



Designation: E411 – 17a

Standard Test Method for Trace Quantities of Carbonyl Compounds with 2,4-Dinitrophenylhydrazine¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation E411; 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 determination of total carbonyl in the range from 0.5 to 50 μg calculated as CO.

1.2 This test method is intended to be general and does not include steps for sample preparation.

1.3 Acetals that hydrolyze under the conditions of the test are also determined.

1.4 Carbonyl derivatives such as acetals and imines that are easily hydrolyzed may be determined by an alternative procedure.

1.5 The developed color is not stable and must be measured within a specified period.

NOTE 1—Other test methods for the determination of traces of carbonyl compounds are given in Test Methods [D1089](#), [D1612](#), [D2119](#), and [D2191](#).

1.6 Review the current appropriate Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for detailed information concerning toxicity, first aid procedures, and safety precautions.

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

1.8 *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.* Specific hazards statements are given in Section 7 and Section 8.

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.*

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee [D16](#) on Aromatic, Industrial, Specialty and Related Chemicals and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee [D16.15](#) on Industrial and Specialty General Standards.

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2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards*:²

[D1089 Method of Test for Carbonyl Content of Butadiene \(Withdrawn 1984\)](#)³

[D1193 Specification for Reagent Water](#)

[D1612 Test Method for Acetone in Methanol \(Withdrawn 2011\)](#)³

[D2119 Test Method for Aldehydes in Styrene Monomer](#)

[D2191 Test Method for Acetaldehyde Content of Vinyl Acetate](#)

[D6809 Guide for Quality Control and Quality Assurance Procedures for Aromatic Hydrocarbons and Related Materials](#)

[E60 Practice for Analysis of Metals, Ores, and Related Materials by Spectrophotometry](#)

[E180 Practice for Determining the Precision of ASTM Methods for Analysis and Testing of Industrial and Specialty Chemicals \(Withdrawn 2009\)](#)³

[E300 Practice for Sampling Industrial Chemicals](#)

3. Summary of Test Method

3.1 The sample containing traces of carbonyl compounds is reacted with an acidic solution of 2,4-dinitrophenylhydrazine to form the hydrazone which, upon reaction with potassium hydroxide, forms a wine-red color, presumably due to a resonating quinoidal ion. The intensity of the red color, which is a function of the carbonyl concentration, is determined photometrically and the amount of carbonyl is read directly from a previously prepared calibration curve. This test method is based upon the work of Lappin and Clark.⁴

4. Significance and Use

4.1 This test method is applicable to the determination of trace amounts of aldehydes and ketones in aqueous solutions and a wide variety of organic solvents.

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

⁴ Lappin, G. R., and Clark, L. C., *Analytical Chemistry*, Vol 23, 1951, p. 541.

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

5. Interferences

5.1 This test method has been found to be relatively free from interferences. It is necessary, however, to test a sample to ensure that it does not interfere.

5.2 Carbonyl compounds containing conjugated unsaturation interfere by absorbing at a different wavelength than other carbonyl compounds.

5.3 Acetals that are only partially hydrolyzed under the conditions of the test will interfere. A higher reaction temperature is required to effect complete hydrolysis.

5.4 Certain carbonyl compounds such as diisobutyl ketone have been found to undergo incomplete reactions and thus give low results. These compounds may be determined if a suitable calibration is made using the compound in question.

5.5 Because of the extreme sensitivity of this test method, it is necessary to perform the test in a room from which acetone or other carbonyl compound vapors are excluded.

6. Apparatus

6.1 *Spectrophotometer or Photometer*, capable of measuring light absorption at 480 nm and holding a 1-cm cell.

NOTE 2—If a filter photometer is used, a narrow band filter having its maximum transmission at approximately 480 nm should be used. A discussion of photometers and photometric practice is given in Practice E60.

6.2 *Absorption Cells*, 1-cm.

6.3 All glassware must be cleaned before use. Rinse thoroughly with water and finally with methanol. *Do not use acetone to dry the glassware.*

NOTE 3—The precision and bias reported in this test method were determined using chromic acid cleaning solution to clean the glassware. The effect on precision and bias of using other cleaning materials has not been determined.

7. Reagents

7.1 *Purity of Reagents*—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.⁵ 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.

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

7.3 *Methanol, Carbonyl-free*—To 4 L of methanol add 20 g of 2,4-dinitrophenylhydrazine and 2 mL of hydrochloric acid (HCl, sp gr 1.19). Reflux for 2 h and then distill using a 2 to 3-ft fractionating column. Discard the first 200 mL of distillate.

⁵ *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 *Analar 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.

Continue the distillation until approximately 75 % of the methanol has distilled over.

7.3.1 **Warning**—Do not allow the pot to begin to go dry because there is danger of a violent decomposition of the residue. (See 8.2.) If stored in a tightly capped bottle, the methanol will remain carbonyl-free indefinitely. Properly prepared methanol will have an absorbance of 0.08 or less when used as a blank (11.2 – 11.4).

7.4 *Potassium Hydroxide Solution* (100 g/L)—Dissolve 100 g of potassium hydroxide (KOH) in 200 mL of water. Cool and dilute to 1 L with methanol.

7.5 *2,4-Dinitrophenylhydrazine* (1 g/L)—Dissolve 0.10 g of 2,4-dinitrophenylhydrazine (**Warning**—See 8.2) in 50 mL of carbonyl-free methanol containing 4 mL of hydrochloric acid (HCl, sp gr 1.19) and dilute to 100 mL with water. This solution is unstable and must be discarded after two weeks.

8. Safety Hazards

8.1 **Warning**—The toxicity of 2,4-dinitrophenylhydrazine has not been established. For this reason, handle with customary care. Avoid ingestion and contact of the compound with the skin and eyes.

8.2 **Warning**—2,4-Dinitrophenylhydrazine is an explosive and may ignite violently in contact with an open flame or electrical spark. Handle with caution. Avoid all sources of heat.

9. Sampling

9.1 Special precautions may be necessary to ensure that the sample taken for analysis is representative of the whole. Refer to Practice E300 for a detailed discussion of sampling procedures.

10. Calibration

10.1 Add 50 mL of carbonyl-free methanol to a 100-mL glass stoppered volumetric flask. To the flask transfer an amount of the carbonyl compound being determined that will contain 25 mg of CO, weighing to the nearest 0.1 mg (see Note 4). Dilute the contents of the flask to the mark with carbonyl-free methanol and mix well (see Note 5). (See 5.5 and 6.3.)

NOTE 4—The correct weight may be calculated as follows:

$$W = 0.893 \times E \quad (1)$$

where:

W = weight, mg,
 E = equivalent weight of compound, and
 0.893 = derived as a solution to the equation: $W \times 28/E = 25$, where 28 is the molecular weight of CO, and 25 is milligrams of CO to be determined. Solve this equation for W . Thus: $W = 25 \times E/28$, which simplifies to $W = (25/28) \cdot E$. $25/28 = 0.893$.

NOTE 5—For most routine work a calibration based on 2-butanone is satisfactory. (See 5.4.)

10.2 Prepare a series of standards by transferring 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10-mL aliquots of this stock solution to respective 100-mL glass-stoppered volumetric flasks. Dilute the contents of each flask to the mark with carbonyl-free methanol and mix well.