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Good plant design for CO₂ stream impurity measurement

First edition

GOOD PLANT DESIGN FOR CO₂ STREAM IMPURITY MEASUREMENT

First edition

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CONTENTS

	Page
Foreword	9
Acknowledgements	11
1 Introduction	13
2 Scope	15
3 Possible impurities to be measured and related issues	16
3.1 Introduction	16
3.2 Prioritising (risk to network)	16
3.3 Potential for acids in the CO ₂ stream	18
4 Sampling	20
4.1 Introduction	20
4.2 Homogeneity of composition and uniformity of flow	20
4.3 Sampling methods	21
4.3.1 Direct (on-line or active) sampling	21
4.3.2 Passive sampling (in-line/in-situ/insertion type)	21
4.3.3 Indirect sampling (off-line, grab, or spot)	21
4.4 Sample point selection	22
4.5 Sample probe design	23
4.6 Sampling materials selection	23
4.7 Sample conditioning	23
4.8 Sampling frequency	26
4.9 Use of multiple samplers	27
4.10 Offline sample analysis	27
4.11 Isokinetic sampling	29
4.12 Sample gas discharge	29
5 Measurement ranges	30
6 Suitability of measurement techniques for CCS applications	32
6.1 Introduction	32
6.2 N ₂ vs CO ₂ atmosphere	32
6.3 Operating pressure	33
6.4 Effect of coincident impurities	33
6.5 Drift	33
6.6 Calibration frequency	33
6.7 Operation in explosive atmospheres	35
7 Calibration of equipment (including PRMS)	36
7.1 PRMS and CRMS	36
7.2 Availability of PRMS	36
7.3 PRMS for dense phase CO ₂ streams	38
8 Possible on-line measurement techniques for each impurity	39
8.1 Introduction	39
8.2 Certified calibration availability	40
8.3 Carbon dioxide (CO ₂)	42

Contents continued

	Page
8.4 Acid forming compounds	43
8.5 Amines	47
8.6 Ammonia (NH ₃)	48
8.7 Argon (Ar)	50
8.8 BTEX	52
8.9 Carbon disulphide (CS ₂)	54
8.10 Carbon monoxide (CO)	55
8.11 Carbonyl Sulphate (COS)	56
8.12 Ethane (C ₂ H ₆)	57
8.13 Glycols (e.g. MEG, DEG, Selexol)	58
8.14 Hydrogen (H ₂)	59
8.15 Hydrogen sulphide (H ₂ S)	61
8.16 Methane (CH ₄)	62
8.17 Methanol (CH ₃ OH)	63
8.18 Naphthalene	64
8.19 Nitramines and nitrosamines	65
8.20 Nitrogen (N ₂)	66
8.21 Nitric oxide (NO)	67
8.22 Nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂)	68
8.23 Oxygen (O ₂)	69
8.24 Propane & other aliphatic hydrocarbons.	71
8.25 Solid particulate.	72
8.26 SO _x (SO, SO ₂ , SO ₃)	73
8.27 Toxic metals (Hg, Cd, Tl)	74
8.28 VOCs (volatile organic compounds)	75
8.29 Water (H ₂ O)	78
9 Possible off-line measurement techniques for some impurities.	79
9.1 Introduction	79
9.2 Acid forming compounds	79
9.3 Amines	80
9.4 Dioxins and furans.	81
9.5 Glycols	81
9.6 Naphthalene	82
9.7 Nitrosamines and nitramines	83
9.8 Particulates	83
9.9 Toxic Metals.	85
9.10 Volatile organic compounds (VOCs)	86
10 Comment and summary: the state of the art.	87
10.1 Introduction	87
10.2 Equipment selection strategy.	87
10.3 Carbon dioxide (CO ₂)	88
10.4 Summary by impurity.	88
10.4.1 Acid-forming compounds.	88
10.4.2 Amines	89
10.4.3 Ammonia (NH ₃)	89
10.4.4 Argon (Ar)	89
10.4.5 BTEX	90

Contents continued

	Page
10.4.6 Carbon disulphide (CS ₂)	90
10.4.7 Carbon monoxide (CO)	90
10.4.8 Carbonyl sulphide (COS)	90
10.4.9 Dioxins	91
10.4.10 Ethane (C ₂ H ₆)	91
10.4.11 Furans	91
10.4.12 Glycols (eg. MEG, DEG, Selexol)	92
10.4.13 Hydrogen (H ₂)	92
10.4.14 Hydrogen sulphide (H ₂ S)	92
10.4.15 Methane (CH ₄)	92
10.4.16 Methanol (CH ₃ OH)	92
10.4.17 Naphthalene	93
10.4.18 Nitramines	93
10.4.19 Nitrogen (N ₂)	93
10.4.20 Nitric oxide (NO)	93
10.4.21 Nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂)	93
10.4.22 Nitrosamines	94
10.4.23 Oxygen (O ₂)	94
10.4.24 Particulate	94
10.4.25 Propane & other aliphatic hydrocarbons	94
10.4.26 SO _x (SO, SO ₂ , SO ₃)	94
10.4.27 Toxic metals	95
10.4.28 VOCs (volatile organic compounds)	95
10.4.29 Water (H ₂ O)	95
10.5 Summary by technology	96
10.6 Technology transfer from the industrial gases industry	99
10.7 Conclusions	100
11 Measurement standards (BSI/CEN/ISO) and timescales to publication	102
11.1 Introduction	102
11.1.1 Instrument calibration	102
11.1.2 Traceability	102
11.1.3 Precision and resolution	103
11.1.4 Measurement protocols	103
11.1.5 Error analysis and uncertainty quantification	103
11.2 Analysis of natural gas	103
11.3 IOGP Standards gap analysis	104
11.4 BSI activities	104
11.5 European Union standards initiative	104
12 Identification of gaps and timescale to development	105
12.1 Identified gaps	105
12.2 Timescales	105
12.3 Priority impurities	106
13 References	108
14 Abbreviations	111

Contents continued**Page**

14	Abbreviations	111
15	Appendices	114
15.1	Glossary of terms.	114
15.2	Gas measurement techniques	115
15.2.1	Atomic absorption spectroscopy (AAS)	115
15.2.2	Atomic fluorescence spectroscopy (AFS)	115
15.2.3	Cavity-enhanced absorption spectroscopy (CEAS)	116
15.2.4	Cavity ring-down spectroscopy (CDRS)	116
15.2.5	Condensation particle counter (CPC)	116
15.2.6	Dielectric barrier discharge ionization detector (DBDID)	116
15.2.7	Differential optical absorption spectroscopy (DOAS)	116
15.2.8	Deuterated triglycine sulphate (DTGS)	117
15.2.9	Electrochemical gas analysis (EGA)	117
15.2.10	Electrochemical quartz crystal microbalance (EQCM)	118
15.2.11	Flame ionisation detector (FID)	118
15.2.12	Flame photometric detector (FPD)	118
15.2.13	Fourier transform infrared (FTIR)	118
15.2.14	Gas chromatograph (GC)	118
15.2.15	Gas chromatograph-mass spectrometer (GC-MS)	119
15.2.16	Gas chromatograph-mass spectrometer-flame ionisation (GC-MS-FID) ..	119
15.2.17	Gas chromatograph-nitrogen chemiluminescence detector (GC-NCD) ..	119
15.2.18	Gas chromatograph-sulphur chemiluminescence detector (GC-SCD) ..	119
15.2.19	Gas chromatograph – thermal conductivity detector (GC-TCD)	120
15.2.20	High performance liquid chromatography (HPLC)	120
15.2.21	High performance liquid chromatography-mass spectrometer (HPLC-MS) ..	120
15.2.22	High performance liquid chromatography-mass spectrometer (HPLC-RI) ..	120
15.2.23	High performance liquid chromatography-ultra-violet (HPLC-UV)	120
15.2.24	Ion chromatography (IC)	121
15.2.25	Integrated cavity output spectroscopy (ICOS)	121
15.2.26	Inductively coupled plasma-mass spectrometer (ICP-MS)	121
15.2.27	Ion mobility spectrometry (IMS)	122
15.2.28	Infrared/ultraviolet (IR/UV) (as portable gas analyser)	122
15.2.29	Liquid chromatography (LC)	122
15.2.30	Mass spectrometer (MS)	123
15.2.31	Nitrogen chemiluminescent detection (NCD)	123
15.2.32	Non-dispersive infrared (NDIR)	123
15.2.33	Non-dispersive ultra-violet spectroscopy (NDUV)	123
15.2.34	Nitrogen chemiluminescence detector (NCD)	123
15.2.35	Off-axis-integrated cavity output spectroscopy (OA-ICOS)	123
15.2.36	Optical feedback cavity enhanced absorption spectroscopy (OFCEAS) ..	124
15.2.37	Optical particle counter (OPC)	124
15.2.38	Open path spectrometer (OPS)	124
15.2.39	Photo-ionisation detector (PID)	125
15.2.40	Pressure regulating and metering station (PRMS)	125
15.2.41	Quantum cascade laser (QCL)	125
15.2.42	Refractive index (RI)	126
15.2.43	Raman spectroscopy (RS)	126

Contents continued

	Page
15.2.44 Scanning electron microscopy/energy-dispersive X-ray spectrometry (SEM-EDS)	126
15.2.45 Selected ion flow tube mass spectrometry (SIFT-MS)	127
15.2.46 Scanning mobility particle sizer spectrometer (SMPS)	127
15.2.47 Thermal conductivity detector (TCD)	128
15.2.48 Tunable diode laser absorption spectroscopy (TDL-AS)	128
15.2.49 Thermogravimetric analysis	128
15.2.50 Tuneable diode-gas chromatograph-mass spectrometer (TD-GC-MS)	128
15.2.51 Tuneable diode-gas chromatograph-flame ionisation (TD-GC-FID)	128
15.2.52 Tuneable diode (TD-IC)	129
15.2.53 Tapered element oscillating microbalance (TEOM)	129
15.2.54 UV-visible (UV-Vis) spectrophotometers	129
15.2.55 X-ray fluorescence (XRF)	129
15.3 Natural gas analysis standards under review.	130
15.4 Other natural gas analysis standards	131

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES**Page****Figures**

Figure 3-1: Nitrogen oxide cycle.	17
Figure 4-1: Example of location of fiscal sampling point.	22
Figure 4-2: Processing dense phase CO ₂ to permit analysis.	24
Figure 4-3: Typical sample conditioning system	26
Figure 4-4: 'Fill and empty' purging equipment	28
Figure 8-1: Relative thermal conductivity of some gases.	60
Figure 11-1: Traceability pyramid of gas measurements	102
Figure 15-1: Atomic Fluorescence Instrument Configurations.	115
Figure 15-2: OA-ICOS concept.	121
Figure 15-2: OA-ICOS concept.	121
Figure 15-3: TDL and QCL impurity measurement potential	126

Tables

Table 3-1: Types of risk associated with individual impurities	17
Table 5-1: Estimates of the required calibration range for each impurity.	30
Table 7-1: Availability of PRMs for each impurity in Table 5-1	37
Table 8-1: On-line measurement of CO ₂ content of the stream	42
Table 8-2: On-line measurement of chlorine in CO ₂ stream	43
Table 8-3: On-line measurement of hydrogen chloride in a CO ₂ stream	44
Table 8-4: On-line measurement of hydrogen cyanide in a CO ₂ stream.	45
Table 8-5: On-line measurement of hydrogen fluoride in a CO ₂ stream	46
Table 8-7: On-line measurement of ammonia (NH ₃) in a CO ₂ stream	49
Table 8-8: On-line measurement of argon in a CO ₂ stream.	51
Table 8-9: On-line measurement of BTEX in a CO ₂ stream	52

Contents continued**Page**

Table 8-10: On-line measurement of CS ₂ in a CO ₂ stream	54
Table 8-11: On-line measurement of CO in a CO ₂ stream.	55
Table 8-12: On-line measurement of COS in a CO ₂ stream.	56
Table 8-13: On-line measurement of ethane in a CO ₂ stream.	57
Table 8-14: On-line measurement of glycols in a CO ₂ stream	58
Table 8-15: On-line measurement of hydrogen in a CO ₂ stream	59
Table 8-16: On-line measurement of H ₂ S in a CO ₂ stream	61
Table 8-17: On-line measurement of methane in a CO ₂ stream	62
Table 8-18: On-line measurement of methanol in a CO ₂ stream	63
Table 8-19: On-line measurement of naphthalene in a CO ₂ stream.	64
Table 8-20: On-line measurement of nitramines and nitrosamines in a CO ₂ stream.	65
Table 8-21: On-line measurement of nitrogen in a CO ₂ stream.	66
Table 8-22: On-line measurement of nitric oxide in a CO ₂ stream.	67
Table 8-23: On-line measurement of nitrogen dioxide in a CO ₂ stream.	68
Table 8-24: On-line measurement of oxygen in a CO ₂ stream.	69
Table 8-25: On-line measurement of propane and other aliphatic hydrocarbons in a CO ₂ stream.	71
Table 8-26: On-line measurement of solid particulate in a CO ₂ stream	72
Table 8-27: On-line measurement of SO _x in a CO ₂ stream	73
Table 8-28: On-line measurement of toxic metals in a CO ₂ stream	74
Table 8-29: On-line measurement of VOCs in a CO ₂ stream.	76
Table 8-30: On-line measurement of water in a CO ₂ stream.	78
Table 9-1: Off-line measurement of acid forming compounds in a CO ₂ stream.	79
Table 9-2: Off-line measurement of amines in a CO ₂ stream.	80
Table 10-1: Measurement of toxic metals.	95
Table 10-2: Summary of gas impurity measurement by technology	97
Table 15-1: Natural gas analysis standards under review	130
Table 15-2: Other natural gas analysis standards	131

FOREWORD

In 2006, the then Department of Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform¹ asked the UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to determine if there were any health and safety concerns relating to the deployment of large-scale carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology in the UK.

The HSE carried out a significant review of all aspects of the carbon capture and storage chain from the various capture technologies through to the injection points on the offshore platforms. Part of this process involved approaching the Energy Institute (EI) and the Carbon Capture and Storage Association (CCSA), who jointly organised several workshops to identify the key areas for development. The workshops specifically identified several areas which it believed merited greater attention.

The concerns were split into two broad subject areas:

- modelling the dispersion of any leak of carbon dioxide appropriately; and,
- ensuring good practice from industrial gases sectors is fed into the UK CCS industry and is adequate and appropriate for this new industry.

Three documents were produced to cover these topics^{2,3,4}, which proved to be a well-used resource. They were intended for guidance only and to improve the industry's knowledge, to assist developers and operators to carry out hazard analysis and procure and manage their plant safely. It was accepted when producing the documents that it would be necessary, at some point in the future, to review the documents. A decade after their publication, recognising both increased interest in CO₂ capture and storage and the work that has been undertaken in the meantime, the EI organised a series of workshops which identified the need to update the earlier documents.

The opportunity was taken to restructure the three documents into two. The first⁵, which drew on experiences from many countries, provides not only guidance on the various elements that make up a CCS chain (omitting geological storage), but also gives assistance on what is perceived as good practice in design and operation at time of writing. A second document⁶ describes all aspects relating to the hazards associated with CO₂, to include approaches to ensuring that hazards are appropriately identified, quantified and mitigated.

During the production of the first of these, several gaps in the scope were noted, which advised a future work programme. This Good Practice Guide addresses one of these, the measurement of

1 Responsibilities now allocated to the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ).

2 Energy Institute. Good plant design and operation for onshore carbon capture installations and onshore pipelines. [Updated to EI 3554]

3 Energy Institute. Technical guidance on hazard analysis for onshore carbon capture installations and onshore pipelines. [Updated to EI 3553]

4 Energy Institute. Hazard analysis for offshore carbon capture platforms and offshore pipelines. [Updated to EI 3553]

5 Energy Institute. EI 3554 Good plant design and operation for onshore and offshore carbon capture installations and pipelines. 2nd edition.

6 Energy Institute. EI 3553 Hazard analysis for onshore and offshore carbon capture installations and pipelines. 2nd edition.

impurities in the captured CO₂ stream, necessary to provide confidence between producers and the transportation and storage entities, and deliver a system which is safe, operable and affordable.

Whilst every reasonable care has been taken to ensure the accuracy and relevance of its contents, the Energy Institute, its sponsoring companies, section writers and the working group members listed in the Acknowledgements who have contributed to its preparation, cannot accept any responsibility for any action taken, or not taken based on this information. The Energy Institute shall not be liable to any person for any loss or damage which may arise from the use of any of the information contained in any of its publications.

This publication will be reviewed in the future, and it would be of considerable assistance for any subsequent revision if users would send comments or suggestions for improvements to:

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1 INTRODUCTION

The introduction of new technologies is usually accompanied by new challenges, and transitioning the carbon-based energy economy that has served humankind since the dawn of creation to something more sustainable is no exception. Carbon (dioxide) capture and storage (CCS) is expected to make a significant contribution towards managing down the atmospheric CO₂ inventory, and projects to deliver its long-term removal are currently being developed in many nations across the globe. These CCS projects, planned around tens of million tonnes annually, are being developed commercially, initially incentivised by Government support, with the awareness that the technology cannot yet be described as fully mature, and is therefore not without some degree of risk. These risks are typically managed by several actors, including conservative design and operational controls.

One of the operational controls is, having set a purity specification for the captured CO₂ stream⁷, providing confidence that the impurities are within the limits agreed between the producer and the transportation and/or storage operator. The limits are set to avoid unwanted chemical consequences (e.g. corrosion), thermodynamic effects (e.g. sudden phase changes) and reduction in downhole capacity (e.g. promotion of sulphate reducing bacteria). Such confidence is gained by measurement of the levels of impurity at the custody transfer point(s): out-of-specification CO₂ streams may be rejected (usually vented to atmosphere).

Any financial incentive between the parties is a function of the direct measurement of the CO₂ content of the stream. Knowledge of the impurity content of a CO₂ stream allows calculation of the CO₂ content, which could be used as a check. There is therefore a fiscal motivation to provide accurate measurement of the CO₂ content itself and of the impurities. A requirement to do this is therefore included in the commercial and regulatory codes that can govern a CCS network.

Accurate measurement of the impurity content of the CO₂ stream is one of the challenges facing this relatively new industry. This Good Practice Guide is intended to provide guidance to developers in the existence of, and selection of suitable equipment, to enable them to deliver a safe and operable CCS system. It is noted that off-line and on-line measurements have different challenges and therefore need slightly different approaches for impurity measurements. In this context, 'off-line' refers to sample collection followed by laboratory analyses) and 'on-line' refers to continuous measurement as close as practicable to 'real time', with the latter being preferable for reasons which are described herein.

This relatively new industry therefore needs analysers, validated methods, and calibration gases. Whilst existing commercial systems may be offered for the measurement of impurities in CCS applications, it is not always the case following testing that they have demonstrated the capability to identify specific analytes.

Section 2 describes the scope of this guide – what is included and what has been excluded. Section 3 describes the impurities to be measured and some of the factors that will need to be considered, including functions unique to the measurement of impurities in CO₂ streams in a CCS context. Section 4 illustrates the ranges over which the measurement equipment might expect to be calibrated and offers comment on the potential value of beyond-calibration capacity. Sections 8 and 9 describe, for each of the impurities listed, what measurement techniques are available at the time of writing, and provide a high-level summary of key

⁷ A CO₂ stream is defined as 'a stream consisting overwhelmingly of carbon dioxide, usually greater than 95 mol% carbon dioxide' as per ISO 27913:2024, section 3.4.

issues that can influence the designer's choice. These sections are for 'on-line' (samples being automatically taken at defined intervals whenever the plant is operational), and 'manual' which refers to the less frequent measurement, often by a plant operator, respectively.

Much of the focus in earlier sections is on hardware, sections 7 and 10.6 address the important issues of standards against which the equipment will be calibrated, and how such calibration would be supported by Primary Reference Materials.

A summary of the 'state of the art' is provided in section 10, and seeks to identify what measurement equipment is available now, what could reasonably be made available within about one year, what might become available within a two/three-year horizon and what requires more fundamental development and is beyond currently available technology.

Throughout the document certain gaps will have been identified, both in the suitability of hardware on an appropriate timescale, in the availability of recognised standards, and how calibration is to be confirmed. Section 12 lists these and, based on a subjective assessment by the Working Group, assigns priorities to support existing and planned CCS projects, together with an idealised timescale to development, assuming that the work was adequately resourced.

A substantial appendix (15.2) provides the reader with a very brief description of each of the measurement techniques referred to in the preceding sections, particularly in sections 8 and 9.



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