

## METHOD 3020A

### ACID DIGESTION OF AQUEOUS SAMPLES AND EXTRACTS FOR TOTAL METALS FOR ANALYSIS BY GFAA SPECTROSCOPY

#### 1.0 SCOPE AND APPLICATION

1.1 This digestion procedure is used for the preparation of aqueous samples, mobility-procedure extracts, and wastes that contain suspended solids for analysis by furnace atomic absorption spectroscopy (GFAA) for the metals listed below. The procedure is used to determine the total amount of the metal in the sample.

1.2 Samples prepared by Method 3020 may be analyzed by GFAA for the following metals:

Beryllium	Lead
Cadmium	Molybdenum
Chromium	Thallium
Cobalt	Vanadium

NOTE: For the digestion and GFAA analysis of arsenic and selenium, see Methods 7060 and 7740. For the digestion and GFAA analysis of silver, see Method 7761.

#### 2.0 SUMMARY OF METHOD

2.1 A mixture of nitric acid and the material to be analyzed is refluxed in a covered Griffin beaker. This step is repeated with additional portions of nitric acid until the digestate is light in color or until its color has stabilized. After the digestate has been brought to a low volume, it is cooled and brought up in dilute nitric acid such that the final dilution contains 3% (v/v) nitric acid. This percentage will vary depending on the amount of acid used to complete the digestion. If the sample contains suspended solids, it must be centrifuged, filtered, or allowed to settle.

#### 3.0 INTERFERENCES

3.1 Interferences are discussed in the referring analytical method.

#### 4.0 APPARATUS AND MATERIALS

4.1 Griffin beakers - 150-mL, or equivalent.

4.2 Watch glasses - ribbed or equivalent.

4.3 Qualitative filter paper or centrifugation equipment.

4.4 Funnel or equivalent.

4.5 Graduated Cylinder - 100mL.

4.6 Electric hot plate or equivalent - adjustable and capable of maintaining a temperature of 90-95°C.

## 5.0 REAGENTS

5.1 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 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.

5.2 Reagent Water. Reagent water will be interference free. All references to water in the method refer to reagent water unless otherwise specified. Refer to Chapter One for a definition of reagent water.

5.3 Nitric acid (concentrated),  $\text{HNO}_3$ . Acid should be analyzed to determine levels of impurities. If method blank is  $< \text{MDL}$ , the acid can be used.

## 6.0 SAMPLE COLLECTION, PRESERVATION, AND HANDLING

6.1 All samples must have been collected using a sampling plan that addresses the considerations discussed in Chapter Nine of this manual.

6.2 All sample containers must be prewashed with detergents, acids, and water. Plastic and glass containers are both suitable. See Chapter Three, Step 3.1.3, for further information.

6.3 Aqueous wastewaters must be acidified to a pH of  $< 2$  with  $\text{HNO}_3$ .

## 7.0 PROCEDURE

7.1 Transfer a 100-mL representative aliquot of the well-mixed sample to a 150-mL Griffin beaker and add 3 mL of concentrated  $\text{HNO}_3$ . Cover the beaker with a ribbed watch glass. Place the beaker on a hot plate and cautiously evaporate to a low volume (5 mL), making certain that the sample does not boil and that no portion of the bottom of the beaker is allowed to go dry. Cool the beaker and add another 3-mL portion of concentrated  $\text{HNO}_3$ . Cover the beaker with a non-ribbed watch glass and return to the hot plate. Increase the temperature of the hot plate so that a gentle reflux action occurs.

7.2 Continue heating, adding additional acid as necessary, until the digestion is complete (generally indicated when the digestate is light in color or does not change in appearance with continued refluxing). When the digestion is complete, evaporate to a low volume (3 mL); use a ribbed watch glass, not allowing any portion of the bottom of the beaker to go dry. Remove the beaker and add approximately 10 mL of water, mix, and continue warming the beaker for 10 to 15 minutes to allow additional solubilization of any residue to occur.

7.3 Remove the beaker from the hot plate and wash down the beaker walls and watch glass with water. When necessary, filter or centrifuge the sample to remove silicates and other insoluble material that may interfere with injecting the sample into the graphite atomizer. (This additional step can cause sample contamination unless the filter and filtering apparatus are thoroughly cleaned and prerinsed with dilute HNO<sub>3</sub>.) Adjust to the final volume of 100 mL with water. The sample is now ready for analysis.

## 8.0 QUALITY CONTROL

8.1 All quality control measures described in Chapter One should be followed.

8.2 For each batch of samples processed, method blanks should be carried throughout the entire sample preparation and analytical process. These blanks will be useful in determining if samples are being contaminated. Refer to Chapter One for the proper protocol when analyzing blanks.

8.3 Replicate samples should be processed on a routine basis. Replicate samples will be used to determine precision. The sample load will dictate frequency, but 5% is recommended. Refer to Chapter One for the proper protocol when analyzing replicates.

8.4 Spiked samples or standard reference materials should be employed to determine accuracy. A spiked sample should be included with each batch of samples processed or 5% and whenever a new sample matrix is being analyzed. Refer to Chapter One for the proper protocol when analyzing spikes.

8.5 The concentration of all calibration standards should be verified against a quality control check sample obtained from an outside source. Refer to Chapter One for the proper protocol.

8.6 The method of standard addition shall be used for the analysis of all EP extracts. See Method 7000, Step 8.7, for further information.

## 9.0 METHOD PERFORMANCE

9.1 No data provided.

## 10.0 REFERENCES

1. Rohrbough, W.G.; et al. Reagent Chemicals, American Chemical Society Specifications, 7th ed.; American Chemical Society: Washington, DC, 1986.
2. 1985 Annual Book of ASTM Standards, Vol. 11.01; "Standard Specification for Reagent Water"; ASTM: Philadelphia, PA, 1985; D1193-77.

METHOD 3020A  
ACID DIGESTION FOR AQUEOUS SAMPLES AND EXTRACTS  
FOR TOTAL METALS FOR ANALYSIS BY GFAA SPECTROSCOPY

