



Designation: **C697 – 10 C697 – 16**

Standard Test Methods for Chemical, Mass Spectrometric, and Spectrochemical Analysis of Nuclear-Grade Plutonium Dioxide Powders and Pellets¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation C697; 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

1.1 These test methods cover procedures for the chemical, mass spectrometric, and spectrochemical analysis of nuclear-grade plutonium dioxide powders and pellets to determine compliance with specifications.

1.2 The analytical procedures appear in the following order:

	Sections
Plutonium Sample Handling	8 to 10
Plutonium by Controlled-Potential Coulometry	2
Plutonium by Ceric Sulfate Titration	3
Plutonium by Amperometric Titration with Iron(II)	2
Plutonium by Diode Array Spectrophotometry	3
Nitrogen by Distillation Spectrophotometry Using Nessler Reagent	11 to 18
Carbon (Total) by Direct Combustion–Thermal Conductivity	19 to 30
Carbon (Total) by Direct Combustion–Thermal Conductivity	19 to 29
Total Chlorine and Fluorine by Pyrohydrolysis	31 to 38
Total Chlorine and Fluorine by Pyrohydrolysis	30 to 37
Sulfur by Distillation Spectrophotometry	39 to 47
Sulfur by Distillation Spectrophotometry	38 to 46
Plutonium Isotopic Analysis by Mass Spectrometry	4
Rare Earth Elements by Spectroscopy	48 to 55
Rare Earth Elements by Spectroscopy	47 to 54
Trace Elements by Carrier–Distillation Spectroscopy	56 to 63
Trace Elements by Carrier–Distillation Spectroscopy	55 to 62
(Alternative: Impurities by ICP-AES or ICP-MS)	
Impurity Elements by Spark-Source Mass Spectrography	64 to 70
Impurity Elements by Spark-Source Mass Spectrography	63 to 69
Moisture by the Coulometric Electrolytic Moisture Analyzer	71 to 78
Moisture by the Coulometric Electrolytic Moisture Analyzer	70 to 77
Total Gas in Reactor-Grade Plutonium Dioxide Pellets	79 to 86
Total Gas in Reactor-Grade Plutonium Dioxide Pellets	5
Plutonium-238 Isotopic Abundance by Alpha Spectrometry	3
Americium-241 in Plutonium by Gamma-Ray Spectrometry	2
Rare Earths By Copper Spark Spectroscopy	87 to 96
Rare Earths By Copper Spark Spectroscopy	78 to 87
Plutonium Isotopic Analysis by Mass Spectrometry	97 to 105
Plutonium Isotopic Analysis by Mass Spectrometry	88 to 96
Oxygen-To-Metal Atom Ratio by Gravimetry	106 to 114
Oxygen-To-Metal Atom Ratio by Gravimetry	97 to 104

1.3 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as standard. The values given in parentheses are for information only.

¹ These test methods are under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee C26 on Nuclear Fuel Cycle and are the direct responsibility of Subcommittee C26.05 on Methods of Test.

Current edition approved June 1, 2010/June 1, 2016, Published July 2010/July 2016. Originally approved in 1972. Last previous edition approved in 2004/2010 as C697 – 04-C697 – 10. DOI: 10.1520/C0697-10:10.1520/C0697-16.

² Discontinued as of November 15, 1992.

³ Discontinued as of January 1, 2004.

⁴ Discontinued as of May 30, 1980.

⁵ Discontinued as of June 2016.

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. For specific precautionary statements, see Sections 6, ~~1516.2.5~~, ~~2444.7~~, ~~111~~, and ~~52.951.9~~ and ~~101.5-192.5.1~~.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:⁶

- [C757](#) Specification for Nuclear-Grade Plutonium Dioxide Powder for Light Water Reactors
- [C852](#) Guide for Design Criteria for Plutonium Gloveboxes
- ~~[C1009](#)~~[C859](#) ~~Guide for Establishing and Maintaining a Quality Assurance Program for Analytical Laboratories Within the Nuclear Industry~~[Terminology Relating to Nuclear Materials](#)
- [C1068](#) Guide for Qualification of Measurement Methods by a Laboratory Within the Nuclear Industry
- [C1108](#) Test Method for Plutonium by Controlled-Potential Coulometry
- ~~[C1128](#)~~ ~~Guide for Preparation of Working Reference Materials for Use in Analysis of Nuclear Fuel Cycle Materials~~
- ~~[C1156](#)~~ ~~Guide for Establishing Calibration for a Measurement Method Used to Analyze Nuclear Fuel Cycle Materials~~
- [C1165](#) Test Method for Determining Plutonium by Controlled-Potential Coulometry in H₂SO₄ at a Platinum Working Electrode
- [C1168](#) Practice for Preparation and Dissolution of Plutonium Materials for Analysis
- [C1206](#) Test Method for Plutonium by Iron (II)/Chromium (VI) Amperometric Titration (Withdrawn 2015)⁷
- ~~[C1210](#)~~[C1233](#) ~~Guide for Establishing a Measurement System Quality Control Program for Analytical Chemistry Laboratories Within the Nuclear Industry~~[Practice for Determining Equivalent Boron Contents of Nuclear Materials](#)
- [C1235](#) Test Method for Plutonium by Titanium(III)/Cerium(IV) Titration (Withdrawn 2005)⁷
- [C1268](#) Test Method for Quantitative Determination of ²⁴¹Am in Plutonium by Gamma-Ray Spectrometry
- ~~[C1297](#)~~ ~~Guide for Qualification of Laboratory Analysts for the Analysis of Nuclear Fuel Cycle Materials~~
- [C1307](#) Test Method for Plutonium Assay by Plutonium (III) Diode Array Spectrophotometry
- [C1415](#) Test Method for ²³⁸Pu Isotopic Abundance By Alpha Spectrometry
- [C1432](#) Test Method for Determination of Impurities in Plutonium: Acid Dissolution, Ion Exchange Matrix Separation, and Inductively Coupled Plasma-Atomic Emission Spectroscopic (ICP/AES) Analysis
- [C1625](#) Test Method for Uranium and Plutonium Concentrations and Isotopic Abundances by Thermal Ionization Mass Spectrometry
- [C1637](#) Test Method for the Determination of Impurities in Plutonium Metal: Acid Digestion and Inductively Coupled Plasma-Mass Spectroscopy (ICP-MS) Analysis
- [C1672](#) Test Method for Determination of Uranium or Plutonium Isotopic Composition or Concentration by the Total Evaporation Method Using a Thermal Ionization Mass Spectrometer
- [D1193](#) Specification for Reagent Water
- [D4327](#) Test Method for Anions in Water by Suppressed Ion Chromatography [C697-16](#)
- [E60](#) Practice for Analysis of Metals, Ores, and Related Materials by Spectrophotometry
- [E115](#) Practice for Photographic Processing in Optical Emission Spectrographic Analysis (Withdrawn 2002)⁷
- [E116](#) Practice for Photographic Photometry in Spectrochemical Analysis (Withdrawn 2002)⁷
- [E130](#) Practice for Designation of Shapes and Sizes of Graphite Electrodes (Withdrawn 2013)⁷

3. Terminology

3.1 Except as otherwise defined herein, definitions of terms are as given in Terminology [C859](#).

4. Significance and Use

4.1 Plutonium dioxide is used in mixtures with uranium dioxide as a nuclear-reactor fuel. In order to be suitable for this purpose, the material must meet certain criteria for plutonium content, isotopic composition, and impurity content. These test methods are designed to show whether or not a given material meets the specifications for these items as described in Specification [C757](#).

4.1.1 An assay is performed to determine whether the material has the minimum plutonium content specified on a dry weight basis.

4.1.2 Determination of the isotopic content of the plutonium in the plutonium dioxide powder is made to establish whether the effective fissile content is in compliance with the purchaser's specifications.

4.1.3 Impurity content is determined to ensure that the maximum concentration limit of certain impurity elements is not exceeded. Determination of impurities is also required for calculation of the equivalent boron content (~~EBC~~)-(EBC) as described in Practice [C1233](#).

⁶ 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.

⁷ The last approved version of this historical standard is referenced on www.astm.org.

4.2 *Fitness for Purpose of Safeguards and Nuclear Safety Applications*—Methods intended for use in safeguards and nuclear safety applications shall meet the requirements specified by Guide C1068 for use in such applications.

4. Committee C26 Safeguards Statement⁷

4.1 The materials (plutonium dioxide powders and pellets) to which these test methods apply are subject to nuclear safeguards regulations governing their possession and use. The following analytical procedures in these test methods have been designated as technically acceptable for generating safeguards accountability measurement data: Plutonium by Controlled-Potential Coulometry; Plutonium by Cerie Sulfate Titration; Plutonium by Amperometric Titration with Iron (II); Plutonium by Diode Array Spectrometry Plutonium-238 Isotopic Abundance by Alpha Spectrometry; and Plutonium Isotopic Analysis by Mass Spectrometry.

4.2 When used in conjunction with appropriate Certified Reference Materials (CRMs), these procedures can demonstrate traceability to the national measurement base. However, adherence to these procedures does not automatically guarantee regulatory acceptance of the resulting safeguards measurements. It remains the sole responsibility of the user of these test methods to assure that its application to safeguards has the approval of the proper regulatory authorities.

5. Reagents

5.1 *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.⁸ 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.

5.2 *Purity of Water*—Unless otherwise indicated, references to water shall be understood to mean reagent water conforming to Specification D1193.

6. Safety Precautions

6.1 Since plutonium bearing materials are radioactive and toxic, adequate laboratory facilities, ~~gloved glove~~ glove boxes, fume hoods, etc., and so forth, along with safe techniques, must be used in handling samples containing these materials. Glove boxes should be fitted with off-gas filters capable of sustained operation with dust-laden atmospheres. A detailed discussion of all the precautions necessary is beyond the scope of these test methods; however, personnel who handle these materials should be familiar with such safe handling practices as are given in Guide C852 and in Refs (1-3) through (2).⁹

6.2 Adequate laboratory facilities, such as fume hoods and controlled ventilation, along with safe techniques, must be used in ~~this procedure.~~ all procedures in this test method. Extreme care should be exercised in using hydrofluoric acid and other hot, concentrated acids. Use of proper gloves is recommended. Refer to the laboratory's chemical hygiene plan and other applicable guidance for handling chemical and radioactive materials and for the management of radioactive, mixed, and hazardous waste.

6.3 Hydrofluoric acid is a highly corrosive acid that can severely burn skin, eyes, and mucous membranes. Hydrofluoric acid is similar to other acids in that the initial extent of a burn depends on the concentration, the temperature, and the duration of contact with the acid. Hydrofluoric acid differs from other acids because the fluoride ion readily penetrates the skin, causing destruction of deep tissue layers. Unlike other acids that are rapidly neutralized, hydrofluoric acid reactions with tissue may continue for days if left untreated. Due to serious consequences of hydrofluoric acid burns, prevention of exposure or injury of personnel is the primary goal. Utilization of appropriate laboratory controls (hoods) and wearing adequate personal protective equipment to protect from skin and eye contact Familiarization and compliance with the Safety Data Sheet is essential.

6.4 Perchloric acid (HClO₄) forms explosive compounds with organics and many metal salts. Avoid exposure by contact with the skin or eyes, or by inhalation of fumes. Familiarization and compliance with the Safety Data Sheet is essential. Carry out sample dissolution with perchloric acid in a fume hood with a scrubber unit that is specially designed for use with HClO₄.

7. Sampling and Dissolution

7.1 Criteria for sampling this material are given in Specification C757.

7.2 Samples can be dissolved using the appropriate dissolution technique described in Practice C1168.

PLUTONIUM SAMPLE HANDLING

8. Scope

8.1 This test method covers the conditions necessary to preserve the integrity of plutonium dioxide samples. Conditions listed here are directed toward the analytical chemist. However, they are just as applicable to any group handling the material.

⁷Based upon Committee C26 Safeguards Matrix (C1009, C1068, C1128, C1156, C1210, C1297).

⁸ *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 *Analar 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.

⁹ The boldface numbers in parentheses refer to the list of references at the end of these test methods.

9. Summary of Test Method

9.1 Plutonium dioxide is very hygroscopic. In a short time it can sorb sufficient water from an uncontrolled atmosphere to destroy the validity of the most accurate analytical methods. An atmosphere with a dew point of -23°C has been found adequate to prevent sorption of water, but care must be exercised to use equipment and sample containers known to be dry.

10. Sample Handling Conditions

10.1 All sampling and critical weighings are to be performed ~~in~~ with consideration of the hygroscopic nature of plutonium and the applicable data quality objectives (DQOs). In some instances an atmosphere with a dew point no greater than -23°C . ~~than -23°C may be needed to meet DQOs.~~

10.2 All sampling equipment, including bottles, is to be dried before use. Plastic bottles are not to be used since they cannot be adequately dried. Glass bottles and aluminum foil are to be dried at 110°C for at least 1 h and kept in a desiccator until used.

NOTE 1—It has been shown that plutonium dioxide will sorb water from apparently dry aluminum foil. The foil should be dried at 110°C before use.

10.3 Quantitative methods to correct for moisture absorption, such as drying, must be avoided. The sample will not be representative under these conditions. It is virtually impossible to get equal amounts of moisture in the sample and bulk of the material at the same time.

PLUTONIUM BY CONTROLLED-POTENTIAL COULOMETRY

(This test method was discontinued in 1992 and replaced by Test Method **C1165**.)

PLUTONIUM BY CONTROLLED-POTENTIAL COULOMETRY

(With appropriate sample preparation, controlled-potential coulometric measurement as described in Test Method **C1108** may be used for plutonium determination.)

PLUTONIUM BY CERIC SULFATE TITRATION

(This test method was discontinued in 2003 and replaced by Test Method **C1235**), which was withdrawn in 2005.)

PLUTONIUM BY AMPEROMETRIC TITRATION WITH IRON (II)

(This test method was discontinued in 1992 and replaced by Test Method **C1206**), which was withdrawn in 2015.)

STANDARD TEST METHOD FOR PLUTONIUM ASSAY BY PLUTONIUM(III) DIODE ARRAY SPECTROPHOTOMETRY

(With appropriate sample preparation, the measurement described in Test Method **C1307** may be used for plutonium determination.)

NITROGEN BY DISTILLATION SPECTROPHOTOMETRY USING NESSLER REAGENT

11. Scope

11.1 This test method covers the determination of 5 to 100 $\mu\text{g/g}$ of nitride nitrogen in 1-g samples of nuclear-grade plutonium dioxide.

12. Summary of Test Method

12.1 The sample is dissolved in hydrochloric acid by the sealed tube method or by phosphoric acid hydrofluoric acid solution, after which the solution is made basic with sodium hydroxide and nitrogen is separated as ammonia by steam distillation. Nessler reagent is added to the distillate to form the yellow ammonium complex and the absorbance of the solution is measured at approximately 430 nm (**34, 45**).

13. Apparatus

13.1 *Distillation Apparatus*, see **Fig. 1**.

13.2 *Spectrophotometer*, visible range.

14. Reagents

14.1 *Ammonium Chloride (NH_4Cl)*—Dry salt for 2 h at 110 to 120°C .

14.2 *Boric Acid Solution (40 g/L)*—Dissolve 40 g of boric acid (H_3BO_3) in 800 mL of hot water. Cool to approximately 20°C and dilute to 1 L.

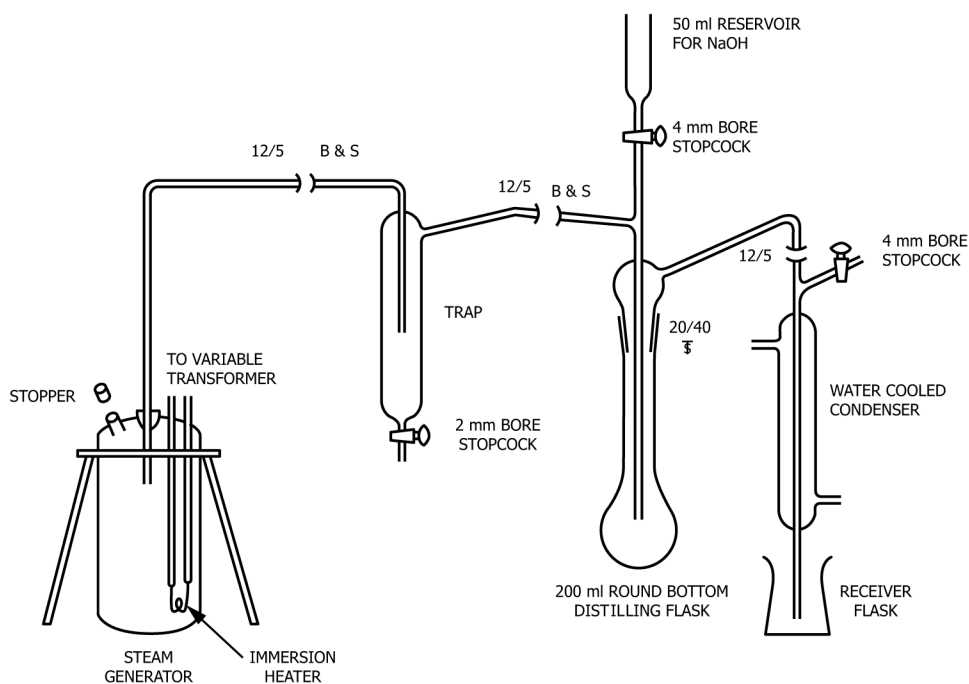


FIG. 1 Distillation Apparatus

14.3 *Hydrochloric Acid (sp gr 1.19)*—Concentrated hydrochloric acid (HCl).

14.4 *Hydrofluoric Acid (48 %)*—Concentrated hydrofluoric acid (HF).

14.5 *Nessler Reagent*—To prepare, dissolve 50 g of potassium iodide (KI) in a minimum of cold ammonia-free water, approximately 35 mL. Add a saturated solution of mercuric chloride (HgCl_2 , 22 g/350 mL) slowly until the first slight precipitate of red mercuric iodide persists. Add 400 mL of 9 N sodium hydroxide solution and dilute to 1 L with water, mix, and allow the solution to stand overnight. Decant supernatant liquid and store in a brown bottle.

14.6 *Nitrogen Standard Solution (1 mL = 0.01 mg N)*—Dissolve 3.819 g of NH_4Cl in water and dilute to 1 L. Transfer 10 mL of this solution to a 1-L volumetric flask and dilute to volume with ammonia-free water.

14.7 *Sodium Hydroxide (9 N)*—Dissolve 360 g of sodium hydroxide (NaOH) in ammonia-free water and dilute to 1 L.

14.8 *Sodium Hydroxide (50 %)*—Dissolve sodium hydroxide (NaOH) in an equal weight of water.

14.9 *Water (Ammonia-free)*—To prepare, pass distilled water through a mixed-bed resin demineralizer and store in a tightly stoppered chemical-resistant glass bottle.

15. Precautions

15.1 The use of ammonia or other volatile nitrogenous compounds in the vicinity can lead to serious error. The following precautionary measures should be taken: (1) Clean all glassware and rinse with ammonia-free water immediately prior to use, and (2) avoid contamination of the atmosphere in the vicinity of the test by ammonia or other volatile nitrogenous compounds.

16. Procedure

16.1 *Dissolution of Sample:*

16.1.1 Transfer a weighed sample in the range from 1.0 to 1.5 g to a 50-mL beaker.

16.1.2 Transfer a weighed sample in the range from 1.0 to 1.5 g to a 50-mL beaker. Crush the pellet samples to a particle size of 1 mm or less in a diamond mortar.

NOTE 2—Crush the pellet samples to a particle size of 1 mm or less in a diamond mortar.

16.1.3 To the crushed sample add 5 mL of HCl and 3 drops of HF. Heat to put sample into solution.

NOTE 2—Concentrated phosphoric acid or mixtures of phosphoric acid and hydrofluoric acids or of phosphoric and sulfuric acids may be used for the dissolution of plutonium dioxide. Such acids may require a purification step in order to reduce the nitrogen blank before being used in this procedure.

16.2 *Distillation:*

16.2.1 Quantitatively transfer the sample solution to the distilling flask of the apparatus. Add 20 mL of ammonia-free water; then clamp the flask into place on the distillation apparatus (see Fig. 1).

16.2.2 Turn on the steam generator, but do not close with the stopper.

16.2.3 Add 5 mL of 4 % H₃BO₃ solution to a 50-mL graduated flask and position this trap so that the condenser tip is below the surface of the H₃BO₃ solution.

16.2.4 Transfer 20 mL of 50 % NaOH solution to the funnel in the distillation head.

16.2.5 When the water begins to boil in the steam generator, replace the stopper and slowly open the stopcock on the distilling flask to allow the NaOH solution to run into the sample solution. **(Warning—The NaOH solution must be added slowly to avoid a violent reaction, which may lead to a loss of sample.)**

NOTE 4—The NaOH solution must be added slowly to avoid a violent reaction which may lead to a loss of sample.

16.2.6 Steam distill until 25 mL of distillate has collected in the trap.

16.2.7 Remove the trap containing the distillate from the distillation apparatus and remove the stopper from the steam generator.

16.2.8 Transfer the cooled distillate to a 50-mL volumetric flask.

16.2.9 Prepare a reagent blank solution by following 16.1 through 16.2.8.

16.3 *Measurement of Nitrogen:*

16.3.1 Add 1.0 mL of Nessler reagent to each of the distillates collected in 16.2.8 and 16.2.9 and dilute to volume with ammonia-free water, mix, and let stand 10 min.

16.3.2 Measure the absorbance of the solutions at 430 nm in a 1-cm cell. Use water as the reference.

16.4 *Calibration Curve:*

16.4.1 Add 0, 5, 10, 25, 50, 100, and 150 µg of N from the nitrogen standard solution to separate distilling flasks. Then add 5 mL of HCl and 3 drops of HF plus 20 mL of ammonia-free water to each flask.

16.4.2 Process each solution by the procedure in 16.2 through 16.3 (omit 16.2.9).

16.4.3 Correct for the reagent blank reading and plot the absorbance of each standard against the micrograms of nitrogen per 50 mL of solution.

17. Calculation

17.1 From the calibration chart, read the micrograms of nitrogen corresponding to the absorbance of the sample solution.

17.1.1 Calculate the nitrogen content, *N*, micrograms per gram, of the sample as follows:

$$N = (A - B)/W \quad (1)$$

where:

A = micrograms of nitrogen from sample plus reagents,

B = micrograms of nitrogen in blank, and

W = sample mass, g.

18. Precision

18.1 The estimated relative standard deviation for a single test measurement by this test method is 20 % for 3 µg of nitrogen and 3 % for 50 to 90 µg of nitrogen.

CARBON (TOTAL) BY DIRECT COMBUSTION-THERMAL CONDUCTIVITY

19. Scope

19.1 This test method covers the determination of 10 to 200 µg of residual carbon in nuclear-grade plutonium dioxide.

20. Summary of Test Method

20.1 Powdered samples are covered and mixed with an accelerator in carbon-free crucibles and burned with oxygen in an induction heating furnace. Traces of sulfur compounds and water vapor are removed from the combustion products by a purification train, and the resultant carbon monoxide is converted to carbon dioxide. The purified carbon dioxide is trapped on a molecular sieve, eluted therefrom with a stream of helium upon application of heat to the trap, and passed through a thermal conductivity cell. The amount of carbon present, being a function of the integrated change in the current of the detector cell, is read directly from a calibrated digital voltmeter or strip-chart recorder.

21. Interferences

21.1 There are no known interferences not eliminated by the purification system.

22. Apparatus

22.1 *Commercial Combustion Apparatus*, suitable for the carbon determination, is often modified to facilitate maintenance and operation within the glove box which is required for all work with plutonium materials.

22.1.1 *Combustion Apparatus*—This apparatus shall consist of an induction furnace suitable for operation at 1600°C, with a purification train, a catalytic furnace, carbon dioxide trap, thermal conductivity cell with appropriate readout equipment, and a regulated supply of oxygen and helium.

22.1.2 *Combustion Tubes*—Quartz combustion tubes with integral baffle shall be used.

22.1.3 *Crucibles*—Expendable alumina or similar refractory crucibles shall be used. The use of crucible covers is optional. Satisfactory operation with covers must be established by analysis of standards. Crucibles and covers (if used) must be ignited at a temperature of 1000°C or higher for a time sufficient to produce constant blank values.

22.1.4 *Accelerators*—Granular tin and tin foil accelerators shall be used as required to obtain satisfactory results. The criterion for satisfactory results is the absence of significant additional carbon release upon re-combustion of the specimen.

22.1.5 *Catalytic Furnace and Tube*—This unit, which is used to ensure complete oxidation of CO to CO₂, consists of a tube containing copper oxide and maintained at a temperature of 300°C by a small furnace.

22.1.6 *Carbon Dioxide Purifiers*—The purifiers that follow the combustion tube must remove finely divided solid metallic oxides and oxides of sulfur and selenium, dry the gases before they enter the CO₂ trap, and protect the absorber from outside effects. Finely divided solid metal oxides are removed from the gases during their passage through the quartz wool. The SO₂ given off by materials containing sulfur is removed by MnO₂ and any water vapor is absorbed in a tube containing Mg(ClO₄)₂. Hot copper oxide converts carbon monoxide to carbon dioxide. Additional components in the purification train may be required when materials containing very high amounts of sulfur or of halides are being analyzed. The materials used in the purification train must be checked frequently to ensure that their absorbing capacity has not been exhausted.

22.2 *Vibratory Sample Pulverizer Apparatus*, capable of reducing ceramic materials to a –100-mesh powder such that 90 % or more of the particles are less than 149 μm (equivalent to a –100-mesh powder). A stainless steel capsule and mixing ball must be used in order to reduce the contamination of the sample with carbon.

23. Reagents and Materials

23.1 *Sulfuric Acid (sp gr 1.84)*—Concentrated sulfuric acid (H₂SO₄) to be used in the oxygen purification train.

23.2 *Quartz Wool*, to use as a dust trap at top of combustion tube.

23.3 *Standard Materials*—Certified reference material standards from a national standards body such as the U.S. National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST) SRM 131b Low-Carbon Steel (0.0018 % carbon) and SRM 336 Steel (0.567 % carbon) or their replacements or equivalent. Certified materials in steel matrices (steel pins, steel rings, steel granules, and steel powder) ranging from 5 μg carbon/g sample to 1500 μg carbon/g sample are available and have been found satisfactory.

24. Safety Precautions

24.1 *Samples Containing Plutonium*—Due to the extreme toxicity of plutonium and the certainty that some plutonium will become airborne during the analytical operations, it is mandatory to perform all operations within an approved glove box fitted with off-gas filters capable of sustained operation with dust-laden atmospheres.

24. Sampling

24.1 *Sample Size*—The normal sample size for plutonium dioxide fuel materials shall be 1 g. If necessary, this amount shall be altered as required to contain less than 200 μg of carbon.

24.2 *Sample Preparation*—Pellet or particulate samples shall be reduced such that approximately 90 % of the particles are less than 149 μm (equivalent to approximately a –100-mesh powder powder) prior to the weighing of the specimens. Exposure of the powdered sample to atmospheric carbon dioxide should be minimized by storage of the powder in a closed vial. Refer to Sections 8 and 10 for guidance in handling plutonium dioxide.

25. Preparation of Apparatus

25.1 *Analysis System Purge*—After having properly set the operating controls of the instrument system, condition the apparatus by combustion of several blanks prepared with the sample crucible and accelerator in the amount to be used with the test specimen analyses. Successive blank values should approach a constant value, allowing for normal statistical fluctuations. The instrument should be adjusted for a 2-min combustion period.

26. Calibration

26.1 *Preparation of Standards for Combustion*—Mix a weighed portion of an accelerator and a-an accurately weighed portion of approximately 1 g of NIST 131b reference material with a certified carbon value of about 0.005 % in each of three sample crucibles. Repeat with NIST 336, using a reference material with a certified carbon value of about 0.5 %, using an accurately weighed portion of approximately 30 to 40 mg.

NOTE 3—These portions represent about 50 μg and 200 μg of carbon, respectively.

26.1.1 The NIST 336 steel is assigned a carbon content 0.567 % (5670 μg/g). Therefore, amounts ranging up to approximately 40 mg are used for standardization. Weigh the steel into a tared container (a container, such as a small nickel-sample boat if

convenient), boat, obtaining the mass to the nearest 0.01 mg. Transfer the chips to a 30-mm square of aluminum foil (previously acetone washed), and fold the foil into a wrapper with the aid of stainless steel tongs and spatulas. The foil should not be touched by the hands. Place the wrapped standard in a numbered glass vial and transfer to the analyzer glove box.

26.2 *Combustion of Standards*—Load and combust the standards and record the results. Adjust the calibration controls in such a way as to produce the correct readout value on the direct readout meter. Combust additional standards as required to produce the correct direct readout. As an alternative, consider the readout digits as arbitrary numbers and prepare a calibration curve of known micrograms of carbon *versus* the readout value. A strip chart recorder connected to present the ~~integrated~~ integrated value of the carbon dioxide response signal is helpful in detecting and correcting for analyzer drift and noise.

27. Procedure

27.1 Pulverize the pellet samples for 15 s in the stainless steel capsule of the sample pulverizer.

27.2 Weigh a sample crucible containing the required amount of accelerator to the nearest 0.01 g.

27.3 Transfer the sample powder, not to exceed 1 g or of such size as to give not more than 200 µg of carbon, to the crucible. Weigh the crucible and contents to the nearest 0.01 g and find the specimen mass by difference.

27.4 Mix the specimen powder and the accelerator with a stainless steel spatula.

27.5 Load the sample crucible into the furnace and combust the specimen for 2 min.

27.6 Remove the sample crucible and examine for evidence of incomplete combustion. The crucible contents should be a uniform fused mass.

28. Calculation

28.1 Calculate the concentration of carbon in the sample by dividing the net micrograms of carbon found by the sample mass, expressed in grams, as follows:

$$C, \mu\text{g/g} = (C_s - C_b)/W \quad (2)$$

where:

C_s = micrograms of carbon in the sample and reagents,

C_b = micrograms of carbon in reagent blank, and,

W = grams of oxide sample.

29. Precision

29.1 The relative standard deviation of this test method is approximately 10 % for a concentration of 30 µg of carbon/g of sample.

<https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/sist/bd4c00e8-c75e-43ff-a2f2-2860686b787c/astm-c697-16>

TOTAL CHLORINE AND FLUORINE BY PYROHYDROLYSIS

30. Scope

30.1 This test method covers the determination of 5 to 100 µg/g of chlorine and 1 to 100 µg/g of fluorine in 1-g samples of nuclear-grade plutonium dioxide.

31. Summary of Test Method

31.1 A 1 to 2-g sample of plutonium dioxide is pyrohydrolyzed at 950°C with a stream of moist air or oxygen. The halogens are volatilized as acids during the pyrohydrolysis and are trapped as chloride and fluoride in a buffered solution. Several procedures are outlined for the measurement of chloride and fluoride in the resultant condensate. Chloride is measured by spectrophotometry, microtitrimetry, or with ion-selective electrodes and fluoride with ion-selective electrodes or spectrophotometry (**56, 67**).

32. Interferences

32.1 Bromide, iodide, cyanide, sulfide, and thiocyanate, if present in the condensate, would interfere with the spectrophotometric and microtitrimetric measurement of chloride. Bromide, iodide, sulfide, and cyanide interfere in the measurement of chloride with ion-selective electrodes, but have very little effect upon the measurement of fluoride with selective electrodes.

33. Apparatus (see Fig. 2 and Fig. 3) for examples)

33.1 *Gas Flow Regulator*—A flowmeter and a rate controller to adjust the flow of sparge gas between 1 to 3 L/min.

33.2 *Hot Plate*—A heater used to keep the water bubbler temperature between 50 and 90°C.

33.3 *Furnace*—A tube furnace that is capable of maintaining a temperature from 900 to 1000°C. The bore of the furnace should be about 32 mm (1¼ in.) in diameter and about 305 mm (12 in.) in length.

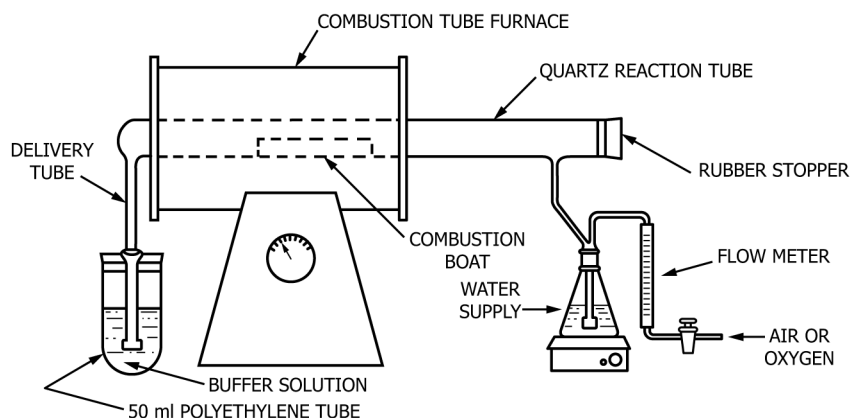


FIG. 2 Pyrohydrolysis Apparatus

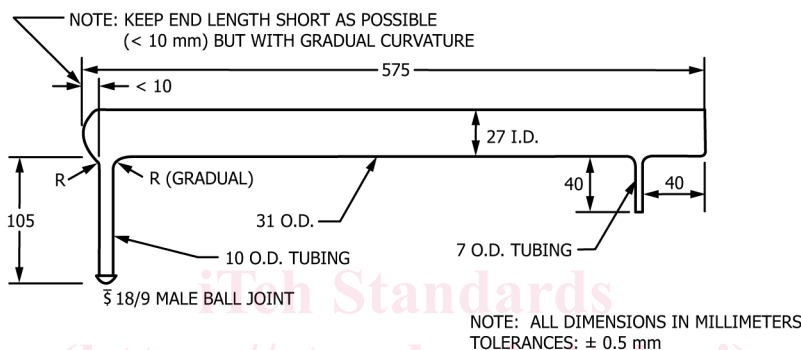


FIG. 3 Quartz Reaction Tube

33.4 *Reactor Tube*, made from fused-silica or platinum. The delivery tube should be a part of the exit end of the reactor tube and be within 51 mm (2 in.) of the furnace (see Fig. 2 for proper tube positioning).

33.5 *Combustion Boats*, made from fused-silica or platinum. A boat about 102 mm (4 in.) long is made by cutting lengthwise a silica tube 20 mm in diameter and flattening one end to provide a handle. A fused-silica inner sleeve for the reactor tube can facilitate the movement of the boat into the tube, prevent spillage, and thus prolong the life of the combustion tube.

33.6 *Collection Vessel*—A plastic graduate or beaker designed to maintain most of the scrubber solution above the tip of the delivery tube.

33.7 *Automatic Chloride Titrator*.

33.8 *Ion-Selective Electrodes*, chloride and fluoride.

33.9 *Reference Electrode*—Use a double-junction type electrode such as mercuric sulfate, sleeve-junction type electrode. Do not use a calomel electrode.

33.10 *Spectrophotometer*, ultraviolet to visible range and absorption cells. For a discussion on spectrophotometers and their use see Practice E60.

33.11 *pH Meter*, with an expanded scale having a sensitivity of 1 mV.

34. Reagents

34.1 *Accelerator*—Halogen-free uranium oxide (U_3O_8) powder used as a flux to enhance the release of chloride and fluoride.

34.2 *Air or Oxygen*, compressed.

34.3 *Buffer Solution* (0.001 N)—Prepare by adding 50 μ L of concentrated glacial acetic acid (CH_3CO_2H , sp gr 1.05) and 0.1 g of potassium acetate ($KC_2H_3O_2$) to 1 L of water.

34.4 *Chloride Standard Solution* (1 mL = 1 mg Cl)—Dissolve 1.65 g of sodium chloride (NaCl) in water and dilute to 1 L.

34.5 *Chloride, Standard Solution* (1 mL = 5 μ g Cl)—Prepare by diluting 5 mL of chloride solution (1 mL = 1 mg Cl) to 1 L with water.

34.6 *Ferric Ammonium Sulfate Solution* (0.25 M in 9 M nitric acid)—Dissolve 12 g of ferric ammonium sulfate ($Fe(NH_4)(SO_4)_2 \cdot 12 H_2O$) in 58 mL of concentrated nitric acid (HNO_3 , sp gr 1.42) and dilute to 100 mL with water.

34.7 *Fluoride, Standard Solution (1 mL = 1 mg F)*—Dissolve 2.21 g of sodium fluoride (NaF) in water and dilute to 1 L.

34.8 *Fluoride, Standard Solution (1 mL = 10 µg F)*—Dilute 10 mL of fluoride solution (1 mL = 1 mg F) to 1 L with water.

34.9 *Gelatin Solution*—Add 6.2 g of dry gelatin mixture (60 parts of dry gelatin + 1 part of thymol blue + 1 part of thymol) to 1 L of hot water and heat with stirring until solution is clear.

34.10 *Lanthanum-Alizarin Complexone*—Dissolve 0.048 g of alizarin complexone (3-aminomethylalizarin-*N,N*-diacetic acid) in 100 µL of concentrated ammonium hydroxide (NH₄OH), 1 mL of an ammonium acetate solution (NH₄C₂H₃O₂, 20 mass %), and 5 mL of water. Filter the solution through a high-grade, rapid-filtering, qualitative filter paper. Wash the paper with a small volume of water, and add 8.2 g of anhydrous sodium acetate (NaC₂H₃O₂) and 6 mL of concentrated glacial acetic acid (CH₃CO₂H, sp gr 1.05) to the filtrate. Add 100 mL of acetone while swirling the filtrate. Add 0.040 g of lanthanum oxide (La₂O₃) dissolved in 2.5 mL of warm 2 N HCl. Mix the two solutions and dilute to 200 mL. After 30 min readjust the solution volume.

NOTE 4—A 0.1-g/L solution is prepared by dissolving 100 mg of the reagent in water and diluting with isopropyl alcohol to obtain a 60 % alcoholic medium.

34.11 *Mercuric Thiocyanate Solution*—Prepare a saturated solution by adding 0.3 g of mercuric thiocyanate (Hg(SCN)₂) to 100 mL of 95 % ethanol. Shake the mixture thoroughly for maximum dissolution of the solid. Filter the solution.

34.12 *Nitric Acid-Acetic Acid Solution (1 N Nitric Acid and 4 N Acetic Acid)*—Prepare by adding 64 mL of nitric acid (HNO₃, sp gr 1.42) to a 1-L volumetric flask which contains 500 mL of water. Swirl the solution in the flask and add 230 mL of acetic acid (CH₃CO₂H, sp gr 1.05). Dilute the solution with water to 1 L.

35. Pyrohydrolysis Procedure

35.1 Prepare the pyrohydrolysis apparatus for use as follows:

35.1.1 Regulate the gas flow between 1 and 3 L/min.

35.1.2 Adjust the temperature of the hot plate to heat the water to approximately 90°C.

35.1.3 Adjust the temperature of the furnace to 950 ± 50°C.

35.1.4 Add 15 mL of buffer solution to the collection vessel and place around the delivery tube.

35.2 Weigh accurately, 1 to 2 g of the powdered plutonium dioxide and transfer to a combustion boat. If an accelerator, U₃O₈, is used mix 4 g with the sample before loading into the boat.

35.3 Place the boat containing the sample into the reactor tube and quickly close the tube. The boat should be in the middle of the furnace.

35.4 Allow the pyrohydrolysis to proceed for at least 30 min.

35.5 Remove the collection vessel and wash down the delivery tube with some buffer solution. Dilute the solution to 25 mL with the acetate buffer. Determine the chloride and fluoride by one or more of the measurement procedures covered in Section [3736](https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/sist/bd4c00e8-c75e-43ff-a2f2-2860686b787c/astm-c697-16).

35.6 Remove the boat from the reactor tube and dispose of the sample residue.

35.7 Run a pyrohydrolysis blank with halogen-free U₃O₈ by following the procedures, given in [36.335.3](#) – [36.635.6](#).

36. Measurement of Chloride and Fluoride

36.1 *Determination of Chloride by Spectrophotometry:*

36.1.1 Prepare a calibration curve by adding 0, 1, 2, 5, and 10 mL of the chloride solution (1 mL = 5 µg Cl) to separate 25-mL flasks. Dilute each to 20 mL with buffer solution, and add 2 mL of the ferric ammonium sulfate solution and 2 mL of the mercuric thiocyanate solution. Mix the solution and dilute to 25 mL with water. Mix the solutions again and allow them to stand 10 min. Transfer some of the solution from the flask to a 1-cm absorption cell and read the absorbance at 460 nm using water as the reference liquid. Plot the micrograms of Cl per 25 mL *versus* the absorbance reading.

36.1.2 To determine Cl in the pyrohydrolysis condensate transfer 15 mL of the buffer solution to a 25-mL volumetric flask. Add 2 mL of the ferric ammonium sulfate solution and 2 mL of the mercuric thiocyanate solution. Mix the solutions, dilute to volume with water, and mix again. Allow the solution to stand 10 min. Transfer some of the solution from the flask to a 1-cm absorption cell and read the absorbance at 460 nm *versus* water as the reference. Read the micrograms of Cl present from the calibration curve.

NOTE 5—A calibration curve can be prepared by drying measured aliquots of a chloride solution on some halogen-free U₃O₈ and proceeding through pyrohydrolysis steps.

36.1.3 Calculate the chlorine, Cl, µg/g, as follows:

$$\text{Cl, } \mu\text{g/g} = (A - B) V_{1/wv_2} \quad (3)$$

where:

A = micrograms of chlorine in aliquot measured,

B = micrograms of chlorine in blank,

W = grams of PuO₂ pyrohydrolyzed,
 V_1 = millilitres of scrub solution, and
 V_2 = aliquot of scrub solution analyzed, mL.

36.2 Determination of Chloride by Amperometric Microtitrimetry:

36.2.1 Calibrate the titrimer by adding 5 mL of the buffer solution, 1 mL of the nitric acid-acetic acid solution, and 2 drops of the gelatin solution to a titration cell. Pipet 50 µL of the chloride solution (1 mL = 1 mL Cl) into the titration cell. Place the cell on the chloride titrator and follow the manufacturer's suggested sequence of operations for chloride (**Note 76**). Record the time required to titrate 50 µg. Run a reagent blank titration.

NOTE 6—The Cl-analyzer generates silver ions which react to precipitate the chloride ion. The instrument uses an amperometric end point to obtain an automatic shut-off of the generating current at a pre-set increment of indicator current. Since the rate of generating silver ion is constant, the amount of chloride precipitated is proportional to the time required for the titration.

36.2.2 Determine Cl in the pyrohydrolysis-scrub solution by adding 5 mL to a titration cell which contains 1 mL of the nitric acid-acetic acid solution and 2 drops of the gelatin solution.

36.2.3 Place the cell in position on the titrator. Start the titrator and record the time required to titrate the Cl present.

36.2.4 Calculate the chlorine as follows:

$$\text{Cl, } \mu\text{g/g} = V_1 F (T_s - T_B) / V_2 W \quad (4)$$

where:

V_1 = volume of scrub solutions = 25,
 V_2 = aliquot of scrub solution analyzed, mL,
 F =

$$\frac{\mu\text{Cl standard titrated}}{\text{titration time of standard} - \text{titration time of blank}}$$

or

$$F = 50 / (T_{C1} - T_B), \quad (5)$$

T_s = titration time to titrate sample and blank,
 T_{C1} = titration time to titrate 50 µg of Cl and blank,
 T_B = titration time to titrate reagent blank, and
 W = grams of PuO₂ pyrohydrolyzed.

36.3 Determination of Chloride and Fluoride with Ion-Selective Electrodes:

36.3.1 Preparation of the calibration curves requires the assembly of the meter and the ion-selective electrode with a suitable reference electrode. From these standards take the millivolt readings for each ion-selective electrode and plot on semi-log paper determine the halogen content per 25 mL versus millivolts, millivolts, using computer software or a plot on semi-log paper. Prepare a series of standards in acetate buffer solution by pipeting aliquots of the halogen standards into separate 25-mL flasks ranging in concentrations as follows:

Cl from 10 to 100 µg/25 mL
 F from 5 to 100 µg/25 mL

36.3.2 Determine the Cl and F in the scrub solution from the pyrohydrolysis by using the appropriate ion-selective electrode. Record the micrograms of Cl or F from the calibration curve and calculate the halide as follows:

$$\text{Cl or F, } \mu\text{g/g} = (H_s - H_b) / W \quad (6)$$

where:

H_s = halide in aliquot of scrub solution + blank, µg,
 H_b = halide in pyrohydrolysis blank, µg, and
 W = sample mass, g.

36.4 Determination of Fluoride by Spectrophotometry:

36.4.1 Prepare a calibration curve by adding to separate 10-mL flasks 0, 50, 100, 200, 500, and 1000 µL of the fluoride solution (1 mL = 10 µg F). Add 2.0 mL of the lanthanum-alizarin complexone solution and dilute to volume with water. Mix and let stand 1 h. Read the absorbance at 622 nm *versus* the reagent blank. Plot the micrograms of F per 10 mL *versus* absorbance reading.

36.4.2 Measure F in the pyrohydrolysis scrub solution by pipeting 5 mL into a 10-mL volumetric flask. Add 2.0 mL of the lanthanum-alizarin complexone and dilute to volume. Mix and let stand 1 h. Read the absorbance at 622 nm *versus* a reagent blank and obtain the fluoride content from the calibration curve.

36.4.3 Calculate the fluorine concentration, F , in the PuO₂ sample as follows:

$$F, \mu\text{g/g} = [(F_s - F_b) / W] \times V_1 / V_2 \quad (7)$$