



Designation: D4273 – 23

Standard Test Method for Polyurethane Raw Materials: Determination of Primary Hydroxyl Content of Polyether Polyols¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D4273; 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 *Carbon-13 Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Spectroscopy* (¹³C NMR) measures the primary hydroxyl content of ethylene oxide (EO)-propylene oxide (PO) polyether polyols used in preparing flexible polyurethane foams. This method is best suited for polyether polyols with primary hydroxyl contents of 10 to 90 %.

1.2 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as 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.*

NOTE 1—There is no known ISO equivalent to this standard.

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

D883 Terminology Relating to Plastics

E456 Terminology Relating to Quality and Statistics

E691 Practice for Conducting an Interlaboratory Study to Determine the Precision of a Test Method

E2935 Practice for Evaluating Equivalence of Two Testing Processes

E2977 Practice for Measuring and Reporting Performance of

Fourier-Transform Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (FT-NMR) Spectrometers for Liquid Samples

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—Terms used in this standard are defined in accordance with Terminology D883 and Practice E2977, unless otherwise specified. For terms relating to precision and bias and associated issues, the terms used in this standard are defined in accordance with Terminology E456.

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 Peaks of the primary and secondary hydroxyl carbons of polyether polyols used in flexible polyurethane foams are well-resolved in high-resolution ¹³C NMR spectra. The primary hydroxyl content is determined from the ratio of the primary hydroxyl area to the total hydroxyl (primary and secondary) area.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 The primary hydroxyl content provides information about the relative reactivities of polyols in the urethane forming reaction with isocyanates.

6. Interferences

6.1 Primary hydroxyl PO methylene carbons (where the methylene carbon is next to the hydroxyl group and the methine carbon is next to the ether oxygen) are integrated with the secondary hydroxyl carbons and are therefore not included in the primary hydroxyl content as measured by this method. Any additional non-polyether polyol compounds in the sample that produce NMR peaks in the 68-60 ppm region may interfere with the measurement.

7. Apparatus

7.1 *Fourier-Transform NMR (FT-NMR) Spectrometer*, with carbon-13 capability and a carbon-13 resonance frequency of 50 MHz (proton resonance frequency of 200 MHz) or higher. The spectrometer is to have a minimum carbon-13 signal-to-noise ratio of 70:1 based on the benzene carbon signal in a 60 % benzene-d₆, 40 % p-dioxane (v/v) sample (ASTM NMR standard) that has been pulsed once using a 90° pulse angle under the conditions specified in Practice E2977.

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D20 on Plastics and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D20.22 on Cellular Materials - Plastics and Elastomers.

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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.

*A Summary of Changes section appears at the end of this standard

7.2 *NMR sample tubes* having outside diameters of 5 mm or more.

7.3 *NMR spinners*.

8. Reagents and Materials

8.1 All reagents are to be spectroscopic-grade and free of magnetic materials.

8.1.1 *Deuterated chloroform or deuterated acetone*, containing tetramethylsilane (TMS) as an internal standard.

9. Hazards

9.1 *Magnetic Fields*—Follow the manufacturer's recommendation for the safe operation of the instrument.

9.1.1 Persons with implanted or attached medical devices such as pacemakers and prosthetic parts must remain outside the 5-gauss perimeter.

9.1.2 Objects made of ferromagnetic material will be attracted to the magnet and are to be kept a safe distance away, outside the 5-gauss perimeter.

10. Preparation of Apparatus

10.1 Prepare a proton decoupled carbon-13 NMR experiment, selecting appropriate parameters to obtain quantitative integration of the peaks in the 68-60 ppm region.

10.1.1 *Inverse Gated Decoupling*—Decouple only during acquisition.

10.1.2 *Pulse Angle and Sequence Delay Time*—Select a 90 degree pulse angle with a sequence delay of 5 to $10 \times T_1$ of the peak with the longest relaxation time in the 68-60 ppm region. It is acceptable to use a different pulse angle/sequence delay combination to reduce acquisition time provided that quantitative data acquisition is not compromised.

10.1.3 *Number of Scans*—Select the appropriate number to yield a minimum signal to noise of > 10:1 for the smallest peak integrated over the 68-60 ppm region (usually 1024 to 2048).

10.1.4 *Sweep Width*—~ 220 ppm.

10.1.5 *Transmitter Frequency*—~100 ppm.

10.1.6 *Acquisition Time*—1 to 2 s.

11. Calibration and Standardization

11.1 This test method does not require standards. To evaluate the test method, it is feasible to prepare standards by blending commercially available poly(propylene oxide) and poly(ethylene oxide) diols. Ideally, the molecular weights of the diols are to be 300 or more since lower molecular weight polyols can contain structural configurations that are not typical of polyether polyols used in flexible polyurethane foams.

12. Procedure

12.1 Prepare a solution of the polyol sample in deuterated chloroform or deuterated acetone containing TMS as an internal standard. A 30-60 % solution is recommended. (See [Note 2](#).)

12.2 Transfer an appropriate amount of the sample solution to an NMR tube.

12.3 Place the NMR tube into a spinner, adjust it to the appropriate depth and insert it into the spectrometer probe.

12.4 Obtain a stable deuterium lock on the solvent.

12.5 Tune and match the probe for ^{13}C and ^1H channels.

12.6 Shim the sample to optimize magnetic field-homogeneity.

12.7 Acquire the NMR data.

12.8 Zero fill the data. The recommended value is 1 or $2 \times$ number of data points.

12.9 Apply a spectral weighting function (apodization) and Fourier Transform the Free Induction Decay (FID). The recommended apodization is an exponential window multiplication and a typical line broadening value is 1/acquisition time.

12.10 Phase and baseline correct the spectrum.

12.11 Set the internal TMS reference to 0 ppm.

12.12 Integrate the peaks of interest. The primary hydroxyl peaks typically resonate in the 61.0 to 62.5 ppm region and the secondary hydroxyl peaks typically resonate in the 65.5 to 67.5 ppm region. An example is shown in [Fig. 1](#).

NOTE 2—The use of 0.025 to 0.05 M $\text{Cr}(\text{acac})_3$ has been found to shorten relaxation times allowing for shorter data acquisition times.

13. Calculation

13.1 Calculate the percent primary hydroxyl content using the following equation:

$$\text{Primary hydroxyl, \%} = A * \frac{100}{A + B} \quad (1)$$

where:

A = area of terminal EO methylene carbons (primary hydroxyl peaks),

B = area of terminal PO methine carbons (secondary hydroxyl peaks—does not correct for primary hydroxyl PO terminations).

14. Report

14.1 Report the % primary hydroxyl content to the nearest two decimal places.

15. Precision and Bias³

15.1 [Table 1](#) is based on a round robin conducted in 2016 in accordance with Practice [E691](#), involving five materials tested by eight laboratories. For each material, all the samples were prepared at one source, but the individual specimens were prepared at the laboratories which tested them. Each test result was a single determination. Each laboratory obtained two test results for each material.

15.2 *Caution*—The explanation of repeatability (*r*) and reproducibility (*R*) is only intended to present a meaningful way of considering the approximate precision of this test method. Do not apply the data in [Table 1](#) to accept or reject materials, as these data apply only to the materials tested in the round robin and are unlikely to be rigorously representative of other lots, formulations, conditions, materials, or laboratories. Users

³ Supporting data are available from ASTM Headquarters. Request RR:D20-1270.