



## Idaho State Police Forensic Services

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### Section I

### Recovery, Analysis and the Identification of Ignitable Liquid Residues from Fire Evidence Samples

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#### 1.1 BACKGROUND

The analysis of evidence from fires of suspicious origin encompasses a variety of sample types. The submitted samples may include burnt fire debris, liquids recovered at the fire scene, the suspect's clothing, and/or ignitable liquids found in the suspect's possession. Establishing the presence of an ignitable liquid residue in burnt debris recovered from a fire scene is an important investigative tool for the investigator tasked with establishing the cause and origin of a fire. The techniques used to recover the ignitable residue in debris are complicated by the large contribution of the vast variety of materials that are concurrently subjected to the fire process. The analysis of recovered vapors and/or extracts by gas chromatograph equipped with a mass spectrometer not only provides an analytical tool to identify the ignitable liquid present but also the capability to use characteristic ions in extracted ion profiling (EIP) to identify ignitable liquid residues when high background levels of substrate materials or pyrolysis products are present. The presence of an ignitable liquid residue in fire debris or on a suspect's clothing should be considered in the context of the circumstances surrounding the fire. The detection of an ignitable liquid does not determine that the fire was arson without supporting information.

#### 1.2 SCOPE

This method details the sampling, analysis, identification and reporting of ignitable liquids/residues from fire evidence samples as well as the care of the instrumentation utilized. Sampling is performed using any combination of the following; heated headspace, passive adsorption elution (PAE) with activated charcoal strips (ACS), or solvent extraction. Analysis of the resulting extract is performed on a gas chromatograph equipped with a mass selective detector. The identification by GC-MSD is based on the interpretation of data provided in accordance with the outlined criteria for identification. For PAE and solvent extraction the ACS or extract is to be returned with the evidence for possible reanalysis. This analytical method is based upon corresponding American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) standard test methods and practices used in Forensic Science, that address the recovery, analysis and identification of ignitable liquid residues (ILR) from fire evidence.

#### 1.3 FIRE EVIDENCE HANDLING

##### 1.3.1 Fire Evidence Containers

1.3.1.1 Fire evidence must be submitted in clean, airtight containers.

- 1.3.1.2 Debris samples and clothing must be packaged in a friction lid can and/or a heat sealable polyethylene or nylon pouch material that is designed for use with fire evidence.
- 1.3.1.3 Glass vials should be used for liquids suspected of being or containing an ignitable liquid. The glass vial must be submitted in a friction lid can or heat sealable pouch material to prevent the contents of the vial from contaminating adjacent samples.
- 1.3.1.4 Items not properly packaged may be repackaged and/or not analyzed due to contamination issues. When the packaging has clearly compromised the integrity of the evidence, the sample(s) should not be analyzed.

### 1.3.2 Fire Evidence Storage

- 1.3.2.1 Fire evidence should be stored refrigerated until analysis. After consultation with a trained analyst exceptions can be made on a case by case basis depending on the nature of the evidence.
- 1.3.2.2 Fire evidence said to contain substrate materials likely to contribute to the degradation of petroleum products such as manure, vegetation and/or soil, should be frozen until analysis. After consultation with a trained analyst exceptions can be made on a case by case basis depending on the nature of the evidence.

### 1.3.3 Description of Fire Evidence

- 1.3.3.1 The analyst should note the type of container, condition of seals, a brief description of the sample and any obvious ignitable liquid product odor.
- 1.3.3.2 When discernable, the nature of the substrate (carpet, wood, plastic, etc.) should be included in the description.
- 1.3.3.3 The evidence container labeling and contents should be compared against the evidence submittal form. Any discrepancies are to be noted in case notes.

### 1.3.4 Recovery Method Approach

PAE is the sampling method that is employed most often. Headspace and solvent extraction will be done on a case specific basis.

### 1.3.5 Liquid Sample Screening

A drop or two of liquid sample is placed on glass wool and then exposed to flame. Observations are noted, i.e. does it ignite, color of flame, presence of smoke, soot, residue, etc.

## 1.4 RECOVERY METHODS

### 1.4.1 Separation of Ignitable Liquid Residues from Fire Evidence Samples by Headspace Sampling

#### 1.4.1.1 **General**

1.4.1.1.1 This method serves to recover ignitable liquid residues from samples submitted as evidence in fire investigations.

1.4.1.1.2 This method involves sampling vapors in the headspace of a fire evidence collection container.

1.4.1.2 **ASTM Reference Method**

This separation protocol was derived from ASTM standard practice E 1388-05: *Standard Practice for Sampling of Headspace Vapors from Fire Debris Samples*.

1.4.1.3 **Application**

1.4.1.3.1 The screening of samples to determine relative ignitable liquid concentrations and possible ignitable liquid class and range prior to extraction with other techniques.

1.4.1.3.2 Samples suspected of containing light range constituents such as ketones, alcohols and chlorinated hydrocarbons which could have a reduced response using techniques involving a solvent.

1.4.1.3.3 Liquid samples suspected to contain a light range ignitable liquid ( $\pm$  C4 - C9).

1.4.1.4 **Sensitivity**

This separation protocol is the least sensitive of the recovery techniques covered in this analytical method.

1.4.1.5 **Limitations**

1.4.1.5.1 Interfering compounds inherent in the fire debris recovered by this method may create GC-MSD data interpretation problems. These compounds are the result of pyrolysis of solid fuels present at the fire scene and the combustion of organic compounds liberated during the fire process.

1.4.1.5.2 This method lacks the sensitivity of other available recovery techniques. A negative result from the application of this technique should be interpreted as only indicating that a significant amount of a light range ignitable liquid may not be available for detection.

1.4.1.5.3 This method is more effective in recovering light to medium range products than heavy range products. The higher temperatures required to recover heavy range products could result in the production of additional decomposition of the sample matrix.

1.4.1.6 **Reference Material**

1.4.1.6.1 Refer to section 1.4.1.11 for headspace sampling reference material preparation.

1.4.1.6.2 Refer to section 1.5.4.2 for headspace test mixture requirements.

1.4.1.7 **Safety Concerns**

1.4.1.7.1 Care should be taken with the handling headspace sampling syringes.

1.4.1.7.2 Given the unknown nature of samples, olfactory screening may pose a health risk and is not recommended. Note obvious odors to aid in the selection of parameters applied to the recovery technique.

1.4.1.8 **Equipment and Supplies**

1.4.1.8.1 Laboratory oven capable of providing uniform heating of samples from 40° to 90°C.

1.4.1.8.2 Hammer and nail, awl, or punch.

1.4.1.8.3 Foil adhesive tape.

1.4.1.8.4 Gas tight syringes capable of sampling from 250µL to 1 mL.

1.4.1.9 **Headspace Preparation - Non-liquid Samples**

1.4.1.9.1 Friction Lid Can

Prepare the can for headspace sampling by using the hammer and nail to punch a small hole in the friction lid. The hole must be immediately covered with foil adhesive tape.

1.4.1.9.2 Plastic Fire Debris Bag

If the sample is submitted in polymer pouch material, insert needle directly through pouch material for sampling. Place a piece of tape over hole until pouch can be re-heat-sealed.

1.4.1.10 **Headspace Sampling**

1.4.1.10.1 If a significant odor of a petroleum product exists, first collect headspace sample at room temperature. The headspace may be resampled after heating.

1.4.1.10.2 If a significant odor is not present or if room temperature sampling was inadequate, place friction lid can into a 60° to 90°C closely monitored heating device for up to 60 minutes.

1.4.1.10.3 If the sample is heated, the gas tight syringe shall be placed into the oven at the same temperature the sample is being heated at.

1.4.1.10.4 After inserting the needle of the gas tight syringe through the sampling hole in the friction lid can, slowly pump the syringe several times and inject 500µL to 2 mL into GC injection port. Immediately re-tape sampling hole. Smaller volumes may be injected as necessary to reduce the risk of instrument overload.

1.4.1.10.5 Analyze by GC-MSD as described in section 1.5.

1.4.1.11 **Headspace Sampling of Reference Material**

Place 15uL ignitable liquid reference material into to a quart size friction lid can, seal, and heat at both the time and temperature used for the samples.

**1.4 RECOVERY METHODS**

1.4.2 Separation of Ignitable Liquid Residues from Fire Evidence Samples by Passive Adsorption-Elution (PAE) with Activated Charcoal

1.4.2.1 **General**

1.4.2.1.1 This method serves to recover ignitable liquid residues from samples submitted as evidence in fire investigations.

1.4.2.1.2 This method utilizes activated charcoal impregnated polymer strips (ACS) to adsorb, and thus trap, ignitable liquid residues.

1.4.2.1.3 This method recovers ignitable liquids for subsequent instrumental analysis by a gas chromatograph equipped with a mass selective detector (GC-MSD).

1.4.2.1.4 This method is time efficient and is essentially non-destructive to the sample.

1.4.2.2 **ASTM Reference Method**

This separation protocol is derived from ASTM standard practice E 1412-07: *Standard Practice for Separation of Ignitable Liquid Residues from Fire Debris Samples by Passive Headspace Concentration with Activated Charcoal.*

1.4.2.3 **Application**

This procedure is useful for recovering light to medium range (>C6 → ≅C14) ignitable liquids. This method will recover heavier range distillates (>C14) with the limitation indicated in section 1.4.2.5.2.

1.4.2.4 **Sensitivity**

This separation protocol is capable of isolating quantities less than 0.1µL of an ignitable liquid residue from a sample.<sup>1,8,2</sup>

1.4.2.5 **Limitations**

1.4.2.5.1 Section intentionally blank.

1.4.2.5.2 Compounds longer than hexadecane (C16) may not be effectively volatilized for adsorption by ACS.

1.4.2.5.3 This method may not fully differentiate a kerosene class product from a heavy petroleum product like diesel. When full differentiation is an issue perform a solvent extraction as described in section 1.4.3.

1.4.2.5.4 Samples containing high levels of light to medium range ignitable liquids are prone to displacement and thus loss of light petroleum product components. A shorter adsorption time should be used for samples suspected of containing larger concentrations of light to medium range petroleum products based upon the available information.

1.4.2.6 **Equipment and Supplies**

- 1.4.2.6.1 Chemical fume hood
- 1.4.2.6.2 Activated charcoal polymer strips (ACS) (Albrayco Laboratories ACS-150-6PACK or equivalent). Each strip is approximately 10 x 20mm for a total area of 200mm<sup>2</sup>. ASTM E1412-07 recommends a minimum strip size of 100mm<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.4.2.6.3 Metal, non-coated, paper clips or ornament hangers.
- 1.4.2.6.4 Magnet capable of securing paper clip to lid of friction lid can.
- 1.4.2.6.5 Large laboratory oven for uniform heating of friction lid cans and fire debris bags at 50-80°C.
- 1.4.2.6.6 2-mL wide-mouth automatic liquid sampler (ALS) vials preassembled with screw-top cap with PTFE/silicone septa
- 1.4.2.6.7 Glass vial microinserts
- 1.4.2.6.8 Polymer evidence bags/sheet
- 1.4.2.6.9 Heat sealer

1.4.2.7 **Reagents**

Carbon disulfide (CS<sub>2</sub>)

Solvent must meet American Chemical Society (ACS) specifications and/or be 99.9% pure. Each bottle must be checked prior to use as described in section 1.4.2.14.3.

Thiophene, 99%+ pure, added to Carbon disulfide at a 100ppm concentration (50ul thiophene to 500mls of CS<sub>2</sub>)

1.4.2.8 **Reference Material**

1.4.2.8.1 Reference material can be run diluted or after recovery with this recovery technique as described in section 1.4.2.14.

1.4.2.8.2 Refer to section 1.5.4 for ignitable liquid test mixture and reference material requirements and appropriate dilutions.

1.4.2.9 **Safety Concerns**

1.4.2.9.1 Carbon disulfide is an extremely flammable, volatile liquid. All routes of exposure to carbon disulfide have adverse effects on the central nervous system with a NFPA health rating of 3 (severe). Care should be taken to protect all routes of exposure from contact with carbon disulfide; as well as keeping the solvent well away from heat sources.

- 1.4.2.9.2 For further information regarding the hazards of exposure to carbon disulfide refer to material safety data sheets (MSDS).
- 1.4.2.9.3 Given the unknown nature of case samples, olfactory screening may pose a health risk and is not recommended. Obvious odors should however be noted to aid in the selection of parameters applied to the recovery technique(s).<sup>1,8,13</sup>

#### 1.4.2.10 **Passive Adsorption Procedure**

- 1.4.2.10.1 Secure a activated charcoal strip (ACS) with a paper clip or hanger.
  - 1.4.2.10.1.1 Note lot number of ACS on analysis worksheet.
- 1.4.2.10.2 Open friction lid can or evidence pouch and quickly note contents and any obvious odor present.
- 1.4.2.10.3 Suspend ACS over the sample, seal container, place into nylon arson bag or secure lid with clips to prevent loss..
- 1.4.2.10.4 Heat container for 2-24 hours at 50-80°
- 1.4.2.10.5 As described in E 1412-07, important considerations for the optimum adsorption time for representative sampling and/or maximum sensitivity are the adsorption temperature and the ignitable liquid composition and concentration.
- 1.4.2.10.6 At the completion of the adsorption period, remove can from oven and allow to cool to room temperature.
- 1.4.2.10.7 Label two ALS vials, using the same pipette rinse one with solvent placing the solvent into the second vial which is used as a sample blank. Into the first vial add the ACS and then the solvent and cap immediately.
- 1.4.2.10.8 Document the source and lot number of CS<sub>2</sub> and thiophene used on analysis worksheet.
- 1.4.2.10.9 After initial examination of the sample, the CS<sub>2</sub> extract may be diluted for GC-MSD analysis.

#### 1.4.2.11 **Resampling of Item**

If initial GC-MSD data indicates that the strip was clearly overloaded, the sample can be resampled at ambient temperature or with a shortened adsorption time.

#### 1.4.2.12 **Packaging of Retention ACS**



- 1.4.2.13.1 After evaporating the solvent place the vial containing the ACS into polymer pouch.
- 1.4.2.13.2 Place all pouch(s) into a new evidence envelope to be returned with the evidence to the submitting agency.

1.4.2.13 **ACS Recovery of Reference Material**

- 1.4.2.14.1 Place 1 to 10 $\mu$ L ignitable liquid reference material into a clean, unused quart sized friction lid can, and seal.
- 1.4.2.14.2 Secure ACS on paper clip or hanger.
- 1.4.2.14.3 Use a magnet to secure prepared collection device onto lid of friction lid can and immediately seal lid.
- 1.4.2.14.4 Place friction lid can into the oven for the same time and temperature as the samples.
- 1.4.2.14.5 Process charcoal strip as with case samples.

1.4.2.14 **Quality Assurance**

1.4.2.14.1 Charcoal Strip Blanks

1.4.2.14.1.1 A charcoal strip blank must be run with each case.

1.4.2.14.1.2 Place ACS and hanging device into a heat sealable bag.

1.4.2.14.1.3 Process charcoal strip with a blank.

1.4.2.14.1.4 GC-MSD data for the charcoal strip blank must be placed into case file.

1.4.2.14.2 New ACS Lot

1.4.2.14.2.1 Each new lot of ACS should be checked for contamination and relative recovery prior to official use.

1.4.2.14.2.2 Contamination should be checked for by preparing a blank as described in sections 1.4.2.10 and 1.4.2.11.

1.4.2.14.2.3 Relative recovery should be verified with 10 $\mu$ L of SAM mix (50% gasoline, 50% kerosene) as described in sections 1.4.2.10 and 1.4.2.11.

1.4.2.14.2.4 GC-MSD data must be centrally stored in the laboratory performing the analysis.

1.4.2.14.3 New Elution Solvent Bottle



1.4.2.14.3.1 Relative contamination must be checked for in each new bottle of CS<sub>2</sub>, regardless of lot both before and after addition of thiophene.

1.4.2.14.3.2 For this check, evaporate a volume of CS<sub>2</sub> by 50%.

1.4.2.14.3.3 If present, the relative toluene and or benzene concentration must be noted. Solvent should be free of other identifiable ignitable liquids.

1.4.2.15.3.4 GC-MSD data must be centrally stored in the laboratory performing the analysis.

#### 1.4.2.15 **Analysis**

Analyze extracts by GC-MSD as outlined in section 1.5 of this method.

## 1.4 RECOVERY METHODS

### 1.4.3 Separation and Concentration of Ignitable Liquid Residues from Fire Evidence Samples by Solvent Extraction

#### 1.4.3.1 **General**

1.4.3.1.1 This method serves to recover ignitable liquid residues from samples submitted as evidence in fire investigations.

1.4.3.1.2 This method applies the principle "Like dissolves like". Ignitable liquid/residue in the sample is recovered with an organic solvent which is filtered and concentrated if necessary.

#### 1.4.3.2 **ASTM Reference Method**

This separation protocol is derived from ASTM standard practice E 1386-10 *Standard Practice for Separation and Concentration of Ignitable Liquid Residues from Fire Debris Samples by Solvent Extraction*.

#### 1.4.3.3 **Application**

1.4.3.3.1 This recovery technique may be applied to samples which may contain heavy petroleum distillates as indicated by a strong odor and/or GC/MSD data from analysis of passive headspace ACS recovered extract.

1.4.3.3.2 Samples which contain a high percentage of charred debris and tend to hold ignitable liquid residues more tightly.

1.4.3.3.3 Samples which contain non-porous surfaces such as glass, or burned containers.

1.4.3.3.4 Aqueous samples and debris samples containing a significant amount of water.

1.4.3.3.5 Samples which have a significant odor of an ignitable liquid.

1.4.3.3.6 Liquid samples suspected to contain an ignitable liquid.

1.4.3.4 **Sensitivity**

This separation protocol is capable of isolating quantities smaller than 1 $\mu$ L of an ignitable liquid residue from a sample (ASTM E1386-10, 4.2).

1.4.3.5 **Limitations**

1.4.3.5.1 Interfering compounds, inherent in the fire debris recovered by this method, may create GC-MSD data interpretation problems. These compounds are the result of pyrolysis of solid fuels present at the fire scene and the combustion of organic compounds liberated during the fire process.

1.4.3.5.2 The evaporation step in this method may lead to the loss of light ignitable liquid products or lighter components of medium to heavy range products. Close monitoring of the evaporation process should reduce losses.

1.4.3.5.3 Lighter compounds may not be detected by this technique due to the requirement for a solvent delay during GC-MSD analysis. Any compound with a retention time during the solvent delay will not be detected by this technique.

1.4.3.5.4 Due to the nature of the solvent extraction process, this technique may render the extracted sample unsuitable for resampling. For this reason, only a representative portion of the sample should be subjected to this technique and the extracts returned with the evidence.

1.4.3.6 **Safety Concerns**

1.4.3.6.1 Pentane is an extremely flammable, volatile liquid. Although pentane only has a NFPA health rating of 1 (slight), exposure through inhalation and ingestion has an adverse effect on the central nervous system. Skin contact causes irritation. Care should be taken to protect all routes of exposure from contact with pentane as well as keeping the solvent well away from heat sources.

1.4.3.6.2 For further information regarding the hazards of exposure to extraction solvents refer to material safety data sheets (MSDS).

1.4.3.6.3 Given the unknown nature of samples, olfactory screening may pose a health risk and is not recommended. Note obvious odors to aid in the selection of parameters applied to the recovery technique.

1.4.3.7 **Equipment and Supplies**

1.4.3.7.1 Chemical fume hood

1.4.3.7.2 Tube rocker.

1.4.3.7.3 Filter Paper

1.4.3.7.3.1 Whatman Grade 1 - Qualitative (27cm) or equivalent

1.4.3.7.3.2 Whatman 1PS -Phase separation (15cm) or equivalent

1.4.3.7.4 Glassware

1.4.3.7.4.1 Assorted sizes of glass funnels

1.4.3.7.4.2 Assorted 25mL to 2000mL glass beakers

1.4.3.7.4.3 Assorted sizes of screw-top extraction tubes and screw caps (no adhesive liners).

1.4.3.7.4.4 2-mL wide-mouth automatic liquid sampler (ALS) vials preassembled with screw-top cap with PTFE/silicone septa

1.4.3.7.4.5 Glass vial microinserts

1.4.3.8 **Reagents**

1.4.3.8.1 Pentane (Pesticide Grade or equivalent)

1.4.3.9 **Solvent Extraction - Non-liquid Samples**

1.4.3.9.1 Transfer a representative portion of sample to an appropriately sized glass beaker.

1.4.3.9.2 Add sufficient pentane to thoroughly wet the sample.

1.4.3.9.3 Mix/soak the sample for approximately one to five minutes. A beaker may be used as a plunger to facilitate the extraction of flexible material. Note lot and source of extraction solvent on fire evidence worksheet.

1.4.3.9.4 If necessary, filter solvent through phase separation paper supported with Grade 1 filter paper.

1.4.3.9.5 Place  $\cong$ 2mL aliquot of solvent into a 2mL ALS vial prior to evaporation. Additional evaporation may not be necessary. This sample may be diluted as necessary.

1.4.3.9.6 If necessary, allow solvent to evaporate approximately 50%. Transfer an aliquot of the partially evaporated sample to a glass insert in a labeled ALS vial. Additional aliquots at higher levels of evaporation may be collected at the discretion of the analyst.

1.4.3.9.7 Continue to evaporate remaining solvent. Concentrate extract down to approximately 1mL. Place the sample into labeled ALS vial.

1.4.3.10 **Solvent Extraction - Unknown Liquid Samples**

1.4.3.10.1 Examine liquid and note the number of layers present.

1.4.3.10.2 If more than one layer is present, transfer one drop of the organic layer of liquid to a labeled ALS vial containing 2mL of carbon disulfide and mix.

1.4.3.10.3 If only one layer is present extract/dilute a aliquot with carbon disulfide and analyze.

1.4.3.10.4 For all extraction situations, note lot and source of extraction solvent on fire evidence worksheet.

1.4.3.11 **Solvent Purity Check**

1.4.3.11.1 When solvent used for extraction is subjected to evaporation, the batch of samples should include a solvent blank.

1.4.3.11.1.1 Place approximately 200mL of extraction solvent into a clean beaker.

1.4.3.11.1.2 Evaporate solvent to approximately 1mL.

1.4.3.11.1.3 The degree of solvent evaporation should be at least twice the extent used for questioned samples (ASTM E 1386-10, 5.2.1).

1.4.3.11.1.4 When the extraction solvent is used only to dilute a suspected ignitable liquid, it does not have to be subjected to an evaporation check.

1.4.3.12 **Analysis**

Analyze extracts by GC-MSD as described in section 1.5. If a partially evaporated extract provides sufficient sensitivity, the more evaporated extract(s) need not be analyzed.

**1.5 ANALYSIS OF RECOVERED EXTRACTS**

1.5.1 General

1.5.1.1 To detect the presence of an ignitable liquid in fire evidence samples, extracts recovered by headspace sampling, activated charcoal and/or solvent extraction are analyzed with a gas chromatograph equipped with a mass selective detector (GC-MSD).

1.5.1.2 Post-run macros, which process the data to generate extracted ion profiles, can be utilized to assist with the detection and identification of ignitable liquid residues.

### 1.5.2 ASTM Reference Method

This analysis approach is derived from ASTM E 1618-14: *Standard Test Method for Ignitable Liquid Residues in Extracts from Fire Debris Samples by Gas Chromatography-Mass Spectrometry*

### 1.5.3 Apparatus

#### 1.5.3.1 **Instrumentation**

Integrated system consisting of a Gas Chromatograph equipped with a Mass Selective Detector. Data system must be capable of handling macro programs to extract ion profiles to assist with the interpretation of data.

#### 1.5.3.2 **Column**

30 meter Agilent HP-5MS [(5% PhMeSilcone) with 0.25 mm ID and 0.25 µm film thickness], or comparable. The column, with appropriate carrier gas flow and temperature program, must have the capability to adequately separate the components of the column resolution test mixture (refer to 1.5.4.1).

### 1.5.4 Chemicals and Reference Materials

#### 1.5.4.1 **Column Resolution Test Mixture**

1.5.4.1.1 The minimum requirements for the test mixture are described in E 1618-14, 6.4. Compliant test mixtures can be obtained through Restek (#31224), Cerilliant (ERR-002) or equivalent vendor/product  
1.5.4.1.1.1 Dilute stock test mixture 10:1 with carbon disulfide/thiophene.

1.5.4.1.2 The Resolution Test Mixture should be compared to the previous run for retention time shifts and changes in abundances that may indicate instrumental problems and/or deterioration of the test mixture.

1.5.4.1.3 All constituents of this test mixture with the exception of hexane must be present.

1.5.4.1.4 Column resolution test mixture should be stored in the freezer.

#### 1.5.4.2 **Headspace Test Mixture**

1.5.4.2.1 When headspace sampling is employed, a mixture of light range ignitable compounds must be included in each analysis run.

1.5.4.2.2 The mixture will contain Methanol, Acetone, diethyl ether, and n-heptane.

1.5.4.2.3 Additional light range test mixtures may be analyzed at the discretion of the analyst.

1.5.4.2.4 Headspace test mixture should be stored in the freezer.

### 1.5.4.3 **Ignitable Liquid Reference Material**

Ignitable liquids for use as reference material may be obtained as required from commercial and local sources. A reference material collection including weathered/evaporated commonly encountered ignitable liquids must be available. Reference material may be diluted as described below or neat products may be recovered by either headspace sampling or ACS.

#### 1.5.4.3.1 Dilution of Reference Material

##### 1.5.4.3.1.1 **Neat Ignitable Liquid Products**

For most neat liquids a 1:1000 dilution is appropriate. Single component liquids may require a 1:4000 dilution. Additional dilutions may be made as required.

##### 1.5.4.3.1.2 **Diluted Commercial Products**

Most commercially obtained ignitable liquid reference materials should be diluted 1:10. Dilution should be adjusted as necessary.

#### 1.5.4.3.2 Authentication of Ignitable Liquid Reference Material

1.5.4.3.2.1 The authentication of ignitable liquid standards presents a unique problem since the standard may be a multi-component mixture whose identification is based largely on total ion chromatograms (TIC) and extracted ion profiles (EIP) or a single component product whose identification is based mostly on the comparison of mass spectra.

1.5.4.3.2.2 Authentication of standards is based upon interpretation of the TIC, EIP and mass spectral data obtained through the analysis of the reference material.

1.5.4.3.2.3 When available, the analytical data should be compared with the manufacturers package insert/information packet or MSDS.

1.5.4.3.2.5 Authentication documentation must be stored centrally.

#### 1.5.4.3.3 Application of Ignitable Liquid Reference Material

1.5.4.3.3.1 Reference material need not be analyzed with each analysis run if the column resolution mixture (CRM) for the date of casework analysis agrees with the CRM

for the date that the reference material was run on the GC-MSD.

1.5.4.3.3.2 The CRMs should show no significant shifts in retention time.

1.5.4.3.3.4 The CRM for the reference material run date must be included in the casefile.

## 1.5.5 GC/MSD Analysis

### 1.5.5.1 **Instrumental Parameters**

1.5.5.1.1 Instrumental parameters are stored electronically as part of the data file.

### 1.5.5.2 **MSD Tuning**

1.5.5.2.1 An *Autotune* must be performed prior to initiating a new sequence run.

1.5.5.2.2 All parameters evaluated for the *Autotune* must fall within manufacturer recommended ranges.

1.5.5.2.3 *Autotunes* must be centrally stored in the laboratory performing the analysis.

### 1.5.5.3 **GC-MSD Quality Assurance Sample Requirements**

#### 1.5.5.3.1 In-between Sample Blanks

1.5.5.3.1.1 Analyzing a sample blank between case samples will indicate if any carry over is occurring.

1.5.5.3.1.2 For headspace sampling the corresponding amount of headspace may be injected.

1.5.5.3.1.3 For ACS recovery, a CS<sub>2</sub> solvent blank must be analyzed.

1.5.5.3.1.4 For solvent extraction, the solvent used for extraction must be used for the solvent blank.

1.5.5.3.1.5 TIC from BLANK must be placed into case file. If any peaks are present, the MS for peaks of interest must also be placed in the case file.

#### 1.5.5.3.2 Performance Verification Test Mixture

1.5.5.3.2.1 To establish that the system has the capability to resolve compounds as outlined in ASTM E 1618-11, a



column resolution check mix should be analyzed at the beginning of the analysis sequence.

1.5.5.3.2.2 When headspace sampling is used, a mixture of commonly encountered light compounds must be included in the analysis run to verify detection ability.

1.5.5.3.2.3 Data for test mixtures must be centrally stored in the laboratory performing the analysis. A copy of the TIC from the ASTM test mix data must be placed into a casefile.

1.5.5.3.3 Carrier Gas Purity

To prevent contamination, a carrier gas of appropriate quality will be used.

1.5.6 GC/MSD Data Analysis

Data processing capabilities should include both the generation of total ion chromatograms (TIC) and extracted ion profiles (EIP) of characteristic major ion fragments for each of the major types compounds found in ignitable liquids. TICs and EIPs from case samples are compared against TICs and EIPs prepared for reference materials. EIPs may be used to assist with the interpretation of the TIC but must not be the sole basis for the conclusions reached.

1.5.6.1 **Deuser.mac**

The macro generates the TIC and individually printed selected ion profiles. Individual profiles allow the analyst to see less abundant ions indicative of certain classes of compounds in greater detail than summed profiles.<sup>1.8.13</sup>

1.5.6.1.1 This macro may be set up to run at the end of an analysis run or can be accessed in Data Analysis. In Data Analysis, load the method containing the *deuser* macro and a data file. From the method pull down, select run. Ions included are as follows:

Major Compound Types	Major Ion Fragments			
Alkanes	43	57	71	85
Aromatics	91	105	119	133
Cycloalkane/alkene	55	69	82	83
Indanes	117	118	131	132
PNAs (Polynuclear aromatics/naphthalenes)	128	142	156	170

1.5.7 Instrument Maintenance

1.5.7.2 Refer to manufacturer's instrument manuals for maintenance indicators and instructions.

**1.6 INTERPRETATION OF ANALYTICAL DATA**

1.6.1 E 1618-14 Classification system

1.6.1.1 Classification system consists of seven major classes of ignitable liquids and one miscellaneous class.

1.6.1.2 All classes except gasoline are further differentiated into light, medium or heavy subclasses based on carbon spread/n-hydrocarbon boiling range.

1.6.1.2.1 The subclasses allow for the characterization of products, which fall between classes due to evaporation/weathering. A product may be described as “light to medium” or “medium to heavy” when the carbon number range does not fit neatly into one of the below categories. If this option is appropriate, the carbon number range should be reported.

1.6.1.2.2 The products listed in *Table 1* are examples of commercially available products which fall within each classification and are not intended to be all-inclusive. Additional references should be used to provide more specific examples for each class.

## 1.6.2 Identification of an Ignitable Liquid

1.6.2.1 Compare data from case sample TIC and EIPs with data from reference material obtained with the same GC-MSD parameters.

1.6.2.2 The characteristics which establish the presence of an ignitable liquid is set forth in Section 10 of ASTM E 1618-14 : *Standard Test Method for Ignitable Liquid Residues in Extracts from Fire Debris Samples by Gas Chromatography-Mass Spectrometry*.

1.6.2.3 The characteristics are to be used as the basis for the identification of an ignitable by this analytical method.

1.6.2.4 The analyst must consider and be prepared to explain any observed differences between the unknown (questioned sample) and a known reference material.

1.6.2.4.1 Variables that should be taken into account include the influence of evaporation, interference from burned matrix materials, sample preparation techniques and/or bacterial degradation (soil samples).

1.6.2.4.2 Unexplained differences should preclude the identification as an ignitable liquid.

1.6.2.5 A copy of the relevant reference material supporting the conclusions reached must be placed into the casefile.

**Table 1: E 1618-14 Ignitable Liquid Classification Scheme** <sup>1.8.4</sup>

Class	Light {C <sub>4</sub> - C <sub>9</sub> }	Medium {C <sub>8</sub> - C <sub>13</sub> }	Heavy {C <sub>8</sub> - C <sub>20+</sub> }
Gasoline All brands, including gasohol and E-85	Fresh gasoline is typically in the C <sub>4</sub> -C <sub>12</sub> range		
Petroleum Distillates	Petroleum Ether Some Cigarette Lighter Fluids Some Camping Fuels	Some Charcoal Starters Some Paint Thinners Some Dry Cleaning Solvents	Kerosene Diesel Fuel Some Jet Fuels Some Charcoal Starters
Isoparaffinic Products	Aviation Gas Some Specialty Solvents	Some Charcoal Starters Some Paint Thinners Some Copier Toners	Some Commercial Specialty Solvents
Aromatic Products	Some Paint & Varnish Removers Some Automotive Parts Cleaners Xylenes Toluene-based Products	Some Automotive Parts Cleaners Specialty Cleaning Solvents Some Insecticide Vehicles Fuel Additives	Some Insecticide Vehicles Industrial Cleaning Solvents
Naphthenic Paraffinic Products	Cyclohexane based solvents/products	Some Charcoal Starters Some Insecticide Vehicles Some Lamp Oils	Some Insecticide Vehicles Some Lamp Oils Industrial Solvents
N-Alkanes Products	Solvents Pentane Hexane Heptane	Some Candle Oils Some Copier Toners	Some Candle Oils Some Carbonless Forms Some Copier Toners
Oxygenated Solvents	Alcohols Ketones Some Lacquer Thinners Fuel Additives Surface Preparation Solvents	Some Lacquer Thinners Some Industrial Solvents Metal Cleaners/Gloss Removers	
Other-Miscellaneous	Single Component Products Some Blended Products Some Enamel Reducers	Turpentine Products Some Blended Products Various Specialty Products	Some Blended Products Various Specialty Products

## 1.7 ANALYSIS REPORT

### 1.7.1 Fire Evidence Notes

#### 1.7.1.1 **Description of Evidence**

1.7.1.1.1 In the notes the description of the evidence shall contain at least the following information, the item number, the agency exhibit number (when available), condition of seals, the type of container and details of the type of evidence.

1.7.1.1.2 The description may include the location the evidence was said to have been recovered.

#### 1.7.1.2 **Analysis Results**

##### 1.7.1.2.1 Positive Results

1.7.1.2.1.1 When the criteria for identification of an ignitable liquid are met, the analysis results must indicate the class which the ignitable liquid falls. The carbon range (light, medium, or heavy) as described in must be indicated for all classes except gasoline.

1.7.1.2.1.2 Following the class designation, a listing of potential sources of the ignitable liquid must be compiled and listed.

1.7.1.2.1.3 A disclaimer indicating that positive results should be considered in context with all available information and do not automatically lead to the conclusion that a fire was incendiary in nature, may be added to the analysis report.

##### 1.7.1.2.2 Negative Results

1.7.1.2.2.1 When the criteria for identification of an ignitable liquid are not met, the analysis results must indicate that no ignitable liquids were detected in the sample.

1.7.1.2.2.2 A disclaimer indicating that negative results do not preclude the possibility that ignitable liquids were present at the fire scene, may be added to the analysis report.

##### 1.7.1.2.3 Turpenes<sup>1.8.14</sup>

Turpentine is a volatile essential oil obtained from the oleoresin of coniferous trees. The presence of the naturally occurring alkenes,

turpenes (oleoresins) should be considered in context with the make up of the sample.

1.7.1.2.3.1 When a comparison control sample is available and clearly shows the same distribution of turpene constituents, a questioned sample containing wood may be reported out as negative.

1.7.1.2.3.2 When in the absence of a comparison control sample, significant levels of turpenes are noted in a sample containing wood, a qualifier should be used. The qualifier should read to the effect that the sample contains turpenes, which may have originated from coniferous wood in the sample or from a medium range turpentine product.

1.7.1.2.3.3 When a comparison control sample of the involved wood is available and does not indicate the presence of turpenes, it is at the discretion of the analyst as to whether the qualifier is used.

1.7.1.2.3.4 When the sample clearly does not contain wood which would contribute to the presence of turpenes, a qualifying statement is not necessary. The sample should be reported as containing a medium range turpentine product.

1.7.1.2.4 Questionable Results

1.7.1.2.4.1 In situations where the analysis data is inconclusive, the analysis results may indicate that no ignitable liquids were *identified* in the sample.

1.7.1.2.4.2 When a comparison (substrate) sample is not available and the material is one known to have the potential of contributing the ignitable liquid identified, two options are available. Examples of this include distillates in newspaper and varnished flooring.

Option One:

The sample can be reported out as *no ignitable liquids identified* (see 1.7.1.2.4.1 above).

Option Two:

The ignitable liquid may be identified but a qualifying statement must be placed on the analysis report. When appropriate, the qualifier must state that the sample was found to contain the ignitable liquid but due to the

lack of a comparison control sample for the substrate it is unknown whether the ignitable liquid originated from (endogenous to) the substrate itself.

## 1.8 REFERENCES AND RECOMMENDED READING

- 1.8.1 ASTM Method E 1388-05, Standard Practice for Sampling of Headspace Vapors from Fire Debris Samples.
- 1.8.2 ASTM Method E 1412-07, Standard Practice for Separation of Ignitable Liquid Residues from Fire Debris Samples by Passive Headspace Concentration With Activated Charcoal.
- 1.8.3 ASTM Method E 1386-10, Standard Practice for Separation and Concentration of Ignitable Liquid Residues from Fire Debris Samples by Solvent Extraction.
- 1.8.4 ASTM Method E 1618-14, Standard Test Method for Ignitable Liquid Residues in Extracts from Fire Debris Samples by Gas Chromatography Mass Spectrometry.
- 1.8.5 Dietz, W.R. Improved Charcoal Packaging for Accelerant Recovery by Passive Diffusion. J. Forensic Sci. 36(1):111-21; 1991.
- 1.8.6 Newman, R.T.; Dietz, W.R.; Lothridge, K. The Use of Activated Charcoal Strips for Fire Debris Extractions by Passive Diffusion. Part 1: The Effects of Time, Temperature, Strip Size, and Sample Concentration. J. Forensic Sci. 41(3):361-370; 1996.
- 1.8.7 Arson Accelerant Detection Course Materials, presented at Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms Laboratory. Rockville, Maryland, May, 1993.
- 1.8.8 Arson Analysis Workshop Materials, presented at Northwest Association of Forensic Scientist's Fall Meeting, Salt Lake City, Utah, October, 1996.
- 1.8.9 Advanced Fire Debris Course Materials, presented at National Forensic Science Technology Center, St. Petersburg, Florida, September, 2011.
- 1.8.10 Newman, R.; Gilbert, M.; Lothridge, K., GC-MS Guide to Ignitable Liquids. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press: 1998.
- 1.8.11 Stauffer, E., *Concept of pyrolysis for fire debris analysts*, Sci & Justice, 43(1):29-40, 2003.
- 1.8.12 Laboratory Fire Standards and Protocols Committee Scientific Working Group for Fire and Explosions, Initial Assessment of Evidence, page 3, 8.1.5.
- 1.8.13 Trimpe, M.A., *Turpentine in Arson Analysis*, J. Forensic Sci., 36(4):1059-1073, 1991.
- 1.8.14 Stauffer: Dolan: Newman, *Fire Debris Analysis*, 2008 Academic Press.

- 1.8.15 ASTM Method E 2451-08, Standard practice for preserving Ignitable Liquids and Ignitable liquid residue Extracts from Fire Debris Samples.
- 1.8.16 Lentini: Dolan: Cherry, *The Petroleum- Laced Background*, J Forensic Sci 2000: 45 (5) 968-989

Refer to fire evidence training plan and current literature for additional references.

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**Section I**

**Recovery, Analysis and the Identification of Ignitable Liquid Residues from Fire Evidence Samples**

**Manual History**

<u>Revision</u>	<u>Issue Date</u>	<u>History</u>	<u>Author</u>
0	01-1997	Original Issue	S.C. Williamson
1	01-07-1999	ASTM update.	S.C. Williamson
2	01-19-2001	Reformat, updates, refinements, Addition of magnet option to protocol.	S.C. Williamson
3	01-11-2002	Addition of safety section, reformatted GC/MSD maintenance schedule and method refinement	S.C. Williamson
4	11-05-2003	Update to most recent ASTM Standards	S.C. Williamson
5	02-22-2006	Quality assurance sections updated, headspace sampling section reinstated, addition of ACS retention requirement	S.C. Williamson
6	04-19-2006	Headspace test mix modified clarifications in authentication process.	S. C. Williamson
7	09-22-2010	Updated ASTM References and made associated changes, reviewed and clarified wording. (02/2010)	S. C. Williamson R. G. McDowell
8	04-28-2011	Updated E1618 and E1386 ASTM References and made associated changes. Added headspace sampling option for liquids. Updated standards language.	S. C. Williamson D.Sincerbeaux
9	6-17-2013	Updated entire method. Simplified procedure, de-emphasizing headspace screening.	D. Sincerbeaux

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|----|---------|--|----------------|
| 10 | 8-20-13 | Added references, changed 1.3.1, 1.3.2, 1.4.1.9, 1.4.1.10, 1.4.2.5, 1.4.2.6, 1.4.2.10, 1.4.2.12, 1.4.2.14, 1.4.3.3, 1.4.3.9, 1.5.4.1, 1.5.4.2,   | D. Sincerbeaux |
| 11 | 4-22-15 | Added 1.3.5, 1.5.4.1.4, 1.5.4.2.4, changed 1.4.2.7, 1.4.1.9.1, 1.4.2.6.2, 1.4.2.7, 1.4.2.10.3, 1.4.2.10.7, 1.4.2.13.1 &2, 1.5.5.3.3, renumbered 1.4.2.14.1, Updated to ASTM method E-1618-14 throughout. | D Sincerbeaux  |

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