



Standard Test Method for Concentration of Formaldehyde Solutions¹

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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 the formaldehyde content of commercially available formaldehyde solutions ranging in concentration from 36 to 55 weight %.

1.2 For purposes of determining conformance of an observed value or a calculated value using this test method to relevant specifications, test result(s) shall be rounded off “to the nearest unit” in the last right-hand digit used in expressing the specification limit, in accordance with the rounding-off method of Practice E 29.

1.3 For hazard information and guidance, see the supplier’s Material Safety Data Sheet.

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.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*

D 1193 Specification for Reagent Water²

E 29 Practice for Using Significant Digits in Test Data to Determine Conformance with Specifications³

3. Summary of Test Method

3.1 The specimen is reacted with an excess of sodium sulfite solution and the resulting sodium hydroxide is titrated with sulfuric acid using thymolphthalein indicator.

3.2 The sample should be essentially neutral; 0.1 % acidity (as formic acid) is equivalent to 0.065 % formaldehyde.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 This test method provides a measurement of formaldehyde content (assay) of formaldehyde solutions. The results of these measurements can be used for specification acceptance.

5. Apparatus

5.1 *Buret*, calibrated, 100-mL, with a 50 or 75-mL reservoir on top of a lower portion calibrated in 0.1-mL divisions. A TFE-fluorocarbon resin stopcock is suitable for this purpose.

5.2 *Erlenmeyer Flask*, 500-mL capacity.

5.3 *Vials*, specimen, short, style, 1 to 1½-dram (4 to 6-mL) capacity.

6. Reagents

6.1 *Purity of Reagents*—Reagent grade chemicals 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.

6.2 *Purity of Water*—Unless otherwise indicated, references to water shall be understood to mean reagent water conforming to Type IV of Specification D 1193.

6.3 *Sodium Sulfite Solution* (125 g/L)—Dissolve 125 g of anhydrous sodium sulfite (Na_2SO_3) in water and dilute to 1 L.

NOTE 1—Sodium sulfite gradually oxidizes to sodium sulfate on exposure to air and therefore should be kept in a tightly closed container. For best results freshly prepared reagent should be used.

6.4 *Sulfuric Acid* (0.5 N)—Prepare and standardize 0.5 N sulfuric acid (H_2SO_4) against 0.5 N sodium hydroxide (NaOH) solution which has been standardized against potassium acid phthalate to a thymolphthalein end point.

6.5 *Thymolphthalein Indicator* (0.1 % Alcohol Solution)—Dissolve 1.0 g of thymolphthalein in 100 mL of methanol, ethanol, or isopropanol and dilute to 1 L with additional alcohol.

7. Procedure

7.1 Add 100 mL of Na_2SO_3 solution to a sufficient number of 500-mL Erlenmeyer flasks to make all blank and specimen

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D01 on Paint and Related Coatings, Materials, and Applications and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D01.35 on Solvents, Plasticizers, and Chemical Intermediates.

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² *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 11.01.

³ *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 14.02.

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 *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.

