



Designation: C1636 – 22

Standard Guide for Determination of Uranium-232 in Uranium Hexafluoride¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This guide covers the determination of ^{232}U in uranium hexafluoride by alpha spectrometry.

1.2 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as standard, except where the non-SI unit of molar, M, is used for the concentration of chemicals and reagents. The unit of electronvolt (eV) is outside the SI but its use with the SI is accepted by the International Committee for Weights and Measures (CIPM, Comité International des Poids et Mesures) and the U. S. National Institute of Science and Technology (NIST). No other units of measurement are included in this standard.

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

1.4 *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.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:²

- C787 Specification for Uranium Hexafluoride for Enrichment
- C859 Terminology Relating to Nuclear Materials
- C996 Specification for Uranium Hexafluoride Enriched to Less Than 5 % ^{235}U
- C1163 Practice for Mounting Actinides for Alpha Spectrometry Using Neodymium Fluoride
- C1284 Practice for Electrodeposition of the Actinides for

Alpha Spectrometry

- C1429 Test Method for Isotopic Analysis of Uranium Hexafluoride by Double-Standard Multi-Collector Gas Mass Spectrometer
 - C1474 Test Method for Analysis of Isotopic Composition of Uranium in Nuclear-Grade Fuel Material by Quadrupole Inductively Coupled Plasma-Mass Spectrometry
 - C1477 Test Method for Isotopic Abundance Analysis of Uranium Hexafluoride and Uranyl Nitrate Solutions by Multi-Collector, Inductively Coupled Plasma-Mass Spectrometry
 - C1625 Test Method for Uranium and Plutonium Concentrations and Isotopic Abundances by Thermal Ionization Mass Spectrometry
 - C1672 Test Method for Determination of Uranium or Plutonium Isotopic Composition or Concentration by the Total Evaporation Method Using a Thermal Ionization Mass Spectrometer
 - C1832 Test Method for Determination of Uranium Isotopic Composition by Modified Total Evaporation (MTE) Method Using Thermal Ionization Mass Spectrometer
 - D1193 Specification for Reagent Water
 - D3084 Practice for Alpha-Particle Spectrometry of Water
 - D3648 Practices for the Measurement of Radioactivity
- 2.2 *Other Standards:*
- DIN 25711 Determination of the ^{232}U isotopic content in uranium containing nuclear fuel solutions by α spectrometry³
 - ISO 21847-3 Nuclear fuel technology—Alpha spectrometry—Part 3: Determination of uranium-232 in uranium and its compounds⁴

3. Terminology

3.1 Except as otherwise defined herein, definitions of terms are as given in Terminology C859.

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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 Available from Deutsches Institut für Normung e.V.(DIN), Am DIN-Platz, Burggrafenstrasse 6, 10787 Berlin, Germany, <http://www.din.de>.

⁴ Available from American National Standards Institute (ANSI), 25 W. 43rd St., 4th Floor, New York, NY 10036, <http://www.ansi.org>.

3.2 Definitions:

3.2.1 *region-of-interest (ROI)*—the channels, or region, in the alpha spectra in which the counts due to a specific radioisotope appear on a functioning calibrated alpha spectrometry system.

3.2.2 *Reagent blank*—DI water processed the same as the samples; used in the determination of the minimum detectable activity.

4. Summary of Guide

4.1 An aliquot of hydrolyzed uranium hexafluoride equivalent to 60 µg of uranium is converted to a nitric acid system and the uranium is extracted onto a solid phase extraction column. Uranium progeny isotopes are rinsed from the column and the uranium is then selectively eluted. The uranium is reduced and then coprecipitated with neodymium fluoride. Practice C1163 provides further information on the use of neodymium fluoride to prepare actinide mounts for alpha spectrometry. The sample is then counted by alpha spectrometry, and the ^{232}U is calculated based on the observed activities of the uranium isotopes in the alpha spectra.

4.2 While this guide does not present details on electrodeposition as an alternative to neodymium fluoride precipitation for the preparation of a mount for alpha spectrometry, Practice C1284 does present details on that option.

4.3 Alternative separation chemistry approaches may be found in the literature. It is the responsibility of the user of such alternative separation approaches to validate their effectiveness, especially the removal of potentially interfering thorium isotopes (6.1).

5. Significance and Use

5.1 The guide is applicable to the analysis of materials to demonstrate compliance with the specifications set forth in Specifications C787 and C996. Some other specifications may be expressed in terms of mass of ^{232}U per mass of only ^{238}U (see ISO 21847–3:2007).

6. Interferences

6.1 Incomplete removal of ^{228}Th and/or the ingrowth (3 % of the ^{232}U value/month) from ^{228}Th after the U/Th separation could possibly interfere with the ^{232}U determination. Method DIN 25711 addresses the potential capability for this method to eliminate this potential interference.

6.2 Since only the relative amount of ^{232}U , relative to total uranium, is being determined in this guide, there is no impact to chemical loss in the separation or sample mounting chemistry. Therefore, unlike most alpha spectrometry methods, no yield tracer is necessary or useful.

6.3 The alpha emission energies of ^{235}U and ^{236}U are relatively close. Thus there is the potential for overlap of counts from one isotope into the ROI of the other. Where the alpha spectrometry system (7.1) provides, spectral deconvolution algorithms may be used in the analysis of the spectra. Such deconvolution may allow for minimization of any possible bias in the reported results. However, it should be noted that these two isotopes typically account for a relatively

small amount of the overall uranium mass. Any bias between the two should result in a relatively small overall bias in the reported ^{232}U result.

7. Apparatus

7.1 *Alpha spectrometry system*, see Practices D3084 and D3648 for a description of the apparatus.

7.1.1 A ROI for each uranium isotope (^{232}U , ^{234}U , ^{235}U , ^{236}U , and ^{238}U) will need to be defined for the alpha spectrometry system being used. Based on these defined ROIs the fractional abundance of alpha decays within the energy range of the ROI for each isotope (AB_i in 12.1) must be determined.

7.2 *Ion exchange columns*, able to hold a 10 mL resin bed and 15 mL solution washes.

7.3 *Vacuum funnel*, polysulfone twist-lock with stainless steel screen for filter mounting.

8. Reagents and Materials

8.1 *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. Other grades of reagents 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.⁵

8.2 *Purity of Water*—Unless otherwise indicated, references to water shall be understood to mean reagent water as defined in Specification D1193.

8.3 *Ammonium oxalate (0.1M)*—Dissolve 14.2 g $(\text{NH}_4)_2\text{C}_2\text{O}_4 \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$ in approximately 500 mL water and dilute to 1 L.

8.4 *Ethanol*—Ethyl alcohol, absolute (200 proof), denatured.

8.5 *Hydrochloric acid (sp gr 1.19)*—Concentrated hydrochloric acid (HCl).

8.6 *Hydrochloric acid (9M)*—Add 750 mL concentrated HCl to 100 mL water and dilute to 1 L.

8.7 *Hydrochloric acid (1.5M)*—Add 125 mL concentrated HCl to 500 mL water and dilute to 1 L.

8.8 *Hydrochloric acid (1M)*—Add 83 mL concentrated HCl to 500 mL water and dilute to 1 L.

8.9 *Hydrofluoric acid (minimum 48 % assay)*—Concentrated HF, reagent grade.

8.10 *Neodymium chloride (10 mg Nd/mL)*—Heat 25 mL of concentrated hydrochloric acid and 1.17 g of neodymium oxide

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.