



Standard Guide for Detection of Fouling and Degradation of Particulate Ion Exchange Materials¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This guide presents a series of tests and evaluations intended to detect fouling and degradation of particulate ion exchange materials. Suggestions on reducing fouling and on cleaning resins are given.

1.2 This guide is to be used only as an aid in the evaluation of particulate ion exchange material performance and does not purport to address all possible causes of unsatisfactory performance. The evaluations of mechanical and operational problems are not addressed.

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

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:²

- D 1129 Terminology Relating to Water
- D 1782 Test Methods for Operating Performance of Particulate Cation-Exchange Materials
- D 2187 Test Methods for Physical and Chemical Properties of Particulate Ion Exchange Resins
- D 2332 Practice for Analysis of Water-Formed Deposits by Wavelength-Dispersive X-Ray Fluorescence
- D 2687 Practices for Sampling Particulate Ion-Exchange Materials
- D 3087 Test Method for Operating Performance of Anion-Exchange Materials for Strong Acid Removal
- D 3375 Test Method for Column Capacity of Particulate Mixed Bed Ion Exchange Materials
- D 3682 Test Method for Major and Minor Elements in Combustion Residues from Coal Utilization Processes

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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.

- D 3683 Test Method for Trace Elements in Coal and Coke Ash by the Atomic Absorption Method
- D 5042 Test Methods for Estimating the Organic Fouling of Particulate Anion Exchange Resins
- E 830 Test Method for Ash in the Analysis Sample of Refuse-Derived Fuel

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—For definitions of terms used in this guide, refer to Terminology D 1129.

3.2 Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:

3.2.1 *organic fouling*—the buildup of organic material in or on anion exchange resins by sorption during the service cycle and incomplete removal during normal regeneration.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 Resins used in demineralization systems may deteriorate due to many factors including chemical attack, fouling by organic and inorganic materials, mishandling, or the effects of aging. Detection of degradation or fouling may be important in determining the cause of poor demineralizer performance.

5. Sampling

5.1 Follow the recommendations of Practices D 2687 for obtaining samples of particulate ion exchange materials. Core samples are important for obtaining representative samples; however, special problems may dictate other sampling requirements, such as surface, interface, or other samples.

6. Preliminary Examination

6.1 Examine the sample visually or with the aid of a magnifier for any abnormalities. Note any unusual color, precipitates, biological material (slime), particulate matter, or small pieces or fragments of resin. Note that the color of resin may vary from lot to lot or with normal use and would not be considered unusual.

6.2 Note any peculiar odor associated with the sample, such as from oil, solvents, or biological activity.



TABLE 1 Detection of Fouling and Degradation of Particulate Ion Exchange Materials

Section No.	Property Tested	Test Results	Possible Indications
6	Visual appearance	Unusual color or precipitates Pieces/fragments present	Coating on beads from foulants or improper regeneration Physical degradation
6	Odor	Unusual odor	Fouling of resin by oil, solvents, etc. or biological activity
7	Moisture	Higher than expected (>10 % above) Lower than expected	Degradation of resin causing decrosslinking Fouling of resin by heavy materials, such as metal oxides
7	Particle size distribution	Smaller sizes than expected Larger sizes than expected	Physical degradation or non-representative sample Loss of smaller beads by backwash or through strainers
8	Mixed bed resin separation	Poor separation	Ionic form of resin may not be correct Resin may be fouled Particle size distribution of beads may be incorrect
9	Ash content and metals	Higher than expected	Fouling of resin by expected metal oxides or silica (from corrosion products, influent water, or regenerants)
10	Organic fouling of anion resins	Moderate to severe	Presence of sufficient organic fouling to affect performance
11	Column performance	Poorer than expected	Degradation or fouling sufficient to affect performance
12	Kinetics	Poorer than expected	Degradation or fouling sufficient to affect performance

7. Moisture and Particle Size Distribution

7.1 Follow procedures given in Test Methods D 2187, Methods A, B, and D for determining moisture (water retention capacity) and particle size distribution.

7.2 Compare the values obtained in 7.1 to those expected for the resin when in good condition. It is preferred that new resin, treated in the same way, be used for this comparison, but manufacturer's specifications can also be used.

8. Mixed-Bed Resin Separation

8.1 Observe resin during separation according to Test Methods D 2187, Method A. Adjust backwash rate to give optimum separation, then let resin settle and observe interface and note degree of cross-mixing.

9. Ash Content and Metals Analysis

9.1 Follow the procedure given in Test Method E 830 for determining the ash content of the pretreated and dried sample. A larger sample portion may be used for low-ash resins.

9.2 Analyze the ash for silica or metals such as iron, copper, manganese, barium, aluminum, calcium, magnesium, or others which might be suspected as contaminants. Use X-ray fluorescence analysis to determine major elements (see Practice D 2332). Employ digestion, fusion, and analysis techniques as would be used for other types of ash. (See Test Methods D 3682 and D 3683.) Note that some elements may be lost during the 575°C ashing, and spike recoveries must be checked.

10. Detection of Organic Fouling of Anion Resins

10.1 Follow procedures given in Test Methods D 5042 for estimation of the degree of organic fouling of anion resins.

10.2 For a more rapid, but less reliable evaluation of the resin, the caustic-brine extract from Test Methods D 5042 may be judged by color rather than by total organic carbon measurement: the darker the color, the heavier the organic fouling. Note that colorless foulants such as detergents or synthetic polyelectrolytes will not be detected.

11. Column Performance Testing

11.1 Follow procedures given in Test Methods D 3375, D 3087, or D 1782 as needed to evaluate the performance of mixed bed, anion, or cation exchange materials, respectively.

12. Kinetics Testing

12.1 The evaluation of the kinetics properties of ion-exchange resins is especially important for anion resins used in high flow rate applications such as condensate polishing.

12.2 Test the resin's kinetics properties according to published procedures such as those by the Central Electricity Generating Board³ and Rohm & Haas Company⁴.

13. Interpretation of Results

13.1 Table 1 gives general guidelines for the interpretation of results from these tests. Note that in most cases, test results must be compared to those obtained for resins of the same type which are in good operating condition.

13.2 Caution must be exercised in applying these test results to the evaluation of operating demineralizer systems. However, Appendix X1 and Appendix X2 give some suggestions for pretreatment and resin cleaning procedures. The user should also consult with the resin supplier before using any new treatment process.

14. Precision and Bias

14.1 No statement is made about either the precision or the bias of this guide since the result merely states whether there is conformance to the criteria for success specified in the procedure.

15. Keywords

15.1 degradation; fouling; ion exchange; kinetics; resin

³ Harris, R. R., "Anion Exchange Kinetics in Condensate Purification Mixed Beds-Assessment and Performance Prediction," *Proceedings of EPRI Condensate Polishing Workshop*, October 1985, pp. 31-40.

⁴ McNulty, J. T., et al., "Anion Exchange Resin Kinetic Testing: An Indispensable Diagnostic Tool for Condensate Polisher Troubleshooting," *Proceedings of International Water Conference*, October, 1986.



APPENDIXES

(Nonmandatory Information)

X1. METHODS FOR PREVENTING OR REDUCING FOULANTS TO ION EXCHANGE RESINS⁵

X1.1 These are only suggested treatments; the resin supplier should be consulted before any new treatment process is used.

Suspected Contaminant or Foulant Organics

Humic or fulvic solubles in water
Humic or fulvic leakage from pretreatment-coagulation or organic traps
Colloidal color from influent water
Cation degradation products
Oil, soluble or grease
Organic or vegetable fibers
Filter media, celite/siliceous
Filter media, cellulose (solka floc)
Micro-organisms, algae, bacteria, slime, etc.
Detergents, ABS/LAS, anionic
Detergents, cationic
Air-borne dusts, micro-organisms
Solvents/detergents from new resins
Amines from anion resins
Sloughage from aged exhausted activated carbon
Organic leakage from weak/Type II
Resin leakage, fines or beads
Polyelectrolytes/coagulation aids

Metals or Non-Metals:

Silt, clay, turbidity (colloidal)
Colloidal silica (insoluble)
Silica gelation (due to high soluble silica and strong caustic)
Manganese on cation resin with HCl regeneration causing oxidative attack by chlorine
Iron, soluble or insoluble, influent (greater than 0.5 mg/L per 24-h run)
Iron, soluble, to 30 mg/L (no air)
Corrosion products, iron, copper, etc., in cation water or regeneration dilution water
Iron in caustic, above 10 mg/L (50 % sodium hydroxide basis)
Sulfur precipitate, above 0.5 mg/L per 24-h run
Aluminum floc/aluminum precipitation (above 0.3 mg/L per 24 h)
Barium, strontium, calcium forming sulfate precipitate
Chlorine, ozone, oxidation

Physical/Radiological:

High operating water temperature
Radiation (less than 1 r/day)

Osmotic regeneration shocks
Air mixing in mixed beds/oxidation of cation resins

X1.2 **Warning:** Treatments used on potable water production systems must meet all applicable safety and health regulations.

Possible Pretreatment or Method to Reduce Fouling

Coagulation, lime softening, organic traps
Activated carbon, caustic/salt treatment
Coagulation, lime softening, ultra filter
Rinse new resins, sulfite/SO₂ feeds
Pretreatment, coagulation, filter
Coagulation and filter
Better control of filter operation
Better control of filter operation (add another filter)
Chlorine/coagulation/filtration
Activated carbon, foam fractionation
Activated carbon
Add filter to air blowers/compressors
Warm rinse or brine acid treatment, or both
Warm rinse
Renew carbon, caustic-salt treatments
Pretreat/coagulation/caustic-salt treatments
Improve underdrain collector
Reduce dosage of aids

Coagulation/filtration pretreatment
Coagulation/filtration
Reduce temperature, sodium hydroxide strength, step regeneration
Aeration/filtration, with or without coagulation

Aeration/coagulation/filtration
Brine regeneration with reducing agents
Use plastic materials, stainless steel

Evaluate resin replacement versus sodium hydroxide
Aeration and filter, with or without coagulation
High rate polishing filter
Lime softening pretreatment
Activated carbon, sulfite/SO₂ feed

Evaluate temperature reduction versus resin cost
Evaluate radiation versus resin replacement
Reduce regenerant strengths, limit exchange capacity
Restrict air mixing time to minimum

⁵ Crits, G. J., "The Prevention of Organics and Other Foulants in Ion Exchange Resins," 24th Annual Liberty Bell Corrosion Course, April 1986.

X2. CLEANING AGENTS AND PROCEDURES FOR ION EXCHANGE RESINS⁶

X2.1 These are only suggested treatments; the resin supplier should be consulted before any new treatment process is used.

X2.2 **Warning:** Treatments used on potable water production systems must meet all applicable safety and health regulations.

X2.3 *Procedures:*

X2.3.1 Brine at least 8 lb/ft³ (at 12 to 15 %).

X2.3.2 Air scour—at minimum 4 ft³/min/ft² with minimum 24 in. water above bed

X2.3.3 Air lance (at 4 ft³/min/ft²) along with soak is recommended.

X2.3.4 Always backwash thoroughly after treatment, for at least 30 min.

X2.3.5 For softener after acid treatments, always brine twice.

⁶ Crits, G. J., "Resin Cleaning Methods and Are They Effective," 24th Annual Liberty Bell Corrosion Course, April, 1986.

X2.4 These cyclic caustic/salt applications should be performed at regular intervals such as each week, month, and so forth, to prevent the fixing or polymerization of the organics or color.

Equipment System	Type Resin	Suspected Contaminants	Possible Cleaning Agents and Procedures
Softener	Strong acid cation	Iron, manganese	Brine, 8 lb/ft ³ Air scour Brine with 1 lb, sodium hydrosulfite, soak 2 h
Softener	Strong acid cation	Iron, manganese	Brine Air scour 2 lb sulfamic, or citric, or oxalic acid per ft ³ at 2.5 % Air lance, soak for 2 to 4 h
Softener	Strong acid cation	Iron, manganese, silica gels, aluminum floc	Brine Air scour Caustic, 2 lb/ft ³ at 2 to 4 % Air lance, soak 2 h
Softener	Strong acid cation	Slime, iron chrenothrix algae, etc.	H + Beds—must brine first Air scour Brine with 0.8 to 1.2 oz. sodium hypochlorite solution (5 %)/ft ³ Soak 2 h, air lance
Softener/Demineralizer/ Mixed Bed	Strong acid cation	Slime, bacteria, algae, etc.	Brine, 8 lb/ft ³ Formaldehyde, peracetic, or H ₂ O ₂ at ¼ to ½ %, soak 3 h or more Air lance
Softener/Demineralizer	Strong acid cation	Slime, bacteria, algae, etc.	Apply 0.5 to 1 mg/L chlorine (on line feed) sodium hypochlorite-solution for 2 to 5 h (also, I ₂ , O ₃ , H ₂ O ₂ , hot 70°C water may be used)
Softener/Demineralizer/ De-alkalizer	Strong acid or cation anion resin	Oil, fibers, sulfur, algae or- ganics	Brine (to remove acid and hardness) Caustic, 2 lb/ft ³ (1 to 3 %) with non-ionic surfactant Air lance Air scour
Softener/Demineralizer/ De-alkalizer	Strong acid or weak acid cation	Calcium sulfate, iron	HCl, 2 to 3 gal. of 30 %/ft ³ (add extra acid for conversion of resin to H + form); equipment must be HCl corrosion proof
Softener/Demineralizer/ De-alkalizer (Problems without oil)	Strong acid or weak acid cation	Organic fibers, cellulose filter media	Air scour Brine with or without 0.05 to 0.1 % detergent (non-ionic surfactant) Air lance
Demineralizer/Organic trap/ De-alkalizer	Strong or weak base anion	Iron, calcium, magnesium	Exhaust and brine ^A 2 gal of 30 % HCl per ft ³ For calcium and magnesium, apply 3 % HCl For iron, apply 15 % HCl Flow slowly for 2 h
Demineralizer/Organic trap	Strong base anion	Silica precipitates or gels	Regenerate with normal sodium hydroxide, air scour or lance Apply extra 2 lb sodium hydroxide/ft ³ at 2 to 4 % and air lance for 1 h Rinse, backwash, and regenerate again
Demineralizer/Organic trap	Strong base anion Type 1	Organics, color, foulants	Cyclic caustic/salt Sodium hydroxide (warm 150°F) 2 lb/Cu. at 3 %. Displace with water, 10min. salt (warm), 6 to 8 lb/ft ³ at 12 %. Displace with water, 10 min. Repeat 3 times or until color in effluent drops below 20 % of the maximum observed. (Alternatively 2 to 3 bed volumes of a combined 10 % NaCl and 1 to 2 % NaOH solution at 120 to 140°F can be used, soaking on the last volume.)
Demineralizer/Organic trap/ De-alkalizer	Strong Base Type I Type II	Organics with iron/heavy metals	Cyclic caustic/salt treatments followed by HCl ^B ; 2 gal. of 30 % HCl per ft ³ applied to drained bed (water level below bed 3 in.) Soak and displace slowly over 1 or 2 h; note effluent color
Demineralizer/Organic trap/ De-alkalizer	Strong base anion	Organics and/or bacterial slimes	Air scour Regenerate with sodium hydroxide—no acidity Brine with 0.5 to 1.0 oz. of sodium hypochlorite solution (5 %) per ft ³ Soak 2 h or more Air lance if slimes are high
		Slimes, bacteria	Hot water soak/flow at 70°C for 3 h or more ^C

^A For strong base resin with high silica exchanged (over 7 %), regenerate with normal caustic dosage first to remove silica, then brine to exhaust or remove the alkalinity.

^B Equipment must be HCl-corrosion proof when using HCl acid.

^C Internal surfaces of the unit, piping, regen. tank must be contacted by the sterilizing agent to prevent re-infection of the resin beds.

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