

Standard Test Method for Water in Crude Oils by Coulometric Karl Fischer Titration¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D4928; 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 Department of Defense.

1. Scope*

1.1 This test method covers the determination of water in the range from 0.02 to 5.00 mass or volume % in crude oils. Mercaptan (RSH) and sulfide (S^- or H_2S) as sulfur are known to interfere with this test method, but at levels of less than 500 $\mu\text{g/g}$ [ppm(m)], the interference from these compounds is insignificant (see Section 6).

1.2 This test method can be used to determine water in the 0.005 to 0.02 mass % range, but the effects of the mercaptan and sulfide interference at these levels has not been determined. For the range 0.005 to 0.02 mass %, there is no precision or bias statement.

1.3 This test method is intended for use with standard commercially available coulometric Karl Fischer reagent.

1.4 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as standard. No other units of measurement are included in this standard.

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.* For specific warning statements, see Section 8.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:²

[D1193 Specification for Reagent Water](#)

[D4057 Practice for Manual Sampling of Petroleum and Petroleum Products \(API MPMS Chapter 8.1\)](#)

[D4177 Practice for Automatic Sampling of Petroleum and Petroleum Products \(API MPMS Chapter 8.2\)](#)

[D5854 Practice for Mixing and Handling of Liquid Samples of Petroleum and Petroleum Products \(API MPMS Chapter 8.3\)](#)

[E203 Test Method for Water Using Volumetric Karl Fischer Titration](#)

2.2 API Standards:³

[MPMS Chapter 8.1 Practice for Manual Sampling of Petroleum and Petroleum Products \(ASTM Practice D4057\)](#)

[MPMS Chapter 8.2 Practice for Automatic Sampling of Petroleum and Petroleum Products \(ASTM Practice D4177\)](#)

[MPMS Chapter 8.3 Practice for Mixing and Handling of Liquid Samples of Petroleum and Petroleum Products \(ASTM Practice D5854\)](#)

3. Terminology

3.1 The following terms are used with respect to sampling (see Section 9).

3.2 Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:

3.2.1 *aliquot, n*—a small portion of a larger sample which is analyzed and assumed to represent the whole sample.

3.2.2 *sample, n*—portion extracted from the contents of any pipe, tank, or other system, and intended to be representative of that system, placed in a primary sample container for analysis.

3.2.3 *test specimen, n*—the representative sample taken from the primary or intermediate sample (aliquot) container for analysis. The entire test specimen is used in the analysis.

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 After homogenizing the crude oil sample, a test specimen of that sample is injected into the titration cell of a Karl Fischer apparatus in which iodine for the Karl Fischer reaction is generated coulometrically at the anode. When all the water has been titrated, excess iodine is detected by an electrometric

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D02 on Petroleum Products, Liquid Fuels, and Lubricants and the API Committee on Petroleum Measurement and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D02.02/COMQ on Hydrocarbon Measurement for Custody Transfer (Joint ASTM-API).

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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.

³ Published as Manual of Petroleum Standards. Available from American Petroleum Institute (API), 1220 L. St., NW, Washington, DC 20005-4070, <http://www.api.org>.

*A Summary of Changes section appears at the end of this standard

endpoint detector and the titration is terminated. Based on the stoichiometry of the reaction, one mole of iodine reacts with one mole of water thus the quantity of water can be determined.

4.2 The precision of this test method is critically dependent on the effectiveness of the homogenization step. The acceptability of the mixing used to achieve a homogeneous sample is determined by the procedure given in Practice **D5854** (API *MPMS* Chapter 8.3). In addition, if the test method is performed on a volume basis, the precision of the test method is critically dependent on the accuracy and repeatability of the volume injected.

4.3 Two procedures are provided for the determination of water in crude oils. In one procedure, a weighed test specimen is injected into the titration cell and the mass % of water is determined. The other procedure provides for the direct determination of the volume % of water in the crude oil by measuring the volume of crude oil injected into the titration cell.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 The accurate analysis of a crude oil sample to determine the water content is important in the refining, purchase, sale, or transfer of crude oils.

6. Interferences

6.1 A number of substances and classes of compounds associated with condensation or oxidation-reduction reactions interfere in the determination of water by Karl Fischer. In crude oils, the most common interferences are mercaptans and sulfides (not total sulfur). At levels of less than 500 $\mu\text{g/g}$ [ppm(m)] (as sulfur), the interference from these compounds is insignificant. Most crude oils, including crude oils classified as “sour crude,” have mercaptan and sulfide levels of less than 500 $\mu\text{g/g}$ [ppm(m)] as sulfur. For more information on substances that interfere in the determination of water by Karl Fischer titration method, see Test Method **E203**.

6.2 The significance of the mercaptan and sulfide interference on the Karl Fischer titration for water levels in the 0.005 to 0.02 mass % range has not been determined experimentally. At these low water levels, however, the interference may be significant for mercaptan and sulfide levels of less than 500 $\mu\text{g/g}$ [ppm(m)] (as sulfur).

7. Apparatus

7.1 *Karl Fischer Apparatus*, using electrometric endpoint detector. The instrument must have anode and cathode reagents in separate compartments. Instructions for operation of Karl Fischer titration devices are provided by the manufacturer and not described herein.

7.2 *Mixer*, to homogenize the crude sample.

7.2.1 *Non-Aerating, High-Speed, Shear Mixer*—The mixer shall be capable of meeting the homogenization efficiency test described in Practice **D5854** (API *MPMS* Chapter 8.3). The sample size is limited to that suggested by the manufacturer’s specifications for the size of the mixer.

7.2.2 *Circulating Sample Mixer*—A device such as used with automatic crude oil sampling receivers, is acceptable providing it complies with the principles of Practice **D5854** (API *MPMS* Chapter 8.3).

7.3 *Syringes*—Test specimens are most easily added to the titration cell by means of accurate glass syringes with Luer Lok fittings and hypodermic needles of suitable length. The bores of the needles used should be kept as small as possible but large enough to avoid problems arising from back pressure and blocking while injecting a test specimen. The syringe size should be selected such that the test specimen is not less than half the total volume contained by the syringe, the needle should be long enough to permit the injection of the test specimen into the fluid, below the surface of the fluid in the titration cell.

7.3.1 *Syringes for Gravimetric Determination*—For gravimetric determination, any type of syringe that does not leak is appropriate. Syringe should have physical dimensions to fit on the balance appropriately.

7.3.2 *Syringe for Volumetric Determination*—For volumetric determination a certified syringe capable of delivering the volumetric quantity with an accuracy 0.5% of the contained volume is required.

7.4 *Balance for Mass Determination*—Any analytical balance with an accuracy and resolution of 0.1 mg, and capable of weighing up to 100 g can be used.

7.4.1 The balance for determining the weight of the test specimen injected into the titration cell shall be calibrated.

NOTE 1—The use of balances on structures that are in motion may not be appropriate.

7.5 *Titration Cell*—Sunlight can cause disassociation of the iodine in the Karl Fischer reagent, resulting in false results. A titration cell made of opaque material may reduce this effect.

8. Reagents and Materials

8.1 *Purity of Reagents*—Chemicals of reagent grade or higher purity 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.⁴ 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 as defined by Type IV of Specification **D1193**.

8.3 *Xylene*—Reagent grade. Less than 0.05 % water. (**Warning**—Flammable. Vapor harmful.)

⁴ *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.