



Standard Test Method for Nitriles in Aqueous Solution by Gas-Liquid Chromatography¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D 3371; 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 nitriles that can be separated and detected quantitatively at a limit of approximately 1 mg/L by aqueous injection on a selected gas-liquid chromatographic column.

1.2 This test method utilizes the procedures and precautions as described in Practice D 2908.

1.3 *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 1129 Terminology Relating to Water²

D 2908 Practice for Measuring Volatile Organic Matter in Water by Aqueous-Injection Gas Chromatography³

3. Terminology

3.1 **Definitions**—For definitions of terms used in this test method, refer to Terminology D 1129.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 Nitriles at concentrations of a few milligrams per litre are potentially toxic to aquatic life. Nitriles in waste water discharges should be detected and controlled.

4.2 Gas-liquid chromatography (GLC) can detect and determine mixtures of nitriles at levels where wet chemical procedures are not applicable.

5. Special Comments

5.1 It is recommended that samples that cannot be analyzed immediately, be quick frozen for preservation. Samples should be neutralized to pH 7 at the time of collection to minimize hydrolysis of the nitrile groups.

5.2 Samples of nitriles to be employed as standards should

be considered to be unstable. Storage in a freezer is recommended.

5.3 It is not always practical to translate operating conditions directly from one GLC instrument to another. An operator should optimize his instrument to a particular procedure, for example, injection and detection temperature, flow rates, etc.

6. Typical Chromatograms

6.1 The following instrument parameters were used to obtain the typical chromatograms (See Fig. 1 and Fig. 2).

6.1.1 **Column**— $\frac{1}{8}$ in. outside diameter stainless steel, 8 ft long packed with a porous styrene divinylbenzene polymer.

NOTE 1—"Chromosorb" 101, 50/60 mesh, was used for the typical chromatograms.

6.1.2 **Detector**, flame ionization.

6.1.3 **Temperatures:**

Injection port	240°C
Detector	240°C
Oven, isothermal	130°C
Oven, programmed at 10°C/min	110°C to max of 200°C

6.1.4 **Carrier Gas**, helium at 25 mL/min.

6.1.5 **Sample Size:**

isothermal 5 µL

programmed 3 µL

6.1.6 **Recorder**, $\frac{3}{4}$ in./min chart speed and 1 mV full-scale response.

6.2 **Kovats Index Values:**⁴

Compounds	Relative Retention	Kovats Index
Acetonitrile	1.00	470
Acrylonitrile	1.25	512
Propionitrile	1.67	570
Methoxyacetonitrile	2.21	635 ⁵
Butyronitrile	2.50	678
Isovaleronitrile	3.04	740 ⁵
Valeronitrile	3.38	783
Hexanenitrile	4.25	905 ⁵
Benzonitrile	5.42	990

7. Precision and Bias

7.1 An interlaboratory study was conducted in 1972 with participation from four laboratories and seven operators.

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D-19 on Water and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D 19.06 on Methods for Analysis for Organic Substances in Water.

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

³ *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 11.02.

⁴ *Gas Chromatographic Data Compilation*, ASTM AMD25A, 1967.

⁵ Kovats index values estimated from relative retention data because standard compound was not readily available.