Designation: D857 – 17

Standard Test Method for Aluminum in Water[1]

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D857; 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 This test method covers the direct flame atomic absorption determination of aluminum in the nitrous oxide-acetylene flame.

1.2 This test method is applicable to waters containing dissolved and total recoverable aluminum in the range from 0.5 to 5.0 mg/L. Aluminum concentrations as high as approximately 50 mg/L can be determined using this test method without dilution. However, no precision and bias data are available for concentrations greater than 5.0 mg/L.

1.3 This test method was tested on reagent, natural, and potable waters. It is the user's responsibility to ensure the validity of this test method for waters of untested matrices.

1.4 The same digestion procedure may be used to determine total recoverable nickel (Test Methods D1886), chromium (Test Methods D1687), cobalt (Test Methods D3558), copper (Test Methods D1688), iron (Test Methods D1068), lead (Test Methods D3559), manganese (Test Methods D858), and zinc (Test Methods D1691).

1.5 Precision and bias data have been obtained on reagent, natural, and potable waters. It is the responsibility of the user to ensure the validity of this test method on untested matrices.

1.6 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as standard. The values given in parentheses are mathematical conversion to inch-pound units that are provided for information only and are not considered standard.

1.7 *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 hazard statements, see 7.5, 8.4, and Note 2.

1.8 Former Test Methods A (Fluorometric) and B and C (Spectrophotometric) were discontinued. Refer to Appendix X1 for historical information.

1.9 *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]

D858 Test Methods for Manganese in Water
D1066 Practice for Sampling Steam
D1068 Test Methods for Iron in Water
D1129 Terminology Relating to Water
D1193 Specification for Reagent Water
D1687 Test Methods for Chromium in Water
D1688 Test Methods for Copper in Water
D1691 Test Methods for Zinc in Water
D1886 Test Methods for Nickel in Water
D2777 Practice for Determination of Precision and Bias of Applicable Test Methods of Committee D19 on Water
D3370 Practices for Sampling Water from Closed Conduits
D3558 Test Methods for Cobalt in Water
D3559 Test Methods for Lead in Water
D4841 Practice for Estimation of Holding Time for Water Samples Containing Organic and Inorganic Constituents
D5673 Test Method for Elements in Water by Inductively Coupled Plasma—Mass Spectrometry
D5810 Guide for Spiking into Aqueous Samples
D5847 Practice for Writing Quality Control Specifications for Standard Test Methods for Water Analysis

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions:*

3.1.1 For definitions of terms used in this standard, refer to Terminology D1129.

3.2 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.2.1 *continuing calibration blank, n*—a solution containing no analytes (of interest) which is used to verify blank response and freedom from carryover.

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[1] These test methods are under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D19 on Water and are the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D19.05 on Inorganic Constituents in Water.

Current edition approved June 1, 2017. Published June 2017. Originally approved in 1945. Last previous edition approved in 2012 as D857 – 12. DOI: 10.1520/D0857-17.

[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**

3.2.2 *continuing calibration verification*—a solution (or set of solutions) of known concentration used to verify freedom from excessive instrumental drift; the concentration is to cover the range of calibration curve.

3.2.3 *total recoverable aluminum, n*—a descriptive term relating to the forms of aluminum recovered in the acid digestion procedure specified in this standard.

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 Aluminum is determined by direct atomic absorption with only the addition of an ionization suppressor and sensitivity enhancer (optional).

5. Significance and Use

5.1 Although there is little information available concerning the toxicological significance of aluminum in man, the American Water Works Association has established a water quality guideline or goal of a maximum of 0.05 mg/L. Under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), some permits may set aluminum discharge limits. Some evidence does exist to indicate that low levels (5 mg/L) will interfere with activated sludge processes. For the above reasons monitoring of aluminum may be desirable.

5.2 Aluminum is monitored in boiler make-up water, where alum has been used, to determine whether aluminum is present after pretreatment. Residual aluminum may consume ion exchange capacity or consume boiler water treatment chemicals added to stoichiometrically chelate hardness ions (that is, calcium and magnesium) in boiler feed water.

5.3 Aluminum is monitored in cooling water make-up, since its presence may result in deactivation of anionic substances in scale or corrosion inhibitor treatment chemicals, or both. Deactivation may result in decreased performance of inhibitors.

5.4 ICP-MS may also be appropriate but at a higher instrument cost. See Test Method D5673.

6. Interferences

6.1 Aluminum ionizes slightly in the nitrous oxide-acetylene flame, but the addition of sodium chloride described in this test method suppresses this interference. By this technique, a maximum concentration of 9000 mg/L sodium, 9000 mg/L potassium, 4000 mg/L calcium, 4000 mg/L magnesium, 9000 mg/L sulfate, 9000 mg/L chloride, 9000 mg/L nitrate, and 9000 mg/L iron may be tolerated.

7. Apparatus

7.1 *Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometer,* for use at 309.3 nm.

7.2 *Aluminum Hollow-Cathode Lamp*—Multielement lamps are not recommended.

7.3 *Oxidant*—See 8.8.

7.4 *Fuel*—See 8.9.

7.5 *Pressure-Reducing Regulators*—The supplies of fuel and oxidant should be reduced by suitable regulators to the levels recommended by the manufacturer of the spectrophotometer. (**Warning—**The nitrous oxide-acetylene flame is hazardous due to its flash-back potential. Follow the instrument manufacturer's recommended operating procedures closely.)

8. Reagents and Materials

8.1 *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.

8.2 *Purity of Water*—Unless otherwise indicated, references to water shall be understood to mean reagent water conforming to Specification D1193, Type I. Other reagent water types may be used, provided it is first ascertained that the water is of sufficiently high purity to permit its use without lessening the bias and precision of the determination. Type II water was specified at the time of round-robin testing of this test method.

8.3 *Aluminum Solution, Standard (1 mL = 0.1 mg Al)*—Dissolve 1.758 g of aluminum potassium sulfate ($AlK(SO_4)_2 \cdot 12H_2O$) in water. Add 1 mL of nitric acid and dilute to 1 L. A purchased aluminum stock solution of appropriate known purity is also acceptable.

8.4 *Bis-(2-Ethoxyethyl) Ether.* (**Warning—**Avoid inhalation. Perform all manipulation in a well-ventilated hood. This ether can form dangerous peroxides and should be inspected regularly for their presence.)

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

8.6 *Nitric Acid (sp gr 1.42)*—Concentrated nitric acid (HNO_3).

8.7 *Sodium Chloride Solution (25.4 g/L)*—Dissolve 25.4 g of sodium chloride (NaCl) in water and dilute to 1 L.

8.8 *Oxidant:*

8.8.1 *Air,* which has been suitably dried and filtered, is used to support combustion before switching to nitrous oxide.

8.8.2 *Nitrous Oxide* is the required oxidant.

8.9 *Fuel*—Standard commercially available acetylene is the required fuel. The cylinder should be replaced at a gage pressure of 517 kPa (75 psi) to minimize the carry-over of acetone. Since "purified" grades contain a solvent that softens poly(vinyl chloride) tubing, its use constitutes a safety hazard and is not recommended.

8.10 *Filter Paper*—Purchase suitable filter paper. Typically the filter papers have a pore size of 0.45-μm membrane. Material such as fine-textured, acid-washed, ashless paper, or

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[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.

glass fiber paper are acceptable. The user must first ascertain that the filter paper is of sufficient purity to use without adversely affecting the bias and precision of the test method.

9. Sampling

9.1 Collect samples in accordance with Practices D1066 or D3370, as applicable. For dissolved aluminum, filter the samples at the time of collection through a 0.45-µm filter (8.10). Acidify the filtrate to pH 2 or less with nitric acid (8.6). For total recoverable aluminum, acidify the unfiltered sample to pH 2 or less at the time of collection. The holding time for samples may be calculated in accordance with Practice D4841.

NOTE 1—Alternatively, the pH may be adjusted in the laboratory within 14 days of collection. However, acid must be added at least 24 hours before analysis to dissolve any metals that adsorb to the container walls. This could reduce hazards of working with acids in the field when appropriate.

9.2 An effective way to clean glassware is to soak all glassware in hot HCl (1 + 1) for 2 h. Drain and rinse with water or reagent.

10. Preparation of Apparatus

10.1 An effective way to clean glassware is to soak all glassware in hot HCl (1 + 1) for 2 h. Drain and rinse with water or reagent.

11. Calibration and Standardization

11.1 Prepare aluminum standards in the range from 0.0 to 5.0 mg/L by dilution of the aluminum standard solution (see 8.3) with water. It is the responsibility of the user to ensure the validity of this test method for concentrations if the range is extended.

11.2 Add 1.0 mL of NaCl solution (8.7) to 10.0 mL of standard and mix thoroughly. If very low concentrations of aluminum are anticipated in the samples, 1 mL of *bis*-(2–ethoxyethyl) (8.4) ether may be added to the blank and each standard, which will act as a sensitivity enhancer. If this sensitivity enhancer is used, it must also be added to each sample (12.6).

11.3 Read directly in concentration if this capability is provided with the instrument or measure the absorbance of the standards and construct an analytical curve by plotting the absorbance of the standards versus the concentration of aluminum.

12. Procedure

12.1 If dissolved aluminum is to be determined proceed to 12.6.

12.2 Measure a volume of well-mixed acidified sample containing less than 0.5 mg of aluminum (100 mL maximum) into a 125-mL beaker.

12.3 Add 0.5 mL of HNO_3 and 5 mL of HCl.

12.4 Heat the samples (between 65°C and 95°C) on a hot plate below boiling in a well-ventilated hood until the volume has been reduced to 10 to 15 mL, making certain the samples do not boil.

TABLE 1 Overall (S_T) and Single-Operator (S_o) Interlaboratory Precision for Aluminum by Direct AAS

Reagent Water:			
Concentration (*X*), mg/L	0.848	2.54	4.11
S_T	0.167	0.19	0.19
S_o	0.128	0.18	0.23
Natural Water:			
Concentration (*X*), mg/L	0.772	2.48	4.07
S_T	0.194	0.19	0.21
S_o	0.166	0.16	0.28

NOTE 2—For brines and samples with high levels of suspended matter, the amount of reduction in volume is left to the discretion of the analyst.

NOTE 3—Many laboratories have found block digestion systems a useful way to digest samples for trace metals analysis. Systems typically consist of either a metal or graphite block with wells to hold digestion tubes. The block temperature controller must be able to maintain uniformity of temperature across all positions of the block. The digestion block must be capable of maintaining a temperature between 65°C and 95°C. For trace metals analysis, the digestion tubes should be constructed of polypropylene and have a volume accuracy of at least 0.5 %. All lots of tubes should come with a certificate of analysis to demonstrate suitability for their intended purpose.

12.5 Cool and, if necessary, filter the samples through a filter (fine-texture, acid-washed, ashless paper) into a 100-mL volumetric flask. Wash the paper several times and bring the volume to 100-mL.

12.6 To a 10-mL aliquot of sample add 1.0 mL of NaCl and mix thoroughly. If 1 mL of *bis*–(2–ethoxyethyl) ether was added to the blank and standards as a sensitivity enhancer (11.2), an equal amount must be added to each sample.

12.7 Atomize each of the standards, samples, and blank and determine its absorbance or concentration. Atomize water between samples.

13. Calculation

13.1 Determine the concentration of aluminum in each sample by referring to the calibration curve in 13.3. Alternatively, calibrate the spectrophotometer and read directly in concentration mode.

13.2 Calculate the concentration of total recoverable aluminum in milligrams per litre using Eq 1:

$$\text{Aluminum, mg/L} = C \times (100/V) \tag{1}$$

where:

C = concentration from curve, mg/L, and
V = volume of aliquot, mL.

13.3 Calculate the concentration of dissolved aluminum directly from the calibration curve.

14. Precision and Bias[4]

14.1 Precision data for this test method were obtained on reagent, natural, and potable waters. It is the user's responsibility to assure the validity of this test method for waters of untested matrices.

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[4] Supporting data have been filed at ASTM International Headquarters and may be obtained by requesting Research Reports RR:D19-1064 and RR:D19-1065. Contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org.