



Designation: **D7736 – 12 D7736 – 12 (Reapproved 2018)**

## Standard Test Method for Determination of Acids and Glycol Esters in Ethylene Glycol<sup>1</sup>

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D7736; 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 ( $\epsilon$ ) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

### 1. Scope

- 1.1 This test method covers the determination of free acids and glycol esters in ethylene glycol by titration.
- 1.2 This test method is for used on ethylene glycol used for the manufacture of engine coolant. It can not be used on formulated engine coolant. The inhibitors will interfere with the determination.
- 1.3 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as standard. No other units of measurement are included in this standard.
- 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~~ safety, health, and ~~health~~ environmental practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*
- 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:<sup>2</sup>

- D1176 Practice for Sampling and Preparing Aqueous Solutions of Engine Coolants or Antirusts for Testing Purposes
- D1193 Specification for Reagent Water
- D4725 Terminology for Engine Coolants and Related Fluids
- E177 Practice for Use of the Terms Precision and Bias in ASTM Test Methods
- E691 Practice for Conducting an Interlaboratory Study to Determine the Precision of a Test Method

### 3. Terminology

#### 3.1 Definitions:

- 3.1.1 For definitions of terms used in this test method, refer to Terminology **D4725**.

### 4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 This test method is used to determine the acid and ester content of ethylene glycol by titration. The sample is titrated to the phenolphthalein end point with 0.02 N NaOH to determine the acidity. Then a known amount of base is added and the sample is heated at ~~100°C~~ 100 °C to hydrolyze the esters. It is then back-titrated with 0.02 N sulfuric acid to determine the ester content.

### 5. Significance and Use

5.1 The presence of acids or glycol esters in the ethylene glycol used to produce engine coolant is undesirable. Under conditions in an engine cooling system, the esters can hydrolyze to form glycol and an acid. The acid will react with the corrosion inhibitors, thereby reducing the useful life of the coolant. This method can determine the amount of acid and glycol ester present in the ethylene glycol.

<sup>1</sup> This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee **D15** on Engine Coolants and Related Fluids and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee **D15.04** on Chemical Properties.

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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.

## 6. Interferences

6.1 This test method is based on a color change titration. Glycol with a strong color could interfere with the results of this method.

6.2 High pH recycled glycols streams will affect the results of this test method.

## 7. Apparatus

7.1 250 mL Borosilicate Glass Bottles, with screw caps.

## 8. Reagents and Materials

8.1 *Phenolphthalein Solution*—Dissolve 0.5 g of phenolphthalein in methanol or ethanol and dilute to 100 mL.

8.2 *Sodium Hydroxide (NaOH)*, 0.02 N in water.

8.3 *Sulfuric Acid (H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>)*, 0.02 N in water.

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

8.5 *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.<sup>3</sup> 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.

## 9. Sampling

9.1 Sample the material in accordance with Practice **D1176**.

## 10. Procedure

10.1 *Acid Content:*

10.1.1 *Adjustment of pH*—Pipet 25.00 mL of deionized water into each of three 250 mL bottles. Add 3 drops of phenolphthalein solution to each. Titrate with 0.02 N sodium hydroxide to the first pink end point permanent for at least ~~15 seconds~~ 15 s. Do not record this volume of titrant. Repeat for each bottle.

10.1.2 *Determination of Sample Acidity:*

10.1.2.1 Add an amount of sample as indicated in **Table 1** to the nearest 0.1 g into the bottle of deionized water prepared in **10.1.1**.

10.1.2.2 Titrate each sample with 0.02 N sodium hydroxide to the first pink end point permanent for at least 15 s. This volume of titrant is used to calculate the percent acid.

NOTE 1—If the ester content is completely unknown, a trial titration beginning with 25 g of sample may be conducted to develop a preliminary estimate before the actual test titration is performed. If the trial suggests concentration of over 0.10 wt % (1000 ppm) then reduce the sample to 10 g and repeat. The second trial should provide enough information to direct an appropriate choice of the sample quantity to be used.

10.2 *Total Ester Content:*

10.2.1 *Hydrolysis of the Esters*—Pipet 25.00 mL of 0.02 N sodium hydroxide into each bottle used in **10.1.2**. Prepare a blank for each sample by pipetting 25.00 mL of 0.02 N sodium hydroxide into three clean, 250 mL bottles. Immerse the pairs of bottles in a boiling water bath for 1 h. (Tap water is suitable.) The weight of the bottles should prevent tipping. Leave caps slightly loose to prevent pressure buildup.

10.2.2 *Determination of the Ester Content*—Remove bottles from the bath and cool to room temperature. When cool, add 3 drops of phenolphthalein solution to each and titrate with 0.02 N H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> until disappearance of pink color.

**TABLE 1 Recommended Sample Sizes**

| Estimated Ester Content, wt % | Sample Size, g   | Sample Method  |
|-------------------------------|------------------|--|
| < 0.10                        | 25.0             | Weigh the sample to the nearest 0.1 g into the bottle of water prepared in <b>10.1.1</b> |
| 0.10 to 0.20                  | 10.0             |  |
| 0.20 to 0.50                  | 5.0 <sup>A</sup> |  |

<sup>A</sup> Report as ">0.50 wt %" if the titration determination exceeds 0.50 %.

<sup>3</sup> *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.