



Standard Test Method for Trace Metallic Impurities in Electronic Grade Aluminum-Copper, Aluminum-Silicon, and Aluminum-Copper-Silicon Alloys by High-Mass-Resolution Glow Discharge Mass Spectrometer¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation F1845; 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 reapproval. A superscript epsilon (ϵ) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

1. Scope

1.1 This test method determines the concentrations of trace metallic impurities in high purity (99.99 wt. % pure, or purer, with respect to metallic trace impurities) aluminum-copper, aluminum-silicon and aluminum-copper-silicon alloys with major alloy constituents as follows:

aluminum	Greater than 95.0 %
copper	Less or equal than 5.0 %
silicon	Less or equal than 5.0 %

1.2 This test method pertains to analysis by magnetic-sector glow discharge mass spectrometer (GDMS).

1.3 This test method does not include all the information needed to complete GDMS analyses. Sophisticated computer-controlled laboratory equipment, skillfully used by an experienced operator, is required to achieve the required sensitivity. This test method does cover the particular factors (for example, specimen preparation, setting of relative sensitivity factors, determination of detection limits, etc.) known by the responsible technical committee to effect the reliability of high purity aluminum analyses.

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

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*²

[E135 Terminology Relating to Analytical Chemistry for](#)

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee F01 on Electronics and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee F01.17 on Sputter Metallization.

Current edition approved May 1, 2016. Published May 2016. Originally approved in 1997. Last previous edition approved in 2008 as F1845 – 08. DOI: 10.1520/F1845-08R16.

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.

[Metals, Ores, and Related Materials](#)

[E1593 Guide for Assessing the Efficacy of Air Care Products in Reducing the Perception of Indoor Malodor](#)

3. Terminology

3.1 Terminology in this test method is consistent with Terminology [E135](#). Required terminology specific to this test method, not covered in Terminology [E135](#), is indicated in [3.2](#).

3.2 Definitions:

3.2.1 *campaign*—a test procedure to determine the accuracy of the instrument, which was normally performed at the beginning of the day or after the instrument modification, or both.

3.2.2 *reference sample*—material accepted as suitable for use as a calibration/sensitivity reference standard by all parties concerned with the analyses.

3.2.3 *specimen*—a suitably sized piece cut from a reference or test sample, prepared for installation in the GDMS ion source, and analyzed.

3.2.4 *test sample*—material (aluminum alloy) to be analyzed for trace metallic impurities by this GDMS method.

3.2.4.1 *Discussion*—Generally the test sample is extracted from a larger batch (lot, casting) of product and is intended to be representative of the batch.

4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 A specimen is mounted in a plasma discharge cell. Atoms subsequently sputtered from the specimen surface are ionized, and then focused as an ion beam through a double-focusing magnetic-sector mass separation apparatus. The mass spectrum (the ion current) is collected as magnetic field or acceleration voltage, (or both) is scanned.

4.2 The ion current of an isotope at mass M_i is the total measured current, less contributions from all other interfering sources. Portions of the measured current may originate from the ion detector alone (detector noise). Portions may be due to incompletely mass resolved ions of an isotope or molecule with mass close to, but not identical with, M_i . In all such instances

the interfering contributions must be estimated and subtracted from the measured signal.

4.2.1 If the source of interfering contributions to the measured ion current at M_i cannot be determined unambiguously, the measured current less the interfering contributions from identified sources constitutes an upper bound of the detection limit for the current due to the isotope.

4.3 The composition of the test specimen is calculated from the mass spectrum by applying a relative sensitivity factor (RSF(X/M)) for each contaminant element, X , compared to the matrix element, M . RSF's are determined in a separate analysis of a reference material performed under the same analytical conditions, source configuration, and operating protocol as for the test specimen.

4.4 The relative concentrations of elements X and Y are calculated from the relative isotopic ion currents $I(X_i)$ and $I(Y_j)$ in the mass spectrum, adjusted for the appropriate isotopic abundance factors ($A(X_i)$, $A(Y_j)$) and RSF's. $I(X_i)$ and $I(Y_j)$ refer to the measured ion current from isotopes X_i and Y_j , respectively, of atomic species X and Y as follows:

$$(X)/(Y) = RSF(X/M)/RSF(Y/M) \times A(Y_j)/A(X_i) \times I(X_i)/I(Y_j) \quad (1)$$

where $(X)/(Y)$ is the concentration ratio of atomic species X to species Y . If species Y is taken to be the aluminum matrix ($RSF(M/M) = 1.0$), (X) is (with only very small error for pure metal matrices) the absolute impurity concentration of X .

5. Significance and Use

5.1 This test method is intended for application in the semiconductor industry for evaluating the purity of materials (for example, sputtering targets, evaporation sources) used in thin film metallization processes. This test method may be useful in additional applications, not envisioned by the responsible technical committee, as agreed upon between the parties concerned.

5.2 This test method is intended for use by GDMS analysts in various laboratories for unifying the protocol and parameters for determining trace impurities in aluminum-copper, aluminum-silicon, and aluminum-copper-silicon alloys. The objective is to improve laboratory-to-laboratory agreement of analysis data. This test method is also directed to the users of GDMS analyses as an aid to understanding the determination method, and the significance and reliability of reported GDMS data.

5.3 For most metallic species the detection limit for routine analysis is on the order of 0.01 wt. ppm. With special precautions, detection limits to sub-ppb levels are possible.

5.4 This test method may be used as a referee method for producers and users of electronic-grade aluminum-copper, aluminum-silicon and aluminum-copper-silicon materials.

6. Apparatus

6.1 *Glow Discharge Mass Spectrometer*, with mass resolution greater than 3500, and associated equipment and supplies. The GDMS must be fitted with an ion source specimen cell that is cooled by liquid nitrogen, Peltier cooled, or cooled by an equivalent method.

6.2 *Machining Apparatus*, capable of preparing specimens and reference samples in the desired geometry and with smooth surfaces.

6.3 *Electro-Polishing Apparatus*, capable of removing the contaminants from the surfaces of specimens.

7. Reagents and Materials

7.1 *Reagents*—Reagent and high purity grade reagents as required (MeOH, HNO₃ and HCl).

7.2 *Demineralized Water*.

7.3 *Tantalum Reference Sample*.

7.4 *Aluminum Reference Sample*.

7.4.1 To the extent available, aluminum reference materials shall be used to produce the GDMS relative sensitivity factors for the various elements being determined (see [Table 1](#)).

7.4.1.1 As necessary, non-aluminum reference materials may be used to produce the GDMS relative sensitivity factors for the various elements being determined.

7.4.2 Reference materials should be homogeneous (see [11.1](#)) and free of cracks or porosity.

7.4.3 At least two reference materials are required to establish the relative sensitivity factors, including a 99.9999 % pure aluminum metal to establish the background contribution in analyses.

7.4.4 The concentration of each analyte for relative sensitivity factor determination should be at a factor of 100 greater than the detection limit determined using a 99.9999 % pure aluminum specimen, but less than 100 ppmw.

7.4.5 To meet expected analysis precision, it is necessary that specimens of reference and test material present the same size and configuration (shape and exposed length) in the glow discharge ion source, with a tolerance of 0.2 mm in diameter and 0.5 mm in the distance of sample to cell ion exit slit.

8. Preparation of Reference Standards and Test Specimens

8.1 The surface of the parent material must not be included in the specimen.

8.2 The machined surface of the specimen must be cleaned by electropolishing or etching immediately prior to mounting the specimen and inserting it into the glow discharge ion source.

TABLE 1 Suite of Impurity Elements to Be Analyzed^A

NOTE 1—Establish RSFs for the following suite of elements:

silver	arsenic	gold	boron	beryllium	calcium	cerium	chromium	cesium	copper	iron
potassium	lithium	magnesium	manganese	sodium	nickel	phosphorus	antimony	silicon	tin	thorium
titanium	uranium	vanadium	zinc	zirconium						

^AAdditional species may be determined and reported, as agreed upon between all parties concerned with the analyses.

8.2.1 In order to obtain a representative bulk composition in a reasonable analytical time, surface cleaning must remove all contaminants without altering the composition of the specimen surface.

8.2.2 To minimize the possibility of contamination, clean each specimen separately immediately prior to mounting in the glow discharge ion source.

8.2.3 Prepare and use electropolishing or etching solutions in a clean container insoluble in the contained solution.

8.2.3.1 *Electropolishing*— perform electropolishing in a suitable electropolishing solution (2:1 MeOH:HNO₃ was found applicable). Apply 5 to 15 V (dc) across the cell, with the specimen as anode. Electropolish to expose smooth, clean metal over the entire polished surface.

8.2.3.2 *Etching*—perform etching by immersing the specimen in suitable acid mixture solution (4:1:1 H₂O:HF:HNO₃ was found applicable). Etch the specimen until smooth, clean metal is exposed over the entire surface.

8.3 Immediately after cleaning, wash the specimen with several rinses of high purity methanol, or other high purity reagent able to remove water from the specimen surface, and dry the specimen in the laboratory environment.

8.4 Immediately mount and insert the specimen into the glow discharge ion source, minimizing exposure of the cleaned, rinsed and dried specimen surface to the laboratory environment.

8.4.1 As necessary, use a noncontacting gage when mounting specimens in the analysis cell specimen holder to ensure the proper sample configuration in the glow discharge cell (see 7.4.5).

8.5 Sputter etch the specimen surface in the glow discharge plasma for a period of time before data acquisition to ensure the cleanness of the surface (see 12.3). Pre-analysis sputtering conditions are limited by the need to maintain sample integrity. Pre-analysis sputtering at twice the power used for analysis should be adequate for sputter etch cleaning.

9. Preparation of the GDMS Apparatus

9.1 Reference to Test Method E1593, Section 9.

10. Instrument Quality Control

10.1 Reference to Test Method E1593, Section 10.

11. Standardization

11.1 The GDMS instrument should be standardized using NIST traceable reference materials, preferably aluminum to the extent such reference samples are available.

11.1.1 RSF values should, in the best case, be determined from the ion beam ratio measurements of four randomly selected specimens from each standard required, with four independent measurements of each pin.

11.1.2 RSF values must be determined for the suite of impurity elements for which specimens are to be analyzed (see Table 1) using selected isotopes for measurement and RSF calculation (see Table 2).

TABLE 2 Isotope Selection^A

NOTE 1—Use the following isotopes for establishing RSF values and for performing analyses on test specimens.

	Aluminum-Copper	Aluminum-Silicon	Aluminum-Copper-Silicon
Silver	109	109	109
Arsenic	75	75	75
Gold	197	197	197
Boron	11	11	11
Beryllium	9	9	9
Calcium	44	44	44
Cerium	140	140	140
Chromium	52	52	52
Cesium	133	133	133
Copper	65	65	65
Iron	56	56	56
Potassium	39	39	39
Lithium	7	7	7
Magnesium	24	24	24
Manganese	55	55	55
Sodium	23	23	23
Nickel	58	60	60
Phosphorus	31	31	31
Antimony	121	121	121
Silicon	28	28	28
Tin	124	119	124
Thorium	232	232	232
Titanium	48	48	48
Uranium	238	238	238
Vanadium	51	51	51
Zinc	66	66	66
Zirconium	94	90	94

^A This selection of isotopes minimizes significant interferences. Additional species may be determined and reported, as agreed upon between all parties concerned with the analyses.

12. Analysis Procedure

12.1 Establish a suitable data acquisition protocol (DAP) appropriate for the GDMS instrument used for the analysis.

12.1.1 The protocol must include, but is not limited to, the measurement of elements tabulated in Table 1 and isotopes tabulated in Table 2 for respective matrix. Annex A1 lists significant spectral interferences in this testing.

12.1.2 Instrumental parameters selected for isotope measurements must be appropriate for the analysis requirements: (a) ion current integration times to achieve desired precision and detection limits; (b) mass ranges about the analyte mass peak over which measurements are acquired to clarify mass interferences.

12.2 Insert the prepared specimen into the GDMS ion source, allow the specimen to cool to source temperature, and initiate the glow discharge at pre-analysis sputtering conditions.

12.3 After at least 5 min of pre-analysis sputtering, adjust the glow discharge ion source sputtering conditions to the conditions required for analysis, ensuring that the gas pressure required to do so is within normal range.

12.4 Analyze the specimen using the DAP protocol and accept as final the concentration values determined only as detection limits.

12.5 Generate a MDAP protocol including only the elements determined to be present in the sample (from results of 12.4).

12.6 Measure the sample at least two additional times (with at least 10-min intervals between the measurements) using the MDAP protocol until the criteria of 12.6.1 is met.

12.6.1 If the concentration differences between the last two measurements are less than 5, 10 or 20 %, depending on concentration (Table 3), the measurements are confirmed and the last two measurements are averaged.

12.7 The confirmed values from 12.6 and the detection limits determined from 12.4 are reported together as the result of the analysis.

13. Detection Limit Determination

13.1 Reference to Test Method E1593, Section 13.

14. GDMS Analysis for Thorium, Uranium and Similar Elements

14.1 Because of the sensitivities of thorium, uranium, and other Group 3 and Group 4 elements to instrument changes and analytical conditions, the operator is advised to take extra caution in determining those analytes.

TABLE 3 Required Relative Standard Deviation (RSD) for RSF Determinations, Pre-sputtering Period, and Plasma Stability Tests

Analyte Content Range	Required RSD, %
Major (> 100 ppm)	5
Minor (100 ppm > x > 1 ppm)	10
Trace (1 ppm > x > 100 ppb)	20

14.2 Thorium, uranium, and other elements with significantly lower specification limits should be determined separately according to instrument performance, for example, increased ion counting times to lower the detection limits.

15. Report

15.1 Provide concentration data for the suite of elements listed in Table 1, unless the element is present as an alloying element. Additional elements may be listed as agreed upon between all parties concerned with the analysis.

15.2 Element concentration shall be reported, typically, in units of parts per million by weight.

15.3 Numerical results shall be presented using all certain digits plus the first uncertain digit, consistent with the precision of the determination.

15.4 Non-detected elements shall be reported at the detection limit.

15.5 Unmeasured elements shall be designated with an asterisk (*) or other notation.

16. Precision and Bias

16.1 As stated in Test Method E1593.

17. Keywords

17.1 aluminum; aluminum-copper alloys; aluminum-copper-silicon alloys; aluminum-silicon alloys; electronics; glow discharge mass spectrometer (GDMS); purity analysis; sputtering target; trace metallic impurities

ANNEX

(Mandatory Information)

A1. MASS SPECTRUM INTERFERENCES

A1.1 Ions of the following atoms and molecular combinations of aluminum, argon plasma gas isotopes, plasma impurities (carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, chlorine) and tantalum source components can significantly interfere with the determination of the ion current of the selected isotopes at low element concentrations.

$^{38}\text{Ar}^{++}$ interferes with $^{19}\text{F}^+$
 $^{12}\text{C}^{16}\text{O}^+$ interferes with $^{28}\text{Si}^+$
 $(^{16}\text{O}_2)^+$ interferes with $^{32}\text{S}^+$
 $^{38}\text{Ar}^1\text{H}^+$ interferes with $^{39}\text{K}^+$

$^{40}\text{Ar}^+$ scattered ions interfere with $^{39}\text{K}^+$
 $^{12}\text{C}^{16}\text{O}_2^+$ interferes with $^{44}\text{Ca}^+$
 $^{40}\text{Ar}^{12}\text{C}^+$ interferes with $^{52}\text{Cr}^+$
 $^{40}\text{Ar}^{16}\text{O}^+$ interferes with $^{56}\text{Fe}^+$
 $^{36}\text{Ar}^{27}\text{Al}^+$ interferes with $^{63}\text{Cu}^+$
 $^{40}\text{Ar}^{35}\text{Cl}^+$ interferes with $^{75}\text{As}^+$
 $^{40}\text{Ar}^{36}\text{Ar}^1\text{H}^+$ interferes with $^{77}\text{Se}^+$
 $^{40}\text{Ar}^{38}\text{Ar}^1\text{H}^+$ interferes with $^{79}\text{Br}^+$
 $(^{40}\text{Ar}_2)^+$ scattered ions interfere with $^{79}\text{Br}^+$
 $^{40}\text{Ar}^{36}\text{Ar}^{27}\text{Al}^+$ interferes with $^{103}\text{Rh}^+$
 $^{40}\text{Ar}^{36}\text{Ar}^{38}\text{Ar}^+$ interferes with $^{114}\text{Cd}^+$
 $^{181}\text{Ta}^{16}\text{O}^+$ interferes with $^{197}\text{Au}^+$

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