



## Project Summary

# Stability of Organic Audit Materials and Results of Source Test Analysis Audits—Status Report #5

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A repository of 42 gaseous compounds including hydrocarbon, halocarbon, and sulfur species has been established under contract with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The main objectives of this ongoing project are (1) to provide gas mixtures to EPA, state/local agencies, or their contractors, as performance audits to assess the accuracy of source emission measurements in certain organic chemical manufacturing industries, (2) to corroborate the vendor's certified analysis of the gas mixtures by in-house analysis, (3) to determine the stability of the gas mixtures with time by in-house analysis, and (4) to explore the feasibility of new audit materials as requested by EPA.

Thus far, 20 compounds have been used to conduct 106 different audits. The results of these audits and a description of the experimental procedures used for analyses and available stability data are presented in the status report. Seventy percent of the audit results are within 10 percent of the expected values.

Compound stabilities have been determined through multiple analyses of the cylinders containing them. Stability values for all compounds are expressed as percent change per month. Calculated changes are typically found to be a few tenths of one percent per month, though many of these changes may not be significantly different from zero.

*This Project Summary was developed by EPA's Environmental Monitoring Systems Laboratory, Research Triangle Park, NC, 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

Accurate measurement of hydrocarbons, halocarbons, and sulfur containing compounds in ambient and source samples is essential to any environmental monitoring program. The potential for achieving acceptable accuracy is enhanced by the availability of reliable standards which can be used to check or validate the measurement process. The Research Triangle Institute (RTI) under contract to the Environmental Monitoring Systems Laboratory, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), has responded to this need by developing an extensive repository of standard gaseous compounds. These standards are to be used in performance audits as designated by the EPA Project Officer. These performance audits are to assess the accuracy of source emission measurements in certain organic manufacturing industries.

The RTI repository currently contains 42 different compounds based on anticipated needs of EPA. Table 1 lists the compounds, the concentration ranges of each compound, and the number of cylinders of each compound. Additional compounds are obtained as needed.

**Table 1. Audit Materials Currently Held in the Repository**

Compound	Low Concentration Range			High Concentration Range		
	No. of Cylinders	Concentration Range (ppm)	Cylinder Construction*	No. of Cylinders	Concentration Range (ppm)	Cylinder Construction*
Benzene	14	8-13	S	17	60-400	Al, S
Ethylene	4	5-20	Al	4	300-700	Al
Propylene	4	5-20	Al	6	3000-20,000	Al
Methane/Ethane	-	---	-	4	300-700	Al
Propane	4	5-20	Al	4	1000-6000(M), 200-700(E)	Al
Toluene	2	5-20	S	4	300-700	Al
Hydrogen Sulfide	2	5-20	S	2	300-700	S
Meta-Xylene	4	5-20	Al	2	300-700	Al
Methyl Acetate	2	5-20	S	2	300-700	LS
Chloroform	2	5-20	S	2	300-700	S
Carbonyl Sulfide	2	5-20	S	2	300-700	S
Methyl Mercaptan	2	5-20	S	2	100-300	S
Hexane	4	3-10	Al	-	---	-
1,2-Dichloroethane	2	20-80	Al	2	1000-3000	LS
Cyclohexane	4	5-20	Al	4	100-600	Al
Methyl Ethyl Ketone	-	---	-	1	80-200	S
Methanol	1	30-80	S	-	---	-
1,2-Dichloropropane	1	30-80	Al	-	---	-
Trichloroethylene	2	5-20	Al	2	300-700	LS
1,1-Dichloroethylene	2	5-20	Al	2	100-600	Al
1,2-Dibromoethylene	2	5-20	Al	2	100-600	Al
Perchloroethylene	2	5-20	S	2	100-600	Al
Vinyl Chloride	2	5-20	S	2	300-700	LS
1,3-Butadiene	9	5-30	-	-	---	-
Acrylonitrile	1	5-30	S	-	---	-
**Aniline	3	5-20	LS, Al	3	300-700	LS, Al
Methyl Isobutyl Ketone	1	5-20	Al	-	---	-
**Paradichlorobenzene	1	5-20	Al	1	75	Al
**Ethylamine	2	5-20	S	-	---	-
**Formaldehyde	2	5-20	Al	-	---	-
Methylene Chloride	-	---	-	-	---	-
Carbon Tetrachloride	1	5-20	Al	-	---	-
Freon 113	1	5-20	Al	-	---	-
Methyl Chloroform	1	5-20	Al	-	---	-
Ethylene Oxide	1	5-20	Al	-	---	-
Propylene Oxide	1	5-20	Al	1	75-200	Al
Allyl Chloride	1	5-20	S	1	75-200	S
Acrolein	1	5-20	Al	-	---	-
Chlorobenzene	1	5-20	Al	-	---	-
Carbon Disulfide	1	5-20	Al	-	---	-
**Cyclohexanone	-	---	Al	1	75-200	Al
***EPA Method 25 Gas	1	5-20	Al	-	---	-
	3	100-200	Al	3	750-2000	Al

\*Cylinder construction: Al = Aluminum, S = Steel, LS = Low Pressure Steel.

\*\*Cylinders are no longer available in the repository since the compounds are found to be unstable in the cylinders.

\*\*\*The gas mixture contains an aliphatic, an aromatic and carbon dioxide in nitrogen. Concentrations shown are reported in ppmC.

The gaseous compounds are acquired from commercial suppliers in compressed gas cylinders; these same cylinders, along with an appropriate delivery system, are used directly as sources of the standard gas during performance audits. The compressed gas cylinder is especially suitable as an audit device because of its simplicity, portability, low cost, flexibility in analyte delivery over a broad concentration range, reliability, and ruggedness for interstate shipping. The accuracy of the supplier-reported levels of these compounds are verified through measurement using National Bureau of Standards—Standard Reference Materials (NBS-SRM's), commercial permeation tubes, and/or reagent grade pure liquids as standards. The permeation rate of the commercially available tubes are verified by RTI before use.

The accuracy of the "known" cylinder concentrations and the stability of the compounds in the cylinders are important. Along with acquisition of new compounds and verification of their concentrations, an extensive stability study is performed. This study involves periodic analyses of the contents of each of the cylinders in the repository.

### Procedure

Once a compound is chosen, a commercial supplier is contacted to determine if a cylinder containing that compound can be prepared. If so, the manufacturer prepares the cylinder gases and determines the concentration of the analyte in the cylinder. The cylinder is sent to RTI where its contents are analyzed within seven days of its arrival. If the RTI value varies from the manufacturer's value by more than 10 percent, an analysis is performed by a third party. The cylinder contents are then analyzed one month after acquisition, two months after acquisition, and one year after acquisition. The cylinder contents are also analyzed before a cylinder is sent out for an audit. This preaudit analysis may substitute for the annual analysis if it occurs within a month of the normal analysis due date.

All analyses are carried out using gas chromatography. The column and detector are chosen so as to be optimum for the compound being measured. Three types of standards are used to generate gas concentrations for calibration of the GC for the measurement of audit materials. NBS-SRM's methane and propane are used as standards for the measurement of methane and propane audit materials. These same gases are used to calibrate the chromatographic system for measure-

ment of ethylene and propylene, assuming the FID response per carbon is constant for compound to compound. In a few others (e.g., vinyl chloride, ethylene oxide) gaseous standards are generated using permeation tubes. The standards for most of the other audit materials are prepared using pure liquids which are volatilized in a clean glass bulb.

Audit requests are directed to RTI through the EPA Project Officer. The cylinder and a regulator are then shipped by a freight carrier to the laboratory being audited. A letter is also included with the cylinders which provides general instructions for performance of the audit. The audit concentrations are provided to the requesting agency audit coordinator. After the laboratory being audited has analyzed the contents of the cylinder, the audit coordinator reports the value(s) to RTI, which in turn reports both the measured and accepted values to the Project Officer. The laboratory being audited then is responsible for shipping the cylinder and regulator back to RTI.

### Results and Discussion

To date, 106 individual audits have been initiated, and 102 are complete. The results obtained for a few typical performance audits are shown in Table 2 and

the rest are given in the full report. Generally, the results of the audits show close agreement ( $\pm 10\%$ ) with the actual cylinder concentrations measured prior to shipment.

Most of the cylinders in the repository are analyzed at least four times to determine the stability of these compounds; some are analyzed as many as eight times. An estimate of stability has been made for each cylinder that has been analyzed at least three times. This estimate is a calculation of percent change in concentration per month over the period that RTI has performed analyses of the cylinder contents. The calculation involves a linear regression analysis of the concentration of the analyte versus time in days. The slope and intercept determined by this regression analysis are then used to calculate percent change per month by the relationship

$$\% \text{ change/month} = \frac{\text{slope}}{y \text{ intercept}} \times 100 \times 30$$

Examples of stability data are shown in Table 3. Changes are noted for each compound, although these changes may not be significantly different from zero. As the number of analyses per cylinder increases, additional statistical analyses will be performed.

Table 2. Typical Audit Results

Industry	Audit Material	Cylinder Concentration (ppm)	Client Audit Bias (%)
Maleic anhydride production	Benzene in N <sub>2</sub>	138	-9.4
		300	+4.7
Vinyl chloride production	1,2-Dichloroethane in N <sub>2</sub>	9.3	+6.0
		462	+3.7
Vegetable oil plant	Hexane in N <sub>2</sub>	82.2	+5.6
		1982	+3.0
Degreasing vent	Trichloroethylene in N <sub>2</sub>	14.9	-0.4
		566	-8.7

Table 3. Typical Stability Results

Compound	Concentration (ppm)	Period of Cylinder Analyses (Months)	% Change/Month
Benzene	12.2	25	-0.15
Benzene	296	27	0.01
Hydrogen sulfide	9.15	37	-0.05
1,2 Dichloroethane	439	28	-0.10
Perchloroethylene	13.0	13	-0.23
Acrylonitrile	20.1	28	-1.07
Chloroform	348	33	-0.20
Propylene	14.8	25	0.06

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## Conclusions

Cylinder gases of hydrocarbons, halocarbons, and sulfur species have been used successfully to assess the accuracy of gas chromatographic systems used to measure organic compounds in source emissions. Absolute accuracy has not been determined because of lack of standard reference materials; instead interlaboratory bias has been reported for the performance audits conducted during source testing. The interlaboratory bias determined has been generally within 10 percent for both low and high concentration gases.

Thirty-seven out of 42 gaseous compounds have demonstrated sufficient stability in cylinders for use as audit materials. Five compounds (ethylamine, paradichlorobenzene cyclohexane, formaldehyde and aniline) are not recommended as audit materials for various reasons as discussed in the full report. The estimates of stability are reported in terms of percent change per month. Detailed statistical analyses which would separate statistical deviations from true concentration change with time for 14 compounds have been recently published in a journal publication and statistical analyses for the remaining compounds are in progress and will be presented in the final report.

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*J. E. Knoll and D. J. von Lehmden are the EPA Project Officers (see below). The complete report, entitled "Stability of Organic Audit Materials and Results of Source Test Analysis Audits—Status Report #5," (Order No. PB 84-128 578; Cost: \$11.50, subject to change) will be available only from:*

*National Technical Information Service  
5285 Port Royal Road  
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*The EPA Project Officer can be contacted at:  
Environmental Monitoring Systems Laboratory  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
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☆ U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1984-759-015/7

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Environmental Protection  
Agency

Center for Environmental Research  
Information  
Cincinnati OH 45268

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