



Designation: D3943 – 21

Standard Test Method for Total Molybdenum in Fresh Alumina-Base Catalysts¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D3943; 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 reappraisal. A superscript epsilon (ε) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reappraisal.

1. Scope

1.1 This test method covers the determination of molybdenum in alumina-base catalysts and has been cooperatively tested at molybdenum concentrations from 8 to 18 weight %, expressed as MoO₃. Any component of the catalyst other than molybdenum such as iron, tungsten, etc., which is capable of being oxidized by either ferric or ceric ions after being passed through a zinc-amalgam reductor column (Jones reductor) will interfere.

1.2 *Units*—The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as standard. No other units of measurement are included in this standard.

1.3 Many catalysts that contain molybdenum also contain other metals, nickel for example, that may be regulated by the EPA. Go to the material safety data sheet for the catalyst material being analyzed. More information can be found at EPA.gov. Additional information on nickel containing catalysts can be found in Test Method [D4481](#).

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

[D1193](#) Specification for Reagent Water

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee [D32](#) on Catalysts and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee [D32.03](#) on Chemical Composition.

Current edition approved June 1, 2021. Published June 2021. Originally approved in 1980. Last previous edition approved in 2015 as D3943 – 10(2015). DOI: 10.1520/D3943-21.

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.

[D4481](#) Test Method for Total Nickel in Fresh Alumina-Base Catalysts

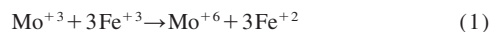
[D7442](#) Practice for Sample Preparation of Fluid Catalytic Cracking Catalysts and Zeolites for Elemental Analysis by Inductively Coupled Plasma Optical Emission Spectroscopy

[E173](#) Practice for Conducting Interlaboratory Studies of Methods for Chemical Analysis of Metals (Withdrawn 1998)³

[E507](#) Test Method for Determination of Aluminum in Iron Ores by Flame Atomic Absorption Spectrometry

3. Summary of Test Method

3.1 The catalyst is digested in hot sulfuric acid to dissolve molybdenum, destroy organic matter, and to expel nitrates if present. The acid solution is diluted and passed through an amalgamated zinc column (Jones reductor) into a receiving flask containing an excess of ferric ammonium sulfate. The column quantitatively reduces the molybdenum (Mo⁺⁶ to Mo⁺³) which in turn is reoxidized in the receiving flask according to the reaction:



3.2 The ferrous ion produced (three per Mo⁺³ oxidized) is titrated with standard ceric sulfate solution in the presence of ferroin indicator. The indicator undergoes a color change (pink to colorless or very faint blue-green) in the presence of excess ceric ion. The amount of Fe⁺² titrated in the reaction:



is a direct measure of Mo⁺⁶ concentration.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 This test method sets forth a procedure by which catalyst samples can be compared either on an interlaboratory or intralaboratory basis. It is anticipated that catalyst producers and users will find this method of value.

5. Interferences

5.1 Elements such as As, Sb, Cr, Fe, Ti, V, U, or W can interfere in this analysis. If serious interference occurs, it will

³ The last approved version of this historical standard is referenced on www.astm.org.

be necessary to isolate the molybdenum from the interfering species prior to measurement.

5.2 Organics and nitrates can interfere or react with the zinc-amalgam if the sulfuric acid treatment is not properly carried out as described in 9.1.

6. Apparatus

6.1 *Beakers*, 250 mL.

6.2 *Jones Reductor Column*, 30 cm long by 2 cm in outer diameter, with a 100 mL reservoir.⁴ Attach a piece of vinyl tubing to the end of the delivery tube long enough to extend to the bottom of the filtering flask (see Test Method E507).

6.3 *Vacuum Filtering Flask*, heavy-walled, 1000 mL.

6.4 *Buret*, 50 mL, Class A (0.1 mL divisions).

6.5 *Stirring Motor*, magnetic, and TFE-fluorocarbon-covered stirring bars, 7.11 by 14.2 mm.

7. Reagents

7.1 *Purity of Reagents*—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.⁵ 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.

7.2 *Purity of Water*—Unless otherwise indicated, references to water shall be understood to mean reagent water conforming to Specification D1193.

7.3 *Ceric Sulfate*, 0.10 *N* standardized using sodium molybdate following the procedure given in Annex A2.

NOTE 1—Refer to Section 8 on Hazards in Practice D7442 for hazards associated with handling of acids.

7.4 *Ferric Ammonium Sulfate Solution*— $[\text{FeNH}_4(\text{SO}_4)_2 \cdot 12\text{H}_2\text{O}]$ —Dissolve 200 g of $[\text{FeNH}_4(\text{SO}_4)_2 \cdot 12\text{H}_2\text{O}]$ in 1000 mL of water containing 20 mL of concentrated sulfuric acid. Add potassium permanganate solution dropwise until a pink color persists for 1 min.

7.5 *Ferriin Indicator*, 0.025 *M* solution of 1, 10-phenanthroline ferrous sulfate complex.

7.6 *Hydrochloric Acid (HCl)*, concentrated.

7.7 *Jones Reductor Amalgam*.

7.8 *Mercuric Chloride (HgCl_2) Solution*, approximately 2 %. Dissolve 10 g of mercuric chloride (HgCl_2) in water. Transfer to a 500 mL volumetric flask, dilute to volume, and mix.

7.9 *Molybdenum Standard Solution*—Dissolve 1.0 g, weighed to the nearest 0.1 mg, of sodium molybdate dihydrate ($\text{Na}_2\text{MoO}_4 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$) in water containing 10 mL of H_2SO_4 , transfer to a 1 L volumetric flask, dilute to volume, and mix (1 mL = 0.5948 mg MoO_3).

7.10 *Phosphoric Acid (H_3PO_4), concentrated*—Mix 130 mL of concentrated H_2SO_4 with 250 mL of water. Add the acid slowly with constant stirring. Add 140 mL of concentrated H_3PO_4 and 15 mL of a saturated solution of MnSO_4 (approximately 60 g/100 mL). Dilute to 1000 mL with water.

7.11 *Potassium Permanganate (KMnO_4)*, approximately 0.1 *M* solution.

7.12 *Sulfuric Acid (H_2SO_4)*, concentrated, 1 + 1 and 1 + 19, dilutions with water, corresponding to 18 and 1.8 *N* solutions, respectively. Cautiously add the concentrated sulfuric acid to the water, mix well, and allow to cool.

7.13 *Sulfuric Acid (H_2SO_4)*, dilute, 1 + 99, warm, dilutions with water, corresponding to 0.18 *N* solution. Cautiously add the concentrated sulfuric acid to the water and mix well.

7.14 *Zinc Metal*, 20 mesh, low iron content.

8. Sampling

8.1 The selection of a representative analytical sample from the bulk material is outside the scope of the present method. It is presumed that parties using this test method for comparison purposes will have agreed on the selection of an analytical sample which is appropriate to their needs.

8.2 Pulverize the analytical sample to pass a 150 μm (No. 100) sieve. Ignite the pulverized sample for 30 min at 550 °C in a muffle furnace. Allow to cool in a desiccator.

9. Procedure

9.1 Transfer a 0.75 g specimen, weighed to the nearest 1 mg, into a 250 mL beaker. Add 20 mL of 1 + 1 H_2SO_4 solution and heat to fumes on a hot plate. Cool, rinse down with 10 mL of water and take to fumes again. Cool, add 100 mL of water and heat to dissolve. Cool to room temperature.

9.2 Activate the Jones reductor by passive five 25 mL portions (1 min/25 mL of solution passed) of the 1 + 19 H_2SO_4 through the column, using slight vacuum. Do not allow the amalgam to become exposed to air. Test the column by passing a blank of 25 mL of 1 + 19 H_2SO_4 through the reductor into a receiver containing 15 mL of ferric ammonium sulfate solution. Add 2 to 3 drops of ferriin indicator and 10 mL of concentrated H_3PO_4 and titrate with 0.1 *N* ceric sulfate solution until the pink indicator color completely disappears and is replaced by a colorless to faint blue green color which persists for at least 15 s. If more than 1 or 2 drops of ceric sulfate solution are required, repeat the washing and testing until a suitable blank is obtained.

⁴ The sole source of supply of the apparatus known to the committee at this time is Part No. 8035-J10 from Thomas Scientific, 99 High Hill Rd. at 295, Swedesboro, NJ 08085. If you are aware of alternative suppliers, please provide this information to ASTM International Headquarters. Your comments will receive careful consideration at a meeting of the responsible technical committee,¹ which you may attend.

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 *Annual 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.