



Standard Practice for Conducting Mixed Flowing Gas (MFG) Environmental Tests¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This practice provides procedures for conducting environmental tests involving exposures to controlled quantities of corrosive gas mixtures.

1.2 This practice provides for the required equipment and methods for gas, temperature, and humidity control which enable tests to be conducted in a reproducible manner. Reproducibility is measured through the use of control coupons whose corrosion films are evaluated by mass gain, coulometry, or by various electron and X-ray beam analysis techniques. Reproducibility can also be measured by in situ corrosion rate monitors using electrical resistance or mass/frequency change methods.

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 become familiar with all hazards including those identified in the appropriate Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for this product/material as provided by the manufacturer, to establish appropriate safety and health practices, and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use. See 5.1.2.4.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:²

- B542** Terminology Relating to Electrical Contacts and Their Use
- B765** Guide for Selection of Porosity and Gross Defect Tests for Electrodeposits and Related Metallic Coatings
- B808** Test Method for Monitoring of Atmospheric Corrosion Chambers by Quartz Crystal Microbalances

¹ This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee B02 on Nonferrous Metals and Alloys and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee B02.11 on Electrical Contact Test Methods.

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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.

- B810** Test Method for Calibration of Atmospheric Corrosion Test Chambers by Change in Mass of Copper Coupons
- B825** Test Method for Coulometric Reduction of Surface Films on Metallic Test Samples
- B826** Test Method for Monitoring Atmospheric Corrosion Tests by Electrical Resistance Probes
- B845** Guide for Mixed Flowing Gas (MFG) Tests for Electrical Contacts
- D1193** Specification for Reagent Water
- D2912** Test Method for Oxidant Content of the Atmosphere (Neutral Ki) (Withdrawn 1990)³
- D2914** Test Methods for Sulfur Dioxide Content of the Atmosphere (West-Gaeke Method)
- D3449** Test Method for Sulfur Dioxide in Workplace Atmospheres (Barium Perchlorate Method) (Withdrawn 1989)³
- D3464** Test Method for Average Velocity in a Duct Using a Thermal Anemometer
- D3609** Practice for Calibration Techniques Using Permeation Tubes
- D3824** Test Methods for Continuous Measurement of Oxides of Nitrogen in the Ambient or Workplace Atmosphere by the Chemiluminescent Method
- D4230** Test Method of Measuring Humidity with Cooled-Surface Condensation (Dew-Point) Hygrometer
- E902** Practice for Checking the Operating Characteristics of X-Ray Photoelectron Spectrometers (Withdrawn 2011)³
- G91** Practice for Monitoring Atmospheric SO₂ Deposition Rate for Atmospheric Corrosivity Evaluation

3. Terminology

3.1 Definitions relating to electrical contacts are in accordance with Terminology **B542**.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 Mixed flowing gas (MFG) tests are used to simulate or amplify exposure to environmental conditions which electrical contacts or connectors can be expected to experience in various application environments (**1, 2**).⁴

³ The last approved version of this historical standard is referenced on www.astm.org.

⁴ The boldface numbers in parentheses refer to the list of references at the end of this standard.

4.2 Test samples which have been exposed to MFG tests have ranged from bare metal surfaces, to electrical connectors, and to complete assemblies.

4.3 The specific test conditions are usually chosen so as to simulate, in the test laboratory, the effects of certain representative field environments or environmental severity levels on standard metallic surfaces, such as copper and silver coupons or porous gold platings (1, 2).

4.4 Because MFG tests are simulations, both the test conditions and the degradation reactions (chemical reaction rate, composition of reaction products, etc.) may not always resemble those found in the service environment of the product being tested in the MFG test. A guide to the selection of simulation conditions suitable for a variety of environments is found in Guide B845.

4.5 The MFG exposures are generally used in conjunction with procedures which evaluate contact or connector electrical performance such as measurement of electrical contact resistance before and after MFG exposure.

4.6 The MFG tests are useful for connector systems whose contact surfaces are plated or clad with gold or other precious metal finishes. For such surfaces, environmentally produced failures are often due to high resistance or intermittences caused by the formation of insulating contamination in the contact region. This contamination, in the form of films and hard particles, is generally the result of pore corrosion and corrosion product migration or tarnish creepage from pores in the precious metal coating and from unplated base metal boundaries, if present.

4.7 The MFG exposures can be used to evaluate novel electrical contact metallization for susceptibility to degradation due to environmental exposure to the test corrosive gases.

4.8 The MFG exposures can be used to evaluate the shielding capability of connector housings which may act as a barrier to the ingress of corrosive gases.

4.9 The MFG exposures can be used to evaluate the susceptibility of other connector materials such as plastic housings to degradation from the test corrosive gases.

4.10 The MFG tests are not normally used as porosity tests. For a guide to porosity testing, see Guide B765.

4.11 The MFG tests are generally not applicable where the failure mechanism is other than pollutant gas corrosion such as in tin-coated separable contacts.

5. Apparatus

5.1 Apparatus required to conduct MFG tests are divided into four major categories, corrosion test chamber, gas supply system, chamber monitoring system, and chamber operating system.

5.1.1 Corrosion Test Chamber:

5.1.1.1 The chamber shall consist of an enclosure made of nonreactive, low-absorbing, nonmetallic materials contained within a cabinet or oven capable of maintaining the temperature to a maximum tolerance of $\pm 1^\circ\text{C}$ with a preferred tolerance held to $\pm 0.5^\circ\text{C}$ within the usable chamber working

space accordance with 7.3, with a means to introduce and exhaust gases from the chamber.

5.1.1.2 The chamber isolates the reactive gases from the external environment. Chamber materials that are not low-absorbing can affect test conditions by absorbing or emitting reactive gases, leading to control and reproducibility problems. The chamber construction shall be such that the leak rate is less than 3 % of the volume exchange rate.

5.1.1.3 The chamber shall have provision for maintaining uniformity of the average gas flow velocity within $\pm 20\%$ of a specified value or of the chamber average when the chamber is empty. For chambers with a dimension of more than 0.5 m, measurement points shall be in accordance with Test Method B810. For chambers with all dimensions of less than 0.5 m, a minimum of five points shall be measured at locations in the plane of sample exposure (perpendicular to the expected flow direction) that are equidistant from each other and the walls of the chamber. After all five or more data values are recorded, all measurements shall be repeated a second time. After the two sets of measurements are recorded, a third complete set shall be recorded. The arithmetic average of the 15 or more measurements shall be the chamber average. See 7.5 and 7.6.8. If a hot wire anemometer is used for gas velocity measurements, it shall be made in accordance with Test Method D3464, with the exception that sample sites shall be in accordance with Test Method B810.

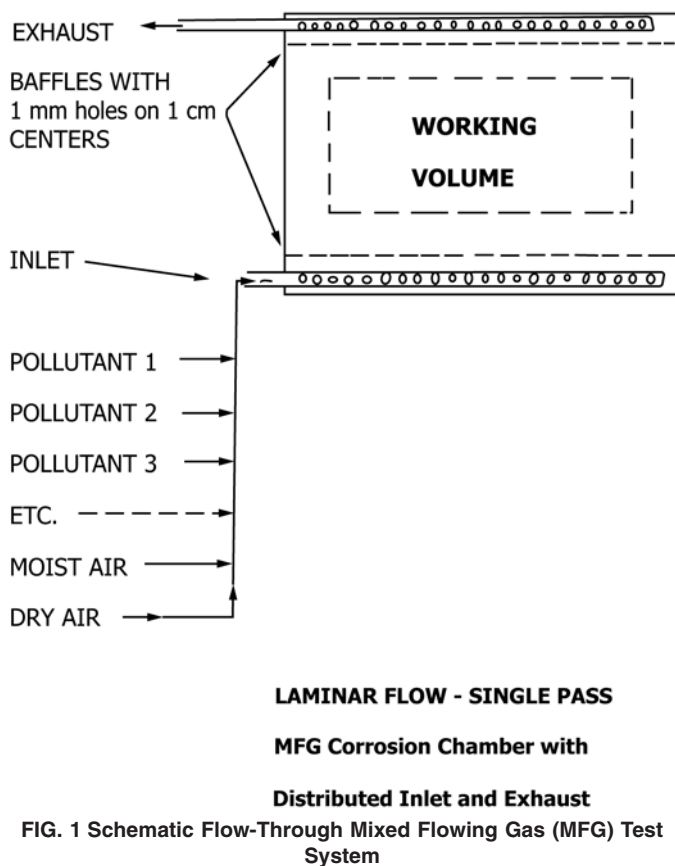
5.1.1.4 A sample access port is desirable. This should be designed such that control coupons can be removed or replaced without interrupting the flow of gases. Corrosion test chamber corrosion rates have been shown to be a function of the presence or absence of light (3, 4). Provision for controlling the test illumination level in accordance with a test specification shall be made.

5.1.1.5 Examples of test chamber systems are diagrammed in Figs. 1-3. They are not to be considered exclusive examples.

5.1.2 Gas Supply System:

5.1.2.1 *Description and Requirements*—The gas supply system consists of five main parts: a source of clean, dry, filtered air; a humidity source; corrosive gas source(s); gas delivery system; and corrosive gas concentration monitoring system(s). Total supply capacity must be such as to meet requirements for control of gas concentrations. The minimum number of volume changes is determined by the requirement that the concentration of corrosive gases be maintained within $\pm 15\%$ between gas inlet and outlet. This is verified by measurement of the gas concentrations near the gas inlet upstream of the usable chamber working volume and comparing with gas concentrations measured downstream of the usable chamber working volume just prior to the chamber exhaust; these values shall be within $\pm 15\%$ (see 7.6). Alternative methods of demonstrating compliance with the maximum allowable concentration gradient are acceptable. Normally, a conditioned chamber equilibrates within several hours after sample loading and start of the corrosive gas supply. Times longer than 2 h shall be reported in the test report; see Section 8. A guide to estimating supply requirements is provided in Appendix X1.

NOTE 1—Guidance: when inlet to outlet concentrations vary by more than $\pm 15\%$, it usually indicates an overloaded chamber.



(PEL). However, concentrations in the compressed gas cylinders or permeation devices are often above the PEL, and may exceed the immediately dangerous to life and health level (IDLH). This practice does not address safety issues associated with MFG testing.)

5.1.2.5 *Gas Delivery System*—The gas delivery system is comprised of three main parts: gas supply lines, gas control valves and flow controllers,⁶ and a mixing chamber. The gas delivery system shall be capable of delivering gases at the required concentrations and rates within the test chamber.

(1) All materials used for the gas transport system must not interact with the gases to the extent that chamber gas concentrations are affected.

(2) Gases, make-up air, and water vapor must be thoroughly mixed before gas delivery to the samples under test in the chambers. Care must be taken to ensure absence of aerosol formation in the mixing chamber whereby gases are consumed in the formation of particulates which may interfere with gas concentration control and may introduce corrosion processes which are not representative of gaseous corrosion mechanisms. Aerosol formation may be detected by the presence of a visible film or deposit on the interior surface of the gas system where the gases are mixed.

(3) Any fogging of the tubing walls or mixing chamber walls can be taken to be an indication of a loss of corrosive gases from the atmosphere. Final mixing of the specified gases should occur inside a separate area of, or as close as possible to, the test chamber so as to ensure thermal equilibration with the test chamber.

(4) Flow measurement capability is required at the inlet of the chamber and also at the exhaust of negative pressure chambers to ensure the absence of uncalibrated gas streams.

5.1.2.6 *Corrosive Gas Concentration Monitoring System*—Standard measurement systems for very low level gas concentrations are listed in Table 1, which provides for gases in common use in present mixed flowing gas systems, for testing electrical contact performance.

(1) Each instrument must be characterized for interference with the gases specified, both individually and mixed.

(2) Depending on the exact equipment set used, it may not be possible to accurately measure the concentration of some gases, such as chlorine, in combination with any of the other gases.

(3) The analytic instruments shall be maintained and calibrated electronically in accordance with the manufacturers' recommendations. Standard gas sources shall also be calibrated in accordance with the manufacturers' specifications, or in accordance with Practice D3609. Gas concentration analyzers shall be calibrated to standard gas sources in accordance with the manufacturers' recommendations. They shall be calibrated before and after each test and whenever the indicated concentration changes exceed the allowed variation in the test specification.

(4) Control of the temperature and humidity within the test chamber itself is part of the chamber monitoring system which is described in 5.1.3

5.1.2.2 *Clean, Dry, Filtered Air Source*—Gases other than oxygen and nitrogen that are present in the dry air source shall be less than or equal to those defined by OSHA Class D limits with the following additional constraint. Gases other than nitrogen, oxygen, carbon dioxide, noble gases, methane, nitrous oxide, and hydrogen shall be less than 0.005 (ppm) by volume total and shall be High Efficiency Particulate Arrestants (HEPA) filtered.

5.1.2.3 *Humidity Source*—The humidity source shall use distilled or deionized water, Specification D1193, Type 1 or better, and shall introduce no extraneous material. The humidity source shall be maintained equivalent to Specification D1193 Type II or better, with the exception that electrical resistivity shall be maintained equivalent to Specification D1193 Type IV. The time averaged value of humidity shall be within $\pm 1\%$ relative humidity of the specified value with absolute variations no greater than $\pm 3\%$ relative humidity from the specified value.

5.1.2.4 *Corrosive Gas Sources*—Corrosive (test) gases, such as nitrogen dioxide, hydrogen sulfide, chlorine, sulfur dioxide, etc. shall be of chemically pure⁵ grade or better. Such gases are frequently supplied in dry carrier gas such as nitrogen or air. (**Warning**—This practice involves the use of hazardous materials, procedures, and equipment. The gas concentrations in the test chamber may be within permissible exposure limits

⁵ Chemically Pure and Pre-Purified are designations of Matheson Gas Co., East Rutherford, NJ, for specific grades of purity of gas. Other vendors such as AIRCO have equivalent gas purities available sold under different terminology.

⁶ Mass flow controllers are recommended for best results.