

Project Summary

Molecular Optical Spectroscopic Techniques for Hazardous Waste Site Screening

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The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is interested in field screening hazardous waste sites for pollutants in surface water, ground water, and soil. This report is an initial technical overview of the principal molecular spectroscopic techniques and instrumentation and their possible field-screening applications at hazardous waste sites. The goal of this overview is to describe the power and utility of molecular spectroscopic techniques for hazardous waste site screening and to define the main strengths, weaknesses, and applications of each major spectroscopic technique. These spectroscopic methods include electronic (ultraviolet-visible absorption and luminescence) and vibrational (infrared absorption and Raman scattering) techniques. A brief discussion is also given for some other techniques that rely on spectroscopic detection (colorimetry and fluorometry as well as immunoassay and fiber-optic chemical sensors).

The cost of instrumentation and analysis and the time needed for analysis are briefly addressed, and broad guidelines are given for three categories of instrumentation: portable, field deployable, and semi-field deployable. An outline of the spectroscopic principles and instrumentation for each particular spectroscopic technique is presented, and state-of-the-art approaches are described. Advantages, limitations, sensitivities, and examples of specific techniques and their applications to environmental pollutants are also discussed.

This Project Summary was developed by EPA's Environmental Monitoring Systems Laboratory, Las Vegas, NV, to announce key findings of the research project that is fully documented in a separate report of the same title (see Project Report ordering information at back).

Introduction

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is interested in field screening of hazardous waste sites for pollutants in surface and ground water as well as soil. Major reasons for this interest are to achieve improved cost effectiveness and to expedite remedial investigations at Superfund sites and thus reduce the time lag between sampling and the receipt of analytical data. Field analytical screening can also help to confine a detailed field investigation to those areas of a site which are truly contaminated and thus reduce the number of samples sent to the analytical laboratory, thereby providing more comprehensive environmental studies as well as more relevant data with reduced cost and time.

Often, for field screening, optical spectroscopic methods and experiments that are field deployable or portable provide attractive alternatives to more common EPA methods such as gas chromatography and mass spectrometry. Optical spectroscopic methods permit large number of samples to be screened, characterized, and prioritized in the field with little or no sample preparation. These screening techniques permit rapid response and considerable

cost savings because detailed analyses are required only for a selected subset of samples. Spectroscopic techniques may sometimes provide information on unusual sample types or on nonvolatile compounds that are of high-molecular weight or thermally labile. For functional groups or geometrical isomers, these techniques may also provide specific structural information complementary to methods such as gas chromatography. Spectroscopic techniques may also offer advantages for in situ measurements (with fiber optics), remote measurements, flow-through analyses, and nondestructive testing.

Each spectroscopic technique has certain advantages and disadvantages. Some may be more widely applicable, may be more feasible for field deployment using current technology, or may be more specific or sensitive for trace identification or classification. All of the techniques discussed in this report have the potential for field application either by themselves or in conjunction with appropriate separation or chromatographic steps. Recent rapid advances in computer hardware and software, chemometrics, and pattern recognition algorithms. although beyond the scope of this report, have also been combined with advances in spectroscopic instrumentation to improve the analysis of complex environmental pollutant mixtures and extract maximum information from data sets.

The main objective of this report is to provide a technical overview and assessment of the principal molecular spectroscopic techniques and instrumentation with applications for field screening at hazardous waste sites. These methods currently include UV-visible absorption and luminescence (electronic) spectroscopy as well as infrared absorption and Raman (vibrational) spectroscopy. For each method, a brief outline of the spectroscopic principles and instrumentation considerations is given to familiarize the reader with the present stateof-the-art approach. Advantages, limitations, sensitivities, and examples of specific techniques and their applications to environmental analyses are also discussed. Specific highlights are also given for adjunct techniques such as colorimetric and fluorometric analysis with chemical derivatization, spectroscopic immunoassay techniques, and fiber-optic chemical sensors. The range of possible applications of spectroscopic methods for field analysis is very broad and might include uses for identification, classification, semiquantitation, and quantitation.

This report is meant as a technical assessment and source document. This document can provide a basis for early

decision-making on potential spectroscopic techniques for field screening.

A table summarizes the applicability of each spectroscopic technique for field and laboratory use, together with advantages, limitations, sensitivity, current field availability, and estimated cost and time. It is hoped that this overview will allow an appreciation of the power and utility of molecular spectroscopic techniques for hazardous waste site screening.

Discussion and Conclusions

Spectroscopic approaches can provide valuable qualitative and quantitative information with substantial savings of time and money. Instruments and methods, developing rapidly in this growing area, can greatly improve environmental analytical technology. All of the spectroscopic methods have specific advantages and shortcomings and have potential applicability for particular environmental problems. Table 1 summarizes the advantages, limitations, and sensitivities with examples of specific techniques and their application to environmental pollutants. This table also includes definitions of portable, field-deployable and semi-field-deployable instruments and includes relative estimates of cost and time factors.

Ultraviolet-visible absorption spectroscopy is a mature technique that has good quantitative accuracy for single compounds after separation, or for simple mixtures. If it is used in conjunction with high-performance liquid chromatography using an optical multichannel analyzer as a detector, the entire spectrum for each chromatographic peak can be recorded its sensitivity is moderate and its specificity is low. Colorimetric reagents can greatly increase the specificity of the method and improve sensitivity by moving the spectrum of the reaction product into the visible region with high absorption coefficients. Ultraviolet-visible absorption spectroscopy is most useful for unsaturated compounds (aromatic or heterocyclic).

Ultraviolet-visible luminescence (fluorescence and phosphorescence), when applicable, can be the most sensitive spectroscopic technique for trace and ultratrace analysis, especially with laser excitation. It is useful in aqueous solutions to the partper-billion to part-per-trillion level. Specific techniques most useful in the field include synchronous luminescence and room temperature phosphorescence. Luminescence is applicable to most polyaromatic compounds and their derivatives and can be made applied to many other compounds by using fluorometric reagents for chemical derivatization reactions. It can also be used with high performance liquid chromatography and multichannel detection. Luminescence is much more selective for identification or classification purposes than ultraviolet-visible absorption but less selective than infrared or Raman spectroscopy. Its selectivity can be enhanced using various excitation and emission wavelengths and by time or phase resolution methods, and indirect detection methods such as fluorescence quenching or energy transfer.

Infrared absorption spectroscopy (dispersive and Fourier transform) has been used in field applications, especially for monitoring air pollutants using a gas cell, for characterizing oil or hazardous chemicals where structural information from group frequencies is useful and where sensitivity is not the critical factor. Infrared devices are also useful as real-time detectors with GC-FTIR and for specific quantitation applications such as oil and grease. Disadvantages include the need for sample preparation to eliminate water, which is the major interferent, some difficulties related to quantitation, and the moderate sensitivity of the technique. Lately, more compact, rugged instruments along with better sample preparation and signal processing techniques that are designed to increase the sensitivity of this method have made it more attractive for field use.

Raman spectroscopy complements infrared spectroscopy because it also provides structural information but with different selection rules. Raman spectroscopy is not sensitive to water and can use visible or near-infrared optical techniques. Until recently, Raman was considered to have several disadvantages for field use including complex instrumentation, need for laser excitation, fluorescence interferences in the visible, and relatively low sensitivity. These disadvantages have been somewhat reduced by the advent of more compact Raman spectrometers, smaller and/or near-IR lasers, and special, more sensitive Raman techniques. The most promising Raman technique for field use is surface-enhanced Raman spectroscopy in which Raman scattering efficiency can be enhanced by factors of as much as 10° for some compounds when a chemical is adsorbed on a special roughened metal (Cu. Ag, Au) surface. Although this technique may be promising for future field applications, it is not yet fully understood or developed and may not apply to all chemicals. The advantage of the technique is that it has the potential to combine the sensitivity of luminescence with structural information similar to that provided by infrared spectroscopy.

Other techniques that rely on spectroscopic detection and that greatly enhance the utility of spectroscopic methods include colorimetry, fluorometry, immunoassay, and some fiber-optic chemical sensors. Fiberoptic sensors may also use some change in the optical properties of the fiber or cladding or may be used as probes for most of the spectroscopic techniques dis-

Spectroscopic techniques are being used with increasing frequency for field screening, allowing rapid response and reduced costs for environmental monitoring programs. Such techniques also help to optimize sampling efforts and help to prioritize samples for more detailed analysis. Some spectroscopic methods can be

used in place without sampling, e.g., fiberoptic chemical sensors, whereas others
can be used with portable instrumentation
or field deployable instruments set up in a
mobile laboratory. Recent instrumentation
developments, such as more compact lasers, miniaturized optical hardware, new
types of detectors such as charge-coupled
devices, increased use of fiber optics, and
better computer software for spectral data
processing and pattern recognition have
increased the utility of these spectroscopic
methods.

Further research and development efforts are needed to improve the field applicability of current and new

spectroscopic analytical techniques, to make instruments more portable and compact. Also, new techniques that employ field-ready instruments need to be accompanied by detailed analytical protocols, appropriate standards, calibration criteria, and appropriate quality assurance for specific pollutant classes. Field spectroscopic instruments and methods are a rapidly improving and growing analytical area which can greatly improve environmental analytical technology.

A better appreciation of the conclusions, relative to the applicability of these spectroscopic techniques, can be obtained by reviewing Table I.

Table 1. Characteristics of Spectroscopic Techniques for Field Analysis

Applicability	Advantages	Limitations	Sensitivity	Current Field Applicability	Related Lab Techniques & Sensors
		UV-vis A	bsorption		
Polyaromatic Compounds (PACs) Dyes Colorimetric Reaction Products	Mature Technique Instrumentation Readily Available Good Quantitative Accuracy for Single Compounds and Simple Mixtures Few Interferences by Nonaromatics Spectral Data Available	Unspecific (Compared to IR and Luminescence) Extensive Sample Preparation Quantitation may be Affected by Solvent, Polarity, or Medium, Chemical Complexation	Moderate Sensitivity ppm - ppb in Favorable Cases	Portable - Hand-held Colorimeter - Colorimetric Kits Field Deployable Instrumentation with Multichannel Detectors HPLC Detectors	UV-VIS Techniques - FT - Derivative LT Matrix Isolation Reflectance Photoacoustic Spectroscopy Fiber Optic Colorimetric Sensors Multichannel Detectors - Diode Arrays - CCDs
	UV-vi	s Luminescence (Fluore	scence and Phosphore	escence)	- CCDs
Polyaromatic	Most Sensitive Method	Limited to Compounds	Excellent Sensitivity	Portable Instruments	Luminescence
Compounds Fluorescent Dyes	for Trace and Ultratrace Analysis when Applicable	with Fairly High Luminescence Yields (Usually PACs, unless	ppb (pptrillion or Less with Laser	Available	Techniques - Fluorescence
Fluorescent Byes	Instrumentation	Derivatized)	Excitation)	Field Deployable Instruments Available	- Phosphorescence - Synchronous - Time and Phase
Products	Readily Available	Relatively Unspecific for Structural	Dependent on Quantum Yields	Flow-through Oil-Water Monitors and HPLC	Resolution - Polarization
PCBs	No Interference by Water	Information (Compared to IR)		with Multichannel Detectors	- RT and LT - 3D
Phenols	Few Interferences by	Quantitation	1 material	Front Surface - RTP	- Microscopy
Pesticides	Nonaromatics	Complicated by Differences in Quantum			Fiber Optic Fluorometric
Semivolatiles	Some Structural Specificity	Yields, Quenching, Microenvironments			Sensors
Nonvolatiles	- Enhanced by Special Techniques	Limited Reference			Multichannel Detectors
Petroleum Oils	Opecial recilliques	Spectra Available			- Diode Arrays - CCDs

Table 1. Continu		,			
Applicability	Advantages	Limitations	Sensitivity	Current Field Applicability	Related Lab Techniques & Sensors
	UV-vis Lun	ninescence (Fluorescenc	e and Phosphorescence	e) (continued)	
	Very Selective - Enhanced by Time and Wavelength Variability Can Distinguish Geometrical Isomers				Fluorescence Quenching or Energy Transfer - Indirect Ways to Measure Non- luminescent Molecules
		Synchronous	s Fluorescence		
Increased Specificity	Increased Specificity	Decrease in	Good Sensitivity	Portable Instruments	
for Individual PACs or PAC Classes in Complex Mixture	Less Spectral Overlap	Sensitivity with Narrower Bandpasses and Wavelength Offset	Slightly Lower than Fluorescence Emission	under Development Field Deployable	LT Measurements Time and Phase Resolution
Petroleum Oils	Classification of PAHs by Number of Rings	Loss of Vibrational Structure in Spectrum	Dependent on Instrumental	Instruments Available	Derivative
Craosotes	Useful for Screening	Need Dual Scanning Monochromators	Conditions		Remote Monitor under Developmen
	Combine with Other Luminescence Techniques	Need Polychromatic Source	Dependent on Stokes Shift of Compound		Synchronous Phosphorescence
		Room Temperature P	hosphorescence (RTP)	J	
Most Luminescent PACs, PCBs, PAHs	Easy Sample Prep	Oxygen may Quench in Solution	Good Sensitivity ppb in Favorable Cases	Portable Instruments Under Development	Can Compare with LT Techniques for Optimization
Directly or with Heavy Atom	and Fluorescence Background	Less Structure than LTP	Dependent on Quantum	Field Deployable Instruments Available	Time Resolution
Perturber	Longer Lifetimes than Fluorescence	Substrate/Technique Dependent	Yield of Compound Dependent on	Front Surface	TLC
	No Need for Cryo- genic Instrumentation	Quantitation may be Complicated	Efficiency of Perturber	Rigid Medium - Filter Paper - TLC Plate	Organized Medium - Micelle Solution - Cyclodextrin
	Useful for Screening	Limited Corrected Spectra Available		Dosimetry	
	Additional Selectivity Due to Perturber	·		Easy Sample Prep	
	Low Tempe	eratur e L uminescence (F	luorescence and Phospi	horescence)	
Luminescent PACs	Higher Sensitivity, Specificity than RT	Cryogenic Apparatus More Complicated	Excellent Sensitivity	Limited Semi-Field Deployability	LT Techniques - Shpolskii Spectra
PCBs	Vibrational Structure	Need Skilled Operator	pptrillion in Optimal Cases		- Laser-line Narrowing - Site Selection
	Similar to Raman				- Matrix Isolation
	Quantitation Over 6 Orders of Magnitude	Less Reference Spectral Data than RT	Improved with Laser		Low Temperatures 77 K to 4 K
	Distinguish Isomers	Some Analytes Matrix Dependent			
	Very Selective - Enhanced by Time and Wavelength Variability				. :

Applicability	Advantages	Limitations	Sensitivity	Current Field	Related Lab
				Applicability	Techniques & Sensors
		Infrared	(Dispersive)	F.	
Organic and Inorganic	Highly Specific Structural Data on	Mid/low Sensitivity	Less Sensitive than UV-vis Absorbance	Portable and Field	FTIR
Determination of Specific Functional	Group Frequencies	Water is Interferent	Much Less Sensitive	Instruments Available Portable Unit with	GC/LC-FTIR
Groups	Mature Technique	Requires Special Optics/Solvents	than Fluorescence	Gas Cell	
	Instrumentation Widely Available	Quantitation Difficulties	ppthousand to ppm in Favorable Cases	Quantitation of Grease and Oil	
	Spectral Libraries Available	Week Optical		ATR Attachments for Solids, Oils	
		Sources and Detectors			
		Infrared (Fou	rier Transform)		
Organic and Inorganic	Highly Specific Structural Data on	Less Sensitive than Luminescence	More Sensitive than Dispersive IR	Field and Semi-field Deployable	GC/LC-FTIR
Determination of Specific Functional Groups	Group Frequencies Instrumentation	Requires Special	- Signal Averaging	- With or Without GC - Volatiles/Semivolatiles	Matrix Isolation - LT for Sensitivity
Routinely Used for	Widely Available	Optics/Solvents Can Tolerate Some	ppm to subppm in Favorable Cases	Adaptable to Use with SFC	Microscopy
Real-Time GC and Vapor Analysis	Real-Time Flow throughVapor Applications	Water (Background Subtraction)	,	with SFC	
	- GC-FTIR	Organics Detection 1-10 ppthousand in	:		
	Spectral Libraries Available	Water	-		
		Near I	Infrared		
Single Compounds Simple Matrices	Sources and Optical Materials Better than Mid-IR	Less Spectral Structure than Mid-IR - Overtone Overlap	Low Sensitivity	Portable Near-IR Instrument with Fiber	Surface/Pollutant Interaction Studies
Organics Overtones	Optically Good Sensor	- Less Specificity - Interpretation	10-1 ppthousand	Optic Probe Characterization of Oil	Near IR Sensors
,	Materials Can Distinguish Major	Complicated	,	Bulk Chemical	Process Control
	Components of Simple Matrix	Not Useful for Complex Matrices		Analysis	
	Fewer Interferences than Mid-IR	Signal Processing and Pattern Recognition Required		·	

(Continued)

Applicability	Advantages	Limitations	Sensitivity	Current Field Applicability	Related Lab Techniques & Sensors
		Normal Raman S	pectroscopy (NRS)		
Organic and Inorganic Aquaous Solutions Biological Matrices Polymers	Specific as IR for Structural Information Different Selection Rules - Complements IR Fewer Interferences than IR in vis or near-IR Regions Water and Glass not Interferences Good Optics and Solvents Available Can Handle Unusual Sample Shapes/Sizes	Fluorescence Interference in UV-vis Requires Laser Source Relatively Complex Instrumentation Requires Skilled Operator Not as Mature as IR Relatively Poor Limits of Detection	Moderate Sensitivity 1000 - 20 ppm	Semi-field Deployable Instruments under Development	Research in: - Aqueous Solution Biological Matrice Polymers Special Raman Techniques - SERS - Resonance - CARS - Microprobes - Microscopy LT Applications
		Surface Enhanced Ran	nan Spectroscopy (SEI	7S)	
Many Pollutants Demonstrated for: - Pyridine - Hydrazine - PAHs - Pasticides	Specific in Structural Information More Sensitive than Normal Raman As Sensitive as Luminescence in Favorable Cases No Interference by Water (See Also NRS)	Relatively New Tech. Surface/Substrate Material Dependent Reproducibility Requires Laser and Special Substrate Not all Analytes Enhanced Equally Few Spectral Libraries (See Also NRS)	Good Sensitivity for Selected Analytes ppm - ppb in Favorable Cases	Field Deployable Instrumentation under Development	Research to Optimize Techniques Microscopy Microprobes Surface Studies Fiber-Optic Sensors HPLC (under Development) Multichannel Detectors

Table 1. Continue	ed .			· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	2	
Applicability	Advantages	Limitations	Sensitivity	Current Field Applicability	Related Lab Techniques & Sensors	
		Resona	nce Raman			
PACs Absorbing in UV Phenols	Specific in Structure May Eliminate Fluorescence Background (See Also NRS)	Only Chromophore Vibrations Enhanced Limited to UV Absorbing Compounds - Mainly PACs Quantitation Difficult Not Comparable to Other Raman Techniques UV Laser Source Complex Instrumentation (See Also NRS)	Fair Sensitivity in Favorable Cases with Chromophore Vibrations	Many Practical Difficulties	Chromophore Characterization Biological Application	
Definitions of portable, fi Portable:	ield deployable, and sen Field Deplo	ni-field deployable as used oyable:	l in this table are:	Semi-field Deployable	<u>:</u>	
Little sample prep. (< 10 min.) Relatively simple sample		two people can lift (severa simple sample prep. (< 1 h t cost \$30,000 to \$100,000	nr.)	Can fit in mobile lab lab) Complex or fragile instrument Often considerable sample prep. (> 1 h Instrument cost > \$100,000 Analysis cost > \$200		

Definitions of abbreviations as used in this table are:

ATR CARS CCD FTIR GC HPLC IR LC LT NRS	Attenuated Total Reflectance Coherent Anti-Stokes Raman Spectroscopy Charge-Coupled Device Fourier Transform-Infrared Spectroscopy Gas Chromatography High Performance Liquid Chromatography Infrared Spectroscopy Liquid Chromatography Low Temperature Normal Raman Spectroscopy	PAC PAH PCB ppb/ppm RTP SERS SFC TLC UV-vis	Polyaromatic Compounds Polyaromatic Hydrocarbons Polychlorinated Biphenyls part per billion/part per million (mg/mL, µg/mL) Room Temperature Phosphorescence Surface-Enhanced Raman Spectroscopy Supercritical Fluid Chromatography Thin-Layer Chromatography Ultraviolet-Visible Spectroscopy	
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William H. Engelmann is the EPA Project Officer, (see below).

The complete report, entitled "Molecular Optical Spectroscopic Techniques for Hazardous Waste Site Screening," (Order No. PB91-195990/AS; Cost: \$23.00, subject to change) will be available only from:

National Technical Information Service 5285 Port Royal Road Springfield, VA 22161 Telephone: 703-487-4650

The EPA Project Officer can be contacted at:

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