



# Standard Guide for Field Filtration of Groundwater Samples<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>ε1</sup> NOTE—Editorial changes were made throughout in May 2012.

## 1. Scope

1.1 This guide covers methods for field filtration of groundwater samples collected from groundwater monitoring wells, excluding samples that contain non-aqueous phase liquids (either Dense Non-Aqueous Phase Liquids (DNAPLs) or Light Non-Aqueous Phase Liquids (LNAPLs)). Methods of field filtration described herein could also be applied to samples collected from wells used for other purposes. Laboratory filtration methods are not described in this guide.

1.2 This guide provides procedures available for field filtration of groundwater samples. The need for sample filtration for specific analytes should be defined prior to the sampling event and documented in the site-specific sampling and analysis plan in accordance with Guide D5903. The decision should be made on a parameter-specific basis with consideration of the data quality objectives of the sampling program, any applicable regulatory agency guidelines, and analytical method requirements.

1.3 This guide offers an organized collection of information or a series of options and does not recommend a specific course of action. This guide cannot replace education or experience and should be used in conjunction with professional judgment. Not all aspects of this guide may be applicable in all circumstances. This guide is not intended to represent or replace the standard of care by which the adequacy of a given professional service must be judged, nor should this guide be applied without consideration of the many unique aspects of a project. The word “Standard” in the title of this guide means only that the guide has been approved through the ASTM consensus process.

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 and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

<sup>1</sup> This guide is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D18 on Soil and Rock and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D18.21 on Groundwater and Vadose Zone Investigations.

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## 2. Referenced Documents

### 2.1 ASTM Standards:<sup>2</sup>

- D653 Terminology Relating to Soil, Rock, and Contained Fluids
- D5088 Practice for Decontamination of Field Equipment Used at Waste Sites
- D5092 Practice for Design and Installation of Ground Water Monitoring Wells
- D5903 Guide for Planning and Preparing for a Groundwater Sampling Event
- D6089 Guide for Documenting a Ground-Water Sampling Event
- F740 Definitions of Terms Relating to Filtration (Withdrawn 2002)<sup>3</sup>

## 3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions:* For definitions of common technical terms in this standard, refer to Terminology D653.

### 3.2 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.2.1 *filter, v*—to pass a fluid containing particles through a filter medium whereby particles are separated from the fluid. **F740**

3.2.2 *filter, n*—a device for carrying out filtration which consists of the combination of the filter medium and suitable hardware for constraining and supporting it in the path of the fluid. **F740**

3.2.3 *filter medium*—the permeable material used for a filter that separates particles from a fluid passing through it. **F740**

3.2.4 *filter preconditioning*—the process of preparing a filter medium for filtration

3.2.5 *filter system*—the combination of one or more filter with all the associated process hardware required for filtration. **F740**

<sup>2</sup> 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.

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

3.2.6 *filtrate*—the fluid that has passed through the filter. **F740**

3.2.7 *filtration*—the process by which particles are separated from a fluid by passing the fluid through a permeable material. **F740**

3.2.8 *filtered sample*—a groundwater sample which has passed through a filter medium.

3.2.8.1 *Discussion*—This type of sample may also be referred to as a “dissolved” sample. An unfiltered sample containing dissolved, sorbed, coprecipitated and all suspended particles may be referred to as a “total” sample.

3.2.9 *particle*—a small discrete mass of solid or liquid matter. **F740**

#### 4. Significance and Use

4.1 A properly designed, installed and developed groundwater monitoring well, constructed in accordance with Practice **D5092**, should facilitate collection of samples of groundwater that can be analyzed to determine both the physical and chemical properties of that sample. Samples collected from these wells that require analysis for dissolved constituents should be filtered in the field prior to chemical preservation and shipment to the laboratory for analysis.

#### 5. Purpose of Groundwater Sample Filtration

5.1 Groundwater samples may be filtered to separate a defined fraction of the sample for analysis.

#### 6. Timing of Groundwater Sample Filtration

6.1 Groundwater samples should be filtered immediately upon collection and prior to chemical preservation of the sample. **(1)**<sup>4</sup> Filtration should be completed in as short a time as possible while minimizing sample aeration, agitation, pressure changes, temperature changes and prolonged contact with ambient air.

NOTE 1—The pressure change that occurs when the sample is brought to the surface may cause changes in sample chemistry which include losses of dissolved gases and precipitation of dissolved constituents such as metals. When handling samples during filtration operations, additional turbulence and mixing of the sample with air can cause aeration and oxidation of dissolved ferrous to ferric iron. Ferric iron rapidly precipitates as amorphous iron hydroxide and can absorb other dissolved trace metals **(2)**.

#### 7. Groundwater Sample Filtration Procedures

7.1 *Preparation for Groundwater Sample Filtration*—The groundwater sample filtration process consists of three phases: selection of filtration method; selection and pretreatment of filter media; and groundwater sample filtration prior to transfer into the sample container.

7.1.1 *Filtration Method Selection Criteria*—A wide variety of methods are available for field filtration of groundwater samples. In general, filtration equipment can be divided into positive pressure filtration and vacuum (negative pressure) filtration methods, each with several different filtration medium

configurations. Groundwater samples undergo pressure changes as they are brought from the saturated zone (where groundwater is under pressure greater than atmospheric) to the surface (where it is under atmospheric pressure), resulting in changes in sample chemistry. Vacuum filtration methods further exacerbate pressure changes. For this reason, positive pressure filtration methods are preferred. **Table 1** presents equipment options available for positive pressure and vacuum filtration of groundwater samples. **Fig. 1** presents examples of common filter characteristics and applications.

7.1.2 When selecting a filtration method, the following criteria should be evaluated on a site-by-site basis:

7.1.2.1 Effect on sample integrity considering the potential for the following to occur:

7.1.2.2 Sample aeration (**Note 2**),

7.1.2.3 Sample agitation (**Note 2**),

NOTE 2—Sample aeration and increased agitation may result in sample chemical alteration.

7.1.2.4 Change in partial pressure of sample constituents resulting from application of negative pressure to the sample during filtration,

7.1.2.5 Sorptive losses of components from the sample onto the filter medium or components of the filtration equipment (for example, flasks, filter holders etc.); and

7.1.2.6 Leaching of components from the filter medium or components of the filtration equipment into the sample.

7.1.2.7 Volume of sample to be filtered;

7.1.2.8 Chemical compatibility of filter medium with groundwater sample chemistry;

7.1.2.9 Anticipated amount of suspended solids and the attendant effects of particulate loading (reduction in effective filter pore size);

7.1.2.10 Time required to filter samples (**Note 3**);

NOTE 3—Short filtration times are recommended to minimize the time available for chemical changes to occur in the sample.

7.1.2.11 Ease of use;

7.1.2.12 Availability of an appropriate medium in the desired filter pore size

7.1.2.13 Filter surface area;

7.1.2.14 Use of disposable versus non-disposable equipment;

7.1.2.15 Ease of cleaning equipment if not disposable;

7.1.2.16 Potential for sample bias associated with ambient air contact during sample filtration; and

7.1.2.17 Cost, evaluating the costs associated with: equipment purchase price, expendable supplies and their disposal,

**TABLE 1 Examples of Equipment Options for Positive and Negative Pressure Filtration of Groundwater Samples**

<p><i>Positive Pressure Filtration Equipment:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-line capsules                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>attached directly to a pumping device discharge hose</li> <li>attached to a pressurized transfer vessel</li> <li>attached to a pressurized bailer</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Free-standing disk filter holders</li> <li>• Syringe filters</li> <li>• Zero headspace extraction vessels</li> </ul> <p><i>Negative Pressure Filtration Equipment:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Glass funnel support assembly</li> </ul>
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<sup>4</sup> The boldface numbers given in parentheses refer to a list of references at the end of the text.