

Regulatory Announcement

Direct Final Rule Updates Gasoline and Diesel Fuel Test Methods

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is issuing a direct final rule with a corresponding proposed rule that updates our motor vehicle fuels regulations on several test method issues. This rule makes certain fuel testing requirements more up-to-date by having refiners and laboratories use the most current versions of certain American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) Committee D.02 analytical test methods. Together, these rules will allow improvements in the test method procedure to ensure better operation and provide additional flexibility to the regulated community.

Elements of This Rulemaking

This rulemaking makes the following changes:

- The designated test method for sulfur in butane is being changed from ASTM D 3246 to ASTM D 6667, which is more readily available, more reliable, and a better test method than the current designated test method. ASTM D 3246 would continue to be allowed as an alternative test method for sulfur in butane provided its results are correlated to the new sulfur in butane designated test method.
- The September 1, 2004, sunset provision for two gasoline alternative test methods, ASTM D 1319 and ASTM D 4815, is removed. (Since the sunset provision went into effect, the two alternative test methods

have been allowed by enforcement discretion.) ASTM D 1319 is an alternative test method for aromatics in gasoline, and ASTM D 4815 is an alternative test method for oxygenates in gasoline. Use of these alternative test methods would continue to be allowed until EPA promulgates a performance-based test method (PBTM) approach, which would establish criteria for the qualification of alternative test methods. At that time, these two alternative test methods may qualify as alternative test methods under the PBTM's criteria.

- ASTM D 6428 (an ASTM D.16 Committee test method developed primarily for measuring the sulfur content of simpler chemical matrices) is being replaced with the essentially identical D 6920 (an ASTM D.02 Committee test method). ASTM's D.02 Committee recently determined the precision of D 6920 with respect to gasoline and diesel fuel. ASTM D 6428 is currently our designated test method for sulfur at the 15 ppm level in diesel fuel, and is also an alternative test method for sulfur in gasoline and diesel fuel at the 500 ppm sulfur level. ASTM D 6920 differs from D 6428 only in that its precision estimates apply to gasoline and diesel fuel matrices, making the method more practically applicable to our fuels regulatory programs.
- An additional alternative test method for sulfur in gasoline, ASTM D 7039, is being provided, which will provide more flexibility to the regulated industry.

- The references in our regulations to ASTM analytical test methods D 2622, D 3120, D 5453, D 1319, and D 4815 are being updated to their most recent ASTM versions. These test methods are referenced in EPA regulations for measuring chemical compositions in reformulated gasoline (RFG), conventional gasoline (CG), and motor vehicle diesel fuel. These updates allow for improvements in the test methods' procedures that will ensure better operation and practicality of use of the test methods for the regulated community. These updates are listed below along with the fuel parameters to which they apply and the regulatory status of the methods.
 - ASTM D 2622-03 - sulfur in gasoline (designated test method)
 - ASTM D 5453-03a - sulfur in gasoline (alternative test method*)
 - ASTM D 3120-03a - sulfur in gasoline (alternative test method*)
 - ASTM D 4815-03 - oxygenate content in gasoline (alternative test method*)
 - ASTM D 1319-03 - olefins in gasoline (designated test method) & aromatics in gasoline (alternative test method*) & diesel (designated test method)

** - alternative test methods results must be correlated to fuel parameter's corresponding designated test method.*

- A new section is being added to the motor vehicle fuels regulations at 40

CFR 80.9. This new section references the rounding method in ASTM standard guidance E 29-02ε1. The rounding method in this standard practice is the procedure to follow for rounding a test result when determining compliance with EPA's motor vehicle fuels standards listed at 40 CFR 80.

Health and Environmental Impacts

The clean air benefits of EPA's gasoline and diesel motor vehicle fuel programs will continue to be realized. There will be no adverse health or environmental impact as a result of these test method changes or updates.

Gasoline Supply Benefits

This direct final rule with its corresponding proposed rule will allow improvements in the test method procedure to ensure better operation and provide additional flexibility to the regulated community.

These test method changes will be effective sixty days after publication of the final rule in the Federal Register. We are confident that sixty days is sufficient lead time for industry to become familiar with and implement these ASTM test method changes or ASTM test method updates. The proposed rule also solicits comments on these changes. However, we do not anticipate any adverse comments and believe the industry will be very supportive of these changes in the regulations.

For Further Information

You can access documents on these rulemakings on EPA's Office of Transportation and Air Quality Web site at:

www.epa.gov/otaq/rfg_regs.htm

For further information about the direct final rule or proposed rule, please contact Joe Sopata at:

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