



Designation: **D4808 – 01 (Reapproved 2012) D4808 – 17**

Standard Test Methods for Hydrogen Content of Light Distillates, Middle Distillates, Gas Oils, and Residua by Low-Resolution Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Spectroscopy¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D4808; 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.

This standard has been approved for use by agencies of the U.S. Department of Defense.

1. Scope-Scope*

1.1 These test methods cover the determination of the hydrogen content of petroleum products ranging from atmospheric distillates to vacuum residua using a continuous wave, low-resolution nuclear magnetic resonance spectrometer. (Test Method **D3701** is the preferred method for determining the hydrogen content of aviation turbine fuels using nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy.)

1.2 Three test methods are included here that account for the special characteristics of different petroleum products and apply to the following distillation ranges:

Test Method	Petroleum Products	Boiling Range, °C (°F) (approximate)
A	Light Distillates	15–260 (60–500)
B	Middle Distillates	200–370 (400–700)
	Gas Oils	370–510 (700–950)
C	Residua	510+ (950+)

1.3 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as standard. No other units of measurement are included in this standard. The preferred units are mass %.

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 warning statements, see Sections 6.2 and 6.4.

1.5 *This international standard was developed in accordance with internationally recognized principles on standardization established in the Decision on Principles for the Development of International Standards, Guides and Recommendations issued by the World Trade Organization Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Committee.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:²

[D3701 Test Method for Hydrogen Content of Aviation Turbine Fuels by Low Resolution Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Spectrometry](#)

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

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

[D5291 Test Methods for Instrumental Determination of Carbon, Hydrogen, and Nitrogen in Petroleum Products and Lubricants](#)

3. Summary of Test Methods

3.1 A test specimen is compared in a continuous wave, low-resolution nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectrometer with a reference standard sample. The spectrometer records in a nondestructive fashion the absolute concentration of hydrogen atoms in the reference standard and test sample. The absolute hydrogen concentrations reported by the integrator on the NMR instrument

¹ These test methods are under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D02 on Petroleum 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

for the standard and test specimens are used as a means of comparing the theoretical hydrogen content of the standard with that of the sample, the result being expressed as the hydrogen content (on a mass % basis) of the sample.

3.2 To ensure an accurate measure of the absolute hydrogen content of the reference standard and sample, it is necessary to ensure that the measured hydrogen integrator counts are always directly proportional to the absolute hydrogen content of the standard and sample.

3.3 Undercounting of the reference standard with respect to the sample is avoided in Test Methods B and C by dilution of the standard with a relaxation reagent solution. Undercounting of highly viscous or solid test samples is avoided by dissolving the sample in a non-hydrogen containing solvent, which ensures that all of the weighed sample is in a fluid and homogeneous solution at the time of measurement. An elevated sample temperature at the time of measurement also ensures a homogeneous liquid-phase sample.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 The hydrogen content represents a fundamental quality of a petroleum product that has been correlated with many of the performance characteristics of that product.

4.2 This test method provides a simple and more precise alternative to existing test methods, specifically combustion techniques (Test Methods [D5291](#)) for determining the hydrogen content on a range of petroleum products.

5. Apparatus

NOTE 1—This test method has been written around the Newport Analyzer Mark III F or its replacement version, the Newport 4000 (Oxford Analytical Instruments, Ltd., Oxford, England), and the details of the test method are to be read in conjunction with the manufacturer's handbook. These instruments have demonstrated statistically indistinguishable performance in these standard test methods and in Test Method [D3701](#). Any similar instrument is acceptable, provided that the new instrument is adequately correlated and proved to be statistically similar. As of the mid-1990s, however, the Newport 4000 instrument is no longer being manufactured by the vendor. No newer models are currently being manufactured as replacements for the Newport 4000 instrument.

5.1 Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Spectrometer:

5.1.1 A low-resolution, continuous wave instrument capable of measuring a nuclear magnetic resonance signal due to hydrogen atoms in the sample and includes an excitation and detection coil of suitable dimensions to contain the test cell; an electronic unit, to control and monitor the magnet and coil, and containing: circuits, to control and adjust the radio-frequency level and audio-frequency gain; and integrating counter, with variable time period in seconds.

5.1.2 Test Methods B and C also require that the instrument has the ability to equilibrate samples within the probe at an elevated temperature (50°C): (50°C).

5.2 *Conditioning Block*—A block of aluminum alloy drilled with holes of sufficient size to accommodate the test cells with the mean height of the sample being at least ~~20 mm~~ 20 mm below the top of the conditioning block, capable of holding the sample at the given test temperature (see [Fig. 1](#)).

5.3 *Test Cells*—Nessler-type tubes of approximately ~~100 mL~~ 100 mL capacity with a nominal external diameter of ~~34 mm~~ 34 mm and a nominal internal diameter of ~~31 mm~~ 31 mm marked at a distance of ~~51 mm~~ 51 mm above the bottom of the tube by a ring around the circumference. The variation between the internal diameters of the test cells used for the sample and reference material should not be greater than $\pm 0.5 \text{ mm}$. $\pm 0.5 \text{ mm}$.

NOTE 2—To avoid potential difficulties with tightness when the test cell is introduced into the magnet coil, users are cautioned to avoid test cells that have nominal external diameters that are greater than ~~34.2 mm~~ 34.2 mm.

5.4 *Polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) Plugs*, for closing the test cells and made from pure PTFE.

5.5 *Insertion Rod*—A metal rod with a threaded end used for inserting and removing the PTFE plugs from the test cells (see [Fig. 1](#)).

5.6 *Analytical Balance*—A top pan-type balance, capable of weighing the test cells in an upright position to an accuracy of at least ~~0.001 g~~ 0.001 g.

5.7 *Beakers*, ~~150 mL~~ and ~~50 mL~~ 150 mL and 50 mL with pour spouts.

5.8 *Glass Stirring Rod*, approximately ~~250 mm~~ 250 mm length.

6. Reagents and Materials

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.

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 *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.

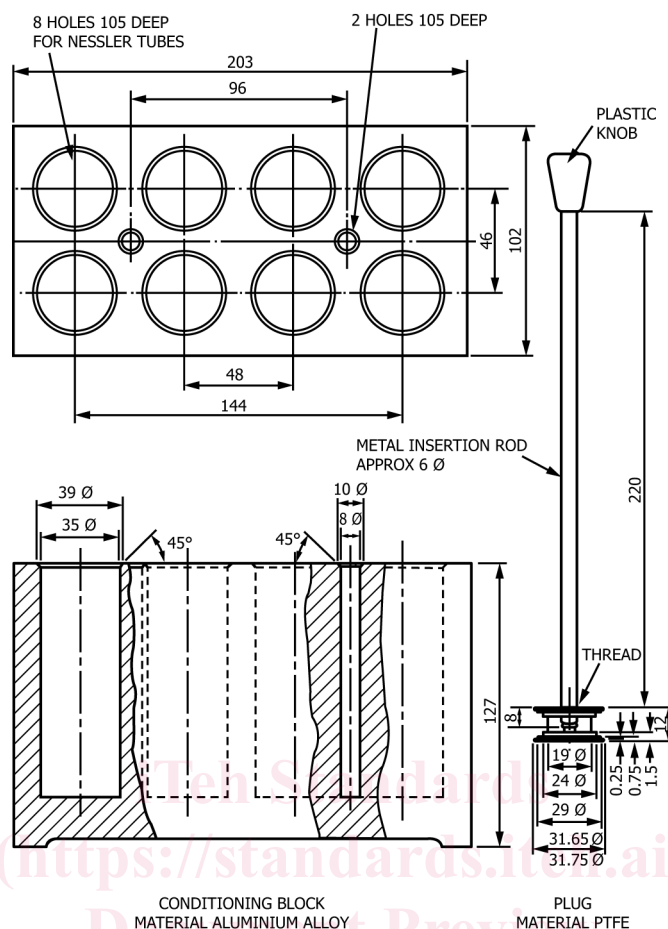


FIG. 1 Conditioning Block and Insertion Rod

6.2 Reference Standard—*n*-Dodecane. Standard—*n*-Dodecane. (Warning—Flammable.)

6.3 Relaxation Reagent Solution, prepared from ferric acetylacetonate ($\text{Fe}(\text{C}_5\text{H}_7\text{O}_2)_3$ - MW = 353.16, reagent grade)—Prepare a fresh 0.02 M $\text{Fe}(\text{C}_5\text{H}_7\text{O}_2)_3$ solution by dissolving 1.77 g ± 1.77 g of $\text{Fe}(\text{C}_5\text{H}_7\text{O}_2)_3$ in 250 mL ± 250 mL TCE. If any of the $\text{Fe}(\text{C}_5\text{H}_7\text{O}_2)_3$ remains undissolved, filter the solution, and use the filtrate in subsequent steps.

6.4 Tetrachloroethylene (TCE). (Warning—Cancer-suspect agent.)

7. Sampling

7.1 Take a homogeneous sample in accordance with Practice D4057 or D4177. Mix the sample prior to taking a representative aliquot as the test specimen. Middle distillates, gas oils, and residue can require heating to facilitate mixing to obtain a homogeneous test specimen, as described in 8.2.2.2 and 8.3.2.

8. Preparation of Test Specimen and Standard

8.1 Test Method A—Light Distillates

8.1.1 Take a clean and dry test cell and PTFE plug, and weigh them together to the nearest 0.001 g ± 0.001 g and record the weight. Add 30 ± 1 mL ± 30 mL ± 1 mL of the reference standard or test specimen to the tube, taking extreme care to prevent splashing the liquid above the line inscribed on the tube. Use a pipet for this operation.

8.1.2 Using the insertion rod, push the PTFE plug into the tube until it is about 3 cm ± 3 cm above the liquid surface, being careful to keep the tube upright. A gentle twisting or rocking of the plug as it is inserted usually aids the escape of air from the test cell and ensures that the lip of the PTFE plug is turned up around the entire circumference. Take care to ensure that this is so, since a plug that is not properly inserted allows sample evaporation and gives rise to erroneous results.

NOTE 3—If difficulties are encountered in the insertion of the PTFE plug, this operation is facilitated by inserting a length of thin (less than 0.2 mm ± 0.2 mm diameter) and clean copper wire down the inside surface of the test cell until it is approximately 4 cm ± 4 cm from the graduation mark, and then pushing the PTFE plug down past the wire which is then removed.

8.1.3 Unscrew the insertion rod carefully and remove without disturbing the plug and without contacting the liquid with the under surface of the plug.