaning agents with nonmetallic materials, refer to Test Methods D471, D543, and D1460. These test methods may not include a pass/fail criterion for each material property. Therefore, an engineering evaluation that considers whether any identified material property changes are acceptable in the application should be performed. Some of these material property changes can influence the oxygen compatibility of the nonmetallic material. If the influence of a material property change on oxygen compatibility is uncertain, the oxygen compatibility testing discussed in Guide G63 should be performed on the nonmetallic material (pre- and post-exposure to the cleaning solution and process) to support this evaluation.

7.3.2 Weight loss, shrinkage, cracking, crazing, blistering, or embrittlement are evidence that the cleaning agent is reacting with or leaching materials from the nonmetal and is therefore incompatible.

7.3.3 Swelling and weight gain may indicate that the non-metal is absorbing some of the cleaning agent during exposure. Some slight swelling and weight gain may be acceptable if the cleaning agent does not adversely affect oxygen compatibility or component function. The drying method and length of drying time used in the test should be representative of the expected user cleaning process.

NOTE 4—Return to original dimensions after drying is indicative of a totally reversible solvent absorption/desorption process with no effect on properties or oxygen compatibility.

**Warning**—Prolonged exposure to solvents can result in time-dependent absorption and desorption processes, and lead to erroneous conclusions based on weight and dimensions alone.

7.3.4 Cleaning agents that are effective at removing hydrocarbon, halocarbon, perhalogenated, or silicone contaminants will be incompatible with some nonmetals with analogous hydrocarbon, halocarbon, etc., content. This may require that the incompatible soft goods be removed from a component prior to cleaning and cleaned by another method. This may also require changing seal materials in the cleaning equipment when changing to a new cleaning agent.

## 8. Oxygen Compatibility

### 8.1 *Approach:*

8.1.1 Historically, chlorinated solvents that are minimally reactive with oxygen have been used to clean oxygen-enriched systems. Production of ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbon (CFC)-based and hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC)-based solvents has now been banned by international treaties. Other solvents, such as trichloroethylene, have been found to be highly toxic or carcinogenic and are heavily regulated or banned. As a result, the oxygen service industry has shifted to the use of aqueous-based cleaners, flammable solvents, or newer generation cleaning solvents that may be less effective unless blended with a flammable chlorinated solvent. Any of these approaches may be acceptable when used with the proper safety precautions.

8.1.2 Determination of the suitability of a cleaning agent for use with oxygen-enriched systems and the need for specific