



Standard Test Method for Total Mercury in Coal by the Oxygen Bomb Combustion/Atomic Absorption Method¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This test method describes a procedure for the analysis of total mercury in coal.

1.2 *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 precautionary statements are given in 8.3.1.

1.3 The values stated in SI units (IEEE/ASTM SI 10) shall be regarded as the standard.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:

D 1193 Specification for Reagent Water²

D 2013 Method of Preparing Coal Samples for Analysis³

D 3173 Test Method for Moisture in the Analysis Sample of Coal and Coke³

D 3180 Practice for Calculating Coal and Coke Analyses from As-Determined to Different Bases³

D 5142 Test Methods for the Proximate Analysis of the Analysis Sample of Coal and Coke by Instrumental Procedures³

E 144 Practice for Safe Use of Oxygen Combustion Bombs⁴

IEEE/ASTM SI 10 Standard for Use of International System of Units (SI): The Modern Metric System⁴

3. Summary of Test Method

3.1 Total mercury is determined in this test method by combusting a weighed sample in an oxygen bomb with dilute nitric acid absorbing the mercury vapors. The bomb is rinsed into a reduction vessel with dilute nitric acid, and the mercury is determined by the flameless cold vapor atomic absorption technique.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 The possible emission of mercury that may be found in coal from coal combustion is an environmental concern.

4.2 When test portions are burned according to this procedure, the total mercury is quantitatively retained and is representative of concentrations in the whole coal.

5. Apparatus

5.1 *Combustion Bomb*—The combustion bomb shall be constructed of materials that are not affected by the combustion process or products. The bomb must be designed so that all liquid combustion products can be completely recovered by washing the inner surfaces. There must be no gas leakage during the test. The bomb must be capable of withstanding a hydrostatic pressure test to gage pressure of 20 MPa (approximately 3000 psig) at room temperature without stressing any of the parts beyond the elastic limit.

5.2 *Water Bath*—A container shall be large enough to hold the combustion bomb, and enough cooling water shall be used to dissipate the heat generated during the combustion process. The container should be designed to allow a constant flow of water around the combustion bomb.

5.3 *Combustion Crucibles*—Samples shall be burned in an open crucible of platinum, quartz, or acceptable base-metal alloy.

5.4 *Firing Wire*, 100 mm of either No. 34 B&S (0.160-mm) nickel-chromium alloy, No. 34 B&S iron, or No. 38 B&S (0.101-mm) gage platinum wire.

5.5 *Firing Circuit*—A 6- to 16-V alternating or direct current is required for ignition purposes with an ammeter or pilot light in the circuit to indicate when current is flowing. A stepdown transformer connected to an alternating current lighting circuit or batteries may be used. The ignition circuit switch shall be of the momentary double-contact type, normally open, except when held closed by the operator. The switch should be depressed only long enough to fire the charge.

5.6 *Analytical Balance*, with a sensitivity of 0.1 mg.

5.7 *Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometer*, with a flameless cold-vapor mercury analysis system comprised of either a

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

³ *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 05.06.

⁴ *Annual Book of ASTM Standards*, Vol 14.04.