

SCOPE

On-line, real time X-ray Transmission (XRT) measurement of sulfur (S) in heavy or light oils to satisfy the needs of refineries, pipelines, blending operations, bunkering terminals and other storage facilities. Applications include bunker fuel blending to meet MARPOL Annex VI sulfur restrictions, interface detection of different grade fuels delivered via pipelines, refinery feedstock blending and monitoring, diesel/kerosene blending or production, and the quality monitoring of crude at remote collection and storage facilities.



BACKGROUND

While in-line sulfur gauging - for blending, switching and QC - has been around for years, older technologies never delivered on their promise because those systems did not produce consistent measurements. For the accurate on-line determination of sulphur, the new Rigaku NEX XT resolves those past issues and is thus the perfect tool for blending operations supplying marine bunker fuels and crude feedstock for refineries.

With uniquely engineered hardware and novel proprietary software technologies, the new Rigaku NEX XT system is faster, more sensitive and far more compact than previous generation systems and provides continuous, reliable detection of sulfur from 200 parts-per-million (ppm) to 6.0 wt. %, with analysis times as short as 1 second. The Rigaku NEX XT can operate as a stand-alone analyzer or provide real time closed loop control when tied into a blending or plant wide automation system.

INSTRUMENTATION & SPECIFICATIONS

Model:	Rigaku NEX XT
Analytical technique:	X-ray transmission (XRT)
X-ray tube:	30 kV side-window (<i>no radioisotopes</i>)
Detector:	Scintillation
Sulfur range:	0.02 – 6%
Ambient conditions:	0 - 43°C (32-110 °F) - no direct sunlight
Process conditions:	Stream pressures up to 100 bar (1480 psig) Stream temperatures up to 200 C (392 °F) Flow rates up to 200 l/m (53 gal/m)
Communications:	Sulfur results - 4-20 mA output Density results - 4-20 mA output General warning – dry contact General alarm – dry contact MODBUS 485



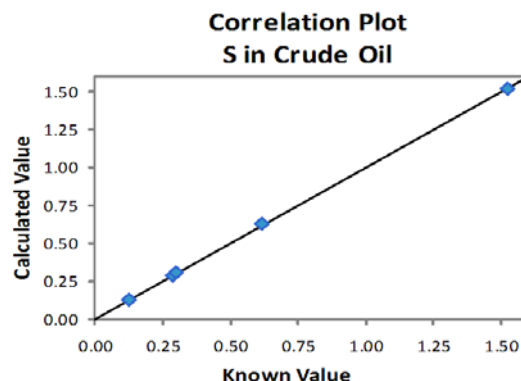
SAMPLE PRESENTATION

To demonstrate the performance of the NEX XT, assayed crude oils were measured as static samples. One liter of sample was introduced to the flow tube, measured and then drained from the system. Because the NEX XT utilizes a transmission technique and unique flow cell design, coatings of paraffin or other deposits on the analysis windows which may occur during normal operations do not affect the sulfur measurement since the coatings are a negligible part of the total X-ray path.

CALIBRATION

Six known field samples with assayed sulfur values were used to establish the crude calibration shown below. Up to 15 product calibrations with 15 standards each can be stored in system memory.

Sample I.D.	Known wt%	Calculated wt%	Deviation	Density	Acq Time
1	0	-0.012	0.013	0.8254	60
2	0.124	0.125	-0.001	0.8517	60
3	0.286	0.285	0.001	0.8514	60
4	0.298	0.305	-0.007	0.8042	60
5	0.616	0.627	-0.011	0.8494	60
6	1.526	1.52	0.006	0.8432	60



RECOVERY

To demonstrate measurement recovery, the two lower concentration samples were re-introduced after calibration and analyzed as unknown samples.

Sample I.D.	Known wt%	Calculated wt%	Density	Acq Time
2	0.124	0.128	0.8514	60
3	0.286	0.285	0.8515	60

REPEATABILITY

To demonstrate instrument repeatability (precision), ten repeat analyses were performed for low, medium, and high crude oils, as static samples, using a 60 sec acquisition time for each measurement.

Sample I.D.	Known wt%	Average wt%	Std Dev wt%	% Relative
2	0.124	0.1234	0.0013	1.0
5	0.616	0.6134	0.0034	0.6
6	1.526	1.529	0.004	0.4

DETECTION LIMIT

The empirical method is used to determine detection limit (Lower Limit of Detection, or LLD). Ten repeat analyses of a blank sample (ULSD) are measured and a standard deviation is determined. The LLD is then defined as three times the standard deviation. This ensures that measurements above the LLD are measuring signal above background.

Element	LLD	Acquisition Time
Sulfur	45 PPM	60 sec

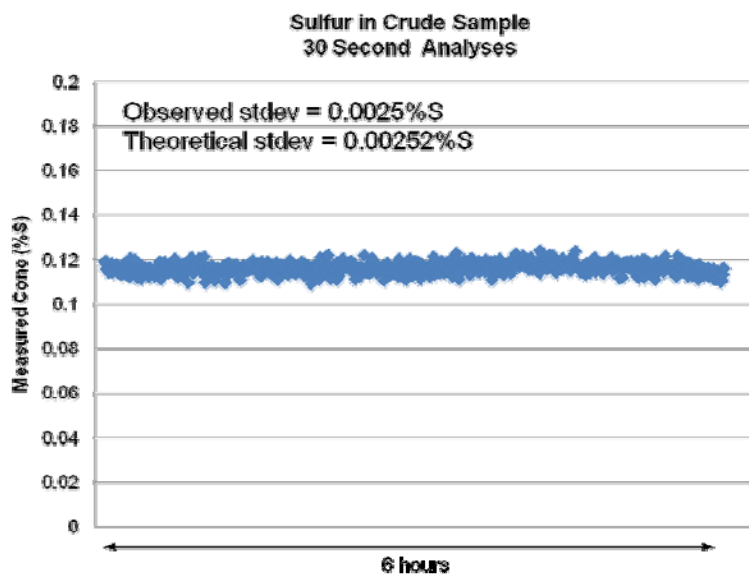
MEASUREMENT OF FIELD SAMPLES

Four unknown field samples were measured against the installed calibration and the results are compared to the results measured by the benchtop XRF technique for bulk at-line analysis.

Sample I.D.	XRF wt%	NEX XT wt%	Deviation	Density	Acq Time
A	0.084	0.084	0	0.8003	60
B	0.482	0.488	0.006	0.8152	60
C	1.85	1.89	0.04	0.8504	60
D	0.37	0.39	0.02	0.8149	60

ANALYTICAL STABILITY

The chart below reflects approximately 700 thirty second analysis over a period of 6 hours. The unit reported excellent analytical stability as the observed standard deviation reported was at the theoretical value.



XRT TECHNIQUE

X-ray transmission gauging involves measuring the attenuation of a monochromatic X-ray beam at an energy (21 keV) that is specific to sulfur (S). In practice, a process stream passes through a flowcell where sulfur (S), in the hydrocarbon matrix, absorbs X-rays transmitted between an X-ray source and detector (see schematic at left). The recorded X-ray intensity is negatively correlated to the sulfur concentration, thus the highest sulfur levels transmit the least X-rays.

Transmission of X-rays through the flowcell is given by the following equation:

$$T = I/I_0 = \exp^{-dt[\mu_m(1-C_s) + \mu_s C_s]}$$

where:

- I = measured X-ray intensity (after flowcell, in photons/sec)
- I₀ = initial X-ray intensity (before flowcell, in photons/sec)
- d = density of the hydrocarbon stream
- t = thickness of the flowcell path (in cm)
- μ_m = molar absorptivity for the hydrocarbon matrix @ 21 keV (cm²/gm)
- μ_s = molar absorptivity for sulfur @ 21 keV (cm²/gm)
- C_s = weight fraction of sulfur (%wt/wt)

An in-line densitometer simultaneously measures oil density and temperature, readings which are automatically incorporated into the sulfur calculation, and output independently for use in process control. An optional water input can be utilized to compensate for variations in the water content of the process stream.

Simple, intuitive software interface makes calibration and analysis easy. Calibrate once, and then continuous sulfur results are reported automatically as oil flows through the analysis chamber. The update frequency is user configurable. The system is designed for unattended operation and requires no consumables or routine maintenance. Grab samples can be occasionally taken for verification testing using another technique, such as benchtop EDXRF, and adjustments can be made to the calibration at the system HMI or through a MODBUS 485 connection.

Sulfur concentration, oil density and temperature, as well as water content (optional) can be output to a DCS or other control systems, giving the operator a complete and real time overview of their product.

CONCLUSION

X-ray Transmission (XRT) gauging has long been an accepted technique for the measurement of sulfur (S) in heavy and light hydrocarbon process streams. Whether used for crude oil blending and monitoring, assaying or blending marine bunker fuels or switching pipelines, the Rigaku NEX XT XRT process analyzer is well suited to meet the varying demands of the industry.

Marine bunker fuel

- Blending operations
- MARPOL ANNEX VI compliance

Refineries

- Feedstock blending
- Process quality control
- Heavy Oil Upgrading

Pipelines & Remote terminals

- Real time blending operations
- Remote crude collection QC
- Pipeline interface detection

