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Workplace atmospheres — Measurement of dermal exposure — Principles and methods

*Air des lieux de travail — Mesurage de l'exposition cutanée — Principes
et méthodes*



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Contents

Page

Foreword	iv
Introduction.....	v
1 Scope	1
2 Normative references.....	1
3 Terms and definitions	2
4 Assessment of dermal exposure	5
4.1 General	5
4.2 Defining study objectives	6
5 Principles and methods	7
5.1 Measurements methods and sampling.....	7
5.2 Selection of sampling methods	9
5.3 Temporal and spatial variations of exposure	10
6 Quality issues	11
6.1 General	11
6.2 Sampling efficiency	11
6.3 Recovery efficiency	11
6.4 Background and contamination	11
6.5 Sample stability	12
6.6 Analytical method.....	12
7 Test report.....	12
7.1 Description of the measuring procedure.....	12
7.2 Core information.....	13
Annex A (informative) The conceptual model.....	14
Annex B (informative) Interception methods	16
Annex C (informative) Hand wash methods.....	21
Annex D (informative) Wipe methods	25
Annex E (informative) Tape-stripping method.....	29
Annex F (informative) <i>In situ</i> methods.....	34
Bibliography.....	41

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.

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Introduction

Dermal exposure assessment explores the dynamic interaction between environmental contaminants and the skin. Occupational skin diseases and disorders constitute a significant percentage of workplace illnesses; the number and frequency of work-related adverse health effects involving the skin is considerably greater than health effects involving the respiratory system^[1]. Occupational skin diseases affect virtually all industry and business sectors and are estimated to cost the European Union 600 million Euros each year, resulting in around 3 million lost working days^[2].

For thousands of chemicals in the workplace, the contribution to total-body exposure by the dermal route has yet to be determined. Historically, the assessment of occupational exposure has focused on inhalation of chemical agents; however, toxicological evidence indicates that dermal contact can serve as the primary route of exposure for many chemical substances and that the contribution to total dose, integrated from all exposure routes, should be considered. As occupational inhalation exposure limits are lowered, the dermal contribution on total dose becomes more critical to assess.

In the decade before publication of this Technical Report, scientific research on dermal exposure continued to be published. An important contribution to this field was the development of a conceptual model for dermal exposure (see Annex A)^[3]. The model systematically describes the transport of contaminant mass from exposure sources to the surface of the skin and provides a structure for both qualitatively and quantitatively evaluating dermal exposure.

The purpose of this Technical Report is to provide a framework of methodologies, including guidance on application and consistency regarding the measurement of dermal exposures to agents in the workplace.