



Designation: D6414 – 23

Standard Test Methods for Total Mercury in Coal and Coal Combustion Residues by Acid Extraction or Wet Oxidation/Cold Vapor Atomic Absorption¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D6414; 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 These test methods cover procedures to determine the total mercury content in a sample of coal or coal combustion residue.

1.2 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as standard. The values given in parentheses after SI units are provided for information only and are not considered standard.

1.3 **Warning:** *Mercury has been designated by many regulatory agencies as a hazardous material that can cause serious medical issues. Mercury, or its vapor, has been demonstrated to be hazardous to health and corrosive to materials. Caution should be taken when handling mercury and mercury containing products. See the applicable product Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for additional information. Users should be aware that selling mercury and/or mercury containing products into your state or country may be prohibited by law.*

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

1.5 *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

[D121 Terminology of Coal and Coke](#)

¹ These test methods are under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee [D05](#) on Coal and Coke and are the direct responsibility of Subcommittee [D05.29](#) on Major Elements in Ash and Trace Elements of Coal.

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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.

[D1193 Specification for Reagent Water](#)

[D2013 Practice for Preparing Coal Samples for Analysis](#)

[D3173 Test Method for Moisture in the Analysis Sample of Coal and Coke](#)

[D3180 Practice for Calculating Coal and Coke Analyses from As-Determined to Different Bases](#)

[D7582 Test Methods for Proximate Analysis of Coal and Coke by Macro Thermogravimetric Analysis](#)

[E691 Practice for Conducting an Interlaboratory Study to Determine the Precision of a Test Method](#)

[IEEE/ASTM SI 10 Standard for Use of the International System of Units \(SI\): The Modern Metric System](#)

2.2 *ISO Standards:*³

[ISO 5725-6:1994 Accuracy of measurement methods and results-Part 6](#)

3. Terminology

3.1 For definitions of terms used in this standard, refer to Terminology [D121](#).

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 *Test Method A*—Mercury in the analysis sample is solubilized by heating the test sample at a specified temperature in a mixture of nitric and hydrochloric acids. The acid solutions produced are transferred into a vessel in which the mercury is reduced to elemental mercury. The mercury vapor is determined by flameless cold-vapor atomic absorption spectrometry.

4.2 *Test Method B*—Mercury in the analysis sample is solubilized by heating the test sample in a mixture of nitric and sulfuric acids with vanadium pentoxide.⁴ The acid solutions produced are transferred into a vessel in which the mercury is reduced to elemental mercury. The mercury vapor is determined by flameless cold-vapor atomic absorption spectrometry.

NOTE 1—Mercury and mercury salts can be volatilized at low temperatures. Precautions against inadvertent mercury loss should be taken when using this method.

³ Available from International Organization for Standardization (ISO), 1 rue de Varembe, Case postale 56, CH-1211, Geneva 20, Switzerland.

⁴ Crock, J. G., *Open-File Report*, U.S. Geological Survey, 87–84, p.19.

5. Significance and Use

5.1 The emission of mercury during coal combustion can be an environmental concern.

5.2 When representative test specimens are analyzed according to one of these procedures, the total mercury is representative of concentrations in the sample.

6. Apparatus

6.1 Apparatus for Test Method A:

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

6.1.2 *Atomic Absorption Spectrometer*, with a flameless cold-vapor mercury analysis system.

6.1.3 *Digestion Vessels*, 100 mL to 250 mL bottles with an O-ring seal and screw cap. Bottle must be compatible for use with aqua regia. Polycarbonate and high density polyethylene (HDPE) are acceptable. Bottles and cap assemblies shall be washed in 1+1 hydrochloric acid (HCl) then dried before each use.

NOTE 2—Other bottle and cap assemblies may be used provided they are compatible for use with aqua regia at a temperature of 80 °C.

6.1.4 *Heat Source*, a water bath capable of maintaining a temperature of 80 °C.

6.1.5 *Syringe and Filter*, a 20 cm³ syringe and a 1 µm pore size polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) filter to fit syringe.

6.2 Apparatus for Test Method B:

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

6.2.2 *Atomic Absorption Spectrometer*, with a flameless cold-vapor mercury analysis system.

6.2.3 *Digestion Vessels*, 16 mm by 150 mm disposable glass test tubes.

6.2.4 *Heat Source*, an aluminum block with 18-mm holes to accommodate the disposable test tubes. The block shall be capable of slowly reaching and maintaining a final temperature of 150 °C. The block can be heated by placing it on a hot plate or it can contain its own internal heating elements.

7. Sample

7.1 Prepare the analysis sample in accordance with Practice **D2013** by pulverizing the material to pass a 250 µm (No. 60 U.S. standard sieve).

7.2 Analyze separate test specimens for moisture in accordance with Test Method **D3173** or Test Method **D7582**.

Test Method A for the Analysis of Mercury by Using Acid Extraction

8. Reagents

8.1 *Purity of Reagents*—Reagent grade chemicals shall be used. 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.⁵ Other grades can 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.

8.2 *Purity of Acids*—Use trace metal purity grade acids or equivalent. Redistilled acids are acceptable.

8.3 *Purity of Water*—Use water equivalent to ASTM Type II reagent water of Specification **D1193**.

8.4 *Mercury Standard Stock Solution* [1000 µg/mL (1000 ppm)]—Dissolve 1.0800 g of mercury (II) oxide (HgO) in a minimum volume of HCl (1+1) and dilute to 1 L with water. Alternatively, use a commercially available stock solution specifically prepared for atomic absorption spectrometry.

8.5 *Mercury Standard Solution* (100 ng/mL)—Prepare the mercury standard solution fresh daily. Dilute 5 mL of the mercury standard stock solution to 500 mL with deionized water. Further dilute 10 mL of this intermediate solution to 1 L with deionized water.

8.6 *Nitric Acid*—Concentrated (HNO₃, sp. gr. 1.42).

8.7 *Hydrochloric Acid*—Concentrated (HCl, sp. gr. 1.19).

8.8 *Sodium Chloride/Hydroxylamine Sulfate Solution*—Dissolve 12 g ± 0.01 g of sodium chloride and 12 g ± 0.01 g of hydroxylamine sulfate in water and dilute to 100 mL.

8.9 *Potassium Permanganate Solution* (5 %)—Dissolve 5 g of potassium permanganate (KMnO₄) in water and dilute to 100 mL.

8.10 *Stannous Chloride Solution* (100 g/L)—Dissolve 100 g of stannous chloride dihydrate (SnCl₂·2 H₂O) in 300 mL of concentrated hydrochloric acid (HCl, sp. gr. 1.19) and CAUTIOUSLY dilute to 1 L with water. This solution is stable for approximately one week if refrigerated.

8.11 *Certified Reference Material (CRM)*—Use Certified Reference Material (CRM) coals with dry-basis mercury values for which confidence limits are issued by a recognized certifying agency such as the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). It is recommended that the user verify the value with the certifying agency before using the CRM coal for quality control purposes.

9. Procedure

9.1 Preparation of Test Solution A (Extraction Step):

9.1.1 Determine the mass of a test specimen of approximately 1 g of the sample into a digestion bottle. Record the mass (*m_s*) to the nearest 0.0001 g.

9.1.2 Quantitatively add 2 mL of concentrated nitric acid (8.6) and 6 mL of concentrated hydrochloric acid (8.7) to the digestion bottle and secure the cap.

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.