

EPA 1668C Semi-Automated Cleanup of Persistent Organic Pollutants in Sample Extracts - Collection of All 209 PCBs

Introduction

The continued interest in Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), such as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), has led to a variety of automated systems for the cleanup of complex sample matrices. This has resulted in development of a fully automated "Power Prep" sample cleanup instead of manual preparative column chromatography.

To meet demands for an inexpensive method that requires little financial investment, we combined the features of the "PowerPrep" system - accurate, fast, and reliable with short turnaround times and low background using FMS pre-packaged columns - with a relatively simple semi-automated approach. The semi-automated technique described here collects all 209 PCBs in one fraction. Data shown here are for samples extracts in hexane.

This semi-automated method is ideal for laboratories that want high quality sample processing without much financial investment. This application follows EPA method 1668C.

Instrumentation

- FMS EZPrep123® System
- Vacuum pump
- Thermo Trace 1310 GC with Thermo DFS Magnetic Sector high resolution MS

Consumables

- FMS, Inc. High Capacity Acidic Silica column (SNHC-ACD-029)
- FMS, Inc. Neutral-Basic Silica column (SNLC-BAN-004, optional)
- FMS, Inc. Basic Alumina column (SNAL-BAS-006)
- Fisher Pesticide Grade Hexane
- Fisher Pesticide Grade Dichloromethane

- 1668C recovery and spiking standards.

Procedure

Stage 1:

- Assemble columns in order acidic silica-neutral/basic silica-alumina.
- Syringe vial at top is used for conditioning and sample loading.
- Columns are conditioned with 60 mLs of hexane. Hexane is pulled by vacuum pump across all columns (vacuum, waste).

Stage 2:

- Samples are loaded across system (Fraction 1, PCBs).
- Columns are eluted with 160 mL hexane (Fraction 1, PCBs)
- Silica columns are removed and alumina is eluted with 50 mL dichloromethane (Fraction 1, PCBs)
- All PCBs have now been collected in Fraction # 1.

- Total run time is less than 45 min
- Number of parallel sample clean up channels is unlimited

Additional Features

- Low re-use of tubing, syringes, parts and glass ware
- No electronics and mechanical parts to fail
- No service contract or maintenance to worry about
- Fast, 45 minutes run time
- No repetitive motions and minimal cleaning of reusable parts

SuperVap Concentration

- Pre-heat temperature: 55 °C
- Pre-heat time: 15 min
- Heat in Sensor mode: 55 °C
- Nitrogen Pressure: 6-8 psi
- Collect in Direct-to-Vial GC vials and reduce to 1 mL



Vial Evaporator

- Reduce sample to 10 uL final volume under 1-1.5 psi nitrogen at 25 °C

Analysis

- High Resolution GC/MS

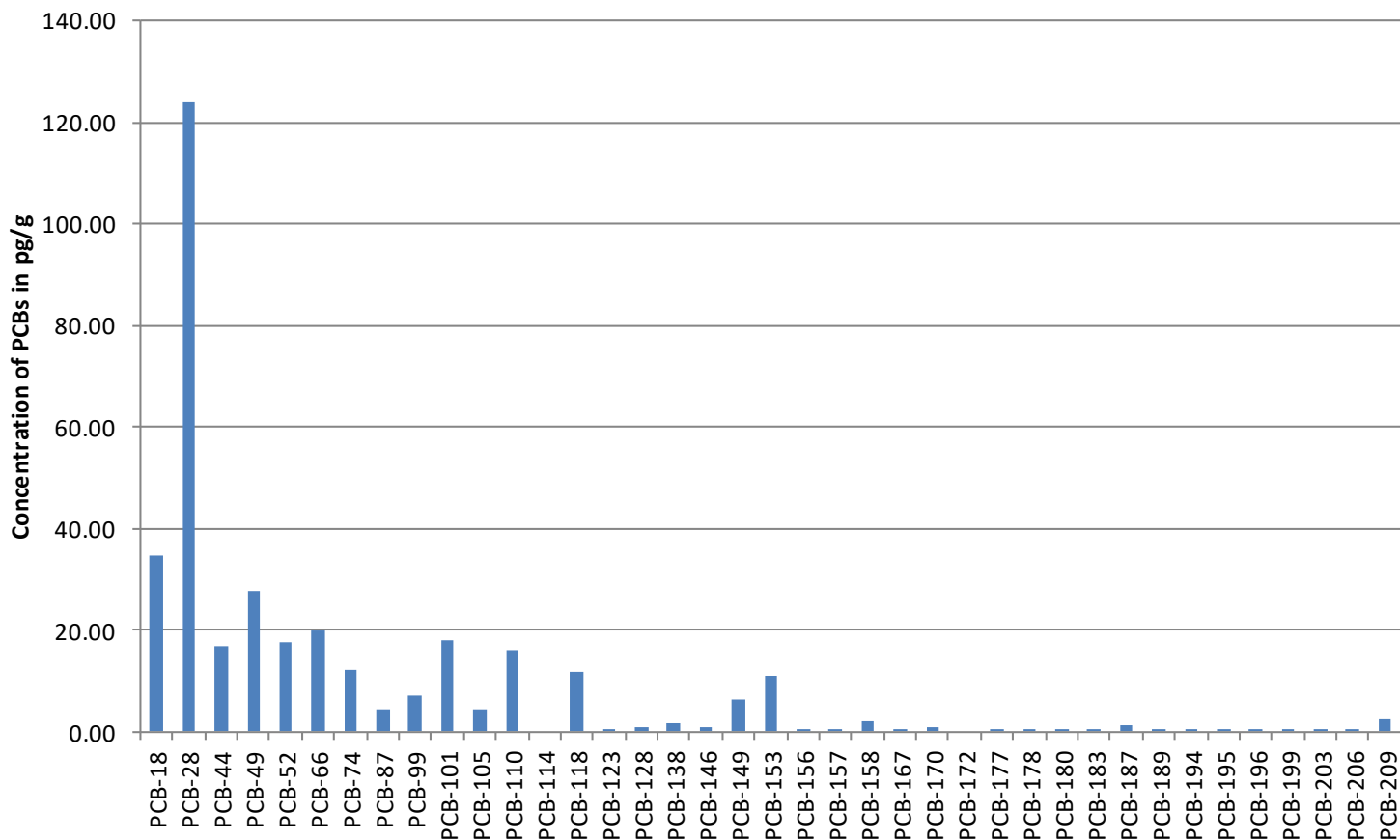


Figure 1. Average concentration of a number of native PCBs in bovine serum (pg/g).



		Average	STDEV	RSD	EPA Window
224'-Tr-PCB 13C STD	PCB_28	86.3	8.9	10.3	
22'55'-Te-PCB 13C STD	PCB_52	62.4	8.5	13.6	
22'455'-Pe-PCB 13C STD	PCB_101	69.2	4.8	7.0	
344'5'-Te-PCB 13C STD	PCB_81	71.4	11.7	16.4	10-145
33'44'-Te-PCB 13C STD	PCB_77	67.3	9.6	14.3	10-145
2'344'5'-Pe-PCB 13C STD	PCB_123	77.2	4.6	5.9	10-145
23'44'5'-Pe-PCB 13C STD	PCB_118	72.4	7.1	9.8	10-145
2344'5'-Pe-PCB 13C STD	PCB_114	73.9	5.3	7.2	10-145
233'44'-Pe-PCB 13C STD	PCB_105	76.0	6.2	8.2	10-145
33'44'5'-Pe-PCB 13C STD	PCB_126	82.2	6.0	7.2	10-145
22'44'55'-Hx-PCB 13C STD	PCB_153	71.9	16.3	22.7	
22'344'5'-Hx-PCB 13C STD	PCB_138	89.0	23.0	25.8	
23'44'55'-Hx-PCB 13C STD	PCB_167	84.0	13.6	16.2	10-145
233'44'5'-Hx-PCB 13C STD	PCB_156	109.9	18.6	16.9	10-145
233'44'5'-Hx-PCB 13C STD	PCB_157	81.3	12.7	15.6	10-145
33'44'55'-Hx-PCB 13C STD	PCB_169	83.4	6.0	7.2	10-145
22'344'55'-Hp-PCB 13C STD	PCB_180	82.9	13.9	16.7	
22'33'44'5'-Hp-PCB 13C STD	PCB_170	80.8	13.4	16.6	
233'44'55'-Hp-PCB 13C STD	PCB_189	84.8	16.8	19.8	10-145
Deca-PCB 13C STD	PCB_209	88.3	5.6	6.4	10-145

Table 1. ¹³C PCBs recoveries in percent for 10 g soil extracts.

Conclusions

Native data across the range of PCBs and excellent recoveries are seen with the new semi automated method using the FMS EZPrep123 System, as can be seen in Figure 1 and Table 1. Because the system is closed, mostly composed of disposable parts, the risk of cross-contamination is very low. Note that all 209 PCBs are collected. The system can be set up as a low-cost alternative to the fully automated clean up equipment. Processing times are much shorter than other manual procedures. The certified pre-packaged columns and simple, versatile system guarantee same morning or afternoon POPs analysis.

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