METHOD 6010A

INDUCTIVELY COUPLED PLASMA-ATOMIC EMISSION SPECTROSCOPY

1.0 SCOPE AND APPLICATION

1.1 Inductively coupled plasma-atomic emission spectroscopy (ICP) determines trace elements, including metals, in solution. The method is applicable to all of the elements listed in Table 1. All matrices, including ground water, aqueous samples, TCLP and EP extracts, industrial and organic wastes, soils, sludges, sediments, and other solid wastes, require digestion prior to analysis.

1.2 Elements for which Method 6010 is applicable are listed in Table 1. Detection limits, sensitivity, and optimum ranges of the metals will vary with the matrices and model of spectrometer. The data shown in Table 1 provide estimated detection limits for clean aqueous samples using pneumatic nebulization. Use of this method is restricted to spectroscopists who are knowledgeable in the correction of spectral, chemical, and physical interferences.

2.0 SUMMARY OF METHOD

2.1 Prior to analysis, samples must be solubilized or digested using appropriate Sample Preparation Methods (e.g. Methods 3005-3050). When analyzing for dissolved constituents, acid digestion is not necessary if the samples are filtered and acid preserved prior to analysis.

2.2 Method 6010 describes the simultaneous, or sequential, multielemental determination of elements by ICP. The method measures element-emitted light by optical spectrometry. Samples are nebulized and the resulting aerosol is transported to the plasma torch. Element-specific atomic-line emission spectra are produced by a radio-frequency inductively coupled plasma. The spectra are dispersed by a grating spectrometer, and the intensities of the lines are monitored by photomultiplier tubes. Background correction is required for trace element determination. Background must be measured adjacent to analyte lines on samples during analysis. The position selected for the background-intensity measurement, on either or both sides of the analytical line, will be determined by the complexity of the spectrum adjacent to the analyte line. The position used must be free of spectral interference and reflect the same change in background intensity as occurs at the analyte wavelength measured. Background correction is not required in cases of line broadening where a background correction measurement would actually degrade the analytical result. The possibility of additional interferences named in Section 3.0 should also be recognized and appropriate corrections made; tests for their presence are described in Step 8.5.

TABLE 1.
RECOMMENDED WAVELENGTHS AND ESTIMATED INSTRUMENTAL DETECTION LIMITS

Detection Element	Wavelength[a](nm)	Estimated Limit[b] (ug/L)
Aluminum	308.215	45
Antimony	206.833	32
Arsenic	193.696	53
Barium	455.403	2
Beryllium	313.042	0.3
Cadmium	226.502	4
Calcium	317.933	10
Chromium	267.716	7
Cobalt	228.616	7
Copper	324.754	6
Iron	259.940	7
Lead	220.353	42
Lithium	670.784	5
Magnesium	279.079	30
Manganese	257.610	2
Molybdenum	202.030	8
Nickel	231.604	15
Phosphorus	213.618	51
Potassium	766.491	See note c
Selenium	196.026	75
Silver	328.068	7
Sodium	588.995	29
Strontium	407.771	0.3
Thallium	190.864	40
Vanadium	292.402	8
Zinc	213.856	2

[a]The wavelengths listed are recommended because of their sensitivity and overall acceptance. Other wavelengths may be substituted if they can provide the needed sensitivity and are treated with the same corrective techniques for spectral interference (see Step 3.1). In time, other elements may be added as more information becomes available and as required.

[b]The estimated instrumental detection limits shown are taken from Reference 1 in Section 10.0 below. They are given as a guide for an instrumental limit. The actual method detection limits are sample dependent and may vary as the sample matrix varies.

[c]Highly dependent on operating conditions and plasma position.

3.0 INTERFERENCES

3.1 Spectral interferences are caused by: (1) overlap of a spectral line from another element at the analytical or background measurement wavelengths; (2) unresolved overlap of molecular band spectra; (3) background contribution from continuum or recombination phenomena; and (4) stray light from the line emission of high-concentration elements. Spectral overlap can be compensated for by computer-correcting the raw data after monitoring and measuring the interfering element. Unresolved overlap requires selection of an alternate wavelength. Background contribution and stray light can usually be compensated for by a background correction adjacent to the analyte line.

Users of all ICP instruments must verify the absence of spectral interference from an element in a sample for which there is no instrument detection channel. Recommended wavelengths are listed in Table 1 and potential spectral interferences for the recommended wavelengths are given in Table 2. The data in Table 2 are intended as rudimentary guides for indicating potential interferences; for this purpose, linear relations between concentration and intensity for the analytes and the interferents can be assumed.

3.1.1 Element-specific interference is expressed as analyte concentration equivalents (i.e. false analyte concentrations) arising from 100 mg/L of the interference element. For example, assume that As is to be determined (at 193.696 nm) in a sample containing approximately 10 mg/L of Al. According to Table 2, 100 mg/L of Al would yield a false signal for As equivalent to approximately 1.3 mg/L. Therefore, the presence of 10 mg/L of Al would result in a false signal for As equivalent to approximately 0.13 mg/L. The user is cautioned that other instruments may exhibit somewhat different levels of interference than those shown in Table 2. The interference effects must be evaluated for each individual instrument since the intensities will vary with operating conditions, power, viewing height, argon flow rate, etc. The user should be aware of the possibility of interferences other than those specified in Table 2 and that analysts should be aware of these interferences when conducting analyses.

3.1.2 The dashes in Table 2 indicate that no measurable interferences were observed even at higher interferent concentrations. Generally, interferences were discernible if they produced peaks, or background shifts, corresponding to 2 to 5% of the peaks generated by the analyte concentrations.

3.1.3 At present, information on the listed silver and potassium wavelengths is not available, but it has been reported that second-order energy from the magnesium 383.231-nm wavelength interferes with the listed potassium line at 766.491 nm.

TABLE 2.

ANALYTE CONCENTRATION EQUIVALENTS ARISING FROM
INTERFERENCE AT THE 100-mg/L LEVEL

		Interferent[a,b]									
Analyte	Wavelength (nm)	Al	Ca	Cr	Cu	Fe	Mg	Mn	Ni	Tl	V
Aluminum	308.215	--	--	--	--	--	--	0.21	--	--	1.4
Antimony	206.833	0.47	--	2.9	--	0.08	--	--	--	0.25	0.45
Arsenic	193.696	1.3	--	0.44	--	--	--	--	--	--	1.1
Barium	455.403	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Beryllium	313.042	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	0.04	0.05
Cadmium	226.502	--	--	--	--	0.03	--	--	0.02	--	--
Calcium	317.933	--	--	0.08	--	0.01	0.01	0.04	--	0.03	0.03
Chromium	267.716	--	--	--	--	0.003	--	0.04	--	--	0.04
Cobalt	228.616	--	--	0.03	--	0.005	--	--	0.03	0.15	--
Copper	324.754	--	--	--	--	0.003	--	--	--	0.05	0.02
Iron	259.940	--	--	--	--	--	--	0.12	--	--	--
Lead	220.353	0.17	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Magnesium	279.079	--	0.02	0.11	--	0.13	--	0.25	--	0.07	0.12
Manganese	257.610	0.005	--	0.01	--	0.002	0.002	--	--	--	--
Molybdenum	202.030	0.05	--	--	--	0.03	--	--	--	--	--
Nickel	231.604	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Selenium	196.026	0.23	--	--	--	0.09	--	--	--	--	--
Sodium	588.995	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	0.08	--
Thallium	190.864	0.30	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Vanadium	292.402	--	--	0.05	--	0.005	--	--	--	0.02	--
Zinc	213.856	--	--	--	0.14	--	--	--	0.29	--	--

[a]Dashes indicate that no interference was observed even when interferents were introduced at the following levels:

Al -	1000 mg/L	Mg -	1000 mg/L
Ca -	1000 mg/L	Mn -	200 mg/L
Cr -	200 mg/L	Tl -	200 mg/L
Cu -	200 mg/L	V -	200 mg/L
Fe -	1000 mg/L		

[b]The figures recorded as analyte concentrations are not the actual observed concentrations; to obtain those figures, add the listed concentration to the interferent figure.

3.2 Physical interferences are effects associated with the sample nebulization and transport processes. Changes in viscosity and surface tension can cause significant inaccuracies, especially in samples containing high dissolved solids or high acid concentrations. Differences in solution volatility can also cause inaccuracies when organic solvents are involved. If physical interferences are present, they must be reduced by diluting the sample or by using a peristaltic pump. Another problem that can occur with high dissolved solids is salt buildup at the tip of the nebulizer, which affects aerosol flow rate and causes instrumental drift. The problem can be controlled by wetting the argon prior to nebulization, using a tip washer, or diluting the sample. Changing the nebulizer and removing salt buildup at the tip of the torch sample injector can be used as an additional measure to control salt buildup. Also, it has been reported that better control of the argon flow rate improves instrument performance; this is accomplished with the use of mass flow controllers.

3.3 Chemical interferences include molecular compound formation, ionization effects, and solute vaporization effects. Normally, these effects are not significant with the ICP technique. If observed, they can be minimized by careful selection of operating conditions (incident power, observation position, and so forth), by buffering of the sample, by matrix matching, and by standard addition procedures. Chemical interferences are highly dependent on matrix type and the specific analyte element.

4.0 APPARATUS AND MATERIALS

4.1 Inductively coupled argon plasma emission spectrometer:

4.1.1 Computer-controlled emission spectrometer with background correction.

4.1.2 Radio frequency generator compliant with FCC regulations.

4.1.3 Argon gas supply - Welding grade or better.

4.2 Operating conditions - The analyst should follow the instructions provided by the instrument manufacturer. For operation with organic solvents, use of the auxiliary argon inlet is recommended, as are solvent-resistant tubing, increased plasma (coolant) argon flow, decreased nebulizer flow, and increased RF power to obtain stable operation and precise measurements. Sensitivity, instrumental detection limit, precision, linear dynamic range, and interference effects must be established for each individual analyte line on that particular instrument. All measurements must be within the instrument linear range where spectral interference correction factors are valid. The analyst must (1) verify that the instrument configuration and operating conditions satisfy the analytical requirements and (2) maintain quality control data confirming instrument performance and analytical results.

4.3 Class A volumetric flasks

4.4 Class A volumetric pipets

4.5 Analytical balance - capable of accurate measurement to 4 significant figures.

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. If the purity of a reagent is in question analyze for contamination. If the concentration is less than the MDL then the reagent is acceptable.

5.1.1 Hydrochloric acid (conc), HCl.

5.1.2 Hydrochloric acid (1:1), HCl. Add 500 mL concentrated HCl to 400 mL water and dilute to 1 liter in an appropriate beaker.

5.1.3 Nitric acid (conc), HNO_3.

5.1.4 Nitric acid (1:1), HNO_3. Add 500 mL concentrated HNO_3 to 400 mL water and dilute to 1 liter in an appropriate beaker.

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

5.3 Standard stock solutions may be purchased or prepared from ultra-high purity grade chemicals or metals (99.99 to 99.999% pure). All salts must be dried for 1 hour at 105°C, unless otherwise specified.

CAUTION: Many metal salts are extremely toxic if inhaled or swallowed. Wash hands thoroughly after handling.

Typical stock solution preparation procedures follow. Concentrations are calculated based upon the weight of pure metal added, or with the use of the mole fraction and the weight of the metal salt added.

Metal

$$\text{Concentration (ppm)} = \frac{\text{weight (mg)}}{\text{volume (L)}}$$

Metal salts

$$\text{Concentration (ppm)} = \frac{\text{weight (mg) x mole fraction}}{\text{volume (L)}}$$

5.3.1 Aluminum solution, stock, 1 mL = 1000 ug Al: Dissolve 1.0 g of aluminum metal, weighed accurately to at least four significant figures, in an acid mixture of 4 mL of (1:1) HCl and 1 mL of concentrated

HNO_3 in a beaker. Warm gently to effect solution. When solution is complete, transfer quantitatively to a liter flask, add an additional 10 mL of (1:1) HCl and dilute to volume in a 1,000 mL volumetric flask with water.

5.3.2 Antimony solution, stock, 1 mL = 1000 ug Sb: Dissolve 2.70 g $K(SbO)C_4H_4O_6$ (mole fraction Sb = 0.3749), weighed accurately to at least four significant figures, in water, add 10 mL (1:1) HCl, and dilute to volume in a 1,000 mL volumetric flask with water.

5.3.3 Arsenic solution, stock, 1 mL = 1000 ug As: Dissolve 1.30 g of As_2O_3 (mole fraction As = 0.7574), weighed accurately to at least four significant figures, in 100 mL of water containing 0.4 g NaOH. Acidify the solution with 2 mL concentrated HNO_3 and dilute to volume in a 1,000 mL volumetric flask with water

5.3.4 Barium solution, stock, 1 mL = 1000 ug Ba: Dissolve 1.50 g $BaCl_2$ (mole fraction Ba = 0.6595), dried at 250°C for 2 hours, weighed accurately to at least four significant figures, in 10 mL water with 1 mL (1:1) HCl. Add 10.0 mL (1:1) HCl and dilute to volume in a 1,000 mL volumetric flask with water.

5.3.5 Beryllium solution, stock, 1 mL = 1000 ug Be: Do not dry. Dissolve 19.7 g $BeSO_4 \cdot 4H_2O$ (mole fraction Be = 0.0509), weighed accurately to at least four significant figures, in water, add 10.0 mL concentrated HNO_3, and dilute to volume in a 1,000 mL volumetric flask with water.

5.3.6 Cadmium solution, stock, 1 mL = 1000 ug Cd: Dissolve 1.10 g CdO (mole fraction Cd = 0.8754), weighed accurately to at least four significant figures, in a minimum amount of (1:1) HNO_3. Heat to increase rate of dissolution. Add 10.0 mL concentrated HNO_3 and dilute to volume in a 1,000 mL volumetric flask with water.

5.3.7 Calcium solution, stock, 1 mL = 1000 ug Ca: Suspend 2.50 g $CaCO_3$ (mole Ca fraction = 0.4005), dried at 180°C for 1 hour before weighing, weighed accurately to at least four significant figures, in water and dissolve cautiously with a minimum amount of (1:1) HNO_3. Add 10.0 mL concentrated HNO_3 and dilute to volume in a 1,000 mL volumetric flask with water.

5.3.8 Chromium solution, stock, 1 mL = 1000 ug Cr: Dissolve 1.90 g CrO_3 (mole fraction Cr = 0.5200), weighed accurately to at least four significant figures, in water. When solution is complete, acidify with 10 mL concentrated HNO_3 and dilute to volume in a 1,000 mL volumetric flask with water.

5.3.9 Cobalt solution, stock, 1 mL = 1000 ug Co: Dissolve 1.00 g of cobalt metal, weighed accurately to at least four significant figures, in a minimum amount of (1:1) HNO_3. Add 10.0 mL (1:1) HCl and dilute to volume in a 1,000 mL volumetric flask with water.

5.3.10 Copper solution, stock, 1 mL = 1000 ug Cu: Dissolve 1.30 g CuO (mole fraction Cu = 0.7989), weighed accurately to at least four

significant figures), in a minimum amount of (1:1) HNO_3. Add 10.0 mL concentrated HNO_3 and dilute to volume in a 1,000 mL volumetric flask with water.

5.3.11 Iron solution, stock, 1 mL = 1000 ug Fe: Dissolve 1.40 g Fe_2O_3 (mole fraction Fe = 0.6994), weighed accurately to at least four significant figures, in a warm mixture of 20 mL (1:1) HCl and 2 mL of concentrated HNO_3. Cool, add an additional 5.0 mL of concentrated HNO_3, and dilute to volume in a 1,000 mL volumetric flask with water.

5.3.12 Lead solution, stock, 1 mL = 1000 ug Pb: Dissolve 1.60 g $Pb(NO_3)_2$ (mole fraction Pb = 0.6256), weighed accurately to at least four significant figures, in a minimum amount of (1:1) HNO_3. Add 10 mL (1:1) HNO_3 and dilute to volume in a 1,000 mL volumetric flask with water.

5.3.13 Lithium solution, stock, 1 mL = 1000 ug Li: Dissolve 5.324 g lithium carbonate (mole fraction Li = 0.1878), weighed accurately to at least four significant figures, in a minimum amount of (1:1) HCl and dilute to volume in a 1,000 mL volumetric flask with water.

5.3.14 Magnesium solution, stock, 1 mL = 1000 ug Mg: Dissolve 1.70 g MgO (mole fraction Mg = 0.6030), weighed accurately to at least four significant figures, in a minimum amount of (1:1) HNO_3. Add 10.0 mL (1:1) concentrated HNO_3 and dilute to volume in a 1,000 mL volumetric flask with water.

5.3.15 Manganese solution, stock, 1 mL = 1000 ug Mn: Dissolve 1.00 g of manganese metal, weighed accurately to at least four significant figures, in acid mixture (10 mL concentrated HCl and 1 mL concentrated HNO_3) and dilute to volume in a 1,000 mL volumetric flask with water.

5.3.16 Molybdenum solution, stock, 1 mL = 1000 ug Mo: Dissolve 2.00 g $(NH_4)_6Mo_7O_{24}.4H_2O$ (mole fraction Mo = 0.5772), weighed accurately to at least four significant figures, in water and dilute to volume in a 1,000 mL volumetric flask with water.

5.3.17 Nickel solution, stock, 1 mL = 1000 ug Ni: Dissolve 1.00 g of nickel metal, weighed accurately to at least four significant figures, in 10.0 mL hot concentrated HNO_3, cool, and dilute to volume in a 1,000 mL volumetric flask with water.

5.3.18 Phosphate solution, stock, 1 mL = 1000 ug P: Dissolve 4.393 g anhydrous KH_2PO_4 (mole fraction P = 0.2276), weighed accurately to at least four significant figures, in water. Dilute to volume in a 1,000 mL volumetric flask with water.

5.3.19 Potassium solution, stock, 1 mL = 1000 ug K: Dissolve 1.90 g KCl (mole fraction K = 0.5244) dried at 110°C, weighed accurately to at least four significant figures, in water, and dilute to volume in a 1,000 mL volumetric flask with water.

5.3.20 Selenium solution, stock, 1 mL = 1000 ug Se: Do not dry. Dissolve 1.70 g H_2SeO_3 (mole fraction Se = 0.6123), weighed accurately to

at least four significant figures, in water and dilute to volume in a 1,000 mL volumetric flask with water.

5.3.21 Silver solution, stock, 1 mL = 1000 ug Ag: Dissolve 1.60 g $AgNO_3$ (mole fraction Ag = 0.6350), weighed accurately to at least four significant figures, in water and 10 mL concentrated HNO_3. Dilute to volume in a 1,000 mL volumetric flask with water.

5.3.22 Sodium solution, stock, 1 mL = 1000 ug Na: Dissolve 2.50 g NaCl (mole fraction Na = 0.3934), weighed accurately to at least four significant figures, in water. Add 10.0 mL concentrated HNO_3 and dilute to volume in a 1,000 mL volumetric flask with water.

5.3.23 Strontium solution, stock, 1 mL = 1000 ug Sr: Dissolve 2.415 g of strontium nitrate ($Sr(NO_3)_2$) (mole fraction 0.4140), weighed accurately to at least four significant figures, in a 1-liter flask containing 10 mL of concentrated HCl and 700 mL of water. Dilute to volume in a 1,000 mL volumetric flask with water.

5.3.24 Thallium solution, stock, 1 mL = 1000 ug Tl: Dissolve 1.30 g $TlNO_3$ (mole fraction T1 = 0.7672), weighed accurately to at least four significant figures, in water. Add 10.0 mL concentrated HNO_3 and dilute to volume in a 1,000 mL volumetric flask with water.

5.3.25 Vanadium solution, stock, 1 mL = 1000 ug V: Dissolve 2.30 g NH_4O_3 (mole fraction V = 0.4356), weighed accurately to at least four significant figures, in a minimum amount of concentrated HNO_3. Heat to increase rate of dissolution. Add 10.0 mL concentrated HNO_3 and dilute to volume in a 1,000 mL volumetric flask with water.

5.3.26 Zinc solution, stock, 1 mL = 1000 ug Zn: Dissolve 1.20 g ZnO (mole fraction Zn = 0.8034), weighed accurately to at least four significant figures, in a minimum amount of dilute HNO_3. Add 10.0 mL concentrated HNO_3 and dilute to volume in a 1,000 mL volumetric flask with water.

5.4 Mixed calibration standard solutions - Prepare mixed calibration standard solutions by combining appropriate volumes of the stock solutions in volumetric flasks (see Table 3). Matrix match with the appropriate acids and dilute to 100 mL with water. Prior to preparing the mixed standards, each stock solution should be analyzed separately to determine possible spectral interference or the presence of impurities. Care should be taken when preparing the mixed standards to ensure that the elements are compatible and stable together. Transfer the mixed standard solutions to FEP fluorocarbon or previously unused polyethylene or polypropylene bottles for storage. Fresh mixed standards should be prepared, as needed, with the realization that concentration can change on aging. Calibration standards must be initially verified using a quality control sample (see Step 5.8) and monitored weekly for stability. Some typical calibration standard combinations are listed in Table 3. All mixtures should then be scanned using a sequential spectrometer to verify the absence of interelement spectral interference in the recommended mixed standard solutions.

NOTE: If the addition of silver to the recommended acid combination results in an initial precipitation, add 15 mL of water and warm the flask until the solution clears. Cool and dilute to 100 mL with water. For this acid combination, the silver concentration should be limited to 2 mg/L. Silver under these conditions is stable in a tap-water matrix for 30 days. Higher concentrations of silver require additional HCl.

TABLE 3.
MIXED STANDARD SOLUTIONS

Solution	Elements
I	Be, Cd, Mn, Pb, Se and Zn
II	Ba, Co, Cu, Fe, and V
III	As, Mo
IV	Al, Ca, Cr, K, Na, Ni,Li,& Sr
V	Ag (see Note to Step 5.4), Mg, Sb, and Tl
VI	P

5.5 Two types of blanks are required for the analysis. The calibration blank is used in establishing the analytical curve, and the reagent blank is used to correct for possible contamination resulting from varying amounts of the acids used in the sample processing.

5.5.1 The calibration blank is prepared by acidifying reagent water to the same concentrations of the acids found in the standards and samples. Prepare a sufficient quantity to flush the system between standards and samples.

5.5.2 The method blank must contain all the reagents and in the same volumes as used in the processing of the samples. The method blank must be carried through the complete procedure and contain the same acid concentration in the final solution as the sample solution used for analysis.

5.6 The instrument check standard is prepared by the analyst by combining compatible elements at concentrations equivalent to the midpoint of their respective calibration curves (see Step 8.6.1.1 for use). The instrument check standard should be prepared from a source independent from that used in the calibration standards.

5.7 The interference check solution is prepared to contain known concentrations of interfering elements that will provide an adequate test of the correction factors. Spike the sample with the elements of interest at approximate

5.7 The interference check solution is prepared to contain known concentrations of interfering elements that will provide an adequate test of the correction factors. Spike the sample with the elements of interest at approximate concentrations of 10 times the instrumental detection limits. In the absence of measurable analyte, overcorrection could go undetected because a negative value could be reported as zero. If the particular instrument will display overcorrection as a negative number, this spiking procedure will not be necessary.

5.8 The quality control sample should be prepared in the same acid matrix as the calibration standards at 10 times the instrumental detection limits and in accordance with the instructions provided by the supplier.

6.0 SAMPLE COLLECTION, PRESERVATION, AND HANDLING

6.1 See the material in Chapter Three, Metallic Analytes, Steps 3.1 through 3.3.

7.0 PROCEDURE

7.1 Preliminary treatment of most matrices is necessary because of the complexity and variability of sample matrices. Water samples which have been prefiltered and acidified will not need acid digestion as long as the samples and standards are matrix matched. Solubilization and digestion procedures are presented in Sample Preparation Methods (Methods 3005A-3050A).

7.2 Set up the instrument with proper operating parameters established in Step 4.2. The instrument must be allowed to become thermally stable before beginning (usually requiring at least 30 minutes of operation prior to calibration).

7.3 Profile and calibrate the instrument according to the instrument manufacturer's recommended procedures, using the typical mixed calibration standard solutions described in Step 5.4. Flush the system with the calibration blank (Step 5.5.1) between each standard or as the manufacturer recommends. (Use the average intensity of multiple exposures for both standardization and sample analysis to reduce random error.) The calibration curve should consist of a blank and three standards.

7.4 Before beginning the sample run, reanalyze the highest mixed calibration standard as if it were a sample. Concentration values obtained should not deviate from the actual values by more than 5% (or the established control limits, whichever is lower). If they do, follow the recommendations of the instrument manufacturer to correct for this condition.

7.5 Flush the system with the calibration blank solution for at least 1 minute (Step 5.5.1) before the analysis of each sample (see Note to Step 7.3). Analyze the instrument check standard (Step 5.6) and the calibration blank (Step 5.5.1) after each 10 samples.

8.0 QUALITY CONTROL

8.1 All quality control data should be maintained and available for easy reference or inspection. Refer to Chapter One for additional quality control procedures.

8.2 Dilute and reanalyze samples that are more concentrated than the linear calibration limit or use an alternate, less sensitive line for which quality control data is already established.

8.3 Employ a minimum of one method blank per sample batch to determine if contamination or any memory effects are occurring. A method blank is a volume of reagent water acidified with the same amounts of acids as were the standards and samples.

8.4 Analyze one replicate sample for every twenty samples or per analytical batch, whichever is more frequent. A replicate sample is a sample brought through the whole sample preparation and analytical process in duplicate. Refer to Chapter One for a more detailed description of an analytical batch.

8.5 It is recommended that whenever a new or unusual sample matrix is encountered, a series of tests be performed prior to reporting concentration data for analyte elements. These tests, as outlined in Steps 8.5.1 and 8.5.2, will ensure the analyst that neither positive nor negative interferences are operating on any of the analyte elements to distort the accuracy of the reported values.

8.5.1 Serial dilution: If the analyte concentration is sufficiently high (minimally, a factor of 10 above the instrumental detection limit after dilution), an analysis of a 1:4 dilution should agree within $\pm$ 10% of the original determination. If not, a chemical or physical interference effect should be suspected.

8.5.2 Post digestion spike addition: An analyte spike added to a portion of a prepared sample, or its dilution, should be recovered to within 75% to 125% of the known value. The spike addition should produce a minimum level of 10 times and a maximum of 100 times the instrumental detection limit. If the spike is not recovered within the specified limits, a matrix effect should be suspected.

CAUTION: If spectral overlap is suspected, use of computerized compensation, an alternate wavelength, or comparison with an alternate method is recommended.

8.6 Check the instrument standardization by analyzing appropriate check standards as follows.

8.6.1 Verify calibration every 10 samples and at the end of the analytical run, using a calibration blank (Step 5.5.1) and a check standard (Step 5.6).

8.6.1.1 The results of the check standard are to agree within 10% of the expected value; if not, terminate the analysis, correct the problem, and reanalyze the previous ten samples.

8.6.1.2 The results of the calibration blank are to agree within three standard deviations of the mean blank value. If not, repeat the analysis two more times and average the results. If the average is not within three standard deviations of the background mean, terminate the analysis, correct the problem, recalibrate, and reanalyze the previous 10 samples.

8.6.2 Verify the interelement and background correction factors at the beginning and end of an analytical run or twice during every 8-hour work shift, whichever is more frequent. Do this by analyzing the interference check solution (Step 5.7). Results should be within ± 20% of the true value obtained in Step 8.6.1.1.

8.6.3 Spiked replicate samples are to be analyzed at a frequency of 5% or per analytical batch, whichever is more frequent.

8.6.3.1 The relative percent difference between replicate determinations is to be calculated as follows:

$$RPD = \frac{D_1 - D_2}{(D_1 + D_2)/2} \times 100$$

where:

RPD = relative percent difference.
D_1 = first sample value.
D_2 = second sample value (replicate).

(A control limit of ± 20% RPD shall be used for sample values greater than ten times the instrument detection limit.)

8.6.3.2 The spiked replicate sample recovery is to be within ± 20% of the actual value.

9.0 METHOD PERFORMANCE

9.1 In an EPA round-robin Phase 1 study, seven laboratories applied the ICP technique to acid-distilled water matrices that had been spiked with various metal concentrates. Table 4 lists the true values, the mean reported values, and the mean percent relative standard deviations.

9.2 In a single laboratory evaluation, seven wastes were analyzed for 22 elements by this method. The mean percent relative standard deviation from triplicate analyses for all elements and wastes was 9 ± 2%. The mean percent recovery of spiked elements for all wastes was 93 ± 6%. Spike levels ranged from 100 ug/L to 100 mg/L. The wastes included sludges and industrial wastewaters.

10.0 REFERENCES

1. Winge, R.K.; Peterson, V.J.; Fassel, V.A. Inductively Coupled Plasma-Atomic Emission Spectroscopy: Prominent Lines (final report, March 1977 -February 1978); EPA-600/4-79-017, Environmental Research Laboratory, Athens, GA, March 1979; Ames Laboratory: Ames IA.

2. Test Methods: Methods for Organic Chemical Analysis of Municipal and Industrial Wastewater; U.S. Environmental Protection agency. Office of Research and Development. Environmental Monitoring and Support Laboratory. ORD Publication Offices of Center for Environmental Research Information: Cincinnati, OH, 1982; EPA-600/4-82-057.

3. Patel, B.K.; Raab, G.A.; et al. Report on a Single Laboratory Evaluation of Inductively Coupled Optical Emission Method 6010; EPA Contract No. 68-03-3050, December 1984.

4. Sampling and Analysis Methods for Hazardous Waste Combustion; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; Air and Energy Engineering Research Laboratory, Office of Research and Development: Research Triangle Park, NC, 1986; Prepared by Arthur D. Little, Inc.

5. Bowmand, P.W.J.M. Line Coincidence Tables for Inductively Coupled Plasma Atomic Emission Spectrometry, 2nd ed.; Pergamon: 1984.

6. Rohrbough, W.G.; et al. Reagent Chemicals, American Chemical Society Specifications, 7th ed.; American Chemical Society: Washington, DC, 1986.

7. 1985 Annual Book of ASTM Standards, Vol. 11.01; "Standard Specification for Reagent Water"; ASTM: Philadelphia, PA, 1985; D1193-77.

TABLE 4.
ICP PRECISION AND ACCURACY DATA[a]

Element	Sample No. 1 True Value (ug/L)	Sample No. 1 Mean Reported Value (ug/L)	Sample No. 1 Mean SD[b] (%)	Sample No. 2 True Value (ug/L)	Sample No. 2 Mean Reported Value (ug/L)	Sample No. 2 Mean SD[b] (%)	Sample No. 3 True Value (ug/L)	Sample No. 3 Mean Reported Value (ug/L)	Sample No. 3 Mean SD[b] (%)
Be	750	733	6.2	20	20	9.8	180	176	5.2
Mn	350	345	2.7	15	15	6.7	100	99	3.3
V	750	749	1.8	70	69	2.9	170	169	1.1
As	200	208	7.5	22	19	23	60	63	17
Cr	150	149	3.8	10	10	18	50	50	3.3
Cu	250	235	5.1	11	11	40	70	67	7.9
Fe	600	594	3.0	20	19	15	180	178	6.0
Al	700	696	5.6	60	62	33	160	161	13
Cd	50	48	12	2.5	2.9	16	14	13	16
Co	700	512	10	20	20	4.1	120	108	21
Ni	250	245	5.8	30	28	11	60	55	14
Pb	250	236	16	24	30	32	80	80	14
Zn	200	201	5.6	16	19	45	80	82	9.4
Se[c]	40	32	21.9	6	8.5	42	10	8.5	8.3

[a]Not all elements were analyzed by all laboratories.

[b]SD = standard deviation.

[c]Results for Se are from two laboratories.

METHOD 6010A
INDUCTIVELY COUPLED PLASMA-ATOMIC EMISSION SPECTROSCOPY