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## **Generation and analysis of toxic gases in fire — Calculation of species yields, equivalence ratios and combustion efficiency in experimental fires**

*Production et analyse des gaz toxiques dans le feu — Calcul des taux  
de production des espèces, des rapports d'équivalence et de l'efficacité  
de combustion dans les feux expérimentaux*



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Tel. + 41 22 749 01 11  
Fax + 41 22 749 09 47  
E-mail [copyright@iso.org](mailto:copyright@iso.org)  
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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

The main task of technical committees is to prepare International Standards. Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

ISO 19703 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 92, *Fire safety*, Subcommittee SC 3, *Fire threat to people and environment*.

This corrected version of ISO 19703:2005 incorporates the following corrections:

a) Clause 2:

- ISO/TR 9122-1:1989 has been cancelled and replaced by ISO/TS 19706.
- ISO/TR 19701:—<sup>1)</sup> has been modified to ISO/TR 19701:2005 and the associated footnote deleted.
- These two references, plus ISO 5725-1:1994, ISO 5725-2:1994, ISO/TR 9122-4:1993, ISO/TS 13571 and the *International vocabulary of basic and general terms in metrology*, have been moved to the Bibliography as references [21] to [27].

b) 3.6: The definition of mass concentration of gas, has been modified.

c) Clause 4:

- The semi-colon (;) has been replaced by a comma in the subscripts of some of the symbols, such as  $m_{m,loss}$  and some of the quantities modified.
- $\sigma_{\alpha}$  has been amended to  $\sigma_{m\alpha}$ .

d) 5.3: The second subclause numbered 5.3.1 has been renumbered to 5.3.2.

e) Table 4:

- In row 1, column 2,  $m_{A,E}$  has been modified to  $m_{A,X}$ .
- Footnote a has been modified to read: " $m_{A,X}$  is the atomic mass, expressed in grams, of element X."

f) 7.1, Equation (45): The units for the factor 1 331 have been modified to read: "..., expressed in cubic metres,"

- g) 8.3.2 (twice): The symbol  $\chi_{\text{ox,dep}}$  has been modified to  $\chi_{\text{ox}}$ .
- h) 8.3.3.1(twice) and 8.3.3.3, Equation (58): The symbol  $\chi_{\text{ox,prod}}$  has been modified to  $\chi_{\text{prod}}$ .
- i) Equation (57): The reference associated with the definition of  $\chi_{\text{cox}}$  has been changed to “(see 8.4)”.
- j) Table 10:
  - Symbols in subtitles 1 and 2 have been modified to  $\omega_{\text{O},2,\text{cons}}$  and  $\omega_{\text{O},2,\text{der}}$ , respectively.
  - The symbol associated with “Combustion efficiency” (fourth row, second column under Oxygen consumption method) has been modified to  $\chi_{\text{ox}}$ .
  - In Footnote a,  $m_{\text{A,E}}$  has been modified to  $m_{\text{A,X}}$ .
  - A footnote indicator has been added to the fourth column of the first and third rows under “Oxygen in products method”, e.g. (microlitres per litre)<sup>b</sup>.
- k) Table 11:
  - Symbol in subtitle 1 has been modified to  $\omega_{\text{O},2,\text{cons}}$ .
  - The symbol associated with “Combustion efficiency” (fourteenth row, second column under Oxygen consumption method) has been modified to  $\chi_{\text{ox}}$ .
- l) Bibliography: ISO 5660 has been revised to ISO 5660-1 with the new title: *Reaction-to-fire tests — Heat release, smoke production and mass loss rate — Part 1: Heat release rate (cone calorimeter method)*.
- m) Other minor editorial changes to layout, punctuation, etc.

## Introduction

It is the view of committees ISO TC92/SC3 (Fire threat to people and the environment), ISO TC92/SC4 (Fire safety engineering), and IEC TC89 (Fire hazard testing) that commercial products should not be regulated solely on the basis of the toxic potency of the effluent produced when the product is combusted in a bench-scale test apparatus (physical fire model). Rather, the information that characterizes the toxic potency of the effluent should be used in a fire risk or hazard assessment that includes the other factors that contribute to determining the magnitude and impact of the effluent. The characterization of (a) the apparatus used to generate the effluent and (b) the effluent itself must thus be in a form usable in such a fire safety assessment.

As described in ISO/TS 13571, the time to incapacitation in a fire is determined by the integrated exposure of a person to the fire effluent components. The toxic species concentrations depend on both the yields originally generated and the successive dilution in air. The former are commonly obtained using a bench-scale apparatus (in which a specimen from a commercial product is burned) or a real-scale fire test of the commercial product. These yields, expressed as the mass of effluent component per mass of fuel consumed, are then inserted into a fluid mechanical model that estimates the transport and dilution of the effluent throughout the building as the fire evolves.

For the engineering analysis to produce accurate results, the yield data must come from an apparatus that has been demonstrated to produce yields comparable to those produced when the full product is burned. In addition to depending on the chemical composition, conformation and physical properties of the test specimen, toxic-product yields are sensitive to the combustion conditions in the apparatus. Thus, one means of increasing the likelihood that the yields from a bench-scale apparatus will be accurate is to operate it under combustion conditions similar to those expected when the real product burns. The important conditions include whether the fuel is flaming or non-flaming, the degree of flame extension, the fuel/air equivalence ratio, and the thermal environment. Similarly, these parameters should be known for a real-scale fire test.

The yields of toxic gases, the combustion efficiency and the equivalence ratio are likely to be sensitive to the manner in which the test specimen is sampled from the whole commercial product. There may be difficulty or alternative ways of obtaining of a proper test specimen. That is not the subject of this document, which presumes that a specimen has been selected for study and characterizes the combustion conditions and the yields of effluent species for that specimen.

For those experimental fires in which time-resolved data are available, the methods in this International Standard can be used to produce either instantaneous or averaged values. The application may be influenced by changes in the chemistry of the test specimen during combustion. For those fire tests limited to producing time-averaged gas concentrations, the calculated values produced by the methods in this International Standard are limited to being averages as well. In real fires, combustion conditions, the fuel chemistry and the composition of fire effluent from many common materials and products vary continuously during the course of the fire. Thus, how well the average yields obtained using these methods correspond to the yields in a given real fire has much to do with the stage of the fire, the pace of fire development and the chemical nature of the materials and products exposed.

This International Standard provides definitions and equations for the calculation of toxic product yields and the fire conditions under which they have been derived in terms of equivalence ratio and combustion efficiency. Sample calculations for practical cases are provided.

# Generation and analysis of toxic gases in fire — Calculation of species yields, equivalence ratios and combustion efficiency in experimental fires

## 1 Scope

This International Standard provides definitions and equations for the calculation of toxic product yields and the fire conditions under which they have been derived in terms of equivalence ratio and combustion efficiency. Sample calculations for practical cases are provided. The methods can be used to produce either instantaneous or averaged values for those experimental fires in which time-resolved data are available.

This International Standard is intended to provide guidance to fire researchers for

- appropriate experimental fire data to be recorded,
- calculating average yields of gases and smoke in fire effluents in fire tests and fire-like combustion in reduced scale apparatus
- characterizing burning behaviour in experimental fires in terms of equivalence ratio and combustion efficiency using oxygen consumption and product generation data.

This International Standard does not provide guidance on the operating procedure of any particular piece of apparatus or interpretation of data obtained therein (e.g. toxicological significance of results).

## 2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO/IEC 13943:2000, *Fire safety — Vocabulary*

## 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 13943:2000 and the following apply.

### 3.1

#### atomic mass

(of an element) value proportional to the mass of its atom relative to carbon (isotope  $^{12}\text{C}$ ) that is assigned the value of 12,00 containing 1 mole of carbon atoms

### 3.2

#### combustion efficiency

ratio of the heat released in a combustion reaction to the theoretical heat of complete combustion

NOTE 1 Combustion efficiency can be calculated only for cases where complete combustion can be defined.

NOTE 2 Combustion efficiency can also be expressed as a percentage.

### 3.3

#### **empirical formula**

chemical formula of a substance in which the relative numbers of atoms of each type are given

NOTE Typically, the number for one type of atom is chosen, to be an integer (usually C or O), e.g. a particular sample might be represented as  $C_6H_{8,9}O_{4,1}N_{0,3}Cl_{0,01}$ .

### 3.4

#### **equivalence ratio**

$\phi$

actual fuel-to-air mass ratio divided by the stoichiometric fuel-to-air mass ratio for that fuel

NOTE 1 For  $\phi < 1$ , as in small or well-ventilated fires, the fuel/air mixture is said to be fuel lean and complete combustion (i.e., to  $CO_2$  and  $H_2O$ ) will dominate. For  $\phi = 1$ , the mixture is stoichiometric. For  $\phi > 1$ , as in ventilation-controlled fires, the mixture is fuel rich and relatively high concentrations of pyrolysis and incomplete combustion gases will result.

NOTE 2 Standard, dry air contains 20,95 % oxygen by volume. In practice, the oxygen concentration in entrained air can vary, requiring correction in the calculation of  $\phi$  to a standard, dry air basis. In this International Standard, fuel-to-oxygen ratios, rather than fuel/air ratios, are used for the equivalence ratio calculations.

NOTE 3 For gaseous fuels, an alternative expression of the equivalence ratio can be based on the fuel-to-air volume ratio.

### 3.5

#### **mass loss concentration**

mass of a test specimen consumed during combustion per unit chamber volume (closed system) or per total volume of air passing through an open system

NOTE 1 Mass loss concentration is typically expressed in units of grams per cubic metre.

NOTE 2 For an open system, the definition assumes that the mass is dispersed in the air flow uniformly over time.

### 3.6

#### **mass concentration of gas**

mass of gas per unit volume

NOTE 1 The mass concentration of a gas can be derived directly from the measured volume fraction and its molar mass, or measured directly.

NOTE 2 Mass concentration is typically expressed in units of grams per cubic metre.

### 3.7

#### **mass concentration of particles**

mass of solid and liquid aerosol particles per unit volume

NOTE Mass concentration of particles is typically expressed in units of grams per cubic metre.

### 3.8

#### **molar mass**

mass of 1 mole

NOTE Molar mass is normally expressed in units of grams per mole.

### 3.9

#### **net heat of combustion**

enthalpy, per unit mass of fuel consumed, generated in complete combustion with the water produced being in the gaseous state

NOTE Net heat of combustion is typically expressed in units of kilojoules per gram or megajoules per kilogram.



**3.10****notional yield****stoichiometric yield**

maximum possible mass of a combustion product generated during combustion, per unit mass of test specimen consumed

NOTE Notional yield is typically expressed in units of grams per gram or kilograms per kilogram.

**3.11****recovery of element**

⟨in a specified combustion product⟩ degree of conversion of an element in the test specimen to a corresponding gas, i.e. a ratio of the actual yield to notional yield of the gas containing that element

**3.12****stoichiometric mixture**

mixture of fuel and oxidizer which has the correct composition to produce only the products of complete combustion

**3.13****stoichiometric oxygen demand****stoichiometric oxygen-to-fuel mass ratio**

amount of oxygen needed by a material for complete combustion

NOTE Stoichiometric oxygen demand is typically expressed in units of grams per gram or kilograms per kilogram.

**3.14****uncertainty of measurement**

parameter associated with the result of a measurement, that characterizes the dispersion of values that could reasonably be attributed to the measurand

NOTE The description and propagation of uncertainty in measurements is described in GUM<sup>[20]</sup>.

**3.15****yield**

mass of a combustion product generated during combustion per unit mass of test specimen consumed

NOTE Yield is typically expressed in units of grams per gram or kilograms per kilogram.

**4 Symbols and abbreviated terms**

Symbol	Quantity	Typical units
$A$	extinction area of smoke	square metre
$A_{\text{of}}$ or $A_{\text{SEA}}$	specific extinction area of smoke per unit mass of material burned	square metres per gram or square metres per kilogram
$D_{\text{MO}}$	mass optical density ( $\log_{10}$ analogue of $A_{\text{SEA}}$ )	cubic metres per gram or cubic metres per kilogram
$F_{\text{R},E}$	recovery fraction of element $E$ in gas containing $E$	dimensionless
$\Delta H_{\text{act}}$	measured heat release in a combustion	kilojoules per gram
$\Delta H_{\text{C}}$	net heat or enthalpy generated in complete combustion	kilojoules per gram
$I / I_0$	fraction of light transmitted through smoke	dimensionless
$L$	is the light path through the smoke	metre
$m_{\text{A},E}$	atomic mass of the element $E$	gram
$m_{\text{E}}$	mass of element $E$ per unit mass of material	dimensionless

$m_{E,per}$	mass of element $E$ in the material	percent
$m_{fuel}$	mass of fuel	gram
$m_{gas}$	total mass of the gas of interest	gram
$m_{m,loss}$	total mass loss of material	gram
$\dot{m}_{m,loss}$	material mass loss rate	grams per minute
$m_{O_2,act}$	actual mass of oxygen available for combustion	gram
$\dot{m}_{O_2,act}$	actual mass flow rate of oxygen available for combustion	grams per minute
$m_{O_2,stoich}$	stoichiometric mass of oxygen required for complete combustion	gram
$m_{part}$	total mass of particles	gram
$m_s$	mass concentration of smoke	grams per cubic metre
$M_{gas}$	molar mass of the gas of interest	grams per mole
$M_{poly}$	molar mass of the polymer unit	gram
$n_E$	number of atoms of element $E$ in the gas	dimensionless
$n_{E,poly}$	number of atoms of element $E$ in the polymer unit	dimensionless
$P_{amb}$	ambient pressure	kilopascal
$P_{std}$	standard pressure	101,3 kPa
$T_C$	temperature of the gas of interest at the point of measurement	degree Celsius
$V_{eff}$	total volume of fire effluent	cubic metre
$\dot{V}_{air}$	volume air flow rate	cubic metres per minute
$w_{O_2,cons}$	measured mass fraction of oxygen consumed	dimensionless
$w_{O_2,der}$	derived mass fraction of oxygen consumed	dimensionless
$w_{Oex,poly}$	mass fraction of oxygen in polymer that contributes to the formation of oxygen-containing products	dimensionless
$w_{Ogases}$	mass fraction of oxygen consumed in the form of the major oxygen-containing products ( $w_{OCO_2} + w_{OCO} + w_{OH_2O}$ )	dimensionless
$w_{Opoly}$	mass fraction of oxygen in the polymer	dimensionless
$Y_{gas}$	measured mass yield of gas of interest	dimensionless
$Y_{part}$	measured mass yield of smoke particles	dimensionless
$\alpha$	linear decadic absorption coefficient (or optical density)	inverse metre
$\alpha_k$	light extinction coefficient	inverse metre
$\chi$	combustion efficiency ratio	dimensionless
$\chi_{cox}$	combustion efficiency ratio calculated from the generation efficiency of carbon in the fuel to oxides of carbon	dimensionless
$\chi_{ox}$	combustion efficiency ratio calculated from oxygen depletion	dimensionless
$\chi_{prod}$	combustion efficiency ratio calculated from the oxygen in the major combustion products	dimensionless
$\phi$	equivalence ratio	dimensionless
$\eta$	generation efficiency for oxides of carbon	dimensionless
$\varphi_{gas}$	volume concentration of the gas of interest	volume per volume, percent, [parts per million (ppm) deprecated]
$\varphi_{O_2}$	volume fraction oxygen in the air supply (0,209 5 for dry air)	dimensionless

$\rho_{\text{gas}}$	mass concentration of the gas of interest	grams per cubic metre
$\rho_{\text{m,loss}}$	mass loss concentration of the material	grams per cubic metre
$\rho_{\text{part}}$	mass concentration of the smoke particles	grams per cubic metre
$\sigma_{\text{m},\alpha}$	mass specific extinction coefficient	square metres per gram or square metres per kilogram
$\psi_{\text{gas}}$	notional mass yield of gas of interest	dimensionless
$\psi_{\text{O}}$	stoichiometric mass oxygen-to-fuel ratio (stoichiometric oxygen demand)	dimensionless

## 5 Appropriate input data required for calculations

### 5.1 Data handling

#### 5.1.1 Uncertainty

In calculating the fire parameters described in this document, it is essential to take into account the uncertainty or error associated with each component, and to combine them in the correct manner<sup>[1]</sup>. Uncertainty is derived from accuracy (how close the measured value is to the true value) and precision (how well the values agree with each other). There will be uncertainties relating to physically measured parameters (e.g. mass loss, gas concentrations etc.).

Assuming all errors to be independent, the total error,  $\delta q$ , is obtained by summing the squares of the errors in accordance with the general Equation (1):

$$\delta q = \sqrt{\left(\frac{\delta q}{\delta a}\right)^2 + \dots + \left(\frac{\delta q}{\delta z}\right)^2} \quad (1)$$

In other words, evaluate the error caused by each of the individual measurements, and then combine them by taking the root of the sum of the squares.

In empirically derived equations, uncertainties in “constant” values should be treated similarly to measurement uncertainties. If a constant is truly constant, i.e. has negligible uncertainty, then it can be neglected.

#### 5.1.2 Significant figures and rounding off

When recording and reporting data, it is also important to handle significant figures properly. The general approach is to carry one digit beyond the last certain one. When rounding off, the typical rule is to round up when the figure to be dropped is 5 or more and round down when it is less than 5.

### 5.2 Test specimen information

#### 5.2.1 Composition

Information should be given where possible on the combustible fraction, organic and inorganic combustible components, inert components, elemental composition, empirical formula, and molecular or formula weight

The combustible in a fire experiment of any scale is often a single, homogenous material, perhaps with dispersed additives. In this case, the molecular formula of the material should be provided. Commercial products, however, are generally non-homogeneous combinations of materials, with each component containing one or more polymers and possibly multiple additives. For complex materials representative of commercial products, the yields, effective heats of combustion, etc. will vary with time as the various components become involved. For some of the following (global) calculations, a simplification is the use of an empirical formula for the composite.

### 5.2.2 Net heat of combustion

The net heat of combustion for combustible components may be required for some of the calculations (e.g. combustion efficiency).

## 5.3 Fire conditions

### 5.3.1 Apparatus

Give the name of the apparatus with a brief description of mode of operation (e.g., flow-through steady state, calorimeter, closed chamber system, etc.). Refer to the appropriate standard or other reference relating to the procedure.

### 5.3.2 Set-up procedure

The fire conditions are generally apparatus-dependent, and largely dictated by the set-up procedure for the particular apparatus. The following information is required:

- a) test specimen details, its mass, dimensions and orientation of the combustible;
- b) thermal environment in terms of the temperature (expressed in degrees Celsius) and/or irradiance (expressed in kilowatts per square metre) to which test specimen is subjected;

NOTE The temperature distribution and the radiation field in a test are frequently not uniform and as a result are rarely well documented. Sufficient information about the thermal and radiative conditions is needed that another person can reproduce the results using the same apparatus, compare the results with results for the same specimen tested in another apparatus, etc.

- c) oxygen concentration in the air supply (volume percent or volume fraction);
- d) volume of chamber or air flow. For a closed system, give the air volume (expressed in litres or cubic metres), and for an open system, give the air flow (expressed in litres per minute or in cubic metres per metre), and the dynamics of the flow. In both cases, give information on the atmospheric mixing conditions and the degree of homogeneity of the fire effluent.

## 5.4 Data collection

### 5.4.1 Data acquisition

Time-resolved data or time-integrated data may be acquired. The method of data acquisition will be specified in the test protocol.

### 5.4.2 Measured data and observations

Most of the following data parameters will be required in order to calculate yields, equivalence ratios and combustion efficiencies in experimental fires. The units applied to data will be usually dictated by the operational procedure associated with a particular piece of apparatus. A number of typical units are suggested below:

- a) mass loss of the test specimen, derived by measuring the test specimen mass before and after test to give overall mass loss (expressed in milligrams, grams or kilograms) or mass loss fraction (expressed in mass percent, grams per gram or kilograms per kilogram), or by measuring the specimen mass throughout a test to give mass loss rate (expressed in milligrams per second, grams per minute, or kilograms per minute);
- b) gas and vapour concentrations and oxygen depletion [expressed in volume percent, volume fraction, microlitres per litre, milligrams per litre, or milligrams per cubic metre (parts per million is deprecated)];

- c) smoke particulate concentration (expressed in milligrams per litre or milligrams per cubic metre) and smoke obscuration (expressed in optical density per metre or square metres per kilogram);
- d) heat release (expressed in kilojoules per gram), used to calculate combustion efficiency, forms part of the protocol for some apparatuses;
- e) combustion mode, time to ignition (expressed in minutes or seconds) and whether the specimen flames or not throughout the test.

## 6 Calculation of yields of fire gases and smoke, stoichiometric oxygen demand, and recovery of key elements

### 6.1 Calculation of measured yields from fire gas concentration data

In experimental fires, the mass yield,  $Y_{\text{gas}}$ , of a gas can be calculated from the measured mass concentration of the gas of interest and the mass loss concentration of the material, or from the total mass of gas generated and the total mass loss of material in accordance with Equation (2); see Notes 1, 2, and 3:

$$Y_{\text{gas}} = \frac{\rho_{\text{gas}}}{\rho_{\text{m,loss}}} \quad (2)$$

where

$\rho_{\text{gas}}$  is the mass concentration, expressed in grams per cubic metre, of the gas ;

$\rho_{\text{m,loss}}$  is the mass loss concentration, expressed in grams per cubic metre, of the material.

Alternatively, the expression can be written as given in Equation (3):

$$Y_{\text{gas}} = \frac{m_{\text{gas}}}{m_{\text{m,loss}}} \quad (3)$$

where

$m_{\text{gas}}$  is the total mass, expressed in grams, of the gas;

$m_{\text{m,loss}}$  is the total material mass loss, expressed in grams.

**NOTE 1** These calculations can be derived from instantaneous data or from data which assumes (a) that the gases are uniformly dispersed in a certain volume and (b) that this volume is the same one in which the lost sample mass is (evenly) dispersed. If the dispersion is not uniform, the equations still work if the lost mass and the gas in question are dispersed equivalently. If a combustion gas is prone to surface losses within the apparatus, the apparent yield will depend on where the concentration is being measured.

**NOTE 2** In flow-through devices, the total effluent is generally well mixed at some distance downstream. For closed-box combustion systems, it is not necessarily so, especially if there are large molecular weight differences and large thermal gradients. If multiple fuels are involved, only some averaged combined yield could be calculated.

**NOTE 3** In setting up these calculations, it is important to keep track of the uncertainty. There will be uncertainties relating to lost sample mass, fluctuations in the measured concentration, etc. The calculated yield needs to take account of and combine these, enabling a sound basis for comparing yields under different combustion conditions, comparing yields from different materials, etc.

Whilst concentrations of the specific gas are most often measured in volume units, the mass loss from a solid will almost always be in mass units, since the molecular weight of the effluent is difficult to determine.

Equations (4) and (5) show how to convert the volume fraction concentrations of a gas to its mass concentration:

$$\rho_{\text{gas}} = \varphi_{\text{gas}} \times \frac{M_{\text{gas}}}{22,414} \times \frac{273,16}{(273,16 + T_{\text{C}})} \times \frac{P_{\text{amb}}}{101,3} \times 10^{-3} \quad (4)$$

where

$\varphi_{\text{gas}}$  is the concentration, expressed as microlitres per litre, of the gas;

$M_{\text{gas}}$  is the molar mass, expressed in grams per mole, of the gas;

$T_{\text{C}}$  is the temperature, expressed in degrees Celsius, of the gas at the point of measurement;

$P_{\text{amb}}$  is the ambient pressure, expressed in kilopascals;

273,16 is standard temperature, expressed in kelvins;

101,3 is standard pressure, expressed in kilopascals;

22,414 is the volume, expressed in cubic metres, occupied by the molar mass of the gas at standard temperature and pressure.

Thus, for fire effluent at 20 °C and standard pressure, Equation (4) simplifies to Equation (5):

$$\rho_{\text{gas}} = \varphi_{\text{gas}} \times \frac{M_{\text{gas}}}{24,055} \times 10^{-3} \quad (5)$$

**EXAMPLE** The calculations for a well ventilated fire atmosphere where mass loss concentration of the material is 25 g·m<sup>-3</sup>, and carbon monoxide (CO) concentration is 0,125 0 volume % at 20 °C are shown in Equations (6) and (7):

$$\rho_{\text{CO}} = 0,125 0 \times \frac{28,01}{24,055} \times 10 = 1,456 \quad (6)$$

$$Y_{\text{CO}} = 1,456/25 = 0,058 2 \quad (7)$$

where

$\rho_{\text{CO}}$  is the mass concentration, expressed in grams per cubic metre, of CO;

$Y_{\text{CO}}$  is the mass yield, expressed in grams of CO per gram material;

28,01 is the molar mass, expressed in grams, of CO.

The atomic mass, molar mass and gas concentration conversion factors for the major fire gases are listed in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1 — Atomic mass of key fire gas elements<sup>[2]</sup>

Element	Symbol	Atomic mass <sup>a</sup>
Carbon	C	12,011
Hydrogen	H	1,0079
Oxygen	O	15,999
Nitrogen	N	14,007
Chlorine	Cl	35,453
Bromine	Br	79,904
Fluorine	F	18,998
Sulfur	S	32,065
Phosphorus	P	30,973
Antimony	Sb	121,76
<sup>a</sup> Atomic mass values rounded to five significant figures		

Table 2 — Molar masses of common fire gases and volume/mass concentration conversion factors

Gas or vapour	Formula	Molar mass <sup>a</sup> g·mol <sup>-1</sup>	Gas concentration conversion factors (at 20 °C and 101,3 kPa)	
			(µl/l) <sup>b</sup> to g·m <sup>-3</sup>	g·m <sup>-3</sup> to (volume % × 10 <sup>4</sup> ) <sup>b</sup>
Carbon dioxide <sup>c</sup>	CO <sub>2</sub>	44,01	1,830 × 10 <sup>-3</sup>	0,546 × 10 <sup>3</sup>
Carbon monoxide <sup>c</sup>	CO	28,01	1,164 × 10 <sup>-3</sup>	0,859 × 10 <sup>3</sup>
Hydrogen cyanide	HCN	27,02	1,124 × 10 <sup>-3</sup>	0,890 × 10 <sup>3</sup>
Nitrogen dioxide	NO <sub>2</sub>	46,01	1,913 × 10 <sup>-3</sup>	0,523 × 10 <sup>3</sup>
Nitrous oxide	N <sub>2</sub> O	44,01	1,831 × 10 <sup>-3</sup>	0,546 × 10 <sup>3</sup>
Nitric oxide	NO	30,01	1,248 × 10 <sup>-3</sup>	0,801 × 10 <sup>3</sup>
Ammonia	NH <sub>3</sub>	17,03	0,708 × 10 <sup>-3</sup>	1,413 × 10 <sup>3</sup>
Hydrogen chloride	HCl	36,46	1,516 × 10 <sup>-3</sup>	0,660 × 10 <sup>3</sup>
Hydrogen bromide	HBr	80,91	3,364 × 10 <sup>-3</sup>	0,297 × 10 <sup>3</sup>
Hydrogen fluoride	HF	20,01	0,832 × 10 <sup>-3</sup>	1,202 × 10 <sup>3</sup>
Hydrogen sulfide	H <sub>2</sub> S	34,08	1,417 × 10 <sup>-3</sup>	0,706 × 10 <sup>3</sup>
Sulfur dioxide	SO <sub>2</sub>	64,06	2,663 × 10 <sup>-3</sup>	0,376 × 10 <sup>3</sup>
Water	H <sub>2</sub> O	18,01	0,749 × 10 <sup>-3</sup>	1,335 × 10 <sup>3</sup>
Phosphoric acid	H <sub>3</sub> PO <sub>4</sub>	97,99	4,074 × 10 <sup>-3</sup>	0,245 × 10 <sup>3</sup>
Acrolein	C <sub>3</sub> H <sub>4</sub> O	56,06	2,331 × 10 <sup>-3</sup>	0,429 × 10 <sup>3</sup>
Formaldehyde	CH <sub>2</sub> O	30,03	1,248 × 10 <sup>-3</sup>	0,801 × 10 <sup>3</sup>
Oxygen	O <sub>2</sub>	32,00	1,331 × 10 <sup>-3</sup>	0,751 × 10 <sup>3</sup>
Oxygen depletion	O <sub>2</sub>	32,00	See note d.	
<sup>a</sup> Molar mass values are rounded to two decimal places.				
<sup>b</sup> Conversion factors: ppm = volume % × 10 <sup>4</sup> ppm = volume fraction × 10 <sup>6</sup>				
<sup>c</sup> CO <sub>2</sub> /CO volume ratio equals the CO <sub>2</sub> /CO mass ratio divided by 1,571.				
<sup>d</sup> The (initial volume fraction minus the measured volume fraction) × 1 331 = g·m <sup>-3</sup> . The volume fraction in totally dry air is 0,209 5 and this is appropriate for dry air supplies. Room air is generally lower in oxygen due to the presence of water vapour. At room temperature and 100 % relative humidity, water is present at a volume fraction of around 0,03.				
NOTE: Example calculation: 0,100 0 volume % CO = 0,100 0 × 1,164 10 = 1,164 g·m <sup>-3</sup> .				

## 6.2 Calculation of notional gas yields

### 6.2.1 General

The notional yields of gases and vapours are a measure of the maximum theoretical combustion product yields. They are based on the composition of the material and are entirely material-dependent. Two primary methods for calculating notional yields are described in 6.2.2 and 6.2.3.

### 6.2.2 From the elemental composition

Provided the elemental composition of the base material is known (e.g. by elemental analysis), the maximum possible (notional) yield,  $\psi_{\text{gas}}$ , of fire gas corresponding to each specified element,  $E$ , is calculated in accordance with Equations (8) and (9):

$$\psi_{\text{gas}} = m_E \times \frac{M_{\text{gas}}}{n_E \times m_{A,E}} \quad (8)$$

where

$m_E$  is the mass, expressed in grams, of element  $E$  per unit mass, expressed in grams, of material;

$n_E$  is the number of atoms of element  $E$  in the gas;

$m_{A,E}$  is the atomic mass, expressed in grams, of the element  $E$ .

or

$$\psi_{\text{gas}} = m_{E,\text{per}} \times \frac{M_{\text{gas}} \times 10^{-2}}{n_E \times m_{A,E}} \quad (9)$$

where  $m_{E,\text{per}}$  is the mass of element  $E$  in the material, expressed as percent.

**EXAMPLE** The notional yield,  $\psi_{\text{CO}}$ , of CO from cellulose is calculated as shown in Equation (10):

$$\psi_{\text{CO}} = 44,5 \times \frac{28,01 \times 10^{-2}}{1 \times 12,011} = 1,038 \quad (10)$$

where

$\psi_{\text{CO}}$  is expressed in grams of CO per gram of material;

44,5 is the mass, expressed as percent, of carbon in the cellulose;

28,01 is the molar mass, expressed in grams per mole, of CO;

12,011 is the atomic mass, expressed in grams, of carbon.

Factors for calculating notional gas yields from the elemental composition are given in Table 3.

### 6.2.3 From the empirical formula

If the empirical formula of the material is known, the notional yield,  $\psi_{\text{gas}}$ , can be calculated from Equation (11):

$$\psi_{\text{gas}} = \frac{n_{E,\text{poly}}}{n_E} \times \frac{M_{\text{gas}}}{M_{\text{poly}}} \quad (11)$$



where

$n_{E,\text{poly}}$  is the number of atoms of element  $E$  in the polymer unit;

$M_{\text{poly}}$  is the molar mass, expressed in grams, of the polymer unit.

EXAMPLE The notional yield,  $\psi_{\text{CO}_2}$ , of carbon dioxide ( $\text{CO}_2$ ) from polypropylene with the empirical formula ( $\text{C}_3\text{H}_6$ ) is calculated as shown in Equation (12):

$$\psi_{\text{CO}_2} = \frac{1}{3} \times \frac{44,01}{42,03} = 3,142 \quad (12)$$

where

$\psi_{\text{CO}_2}$  is expressed in grams of  $\text{CO}_2$  per gram of polymer;

1 is the number of atoms of carbon in  $\text{CO}_2$ ;

3 is the number of atoms of carbon in the polymer unit;

44,01 is the molar mass, expressed in grams per mole, of  $\text{CO}_2$ ;

42,03 is the molar mass, expressed in grams, of the polymer unit.

NOTE The notional yield of a gas that contains more than one element from the fuel molecule will be determined by the least prevalent element (other than oxygen). Thus the notional yield of HCN will most often be determined by the nitrogen content of the fuel. However, for a product gas like formaldehyde, it could be either the carbon or hydrogen fraction that provides the criterion, depending on the fuel composition.

**Table 3 — Factors for calculating notional gas yields from the elemental composition of material**

Gas or vapour		Notional yield of gas or vapour $\psi_{\text{gas}}$ mass fraction of base material	
Formula	Molar mass g·mol <sup>-1</sup>	Element $E$ in base material %	Factor <sup>a</sup>
$\text{CO}_2$	44,01	carbon	$3,664 \times 10^{-2}$
$\text{CO}$	28,01	carbon	$2,332 \times 10^{-2}$
$\text{H}_2\text{O}$	18,02	hydrogen	$8,939 \times 10^{-2}$
$\text{HCN}$	27,02	nitrogen	$1,929 \times 10^{-2}$
$\text{NO}_2$	46,01	nitrogen	$3,284 \times 10^{-2}$
$\text{N}_2\text{O}$	44,01	nitrogen	$1,571 \times 10^{-2}$
$\text{NO}$	30,01	nitrogen	$2,142 \times 10^{-2}$
$\text{NH}_3$	17,03	nitrogen	$1,216 \times 10^{-2}$
$\text{HCl}$	36,46	chlorine	$1,028 \times 10^{-2}$
$\text{HBr}$	80,92	bromine	$1,013 \times 10^{-2}$
$\text{HF}$	20,01	fluorine	$1,053 \times 10^{-2}$
$\text{H}_2\text{S}$	34,08	sulfur	$1,063 \times 10^{-2}$
$\text{H}_3\text{PO}_4$	97,98	phosphorus	$3,163 \times 10^{-2}$
$\text{SO}_2$	64,06	sulfur	$1,998 \times 10^{-2}$
Acrolein ( $\text{C}_3\text{H}_4\text{O}$ )	56,06	carbon	$1,556 \times 10^{-2}$
Formaldehyde ( $\text{CH}_2\text{O}$ )	30,03	carbon	$2,500 \times 10^{-2}$
<sup>a</sup> Factor derived from Equation (9), and rounded to four significant figures.			

### 6.3 Calculation of recovery of elements in key products

The recovery of an element in a key combustion product (alternatively the degree of conversion of an element in the test specimen to a corresponding gas or efficiency yield of the element) can be calculated from the measured yield,  $Y_{\text{gas}}$ , of the gas of interest relative to its notional yield,  $\Psi_{\text{gas}}$ . For a material containing element  $E$ , this corresponds to Equation (13):

$$R_E = Y_{\text{gas}} / \Psi_{\text{gas}} \quad (13)$$

where

$Y_{\text{gas}}$  is derived from Equations (2) to (7);

$\Psi_{\text{gas}}$  is derived from Equations (8) to (12);

$R_E$  is the recovery fraction of element  $E$  in gas containing  $E$ .

### 6.4 Calculation of stoichiometric oxygen demand

#### 6.4.1 General

Stoichiometric oxygen demand (or oxygen-to-fuel ratio) is the amount of oxygen needed by a material for complete combustion. Its derivation is somewhat more complex than notional gas yields, and can be calculated by three primary methods as described in 6.4.2 to 6.4.4:

#### 6.4.2 From the chemical equation for complete combustion

##### 6.4.2.1 For fuel containing C, H, O, for complete combustion to carbon dioxide and water

For the complete combustion of fuels containing C, H, O, the products will only consist of  $\text{CO}_2$  and gaseous  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$ . For fuels which contain oxygen, the requirement of oxygen from air for complete combustion is less than for fuels which do not contain oxygen. For a polymer with the general formula  $\text{C}_a\text{H}_b\text{O}_c$ , Equations (14) to (16) apply:



and

$$z = \frac{2a + (b/2) - c}{2} \quad (15)$$

where

$z$  is the (stoichiometric) number of moles of  $\text{O}_2$  required for complete combustion of the polymer,

$a$  is the number of atoms of carbon in the polymer;

$b$  is the number of atoms of hydrogen in the polymer;

$c$  is the number of atoms of oxygen in the polymer.

The stoichiometric mass oxygen required for complete combustion is then calculated from Equation (16):

$$\Psi_{\text{O}} = \frac{z \times 32,00}{M_{\text{poly}}} \quad (16)$$

where

$\psi_{\text{O}}$  is the stoichiometric oxygen demand, expressed in grams per gram the polymer;

32,00 is the molar mass, expressed in grams per mole, of oxygen.

EXAMPLE The stoichiometric combustion equation for polymethyl methacrylate (PMMA) is given in Equations (17) and (18):



$$\psi_{\text{O}} = \frac{1,20 \times 32,00}{20,02} = 1,918 \quad (18)$$

where

1,0 is the number of atoms of carbon in the polymer;

1,6 is the number of atoms of hydrogen in the polymer;

0,4 is the number of atoms of oxygen in the polymer;

1,20 is the (stoichiometric) number of moles of  $\text{O}_2$  required for complete combustion of PMMA;

1,918 is the calculated stoichiometric oxygen demand, expressed in grams of  $\text{O}_2$  per gram of PMMA.

#### 6.4.2.2 For fuels containing hetero-elements

For the complete combustion of fuels containing (organically-bound) elements in addition to C, H and O, it is assumed that nitrogen generates gaseous  $\text{N}_2$ , halogens generate gaseous acid gases (HCl, HBr etc) and sulfur generates gaseous  $\text{SO}_2$ .

Combustion equations for this type of test material are more complex because, for example, hydrogen from the material is used to form acid gases as well as water, and sulfur consumes oxygen to form  $\text{SO}_2$ . For a halogenated material with the general formula of  $\text{C}_a\text{H}_b\text{O}_c\text{N}_d\text{Cl}_e\text{Br}_f\text{S}_h$ , the equation for stoichiometric oxygen demand is as follows:

$$z = \frac{2a + 2h - c + (b - e - f - g)/2}{2} \quad (19)$$

where

$z$  is the (stoichiometric) number of moles of  $\text{O}_2$  required for complete combustion of the polymer;

$a$  is the number of atoms of carbon in the polymer;

$b$  is the number of atoms of hydrogen in the polymer;

$c$  is the number of atoms of oxygen in the polymer;

$d$  is the number of atoms of nitrogen in the polymer;

$e$  is the number of atoms of chlorine in the polymer;

$f$  is the number of atoms of bromine in the polymer;

$g$  is the number of atoms of fluorine in the polymer;

$h$  is the number of atoms of sulphur in the polymer.

EXAMPLE The stoichiometric combustion equation for unplasticized polyvinyl chloride ( $C_2H_3Cl$ ) is given by Equations (20) to (23):



The number of moles of  $O_2$  is calculated by substituting the appropriate values into Equation (19) as given in Equation (21):

$$z = \frac{2a - c + (b - e)/2}{2} = \frac{4 - 0 + (3 - 1)/2}{2} = 2,5 \quad (21)$$

Equation (20) can be written as Equation (21):



and

$$\psi_O = \frac{2,5 \times 32,00}{62,5} = 1,280 \quad (23)$$

where

- 2,5 is the (stoichiometric) number of moles of  $O_2$  required for complete combustion of UPVC;
- 62,5 is the molar mass, expressed in grams per mole, of UPVC;
- 1,280 is the calculated stoichiometric oxygen demand, expressed in grams  $O_2$  per gram of UPVC.

#### 6.4.3 From the net heat of combustion $\Delta H_c$

It has been empirically determined that when a material burns, for every gram of oxygen consumed, the heat released is approximately  $13,1 \text{ kJ} \cdot \text{g}^{-1}$ , (accurate to  $\pm 5 \%$ ) [3]. Thus, if the net heat,  $\Delta H_c$ , generated in complete combustion is known (e.g., as measured by bomb calorimetry), the stoichiometric oxygen demand can be calculated as given in Equation (24):

$$\psi_O = \Delta H_c / 13,1 \quad (24)$$

where

- $\Delta H_c$  is the net heat or enthalpy per unit mass of fuel consumed, generated in complete combustion with the water produced being in the gaseous state;

EXAMPLE The calculation for polystyrene is shown in Equation (25):

$$\psi_O = 39,2 / 13,1 = 2,99 \quad (25)$$

where

- 39,2 is the net heat, expressed as kilojoules per gram, of complete combustion for polystyrene;
- 2,99 is the calculated stoichiometric oxygen demand, expressed in grams  $O_2$  per gram of polystyrene.

NOTE From its chemical composition,  $\psi_O$  for polystyrene is  $3,07 \text{ g} \cdot \text{g}^{-1}$ .

#### 6.4.4 From the carbon content of the material

There is a less accurate correlation between the carbon content and stoichiometric oxygen demand of polymeric materials empirically derived from the carbon content where the correlation coefficient,  $R^2$ , is 0,933, as shown in Equation (26):

$$\psi_{O,poly} = (m_{C,per} \times 0,038 \ 7) - 0,339 \ 9 \quad (26)$$

where

$m_{C,per}$  is the mass fraction, expressed as a percentage, of carbon in the material;

0,038 7 and 0,339 9 are empirically-derived mathematical coefficients.

EXAMPLE The calculation for polymethyl methacrylate is given in Equation (27):

$$\psi_O = (60,0 \times 0,038\ 7) - 0,339\ 9 = 1,98 \quad (27)$$

where

60,0 is the mass fraction, expressed as a percentage, of carbon in PMMA;

1,98 is the calculated stoichiometric oxygen demand, expressed in grams  $O_2$  per gram of PMMA.

NOTE From its chemical composition,  $\psi_O$  for PMMA is  $1,918\ g \cdot g^{-1}$ .

The step-wise procedures for calculating notional gas yields and stoichiometric oxygen demand for a polymer containing C, O, H, and X and for polyamide using chemical equation methods are summarized in Table 4.

Three methods for calculating stoichiometric oxygen demand for selected polymers are compared in Table 5.

Notional gas yields and stoichiometric oxygen demand derived for a number of common polymers are listed in Tables 6, 7 and 8.

**Table 4 — Example calculations for notional gas yields and stoichiometric oxygen demand for a polymer containing C, O, H, X, and for polyamide using chemical equation methods**

Polymer Empirical formula	Contains C, H, O, X $C_a H_b O_c X_d$	Polyamide $C_{12}H_{22}O_2N_2$ $(C_{12}H_{1,83}O_{0,17}N_{0,17})^b$
Molar mass of polymer $M_{poly}$ , grams	$(12 \times a) + (1 \times b) + (16 \times c) + (m_{A,X} \times d)^a$	$(12 \times 12) + (1 \times 22) + (16 \times 2) + (14 \times 2) = 226$ (= 18,83 relative to each C atom)
Notional yield $CO_2$ $\psi_{CO_2}$ , grams per gram	$a/1 \times 44 / M_{poly}$	$12 \times 44 / 226 = 2,336\ g \cdot g^{-1}$
Notional yield CO $\psi_{CO}$ , grams per gram	$a/1 \times 28 / M_{poly}$	$12 \times 28 / 226 = 1,487\ g \cdot g^{-1}$
Notional yield $H_2O$ $\psi_{H_2O}$ , grams per gram	$b/2 \times 18 / M_{poly}$	$22/2 \times 18 / 226 = 0,876\ g \cdot g^{-1}$
Stoichiometric oxygen demand, $z$ moles $O_2^c$	$(2a + b/2 - c) / 2$	$(24 + 11 - 2) / 2 = 16,5\ mol$
Stoichiometric oxygen demand of polymer $\psi_{O,poly}$ , grams per gram	$z\ mol \times 32 / M_{poly}$	$16,5 \times 32 / 226 = 2,336\ g \cdot g^{-1}$
<p><sup>a</sup> <math>m_{A,X}</math> is the atomic mass, expressed in grams, of the element X.</p> <p><sup>b</sup> Empirical formula re-based to one carbon atom.</p> <p><sup>c</sup> This assumes that nitrogen in the material is converted to <math>N_2</math>. In practice a small proportion will be converted to nitrogen products containing hydrogen or oxygen. The error is considered to be small.</p>		

Table 5 — Examples of stoichiometric oxygen demand derived by three methods

Generic polymer types	Empirical formula	$\Delta H_c^{a,b,c}$ kJ·g <sup>-1</sup>	Carbon content of polymer %	Stoichiometric oxygen demand of polymer $\psi_O$ g·g <sup>-1</sup>		
				From elemental composition	From $\Delta H_c^d$	From carbon content <sup>e</sup>
Polyethylene	C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>4</sub>	43,1 to 43,6	85,7	3,420	3,29 to 3,32	2,98
Polystyrene	C <sub>8</sub> H <sub>8</sub>	39,2 to 39,9	92,3	3,080	2,99 to 3,05	3,23
Polymethylmethacrylate	C <sub>5</sub> H <sub>8</sub> O <sub>2</sub>	24,9 to 25,2	60,0	1,920	1,90 to 1,92	1,98
Polycarbonate	C <sub>16</sub> H <sub>14</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	29,7 to 29,8	75,4	2,260	2,27	2,58
Polyethylene terephthalate	C <sub>10</sub> H <sub>8</sub> O <sub>4</sub>	21,3 to 22,0	62,5	1,665	1,63 to 1,68	2,08
Polyester, unsaturated	C <sub>5,77</sub> H <sub>6,25</sub> O <sub>1,63</sub>	20,3 to 28,5	68,2	2,051	1,55 to 2,18	2,30
Polyvinyl chloride	C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>3</sub> Cl	16,4 to 16,9	38,4	1,280	1,25 to 1,29	1,15
Polytetrafluoroethylene	C <sub>2</sub> F <sub>4</sub>	6,2 to 5,00	24,0	0,640	0,473	0,59
Polyacrylonitrile	C <sub>3</sub> H <sub>3</sub> N	30,8 to 31,0	67,9	2,270	2,35 to 2,37	2,29
Polyamide	C <sub>6</sub> H <sub>11</sub> NO	29,5 to 30,8	63,7	2,330	2,25 to 2,35	2,13
Polyurethane foam, rigid	C <sub>6,3</sub> H <sub>7,1</sub> NO <sub>2,1</sub>	~27 to 22,7	66,2	2,100	2,06 to 1,73	2,22
Polyurethane foam, flexible	—	23,2 to 31,6	—	—	1,77 to 2,41	—
Wool	—	20,7 to 26,6	—	—	1,58 to 2,03	—
Cellulosics (e.g., pinewood)	CH <sub>1,7</sub> O <sub>0,83</sub>	16,0 to 20,4	44,5	1,197	1,22 to 1,56	1,38
<p>a Reference<sup>[4]</sup>.</p> <p>b Reference<sup>[5]</sup>.</p> <p>c Reference<sup>[6]</sup>.</p> <p>d Calculation uses 13,1 as a divisor<sup>[3]</sup>.</p> <p>e From empirical correlation derived from data given in References<sup>[4]</sup>, <sup>[5]</sup>, <sup>[6]</sup>; see Equation (26) where <math>\psi_O = (m_{C,per} \times 0,038\ 7) - 0,339\ 9</math> and <math>R^2 = 0,933</math>.</p>						

**Table 6 — Notional gas yields and stoichiometric oxygen demand for common polymers containing C, H, O, in the structure**

Material	Empirical formula	C %	$\psi_{\text{O}}^{\text{a}}$ g·g <sup>-1</sup>	Notional gas yields <sup>b</sup>	
				$\psi_{\text{CO}_2}$ g·g <sup>-1</sup>	$\psi_{\text{CO}}$ g·g <sup>-1</sup>
Polyethylene	CH <sub>2</sub>	85,7	3,421	3,140	2,000
Polypropylene	CH <sub>2</sub>	85,7	3,421	3,140	2,000
Polystyrene	CH	92,3	3,070	3,380	2,150
Polymethyl methacrylate	CH <sub>1,6</sub> O <sub>0,40</sub>	60,0	1,920	2,200	1,400
Cellulose	CH <sub>1,7</sub> O <sub>0,83</sub>	44,5	1,197	1,630	1,040
Viscose	CH <sub>1,7</sub> O <sub>0,83</sub>	44,5	1,197	1,630	1,040
Polyester <sup>c</sup>	CH <sub>1,4</sub> O <sub>0,22</sub>	70,9	2,340	2,600	1,650
Polyethylene terephthalate	CH <sub>0,80</sub> O <sub>0,40</sub>	62,5	1,667	2,292	1,458
Polycarbonate	CH <sub>0,88</sub> O <sub>0,19</sub>	75,4	2,260	2,760	1,760
<p><sup>a</sup> Stoichiometric oxygen demand, <math>\psi_{\text{O}}</math>, (used to calculate the equivalence ratio, <math>\phi</math>) has been calculated from the chemical composition of the polymer and the equation for complete combustion.</p> <p>EXAMPLE 1 Stoichiometric oxygen demand for complete combustion of polyethylene:</p> $\text{CH}_2 + 1,5 \text{O}_2 = \text{CO}_2 + \text{H}_2\text{O}$ $14,03 \text{ g} + 48,00 \text{ g} \rightarrow 48,00 / 14,03$ $\psi_{\text{O}} = 3,421 \text{ g·g}^{-1}.$ <p>EXAMPLE 2 Stoichiometric oxygen demand for complete combustion of polyester:</p> $\text{CH}_{1,4}\text{O}_{0,22} + 1,24\text{O}_2 = \text{CO}_2 + 0,7 \text{H}_2\text{O}$ $16,92 \text{ g} + 39,70 \text{ g} \rightarrow 39,70 / 16,92$ $\psi_{\text{O}} = 2,346 \text{ g·g}^{-1}.$ <p><sup>b</sup> Notional gas yields, expressed in grams per gram: <math>\psi_{\text{CO}_2} = \%C \times 3,67 \times 10^{-2}</math>  <math>\psi_{\text{CO}} = \%C \times 2,33 \times 10^{-2}.</math></p> <p><sup>c</sup> The values given in the table are examples only, and not necessarily characteristic of the whole family of polymers.</p>					

**Table 7 — Notional gas yields and stoichiometric oxygen demand for common polymers containing C, H, O, N in the structure**

Material	Empirical formula <sup>a</sup>	C %	N %	$\psi_{\text{O}}^{\text{b}}$ g·g <sup>-1</sup>	Notional gas yields <sup>d</sup>			
					$\psi_{\text{CO}_2}$ g·g <sup>-1</sup>	$\psi_{\text{CO}}$ g·g <sup>-1</sup>	$\psi_{\text{HCN}}$ g·g <sup>-1</sup>	$\psi_{\text{NO}_2}$ g·g <sup>-1</sup>
Poly acrylonitrile PAN	CHN <sub>0,33</sub>	68,1	26,4	2,270	2,500	1,590	0,510	0,870
Polyamide	CH <sub>1,8</sub> O <sub>0,17</sub> N <sub>0,17</sub>	63,7	12,6	2,330	2,330	1,480	0,240	0,415
Polyurethane foam, flexible	CH <sub>1,8</sub> O <sub>0,35</sub> N <sub>0,06</sub>	59,3	4,2	2,010	2,170	1,380	0,080	0,140
Polyurethane foam, rigid	CH <sub>1,2</sub> O <sub>0,22</sub> N <sub>0,10</sub>	66,2	7,7	2,100	2,430	1,545	0,150	0,250
Polyisocyanurate foam, rigid	CH <sub>1,0</sub> O <sub>0,19</sub> N <sub>0,11</sub>	68,2	8,8	2,100	2,430	1,545	0,171	0,286
Aramid fibres	CH <sub>0,71</sub> O <sub>0,14</sub> N <sub>0,14</sub>	71,0	11,8	2,094	2,600	1,650	0,230	0,390
Wool <sup>c</sup>	CH <sub>1,62</sub> O <sub>0,38</sub> N <sub>0,27</sub> S <sub>0,03</sub>	49,1	N = 15,5 S = 3,9 O = 24,9	1,590	1,800	1,145	0,290	0,490

<sup>a</sup> The values given in the table are examples only, and not necessarily characteristic of the whole family of polymers.

<sup>b</sup> Stoichiometric oxygen demand,  $\psi_{\text{O}}$ , (used to calculate equivalence ratio,  $\phi$ ) has been calculated from the chemical composition of the polymer and the equation for complete combustion.

<sup>c</sup> Approximate values for wool.

<sup>d</sup> Notional gas yields:

$$\psi_{\text{CO}_2} = \%C \times 3,67 \times 10^{-2}$$

$$\psi_{\text{CO}} = \%C \times 2,33 \times 10^{-2}$$

$$\psi_{\text{HCN}} = \%N \times 1,93 \times 10^{-2}$$

$$\psi_{\text{NO}_2} = \%N \times 3,29 \times 10^{-2}$$



**Table 8 — Notional gas yields and stoichiometric oxygen demand for common polymers containing C, H, O, X in the structure<sup>a</sup>**

Material	Empirical formula	C %	Cl %	F %	$\psi_{\text{O}}^b$ g·g <sup>-1</sup>	Notional yields <sup>f</sup>			
						$\psi_{\text{CO}_2}$ g·g <sup>-1</sup>	$\psi_{\text{CO}}$ g·g <sup>-1</sup>	$\psi_{\text{HCl}}$ g·g <sup>-1</sup>	$\psi_{\text{HF}}$ g·g <sup>-1</sup>
Polyvinyl chloride (PVC)	CH <sub>1,5</sub> Cl <sub>0,50</sub>	38,4	56,7	—	1,280	1,410	0,895	0,585	—
Polyvinyl chloride plasticized	CH <sub>1,5</sub> Cl <sub>0,50</sub> + 50 % DOP <sup>c</sup>	56	28	—	1,917 <sup>c</sup>	2,060	1,300	0,290	—
Poly tetra fluoro-ethylene (PTFE)	CF <sub>2</sub>	24,0	—	75	0,64 <sup>d</sup> 0,32 <sup>e</sup>	0,880	0,560	—	0,750

<sup>a</sup> The stoichiometric number of moles of oxygen required for complete combustion of halogenated polymers is as follows; see Equation (19):

$$z = \frac{2a - c + (b - e - f - g)/2}{2}$$

The general formula for the polymer is C<sub>a</sub>H<sub>b</sub>O<sub>c</sub>N<sub>d</sub>Cl<sub>e</sub>Br<sub>f</sub>F<sub>g</sub>.

<sup>b</sup> Stoichiometric oxygen demand,  $\psi_{\text{O}}$ , (used to calculate equivalence ratio,  $\phi$ ) has been calculated from the chemical composition of the polymer and the equation for complete combustion.

<sup>c</sup> The formula for dioctylphthalate (DOP) is C<sub>24</sub>H<sub>36</sub>O<sub>4</sub>;  $\psi_{\text{DOP}} = 2,553 \text{ g·g}^{-1}$ .

<sup>d</sup> Oxygen demand assumes no H<sub>2</sub>O in the reaction, i.e. CF<sub>2</sub> + O<sub>2</sub> → CO<sub>2</sub> + F<sub>2</sub>.

<sup>e</sup> Oxygen demand assumes H<sub>2</sub>O in the reaction, i.e. CF<sub>2</sub> + ½O<sub>2</sub> + (H<sub>2</sub>O) → CO<sub>2</sub> + 2HF.

<sup>f</sup> Notional gas yields:

$$\begin{aligned}\psi_{\text{CO}_2} &= \%C \times 3,67 \times 10^{-2} \\ \psi_{\text{CO}} &= \%C \times 2,33 \times 10^{-2} \\ \psi_{\text{HCN}} &= \%N \times 1,93 \times 10^{-2} \\ \psi_{\text{NO}_2} &= \%N \times 3,29 \times 10^{-2}\end{aligned}$$

## 6.5 Calculation of smoke yields

### 6.5.1 General

Smoke is an aerosol consisting of liquid droplets, solid particles and two-phase combinations of the two. It can be measured as a function of its gravimetric properties (the mass of smoke particles), of its light obscuring properties or a mixture of the two<sup>[7, 8]</sup>.

### 6.5.2 Smoke yields based on mass of smoke particulates

Gravimetric methods give mass of particles for each gram of mass loss of material. Most systems use simple filter-based sampling devices, whilst other methods are more sophisticated and can characterize the smoke by fractionating the particles into different sizes.

The yield of smoke as particles can be calculated from its mass concentration (grams per cubic metre) and the mass loss concentration of the material (grams per cubic metre), or from the total mass of particles generated and the total mass loss of material as given in Equation (28):

$$Y_{\text{part}} = \frac{\rho_{\text{part}}}{\rho_{\text{m,loss}}} \quad (28)$$

where

$Y_{\text{part}}$  is the measured mass yield, expressed in grams per gram of material, of smoke particles;

$\rho_{\text{part}}$  is the mass concentration, expressed in grams per cubic metre, of the smoke particles;

$\rho_{\text{m,loss}}$  is the mass loss concentration, expressed in grams per cubic metre, of the material.

Alternatively, the relationship can be written as given in Equation (29):

$$Y_{\text{part}} = \frac{m_{\text{part}}}{m_{\text{m,loss}}} \quad (29)$$

where

$m_{\text{part}}$  is the total mass, expressed in grams, of particles;

$m_{\text{m,loss}}$  is the total material mass loss, expressed in grams.

### 6.5.3 Smoke yields based on light obscuring properties

Smoke can also be quantified in terms of its extinction coefficient,  $\alpha_k$ , derived from Bouguer's law [Equations (30) and (31)] which describe the attenuation of monochromatic light by smoke:

$$I/I_0 = e^{-(\alpha_k L)} \quad (30)$$

$$\alpha_k = \frac{1}{L} \times \ln(I_0/I) \quad (31)$$

where

$\alpha_k$  is the light extinction coefficient, expressed as inverse metres;

$I_0$  is the intensity of incident light;

$I$  is the intensity of transmitted light (at the detector);

$L$  is the length, expressed in metres, of the light path through the smoke.

Correlations have been established between visibility in smoke and its extinction coefficient such that their product is a constant, but the value of the constant depends on the contrast and illumination of the target being viewed.

In some studies, base-10 logarithms are used to calculate the optical density per unit light path length,  $\alpha$ , formally designated the linear decadic absorption coefficient, as shown in Equations (32) and (33):

$$\alpha = \frac{1}{L} \times \log_{10}(I_0/I) \quad (32)$$

$$\alpha \times 2,303 = \alpha_k \quad (33)$$

where

$\alpha$  is the linear decadic absorption coefficient (optical density), expressed as inverse metres;

2,303 is the base-10 logarithm conversion factor to give the extinction coefficient,  $\alpha_k$ , in Equation (31).

The extinction area,  $A$ , of the smoke is the total effective cross-sectional area of all the smoke particles, and this is related to the volume,  $V$ , of the chamber in which it is contained as given in Equations (34) and (35):

$$A = \alpha_k \times V \quad (34)$$

or

$$A = 2,303 \times \alpha \times V \quad (35)$$

where

$A$  is the extinction area, expressed in square metres, of the smoke;

$V$  is the volume, expressed in cubic metres, of the chamber in which the smoke is contained.

The specific extinction area ( $A_{\text{sf}}$  or  $A_{\text{SEA}}$ ) is a normalized parameter relating the extinction area of smoke to the mass of material burned by Equation (36):

$$A_{\text{sf}} = A / m_{\text{m,loss}} \text{ or } A_{\text{SEA}} = A / m_{\text{m,loss}} \quad (36)$$

where  $A_{\text{sf}}$  or  $A_{\text{SEA}}$  is the extinction area, expressed in square metres, of smoke per kilogram of material burned.

The relationships in Equation (36) can also be expressed as Equation (37):

$$A_{\text{sf}} = \alpha_k \times V_{\text{eff}} / m_{\text{m,loss}} \text{ or } A_{\text{SEA}} = \alpha_k \times V_{\text{eff}} / m_{\text{m,loss}} \quad (37)$$

where  $V_{\text{eff}}$  is the total volume, expressed in cubic metres, of effluent.

The relationships in Equation (37) can also be expressed as Equation (38):

$$A_{\text{sf}} = \alpha_k / \rho_{\text{m,loss}} \text{ or } A_{\text{SEA}} = \alpha_k / \rho_{\text{m,loss}} \quad (38)$$

A parameter known as the mass optical density ( $D_{\text{MO}}$ ) is the  $\log_{10}$  analogue, and usually refers to mass in grams rather than kilograms. The specific extinction areas ( $A_{\text{sf}}$  or  $A_{\text{SEA}}$ ) can be converted to values based on  $\log_e$  and kilograms as given in Equation (39):

$$A_{\text{sf}} = D_{\text{MO}} \times 2,303 \times 1\,000 \text{ or } A_{\text{SEA}} = D_{\text{MO}} \times 2,303 \times 1\,000 \quad (39)$$

Various other derivations have been used in the literature. They are given in more detail in references<sup>[7],[8],[9]</sup>.

#### 6.5.4 Relationship between mass measurement and light obscuration

Both large and bench-scale test procedures tend to monitor the optical/obscuration properties of smoke. However, the mass concentration of smoke is sometimes useful (e.g. for input to field and zone computational models). A relationship between optical properties and mass concentration has been developed for post-flame generated smoke for a wide range of fuels under well-ventilated conditions<sup>[8]</sup>. Bouguer's law again is the basis, relating the ratio of the transmitted and incident intensities to the mass concentration,  $m_s$ , of the smoke, the path length,  $L$ , through the smoke, and the specific mass extinction coefficient,  $\sigma_{m,\alpha}$ , using Equation (40):

$$I/I_0 = \exp(-\sigma_{m,\alpha} m_s L) \quad (40)$$

The estimated mean value for  $\sigma_{m,\alpha}$  is  $8,7 \text{ m}^2\text{-g}^{-1}$  with an expanded uncertainty (at the 95 % confidence interval) of  $1,1 \text{ m}^2\text{-g}^{-1}$ .

NOTE The value of 8,7 becomes 10 when corrected from He-Ne laser light to visible light<sup>[8]</sup> and it depends on the smoke produced being primarily carbonaceous soot. The value is stated to be smaller and more variable for smoke generated under smouldering or pyrolytic conditions as a result of the low light absorption of this type of smoke and variability in smoke droplet size.

Soot yields have been shown to double  $\pm 50$  % during under-ventilated burning of polymeric fuels in a small-scale apparatus<sup>[8]</sup>.

## 7 Calculation of equivalence ratio

### 7.1 General

The equivalence ratio,  $\phi$ , is defined as the actual fuel-to-air mass ratio divided by the stoichiometric fuel-to-air mass ratio, in accordance with Equation (41). In this International Standard, fuel-to-oxygen ratios are used rather than fuel-to-air ratios:

$$\phi = \frac{(m_{\text{fuel}}/m_{\text{O2,act}})}{(m_{\text{fuel}}/m_{\text{O2,stoich}})} \quad (41)$$

where

$m_{\text{fuel}}$  is the mass, expressed in grams, of fuel;

$m_{\text{O2,act}}$  is the actual mass, expressed in grams, of oxygen available for combustion;

$m_{\text{O2,stoich}}$  is the stoichiometric mass, expressed in grams, of oxygen required for complete combustion.

Equation (41) rearranges to Equations (42) and (43):

$$\phi = (m_{\text{fuel}}/m_{\text{O2,act}}) \times (m_{\text{fuel}}/m_{\text{O2,stoich}}) \quad (42)$$

$$\phi = (m_{\text{fuel}}/m_{\text{O2,act}}) \times \Psi_{\text{O}} \quad (43)$$

where  $\Psi_{\text{O}}$  is the oxygen-to-fuel ratio for stoichiometric combustion ( $m_{\text{O2,stoich}}/m_{\text{fuel}}$ ), also referred to as the stoichiometric oxygen demand.

Equation (44) applies for systems which measure mass loss rate:

$$\phi = (\dot{m}_{\text{m,loss}}/\dot{m}_{\text{O2,act}}) \times \Psi_{\text{O}} \quad (44)$$

where

$\dot{m}_{m,loss}$  is the material mass loss rate, expressed in grams per minute;

$\dot{m}_{O2,act}$  is the actual mass flow rate, expressed in grams per minute of oxygen available for combustion.

and where the mass flow rate of oxygen is calculated from Equation (45):

$$\dot{m}_{O2,act} = \dot{V}_{air} \times \varphi_{O2} \times 1\,331 \quad (45)$$

where

$\dot{V}_{air}$  is the volume air flow rate, expressed in cubic metres per minute;

$\varphi_{O2}$  is the volume, expressed as the volume fraction, of oxygen in the air supply (0,209 5 for dry air);

1 331 is the factor to convert the volume, expressed in cubic metres, of oxygen to mass, expressed in grams, of oxygen at 20 °C.

Alternatively, for systems that measure mass loss concentration, Equation (46) applies:

$$\phi = (\rho_{m,loss} / \rho_{O2,act}) \times \Psi_O \quad (46)$$

where

$\rho_{m,loss}$  is the material mass loss concentration, expressed in grams per cubic metre;

$\rho_{O2,act}$  is the actual mass concentration, expressed in grams per cubic metre, of oxygen available for combustion, calculated from  $\varphi_{O2} \times 1\,331$ .

For fuel lean mixtures (small or well-ventilated fires)  $\phi < 1$ .

For stoichiometric mixtures  $\phi = 1$ .

For fuel rich mixtures (ventilation-controlled fires)  $\phi > 1$ .

**NOTE** In all fires, ranging from real-scale test fires to the burning of test specimens in bench-scale apparatus, both spatial and temporal variations in equivalence ratio occur. Any measurement of equivalence ratio (or any other fire parameter), therefore, represents the results of some degree of averaging. This has been expressed in terms of a “global” equivalence ratio<sup>[10]</sup>. The relationships between local transient equivalence ratios and global equivalence ratio estimates depend upon the extent of averaging within the system. The concept was originally developed to represent equivalence ratio measurements in the upper layer of enclosure fires over limited time periods, but has been extended to encompass the total fuel mass loss over the whole fire duration and the total air mass passing into the combustion zone. While combustion products yields are determined by the local availability of oxygen and fuel, the needed detailed measurements are rarely performed and there is no general algorithm for combining the local yields of a gas into an overall yield for the full test specimen.

## 7.2 Derivation of $\phi$ for flow-through, steady-state experimental systems

For experimental fires where rates of air supply (oxygen) and mass loss rate (fuel) are controlled (e.g., flow-through, steady-state systems such as a moving-tube furnace), determining a global equivalence ratio is relatively straightforward, provided the specimen combusts steadily and leaves no residue, or leaves a residue of similar chemical composition to the initial specimen. Examples of tube furnace devices are described in a DIN 53436, Parts 1 to 3<sup>[11]</sup> and BS 7990<sup>[12]</sup>. Examples of the calculation in this type of apparatus are given in Table 9.

**Table 9 — Example calculations of equivalence ratio for a tube furnace  
for a hydrocarbon polymer and a cellulosic polymer**

Characteristic	Desired ventilation condition	
	Well ventilated flaming	Ventilation-controlled flaming
<b>Apparatus settings</b>		
Fuel mass loss rate (nominal grams per minute)	1,000	1,000
Primary air flow, (cubic metres per minute)	0,018 0	0,004 0
Primary air flow, (litres per minute)	18,0	4,0
Oxygen supply (cubic metres per minute) <sup>a</sup>	$(0,209\ 5 \times 0,018\ 0 \times 1\ 331) = 5,019$	$(0,209\ 5 \times 0,004\ 0 \times 1\ 331) = 1,112$
Fuel-to-oxygen mass ratio: ( $m_{\text{fuel}} / m_{\text{O}_2, \text{act}}$ )	$1,00\ 0 / 5,019 = 0,199$	$1,00\ 0 / 1,112 = 0,899$
<b>Stoichiometric oxygen demand, <math>\psi_{\text{O}}</math></b>		
Hydrocarbon polymer <sup>b</sup>	3,422	3,422
Cellulosic polymer <sup>c</sup>	1,198	1,198
<b>Equivalence ratio, <math>\phi = (m_{\text{fuel}} / m_{\text{O}_2, \text{act}}) \times \psi_{\text{O}}</math></b>		
Hydrocarbon polymer <sup>b</sup>	$0,199 \times 3,422 = 0,68$	$0,899 \times 3,422 = 3,08$
Cellulosic polymer <sup>c</sup>	$0,199 \times 1,198 = 0,24$	$0,899 \times 1,198 = 1,08$
<b>Actual ventilation conditions</b>		
Hydrocarbon polymer <sup>b</sup>	well-ventilated	ventilation-controlled
Cellulosic polymer <sup>c</sup>	well-ventilated	stoichiometric
<p><sup>a</sup> The oxygen fraction will be lower than 0,209 5 if room air is used.</p> <p><sup>b</sup> Hydrocarbon polymer (empirical formula, <math>\text{CH}_2</math>; <math>\psi_{\text{O}} = 3,422</math>).</p> <p><sup>c</sup> Cellulosic polymer (empirical formula, <math>\text{C}_6\text{H}_{10}\text{O}_5</math>; <math>\psi_{\text{O}} = 1,198</math>).</p>		
<p>NOTE 1 The table highlights the strong influence of polymer type on the value of <math>\phi</math> (and consequent ventilation condition) for a fixed air flow and mass loss rate.</p> <p>NOTE 2 In tube furnaces, the mass loss of specimen is not monitored continuously (although it can be estimated from the concentrations of combustion products). Thus, in these systems one generally obtains an average global equivalence ratio for the test. Furthermore, since the oxygen is depleted at the downstream portion of the specimen, the systems do not measure a local equivalence ratio. For a uniform specimen that burns or pyrolyzes evenly, this may equate to the instantaneous value of <math>\phi</math>. For a non-uniform specimen, or one that burns in stages, or one that leaves a residue that is different from the initial specimen, this might not be the case. The example above is for determining the average value.</p> <p>NOTE 3 For some bench-scale non-steady state flow-through systems, where the fuel-to-air ratio varies rapidly during the test, the fire type and/or model cannot usually be described in terms of equivalence ratio. However, in a room fire test, it can be possible to characterize a portion of the test by a time-averaged global equivalence ratio, as is done in Note 2.</p>		

### 7.3 Derivation of $\phi$ for flow-through, calorimeter experimental systems

There is a family of devices in which the air flow is metered and constant and the specimen mass is monitored continuously. When the sample mass loss rate is steady, as might be experienced with a thermoplastic material or a liquid fuel, the equivalence ratio is also steady and the analysis in 7.1 applies. When the mass loss varies during a test (as in case of most furnishing or internal finish products), a time-dependent form of Equation (43) is used, where the mass loss during a time interval determines the global equivalence ratio for that interval. The implementation and accuracy of oxygen control may thus be fairly easy or difficult according to the type of fire calorimeter used.

Examples of this type of device are the fire propagation apparatus (FPA)<sup>[13],[14]</sup> used in two American standards (ASTM E 2058<sup>[15]</sup> and NFPA 287<sup>[16]</sup>) and the ventilation-controlled cone calorimeter<sup>[17]</sup>.

NOTE 1 Calculation of the global equivalence ratio in the conventional ISO 5660<sup>[18]</sup> device is more complex. Some of the exhaust air flow passes the test specimen and is entrained in the fire plume; some of the exhaust air flow may be entrained downstream of the combustion zone. Thus the use of the total exhaust flow in Equation (43) will result in an artificially low value of  $\phi$ . However, since the standard air flow always results in highly over-ventilated combustion, this device should not be used for determining toxic product yields except possibly for the smallest of real-scale fires.

NOTE 2 For some bench-scale non-steady state flow through systems, where the fuel-to-air ratio varies rapidly during the test, the fire type and/or model cannot usually be described in terms of equivalence ratio. However, in a room fire test, it can be possible to characterize a portion of the test by a time-averaged global equivalence ratio, as is done in the Note in 7.1.

## 7.4 Derivation of $\phi$ for closed chamber systems

For a closed cabinet apparatus, an instantaneous global equivalence ratio can be only calculated from the sample mass loss rate (or the cumulative concentrations of carbonaceous by-products, mainly CO<sub>2</sub> and CO) and the oxygen concentration in the chamber, provided the oxygen depletion is small and the air is well mixed. Generally with these types of apparatus however, the sample mass is not monitored, there is a significant decrease in oxygen concentration, and the mixing of the chamber gases may not be sufficient to create a homogeneous atmosphere during the test. Thus, determination of the instantaneous equivalence ratio is not possible, and one must determine an average global equivalence ratio based on the overall mass loss and oxygen depletion.

The operator should be aware that the yields of toxic products are likely to be highest when there is significant vitiation in the vicinity of the test specimen. Thus, the average global equivalence ratio may not be indicative of the toxicologically most important fraction of the specimen combustion.

## 7.5 Derivation of $\phi$ in room fire tests

When the air inflow and the mass of the test specimen(s) are monitored continuously, Equation (44) is used to determine a time-varying global equivalence ratio. Note, however, that all the incoming air does not necessarily approach the combustion zone. Thus, as with ISO 5660<sup>[18]</sup>, the determined equivalence ratio values may not relate directly to those in a more closely controlled bench-scale device.

One approach is to calculate  $\phi$  from Equation (46) using measurements of the total fuel and air derived from the composition of fire effluent samples (in terms of the oxides of carbon, soot, hydrocarbons and oxygen content).

# 8 Calculation of combustion efficiency

## 8.1 General

Combustion efficiency,  $\chi$ , can be defined as the ratio of the heat released in a combustion reaction to the theoretical heat of complete combustion.

In a perfectly efficient combustor, the atoms in the fuel would be converted to the thermodynamically most stable by-products (carbon to carbon dioxide, hydrogen to water, nitrogen to nitrogen gas, etc.) and the heat released would equal the enthalpy of reaction. However, this rarely happens in accidental fires and the processes are less than 100 % efficient.

This is partially due to considerable variations in local fuel and oxidizer concentrations in the immediate vicinity of diffusion flames, so that combustion efficiency tends to be less than predicted by stoichiometry, even under well-ventilated (low- $\phi$ ) conditions. Under vitiated (high- $\phi$ ) conditions, where the rate of oxygen supply is less than the rate of fuel supply, then combustion efficiency is further reduced. Furthermore, a material may burn inefficiently because of its chemical structure, or because it is flame-retarded in some way.

Combustion efficiency is generally reported as a global value, averaged over the full burning time. (This can be misleading when considering toxicological implications, since most of the impact will result from periods when the combustion efficiency is low.)

There are different (but interrelated) ways of defining combustion efficiency. It can be based on

- f) the fraction of possible heat that is released,
- g) the fraction of the maximum oxygen consumption that occurs,
- h) the fraction of the maximum oxides of carbon that are formed.

The first of these is most important in calculating thermal hazard, the latter two in characterizing the toxicity of the fire atmosphere. The three methods of calculation are described in 8.2 to 8.4 and summarized in Table 10. Worked examples are given in Table 11.

NOTE When experimental data are used to calculate combustion efficiency values, they are subject to experimental variations, and can, therefore generate values greater than 1.

## 8.2 Heat release efficiency

The formula for heat release efficiency is given in Equation (47):

$$\chi = \Delta H_{\text{act}} / \Delta H_{\text{c}} \quad (47)$$

where

- $\chi$  is the combustion efficiency, expressed as a ratio or as a percent;
- $\Delta H_{\text{c}}$  is the net heat of combustion, expressed in kilojoules per gram, and defined as the enthalpy, per unit mass of fuel consumed, generated in complete combustion with the water produced being in the gaseous state;
- $\Delta H_{\text{act}}$  is the actual measured heat release, expressed in kilojoules per gram, of the combustion.

NOTE Enthalpy and heat release can be used interchangeably since the burning process is usually at constant pressure and does not perform any mechanical work.

The enthalpy (net heat) of **complete** combustion of a sample may be determined in an oxygen bomb calorimeter. The measurement of the **actual** heat release in a test apparatus is more complex. The heat released warms the ambient gases, heats some or all of the apparatus itself, and may radiate a significant fraction to the external world. Thus a true calorimetric measurement is extremely difficult and unlikely to be accurate.

Research leading to the development of the cone calorimeter showed that the heat release per mole of oxygen consumed during burning of organic materials is independent of the fuel composition (within 5 %). Thus, for systems where the total amount of oxygen is known, the numerator of the equation can be determined from oxygen concentration measurements. (Note that in a flow-through apparatus, both the flow of air/oxygen and the change in oxygen concentration must be measured. In a closed system, only the latter is needed, but it is important to take care that the final value is taken after the chamber atmosphere has equilibrated).



### 8.3 Oxygen consumption efficiency

#### 8.3.1 General

This ratio,  $\chi_{ox}$ , can be determined either directly from the change in oxygen concentration or indirectly from the appearance of oxygen in combustion products. Each requires knowing the empirical formula of the test sample, which might not be available, so that the measured gas data can be compared with the stoichiometric data.  $\chi_{ox}$  can differ from  $\chi$  because

- as noted above, the heat release per mole of oxygen consumed during burning is a function of fuel composition, and
- different combustion conditions may produce the same global thermal efficiency, but produce different oxygenated product yield distributions.

In doing calculations based on the empirical formula of the sample, a typical assumption is that the empirical formula of the mass lost during burning is the same as that of the original product. This will not be the case for layered products or those composed of a mixture of components. The calculation will also be inaccurate to the extent that there is a solid residue, particularly a carbonaceous residue.

#### 8.3.2 Oxygen depletion method

This method calculates combustion efficiency by direct measurement of oxygen depletion in the fire atmosphere and calculating the mass fraction of oxygen consumed as given in Equation (48):

$$\chi_{ox} = w_{O2,cons} / \psi_O \quad (48)$$

where

$\chi_{ox}$  is the combustion efficiency ratio calculated from oxygen depletion;

$w_{O2,cons}$  is the measured mass fraction, in grams per gram, of oxygen consumed.

#### 8.3.3 Oxygen-in-products method

##### 8.3.3.1 General

This is an indirect method where the total amount of combined oxygen contained the major oxygen-containing combustion products ( $CO_2$ ,  $CO$  and  $H_2O$ ) is calculated, and the amount of oxygen contributed from the base polymer or fuel is subtracted to give a derived mass fraction of oxygen consumed

$$\chi_{prod} = w_{O2,der} / \psi_O \quad (49)$$

where

$\chi_{prod}$  is the combustion efficiency calculated from the oxygen contained in the major combustion products;

$w_{O2,der}$  is a derived mass fraction, expressed in grams per gram, of oxygen consumed;

$$w_{O2,der} = w_{Ogases} - w_{Oex,poly} \quad (50)$$

where

$w_{Ogases}$  is the measured mass fraction of oxygen consumed per unit mass of polymer in the form of the major oxygen-containing products ( $w_{O,CO2} + w_{O,CO} + w_{O,H2O}$ );

$w_{Oex,poly}$  is the mass fraction of oxygen in the burned polymer (fuel) that contributes to the oxygen-containing products.