

# Ammonia – Direct Nesslerization, Extended Shelf-Life Method

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## Applications and Industries

Drinking water, clean surface water, good-quality nitrified wastewater effluent, seawater.

## References

APHA Standard Methods, 18<sup>th</sup> ed., Method 4500-NH<sub>3</sub> C - 1988  
ASTM D 1426-08, Ammonia Nitrogen in Water, Test Method A

## Chemistry

In a strongly alkaline solution, ammonia reacts with Nessler's Reagent (K<sub>2</sub>HgI<sub>4</sub>) to produce a yellow-colored complex in direct proportion to the ammonia concentration. Results are expressed in ppm (mg/L) ammonia-nitrogen (NH<sub>3</sub>-N).

## Storage Requirements

Products should be stored in the dark and at room temperature. Vacu-vial® ampoules can be refrigerated to extend shelf life.

## Shelf Life

*When stored in the dark and at room temperature:*

K-1513: 15 months from date of manufacture

K-1533: 18 months from date of manufacture

## Available Analysis Systems

*Instrumental colorimetric:* Vacu-vials®

## Safety Information

Safety Data Sheets (SDS) are available upon request and at [www.sdsfetch.com](http://www.sdsfetch.com). Read SDS before using these products. Breaking the tip of an ampoule in air rather than water may cause the glass ampoule to shatter. Wear safety glasses and protective gloves.

*These products contain mercury and must be disposed of according to local, state and federal laws.*

## Interference Information

- This chemistry measures soluble ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>, NH<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup>), but not ammonia attached to large organic molecules.
- Chloramines, formed by the reaction of ammonia with free chlorine, may interfere positively with these tests, but are not measured quantitatively. Chloramines will continue to

develop color with the test beyond the color development time specified in the kit instructions.

- Residual free chlorine may interfere with this chemistry by giving low test results or by forming a black precipitate.
- High levels of calcium and magnesium may cause the reagent to precipitate. This interference is minimized by addition of Stabilizer Solution A-1500 to the sample. The addition of extra Stabilizer Solution (A-1503) allows for the analysis of natural seawater and some synthetic seawaters.
- Some water samples may require a preliminary distillation to remove interferences. If distillation is not an option, dilution of the sample prior to analysis may help to minimize many interferences.
- Hydrazine at low levels will cause a slight positive interference, and at higher levels will form an orange or yellow precipitate.
- Glycine above 1000 ppm causes a negative interference
- Morpholine up to at least 10 ppm does not interfere.
- Monoethanolamine up to at least 30 ppm does not interfere.
- MDEA above 100 ppm causes the reagent to precipitate.
- DEHA at up to 3 ppm does not interfere.
- Alcohols generally do not interfere. Specifically, methanol up to at least 1% does not interfere.
- Aldehydes and ketones may cause positive interference.
- Iron causes a false positive interference.
- Copper up to at least 3 ppm does not interfere.
- Sulfide is a positive interference and may cause off-color test results.
- Chloride at concentrations up to approximately 2% will not interfere.
- Carbohydrazide interferes positively and may cause off-color development and cloudiness in the test ampoule.
- Nitrite at up to approximately 200 ppm as NO<sub>2</sub>-N does not interfere.
- Alkalinity in the form of bicarbonate or carbonate is tolerated up to 1500 ppm CaCO<sub>3</sub>, and in the form of hydroxide is tolerated up to 10,000 ppm CaCO<sub>3</sub>.

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#### Interference Information (continued)

- Sample pHs above 1.5 are well tolerated. Results obtained with samples with lower pHs will be biased low.
- Sample color or turbidity may make a color match difficult during visual colorimetric testing and may cause a false positive result with instrumental colorimetric tests. CHEMetrics' Sample Zeroing Accessory Pack can be used to correct for potential errors during instrumental analysis.

#### Seawater

- Seawater requires the purchase of the Ammonia in Seawater Accessory Pack, A-1503. It contains S-1502 Activator and S-1504 Stabilizer as a substitute for S-1500.

#### Accuracy Statement

*Statements of accuracy are based on laboratory tests performed under ideal testing conditions using standards of known concentration prepared in deionized water.*

*Vacu-vials® kit K-1513 (0 – 10.00 ppm range):*

- ≤ 0.15 ppm at 0 ppm
- ± 0.15 ppm at 0.50 ppm
- ± 0.50 ppm at 2.50 ppm
- ± 0.75 ppm at 7.50 ppm

*K-1513 (0 – 150 ppm range)*

- ≤ 2 ppm at 0 ppm
- ± 2 ppm at 8 ppm
- ± 8 ppm at 38 ppm
- ± 11 ppm at 112 ppm

*Vacu-vials® kit K-1533 (0 – 20.0 ppm):*

- ≤ 0.5 ppm at 0 ppm
- ± 0.3 ppm at 1.0 ppm
- ± 1.0 ppm at 5.0 ppm
- ± 2.2 ppm at 15.0 ppm