



Standard Test Method for Graphite Furnace Atomic Absorption Spectrometric Determination of Lead and Cadmium Extracted from Ceramic Foodware¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This test method covers procedures for using graphite furnace atomic absorption spectroscopy (GFAAS) to quantitatively determine lead and cadmium extracted by acetic acid at room temperature from the food-contact surface of foodware. The method is applicable to food-contact surfaces composed of silicate-based materials (earthenware, glazed ceramicware, decorated ceramicware, decorated glass, and lead crystal glass) and is capable of determining lead concentrations greater than 0.005 to 0.020 $\mu\text{g/mL}$ and cadmium concentrations greater than 0.0005 to 0.002 $\mu\text{g/mL}$, depending on instrument design.

1.2 This test method also describes quality control procedures to check for contamination and matrix interference during GFAAS analyses and a specific sequence of analytical measurements that demonstrates proper instrument operation during the time period in which sample solutions are analyzed.

1.3 Cleaning and other contamination control procedures are described in this test method. Users may modify contamination control procedures provided that the modifications produce acceptable results and are used for both sample and quality control analyses.

1.4 The values stated in SI (metric) units are to be regarded as the standard. The values given in parentheses are for information only.

1.5 *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.*

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee C21 on Ceramic Whitewares and Related Products and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee C21.03 on Methods for Whitewares and Environmental Concerns.

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2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards*:²

C738 Test Method for Lead and Cadmium Extracted from Glazed Ceramic Surfaces

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.1.1 *calibration solutions*—4 % acetic acid solutions containing known amounts of lead or cadmium which are used to calibrate the instrument.

3.1.2 *characteristic mass* (m_0)—mass (picograms, pg) of lead or cadmium that produces instrument response (peak area) of 0.0044 integrated absorbance (absorbance-seconds, A-s). Characteristic mass is a measure of instrument sensitivity and is a function of instrument design, operating conditions, and analyte-matrix-graphite interactions. Characteristic mass is calculated from the volume of solution in the furnace and the slope of the calibration curve or the concentration that gives an instrument response in the middle of the working range (that is, approximately 0.100 or 0.200 A-s). Characteristic mass is compared to manufacturer specifications to verify that the instrument is optimized.

3.1.3 *check solutions*—4 % acetic acid solutions containing known amounts of lead or cadmium which are analyzed in the same time period and subjected to the same analytical conditions and calibration curve as sample solutions. Check solutions are analyzed to verify that carry-over did not occur and the instrument was operating correctly during the time period in which sample solutions were analyzed. Portions of calibration solutions analyzed as unknown test solutions (as opposed to analysis for calibrating the instrument) are used for this purpose.

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.

3.1.4 *dilution factor (DF)*—factor by which concentration in test solution is multiplied to obtain concentration in original leach solution. For test solutions prepared by mixing pipet-measured portions of leach solution and diluent, $DF = (V_1 + V_2)/V_1$ where V_1 and V_2 are volumes of leach solution and diluent in test solution, respectively. For test solutions prepared by mixing weighed portions of leach solution (gravimetric dilution), $DF = W_T/W_1$ where: W_1 is the weight of leach solution in test solution and W_T is the total weight of leach solution and diluent in the test solution.

3.1.5 *fortified leach solution*—a portion of leach solution to which a known amount of lead or cadmium is added. A fortified leach solution is analyzed to calculate percent recovery and monitor matrix interference. Stock, intermediate, and calibration solutions are used to fortify leach solutions.

3.1.6 *gravimetric dilution*—practice of quantitatively preparing dilute solutions from more concentrated ones by combining known weights of diluent and solution of known concentration. Gravimetric dilution using contamination-free, disposable plasticware is recommended whenever possible because glass volumetric flasks require time-consuming, acid-cleaning procedures to eliminate contamination. Gravimetric dilution may be used when densities and major components of the diluent and concentrated solution are the same (that is, both solutions contain 4 % acetic acid). Volumetric flasks must be used when the densities are different (that is, as when diluent contains 4 % acetic acid and stock standards contain 2 % nitric acid). Gravimetric dilution is accomplished as follows: weigh necessary amount (≥ 1.0000 g) of solution with known concentration to nearest 0.0001 g in a tared, plastic container. Add 4 % acetic acid so that weight of final solution provides required concentration. Calculate concentration in final solution as:

$$C_2 = C_1 \times W_1/W_2 \quad (1)$$

where:

C_2 = concentration in diluted (final) solution, ng/mL;
 C_1 = concentration in initial solution, ng/mL;
 W_1 = weight of initial solution, g; and
 W_2 = weight of final solution, g.

3.1.7 *independent check solution*—4 % acetic acid solution containing a known amount of lead or cadmium which is from a starting material that is different from the starting material used to prepare calibration solutions. Starting materials with different lot numbers are acceptable, but starting materials from different manufacturers are preferable. The independent check solution is analyzed to verify that calibration solutions have been prepared correctly. An independent check solution must be used to verify calibration until such time that a reference material certified for lead and cadmium leaching becomes available.

3.1.8 *leach solution*—solution obtained by leaching a test vessel or method blank with 4 % acetic acid for 24 h.

3.1.9 *method blank*—a contamination-free laboratory beaker or dish that is analyzed by the entire method including preparation, leaching, and solution analysis.

3.1.10 *sample*—six test vessels of identical size, shape, color, and decorative pattern.

3.1.11 *sample concentration limit (SCL)*—a low concentration ($\mu\text{g/mL}$) that can be reliably measured in leach solutions. In this test method, the sample concentration limit is the concentration of lead or cadmium that produces 0.050 A-s. The value 0.050 A-s is chosen to establish the limit of this test method for two reasons; 0.050 A-s is ten times greater than the maximum response (0.005 A-s) typically expected from periodic, repeated analysis of a contamination-free, 0 ng/mL solution and thus guarantees that concentrations in sample solutions are significantly (ten times) greater than those in a true blank; and percent relative standard deviation of instrument response (relative variability as a result of instrument precision) is better for 0.050 A-s than for lower values. The sample concentration limit depends on the characteristic mass of the instrument and volume of solution deposited in the furnace; the numerical value of the limit increases as characteristic mass increases and as the volume of solution deposited in the furnace decreases.

3.1.12 *sample mass limit (SML)*—a low mass (μg) of extractable lead or cadmium that can be reliably measured by this method. The sample limit is the product of the concentration limit times the volume of leach solutions.

3.1.13 *subsample*—each of the six individual vessels which make up the sample.

3.1.14 *test solution*—solution deposited in the graphite furnace for analysis. Test solutions are prepared by diluting leach solutions with known amounts of 4 % acetic acid. Test solutions also include portions of undiluted leach, check, and independent check solutions deposited in the furnace.

3.1.15 *working range*—range of instrument response that may be described as a linear function of the mass of analyte. The linear range of graphite furnace peak area measurements is approximately 0.050 to 0.3500-0.400 A-s. The range of linear response depends on the element and operating conditions and must be verified by analyzing calibration solutions each time the instrument is used. The linear range of instrument response was chosen as the working range of this method because responses in the linear range are well below those at which roll-over adversely affects lead and cadmium instrument responses obtained using Zeeman background correction.

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 Lead and cadmium are extracted from the food-contact surface of test vessels by filling them with 4 % acetic acid to within 6 to 7 mm ($1/4$ in.) of overflowing and leaching them for 24 h at 20 to 24°C (68 to 75°F). Lead and cadmium are determined by GFAAS using a chemical modifier and instrumental background correction. Concentrations in leach solutions are calculated using a calibration curve and linear least squares regression.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 Toxic effects of lead and cadmium are well known and release of these elements from foodware is regulated by many countries. Regulatory decisions are based on results of 24-h leaching with acetic acid because results of this test method are precise and accurate and this test method is easy to use. Concentrations of lead and cadmium extracted by food may be

different from results of this method, however, because acidity, contact time, and temperature typical of consumer use are different from those of this test method.

5.2 This test method is intended for application only in contamination-free settings and should be performed by well-qualified technical personnel. It is recognized that it is not a practical or appropriate method to use in a nonlaboratory environment for quality assurance and control of the ceramic process. Users are advised to use Test Method C738 (flame AAS) for purposes of the latter.

6. Interferences

6.1 Nonspecific absorption and scattering of light as a result of concomitant species in leach solutions may produce erroneously high results. Instrumental background correction is used to compensate for this interference.

6.2 Concomitant elements in leach solutions alter the atomization process and thus degrade or enhance instrumental response. This problem, generally referred to as matrix interference, is controlled by diluting leach solutions and by using a chemical modifier and is monitored by calculating percent recovery from a fortified (spiked) portion of leach solution.

6.3 Contamination from laboratory glassware, supplies, and environmental particulate matter (dust) may cause erroneously high results. Contamination is minimized by keeping work areas and labware scrupulously clean, using plastic labware whenever possible, using acid-cleaning procedures when glass labware is required, and protecting samples and supplies from dust. Analysts must establish contamination control procedures before attempting sample analysis because correcting for lead and cadmium contamination that is sporadic (heterogeneous) by the practice of “blank subtraction” is not scientifically valid.

6.4 Spectral interferences due to direct line overlap are extremely rare when hollow cathode lamps are used and are not expected from leach solutions.

7. Apparatus

7.1 *Atomic Absorption Spectrometer*, capable of displaying and recording fast, transient signals, measuring peak area, and having sensitivity (m_0 based on peak area) less than or equal to 30-pg lead and 1.3-pg cadmium when wavelengths 283.3 and 228.8 nm are used for lead and cadmium determinations, respectively; equipped with light sources (hollow cathode or electrodeless discharge lamps) specific for lead and cadmium, instrumental background correction (deuterium arc, Zeeman, or pulsed techniques such as Smith-Hieftje), autosampler, and electrothermal atomizer (graphite furnace) with pyrolytically coated tubes and platforms. Use wavelengths of 283.3 and 228.8 nm for lead and cadmium, respectively. Record instrument response as peak area (A-s). Do not use peak height. Peak area compensates for small differences in peak shape an appearance time that occur in leach and calibration solutions.

7.2 *Gas Supply for Furnace*, high purity (99.99 %) argon.

7.3 *Cooling Water for Furnace*—Use device that controls temperature and recirculates coolant.

7.4 *Adjustable Macro- and Micropipettes*—Manually operated pipets with disposable, colorless, plastic tips and with capacity ranging from 10 μ L to 10 mL are acceptable. Motorized pipets capable of automatic dilution are preferred.

7.5 *Plastic Labware*—Use plastic or Teflon labware (graduated cylinders, beakers, stirrers, containers, pipet tips, autosampler cups) for all procedures except preparation of intermediate lead and cadmium solutions (8.7). Disposable labware that does not need precleaning is preferred.³ When precleaning is necessary to eliminate contamination, rinse plastic labware with 10 % (1+9) nitric acid followed by rinsing with copious quantities of reagent water. Air dry the ware in a dust-free environment.

7.6 *Glassware*—Use new volumetric flasks dedicated for use with only this method to prepare intermediate calibration solutions. Do not use glassware used for other laboratory operations because potential for contamination is too great. Do not use glass pipets. Wash new glassware with warm tap water and laboratory detergent⁴ followed by soaking over night in 10 % (1+9) nitric acid and rinsing with copious quantities of reagent water. Air dry in dust-free environment. Dedicated glassware may be reused after rinsing with copious quantities of reagent water and repeating the acid-cleaning procedure.

7.7 *Gloves, Powder-Free Vinyl*—Wear gloves when handling test vessels to prevent contamination.

7.8 *Polyethylene Bags, Self-Sealing*—Cover or wrap labware with new plastic bags of suitable size to prevent contamination from dust during drying and storage.

7.9 *Clean-Air Canopy*—Laminar flow canopy equipped with high-efficiency particulate filters is recommended because it makes contamination control easier and analyses faster.

Contamination can be controlled, however, without using a clean-air canopy if care is taken to prevent contamination from dust.

8. Reagents

8.1 *Purity of Reagents*—Reagent grade chemicals may be used in all tests provided that they are of sufficiently high purity to permit their use without lessening the accuracy of the determination. The high sensitivity of graphite furnace may require reagents of higher purity than reagent grade. At a minimum, all reagents must conform to the specifications of the Committee on Analytical Reagents of the American Chemical Society when such specifications are available.

8.2 *Reagent Water*—Ultrapure, deionized, resistance ≥ 18 megohm-cm.

³ The sole source of supply known to the committee at this time is Polypropylene centrifuge tubes with caps, 50-mL capacity (Item No. 2068, Becton Dickinson and Co., Franklin Lakes, NJ). If you are aware of alternative suppliers, please provide this information to ASTM Headquarters. Your comments will receive careful consideration at a meeting of the responsible technical committee, which you may attend.

⁴ The sole source of supply known to the committee at this time is Micro Cleaner, a trademark of International Products Corp., Burlington, NJ, (Catalogue No. 6731). If you are aware of alternative suppliers, please provide this information to ASTM Headquarters. Your comments will receive careful consideration at a meeting of the responsible technical committee, which you may attend.