

# What Makes a Good Reference Standard?

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**Cerilliant®**  
Analytical Reference Standards

# Abstract

To ensure accuracy of results in the analytical laboratory analytical chemists must rely on the accuracy, stability, and consistency of reference materials or spiking solutions.

There are several factors critical to production of a high quality reference standard or spiking solution including raw material handling, characterization and potency; certification and qualification of solutions; and homogeneity and stability of the solution. Certified Analytical Reference Standard Solutions prepared in a diluent that promotes stability and packaged under argon in flame sealed ampoules can be stable for many years. This allows the laboratory the convenience of fewer lot changes and more consistent data over time.

This presentation walks through the parameters important to the manufacture, analysis, uncertainty and storage of certified reference standards. Results are only as good as the reference.



# Results are only as accurate as the reference!

- Accuracy and reliability of analytical results is dependent on accuracy and reliability of the method of analysis, accuracy in the preparation of samples, and accuracy of the calibrators used.
- Highly pure, well-characterized, reference standards are critical to the accuracy of the analysis
- Design, preparation, packaging, and storage of reference standards affect the traceability, accuracy of concentration, stability, and uncertainty



# What makes a Good Reference Standard? One Suitable for Quantitative Applications?

- ✓ High purity thoroughly & accurately characterized components – neat material characterization
- ✓ Prepared using accurate, calibrated, and qualified balances (pipettes & glassware when needed)
- ✓ Accurate weighing operation
- ✓ Accurate solvent addition
- ✓ Traceability of all components
- ✓ High purity diluents and/or stabilizers, compatible with the compound(s)
- ✓ Analyzed to verify accuracy & consistency
- ✓ Appropriate packaging and storage
- ✓ Assessment of shelf life



# Neat Material Characterization

Complete & accurate characterization of neat material is essential to accuracy of the solution

Reference  
Standard  
Design &  
Preparation

## Characterization Considerations

- Are vendor certified values complete, accurate and reliable?
- Reliability/repeatability of method?
- Is there an adjustment for salt form?
- Does the vendor provide uncertainty on the purity factor (potency)?

Characterization of neat materials should include

- Purity and impurities
- Residuals
- Verification of identity

Glycosides-hygroscopic

Opiates-hydrates

Many organic materials -  
residual solvents  
(benzodiazepines)



# Neat Materials - Certification

## Identity

- Multiple techniques
  - 1D and 2D NMR
    - Proton
    - Carbon-13
    - Other nuclei
  - FTIR
  - GCMS, LCMS, LCMSMS
  - Other techniques as needed: EA, Optical Rotation, DSC, Melting Point, TGA
- Comparison to literature references



## Purity / Potency

- Mass Balance – Orthogonal approach
  - Multiple techniques for chrom purity and residuals
  - Based on ISO Guide 34
  - Used by NIST
  - Appropriate mass balance equation critical
- Assays – when appropriate
  - Availability of established methods with high precision
  - Availability of primary reference materials



# Purity and Impurities

## Chromatographic Purity

- Purity and related substances
- Method development
  - Literature methods
  - Existing methods for similar compounds
  - Base line separation
  - Resolution of known impurities
- Use at least 2 techniques and different columns
  - values must agree within 0.5% of each other

## Residual Impurities

- Residual water
  - USP <921>; system suitability
- Residual solvent by GC Headspace –
  - Cerilliant validated method or USP <467>
- Residual inorganic content
  - Micro ROI method based on USP <281> - less material with comparable results
- NMR evaluation
- EA or other techniques



# Assignment of Purity Factor

## Mass Balance Equation

- Incorporates chromatographic purity and related substances
- Assigned on an “as-is” basis – adjustments for salts made when preparing solution
- Equation may be modified to address impurities from orthogonal chromatographic techniques, chiral purity, etc.

$$PurityFactor = \left[ [100 - (wt\% Solvents) - (wt\% H_2O) - (wt\% Inorganics)] * \frac{ChromPurity}{100} \right]$$

*wt%Solvents: the weight percentage of residual solvents present in the neat material*

*wt%H<sub>2</sub>O: the weight percentage of water present in the neat material*

*wt%Inorganics: the weight percentage of inorganic content in the neat material*

*ChromPurity: based on the chromatographic purity of the specified primary purity method, either GC or HPLC*





# Complete Characterization Critical

Use of chromatographic purity alone can introduce significant error into the concentration of the reference solution

Compound	Chrom. Purity (%)	Residual Solvent Content (%)	Trace Inorganic Content (%)	Residual Water Content (%)	Purity Factor for Quantitative Use (%)
Ranitidine HCl	99.5	0.87	0.13	None Detected	98.47
Cyanidin-3-glucoside	94.7	ND	< 0.1	6.29	88.71
Cyanidin-3-galactoside	94.7	ND	< 0.1	4.83	90.08
Oxazepam Glucuronide	99.9	ND	2.37	8.96	88.58
Morphine	99.8	ND	< 0.1	3.36	96.45
Morphine-3-B-D-glucuronide 1/2007	99.6	1.38	< 0.1	3.11	95.1
Morphine-3-B-D-glucuronide 4/2009	99.6	1.38	< 0.1	7.23	91

# Impact of Hygroscopicity

Compound	First Analysis Date	Second Analysis Date	First Analysis Water (%)	Second Analysis Water (%)	Months Stored Between Analyses	Change in Water Content
Morphine	10/2007	5/2009	0.66	3.36	19	409%
Vardenafil di HCl	10/2008	1/2010	0.42	5.64	15	1243%
Digoxin (e.g. of Sample Handling)	6/2/2006 Bench top	6/4/2009 Glove box	1.15%	0.56%	NA	-51%

Changes in residual water content over time during storage and handling can impact accuracy of the reference solution concentration and analytical variability

*Is it practical to check moisture content before each use of a neat reference material in an analytical lab?*



Materials were stored under normal freezer conditions in sealed, screw-cap amber vials. Water content was analyzed by Karl Fisher Coulometry based on USP method <921>.

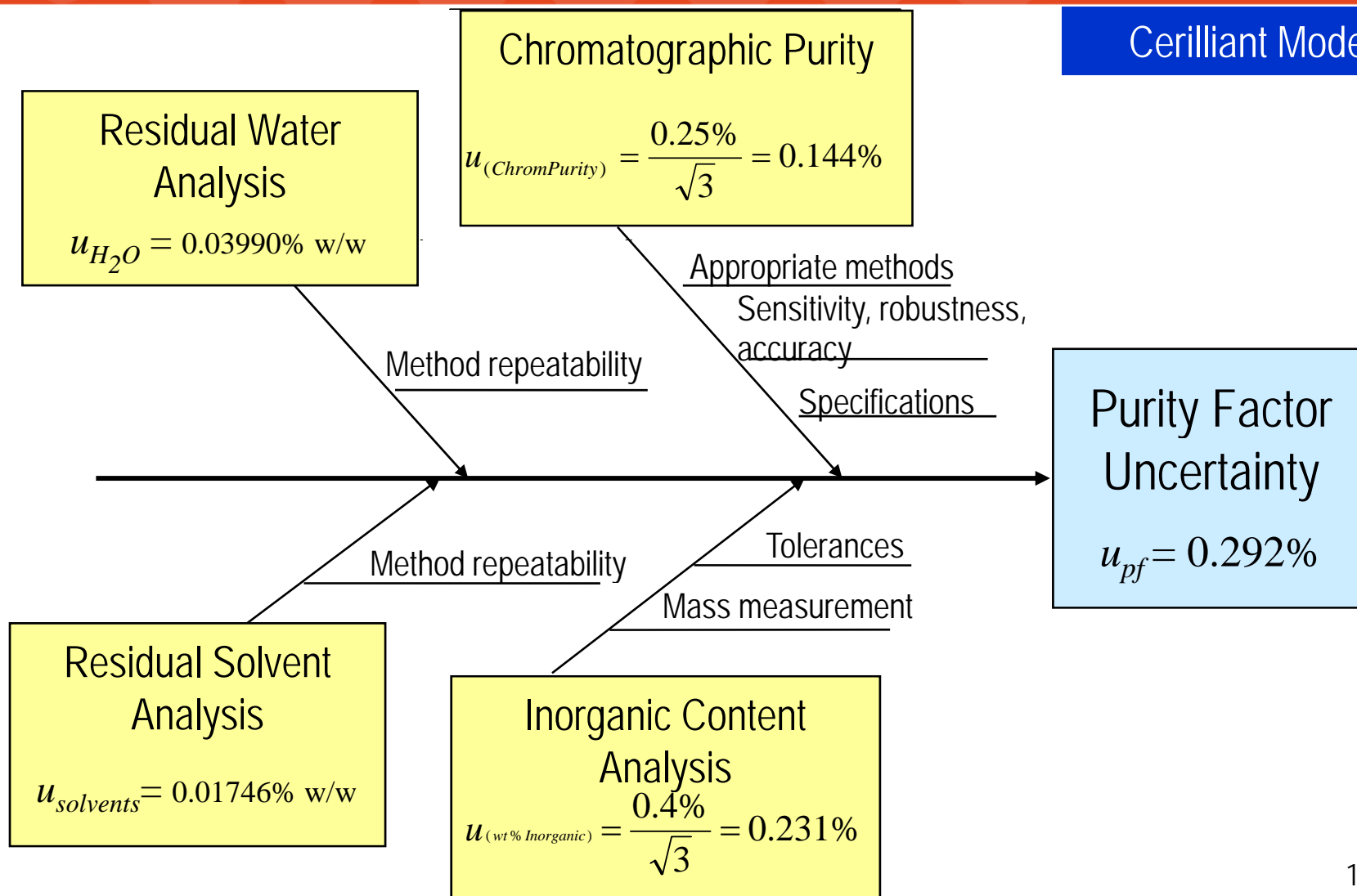
# Uncertainty of the Purity Factor

- Important to understand the uncertainty assigned to the purity factor
- Cerilliant approach
  - Followed ISO Guides 34, 35 and the Eurachem CITAC Guide in the development of uncertainty statements for the neat material purity factors
  - Combined uncertainty for the purity factor was calculated from the root sum square of the standard uncertainties of the individual components in a measurement equation
  - The process involved development of uncertainty budgets for each of the tests that contribute to the purity factor mass balance equation
- A similar approach would be required for assays and should include uncertainty of the primary reference standard certification, the standard curve preparation and the uncertainty of the analytical method



# Uncertainty of the Neat Material Purity Factor

Cerilliant Model



# Diluent/Solvent Considerations

Solvent compatibility is critical to long term stability

Reference  
Standard  
Design &  
Preparation

- Solubility
  - Does the target compound dissolve at the required concentration?
  - Precipitation can occur over time or at reduced storage temperatures
- Compatibility with analysis
  - Solvent interferences in the chromatogram: UV cut-off; baseline effects
  - Non-polar solvents not ideal with reverse phase HPLC
  - Water not compatible with GC
- Solvent stability
  - THF/ethers form peroxides
  - Acetonitrile oxidizes & forms acetic acid
- Compound stability in the solvent
  - Protic solvents – sirolimus (immunosuppressant) degrades in methanol over time but is stable in acetonitrile long term

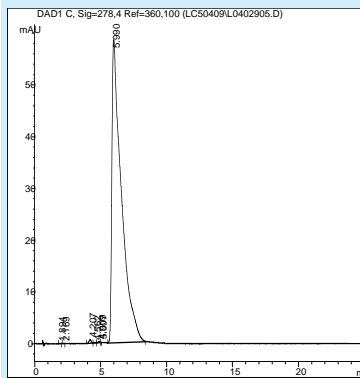


Purity, identity and traceability

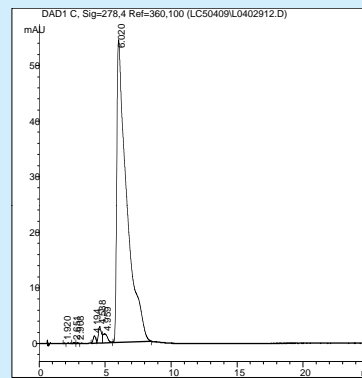
# Solution Development – Diluent’s Impact on Stability

## Example: Sirolimus

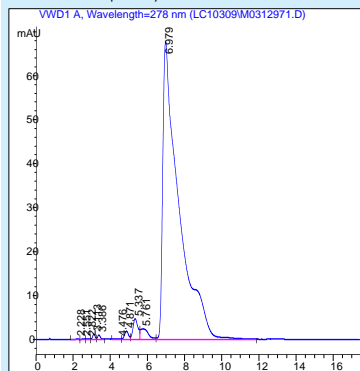
Rapid degradation in Methanol. Stable in Acetonitrile



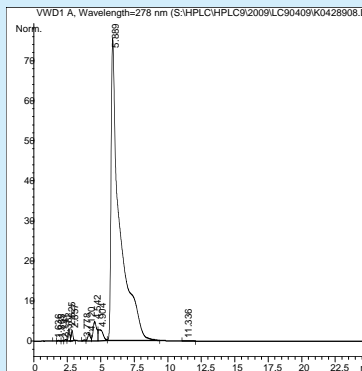
Freshly prepared solution  
Time 0  
Solution purity=99.6%



Ambient; 4 hours  
Solution purity: 96.4%

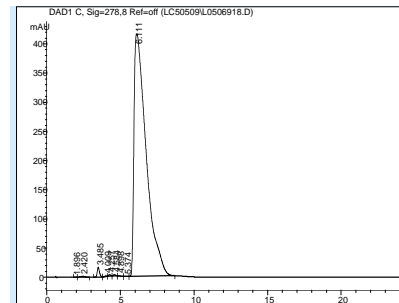


Freezer; 1 week  
Solution purity: 95.0%

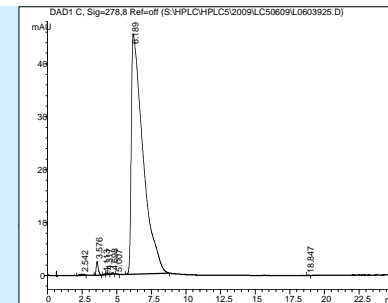


Freezer; 2 months  
Solution purity: 93.5%

Methanol



Time 0  
Solution Purity: 98.8%



Freezer; 4 weeks  
Solution Purity: 98.5%

Stability Assessment: Purity of Sirolimus in Acetonitrile

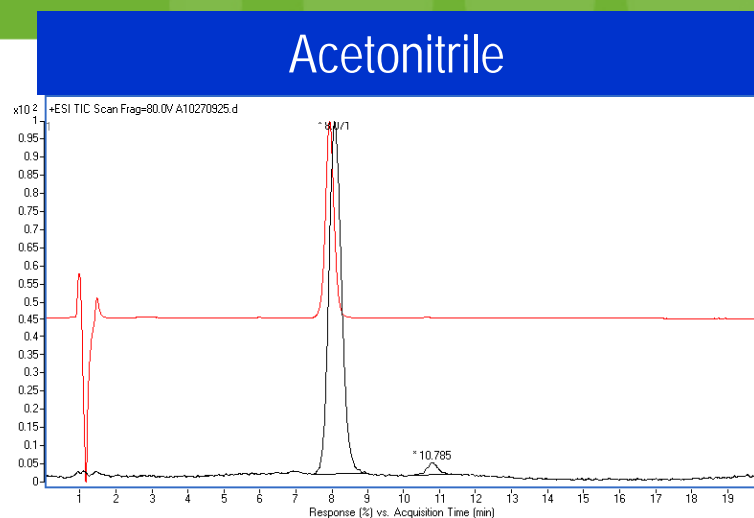
Testing Interval	Refrigerator	Freezer	Sub-freezer
Time 0	98.9		
1 Week	98.3	99.1	99.1
2 Weeks	96.6	98.7	98.2
4 Weeks	95.0	98.5	98.8
4 Months	-	-	99.0

- Stable during routine analysis under ambient conditions (3 hours).
- Degrades to 96% within 2 weeks in the refrigerator.

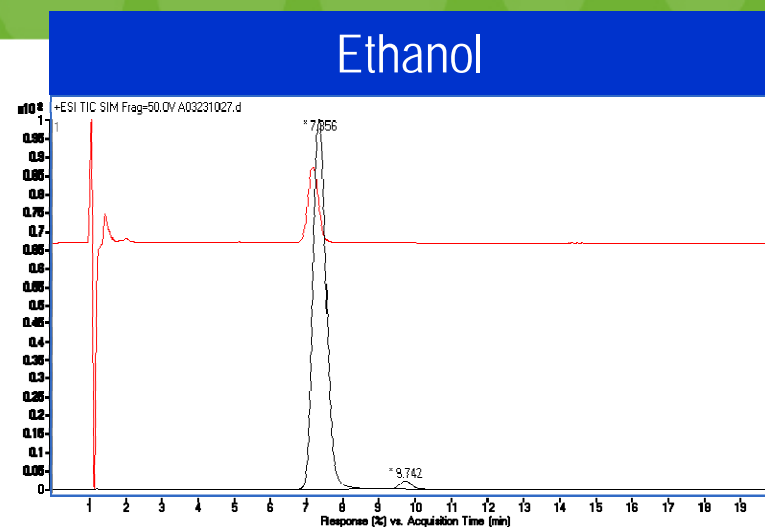
Acetonitrile



# Solution Development – Evaluation of Solvent & Storage Conditions Example: 25-Hydroxyvitamin-D3

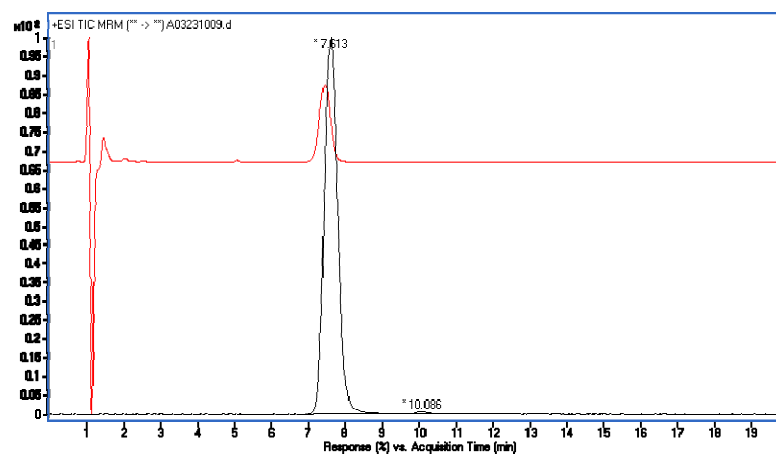


25-Hydroxyvitamin-D3, 100 ug/mL in acetonitrile. Freezer storage condition. Red is UV. Black is TIC.



25-Hydroxyvitamin-D3, 500 ng/mL in ethanol. Freezer 2 weeks.

HPLC and LCMS analysis of 25-Hydroxyvitamin-D3 in different solvents and storage conditions demonstrates improved performance of ethanol solution and at sub-freezer conditions



25-Hydroxyvitamin-D3, 500 ng/mL in ethanol. Sub-Freezer 2 weeks.



# Manufacturing

## Material / Equipment Needs

- Hygroscopicity
- Sensitivity to air or light
- Static potential
- Viscosity / volatility
- Room selection
- Environmental controls – glove box

## Gravimetric Preparation

- Weight/Weight
- Higher precision vs. volumetric
- Balance selection
- Batch size flexibility vs. volumetric
- Traceability with weigh tapes
- Repeatability

## Dispensing

- Equipment checks
- Line purge
- Tubing & syringes
- Sampling plans
- Segregation
- Evaporation control

**Robust manufacturing practices critical to  
accuracy & consistency**





# Solution Preparation - Weighing Accuracy

Balance environment & weighing technique and can significantly influence reference accuracy

Reference  
Standard  
Design &  
Preparation

- Improper balance selection can lead to high level of uncertainty
  - Qualified balances – calibrations traceable to NIST
  - Minimum weighings should be determined to achieve USP tolerances of NMT 0.1% relative error
  - 5, 6, & 7 place balances may be needed
  - Calibration verification procedures – weekly & pre-use



Importance of Balance Selection and Mass Uncertainty		
Sample Mass	Mass Uncertainty	
	5-place Balance	4-place Balance
1 mg	8.0%	45.0%
10 mg	0.80%	4.5%
100 mg	0.080%	0.45%
1000 mg	0.0080%	0.045%

Cerilliant Minimum Weighing Requirements				
Balance	7-place	6-place	5-place	4-place
Balance Resolution	0.0001 mg	0.001 mg	0.01 mg	0.1 mg
Minimum Weighing	1 mg	3 mg	20 mg	125 mg



# Solution Preparation - Weighing Accuracy

Reference  
Standard  
Design &  
Preparation

- Accuracy of weighing can be influenced by:
  - tongs vs. gloved hands
  - balance equilibration time
  - sample and solvent temperature
  - ambient temperature
  - vibrations
  - movement of air
- Hygroscopic materials handled in glove box
  - Inert atmosphere
  - Relative humidity  $\leq 5\%$
- Air currents, drafts around the balance, and additional vibrational forces on the pan can significantly affect balance repeatability.



For Example:

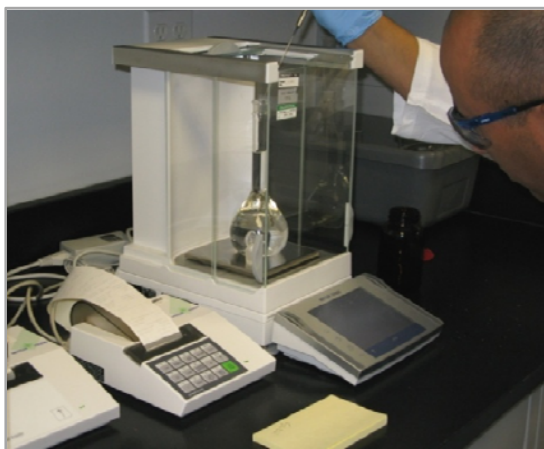
Cerilliant studies indicate that when gloved hands are used as opposed to tongs for handling sample vials, uncertainty of mass measurement increased approximately 10 fold.



# Solution Preparation - Gravimetric Approach

Gravimetric addition of diluent is accurate and reproducible

Reference  
Standard  
Design &  
Preparation



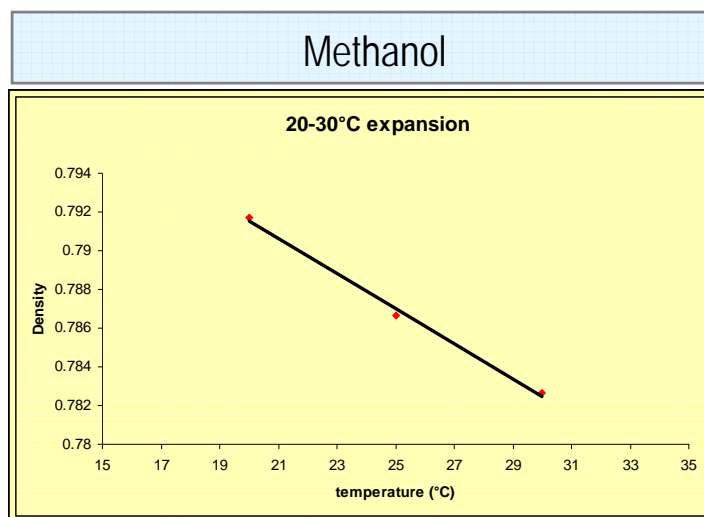
- Target solvent weight calculated from target volume by adjusting for density. Actual solvent weight can be calculated back into volume to report concentration in mg/mL
- **Ensures lot-to-lot consistency** – Measurement of volume by mass eliminates temperature dependence of flask accuracy and allows all solutions to be consistently prepared at the same chosen reference temperature.
- **Eliminates subjectivity** of the visual fill line in volumetric addition
- Mass measurements provide **traceability to SI units** of measure
- Weigh tapes provide an **audit trail**
- Allows accurate formulation of batch volumes well beyond the capacity of Class-A flasks



# Diluent Addition Gravimetric vs. Volumetric Methods

Included for reference

Thermal expansion will affect volumetric preparation of a solution but can be controlled by gravimetric addition of solvent



0.57% difference in concentration when prepared volumetrically at 20° vs. 25°C

Source: Handbook of Thermophysical and Thermochemical Data, CRC Press

Method	Batch Size		
	10 mL	100 mL	1000 mL
Volumetric flask standard error <small>Source: ASTM E288-03, Standard specification for laboratory glassware, 2003</small>	0.20%	0.08%	0.03%
Analytical balance uncertainty			
Balance Type	5 Place	5 Place	1 Place
Typical values per Mettler Toledo	0.001%	0.0001%	0.009%
Values established by Cerilliant based on typical values by Mettler and Cerilliant weighing SOPs	0.0036%	0.00125%	0.009%

Bench preparation of sample and reference on different days may create variability due to density change



# Dispensing & Packaging

Reference  
Standard  
Design &  
Preparation

- Solution standards dispensed into single use volumes and flame sealed under inert atmosphere
- Process controls
  - Line clearance, validated cleaning procedures and new tubing to prevent contamination
  - Batch homogeneity prior to dispensing (ensured with thorough mixing - stirring or sonicating)
  - Consistency of volume dispensed verified throughout dispensing
  - Material specific controls employed as needed: continuous chilling, continuous stirring, nitrogen blanket over bulk material
  - Flame sealed under inert atmosphere



Ampouled format sealed under argon protects from hygroscopicity, degradation, evaporation, & contamination - Promotes Stability



# Analytical Verification & Certification

Reference  
Standard  
Design &  
Preparation

## Accuracy

Comparison to a primary source or certified second source – curve/calibration standard

Comparison of multiple independent preparations

## Purity

Consistent with neat material

No contamination or degradation

## Homogeneity

Across the batch of ampoules/vials

## Consistency

Lot-to-lot consistency verified by comparing to the previous lot



Purity &  
Concentration are  
Analytically Verified

# Assessment of Solution Stability

Solution  
Stability

Enhanced stability from properly prepared ampouled solutions

- Expiration (shelf life) is established through real-time stability studies
- Solution purity and concentration are re-evaluated at multiple intervals
- Solutions properly designed and prepared can be stable for years vs. weeks/months



# Certified Solution Standards – Stability Examples

Solution  
Stability

Flame sealed under argon – ampouled solutions can provide long-term stability. 5+ years for many

Compound/Solvent	Age of Stability Sample	Purity		Analyzed Concentration	
		Original	Stability Interval	Original	Stability Interval
Fentanyl/methanol (ug/mL)	5 years	99.1%	99.9%	97.6	98.6
6-Acetylmorphine/acetonitrile (ug/mL)	5.5 years	98.0%	99.5%	98.8	97.8
Nortriptyline HCl/methanol (mg/mL)	5 years	99.8%	99.9%	0.995	0.970
Codeine/methanol (mg/mL)	5.5 years	99.9%	99.4%	0.989	0.995
Haloperidol/methanol (mg/mL)	6 years	99.8%	99.8%	0.988	0.970

Concentration acceptance criteria for each of the examples =  $\pm 3\%$  and incorporates variability of the analysis.

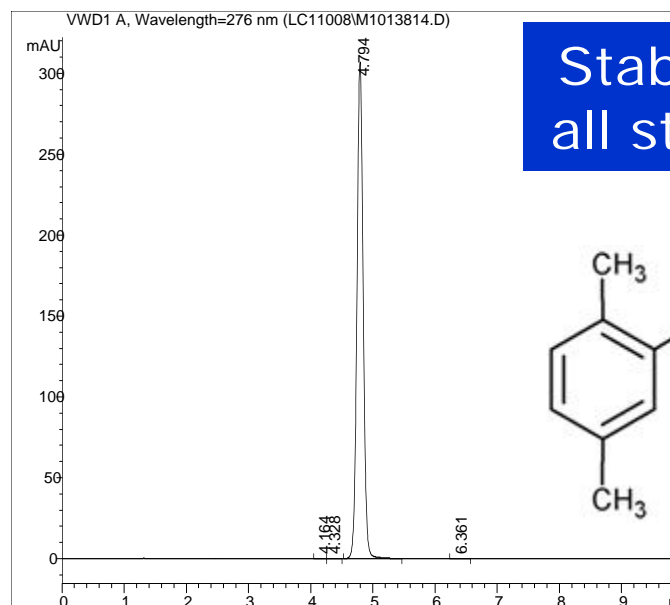




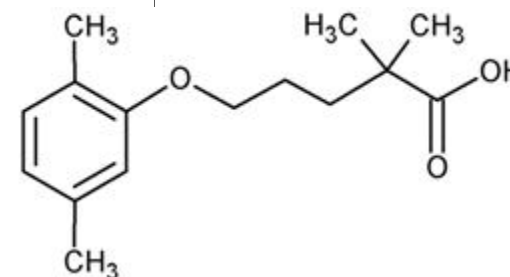
# Accelerated Stability Example: Gemfibrozil

Solution  
Stability

Storage Condition/ Test Interval	Gemfibrozil solution purity(%)
Initial (t=0)	99.9
Freezer (-1 to -25°C)	
1 week	99.9
2 weeks	99.9
4 weeks	99.9
Refrigerate (1 to 15°C)	
1 week	99.9
2 weeks	99.9
4 weeks	99.9
Ambient (18 to 30°C)	
1 week	99.9
2 weeks	99.9
4 weeks	99.9
Elevated (40°C)	
1 week	99.9
2 weeks	99.9
4 weeks	99.9



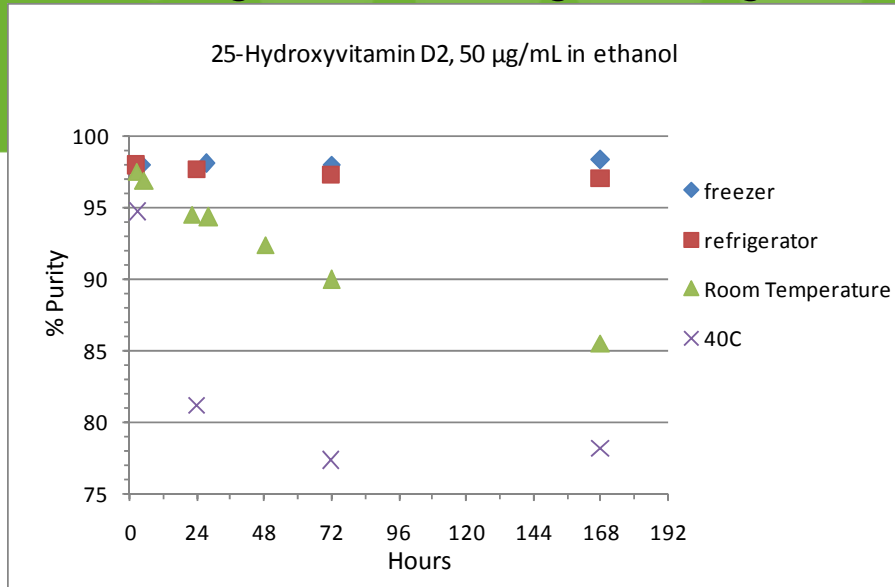
Stability exhibited at  
all storage conditions



Catalog Product: G-012, 1 mg/mL in methanol  
 Analysis Method: HPLC/UV  
 Column: Betasil Phenyl 4.6 x 150 mm  
 Mobile Phase: Acetonitrile::0.1% H<sub>3</sub>PO<sub>4</sub> in Water  
 Flow Rate: 1.0 mL/min  
 Wavelength: 276 nm  
 Calibration Curve: Linear Regression  
 Number of Points: 3  
 Linearity (r): 1.000

# Stability of 25-Hydroxyvitamin D2 & D3

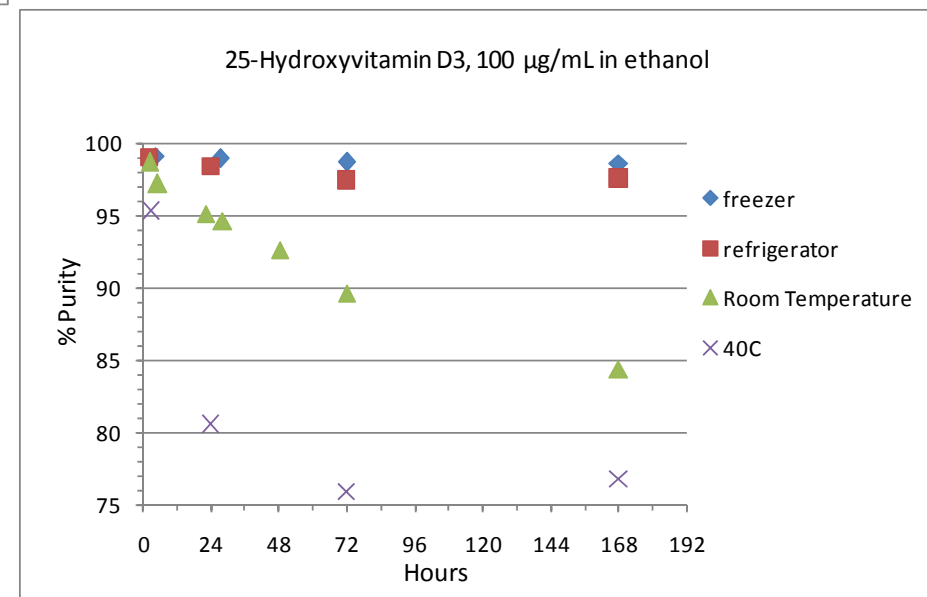
Solution  
Stability



## Accelerated stability

- Multiple temperatures
  - Freezer, refrigerate, and 40°C
- 2 hours to 7 days

Supports handling,  
shipping, and short & long  
term storage



# Stability of Anthocyanins

Solution  
Stability

Catalog Number	Name	Neat Material Purity	Solution Standard Purity time 0	Solution Standard Purity 4 years
C-069	Cyanidin-3-glucoside	94.6	95.2	93.1
C-070	Cyanidin-3-galactoside	94.6	93.4	82.3
P-057	Petunidin-3-glucoside	91.9	91.1	92.1
P-058	Peonidin-3-galactoside	92.4	90.2	88.6

Column:	Prodigy ODS, 4.6 x 250 mm		
Mobile Phase:	A:	50% H <sub>2</sub> O/48.5% CH <sub>3</sub> CN/1% CH <sub>3</sub> COOH/0.5% H <sub>3</sub> PO <sub>4</sub>	
	B:	0.5% H <sub>3</sub> PO <sub>4</sub>	
Gradient: Program:	Time (mins)	%A	%B
	0	10	90
	28	50	50
	32	75	25
	32.1	10	90
Flow Rate:	0.9 mL/min		
Wavelength:	520 nm		

Concentration: 500 µg/mL, 2% HCl in Methanol  
 Container: Amber glass ampoules under Argon  
 Storage: Freezer



# Uncertainty of the Gravimetric Preparation

Certification includes assessment of uncertainty of the reference preparation in compliance with ISO 17025

Certification & Uncertainty

## Neat Material Purity

- Uncertainty associated with all testing performed must be included
- Chromatographic purity
  - Residual water –
  - Residual solvent –
  - Residual inorganic content

## Mass Measurement

- Uncertainty associated with all weighing operations
- Specific to technique, equipment, scale & environment

## Solvent Addition

- Uncertainty associated with the method of solvent addition
- Consider solvent temperature, glassware or balance tolerances, solvent density



*Each process was examined in detail and uncertainty determined using a combination of experimental results and instrument and process tolerances.*

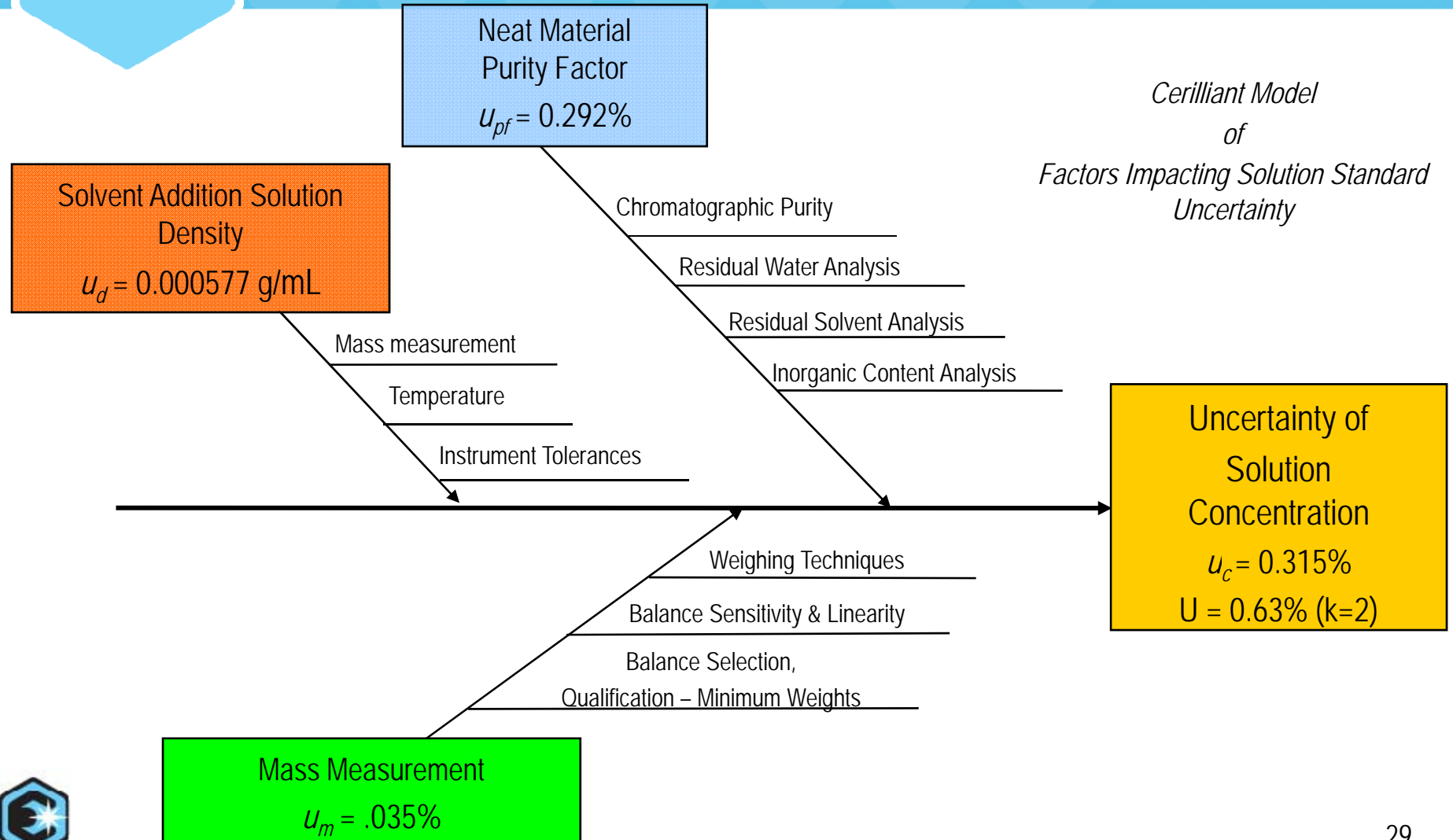
Confidential

# Certification & Assessment of Uncertainty

Certification & Uncertainty

Assessment of Uncertainty is a requirement for compliance with ISO 17025

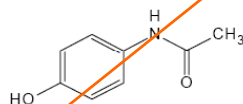
*Cerilliant Model  
of  
Factors Impacting Solution Standard  
Uncertainty*



# Certificate of Analysis

## Acetaminophen 4-Acetamidophenol

Cerilliant Quality  
ISO GUIDE 34  
ACCREDITED  
CERTIFICATE #818165  
ISO/IEC 17025  
ACCREDITED  
CERTIFICATE #1322  
ISO 9001:2000  
CERTIFIED  
VERSION 2014



**Catalog Number:** A-064  
**Solution Lot:** FN022009-02  
**Expiration Date:** February 2014  
**Solvent:** Methanol  
**Volume per Ampule:** Not less than 1 mL  
**Storage:** Protect from air and light, refrigerate or freeze.  
**Intended Use:** For laboratory use only. Not suitable for human or animal consumption.

- Expiration Date has been established through real time stability studies.
- Ampules are overfilled to ensure a minimum 1 mL volume fill. We advise laboratories to use measured volumes of this standard solution before diluting to the desired concentration.

Component	Chromatographic Purity	Concentration
Acetaminophen	99.9%	1.000 ± 0.006 mg/mL

- Uncertainty of the concentration is expressed as an expanded uncertainty in accordance with ISO 17025 and Guide 34 at the approximate 95% confidence interval using a coverage factor of  $k = 2$  and has been calculated by statistical analysis of our production system and incorporates uncertainty of the purity factor, material density, and mass.
- Concentration is corrected for chromatographic purity, residual water, residual solvents and residual inorganics.

### Solution Standard Verification and Homogeneity

Standard Solution	Lot Number	Verified Concentration (mg/mL)		%RSD - Homogeneity	
		Actual Results	Acceptance Criteria	Actual Results	Acceptance Criteria
New Lot	FN022009-02	0.998	± 3%	0.8	≤ 3%
Previous Lot	FN092707-01	0.996	± 3%	0.4	≤ 3%

- Concentration is verified through multiple analyses and is calculated as the average of multiple analyses compared to an independently prepared calibration curve.
- Homogeneity of the New Lot is ensured through rigorous production process controls statistically analyzed to evaluate risk and verified by analysis. The % RSD of samples pulled from across the lot demonstrate homogeneity of the New Lot.
- The % RSD of the Previous Lot represents variability of the analysis.

### Traceability

- Gravimetrically prepared using qualified balances calibrated semi-annually by Mettler Toledo using NIST traceable weights. Calibration verification performed weekly and prior to each use utilizing NIST traceable weights. Each balance has been assigned a minimum weighing by Mettler Toledo taking into consideration the balance and installed environmental conditions to ensure weighing complies with USP tolerances of no more than 0.1% relative error.
- Concentration is verified against an independently prepared 4-point calibration curve gravimetrically prepared using balances calibrated to NIST

Cerilliant certifies that this standard meets the specifications stated in this certificate and warrants this product to meet the stated acceptance criteria through the expiration/retest date.



*Lara Sparks*  
Lara Sparks, Quality Assurance Director

March 18, 2009  
Date

Solution Purity is verified chromatographically post ampouling to ensure no degradation or contamination

Certification of the Solution Standard

Concentration & Uncertainty of the gravimetric preparation expressed as:  
 $1.000 \pm 0.0006$  mg/mL

Description of Cerilliant's Uncertainty value & confidence interval:  
"Uncertainty of the concentration is expressed as an expanded uncertainty in accordance with ISO 17025 and Guide 34 at the approximate 95% confidence interval using a coverage factor of  $k = 2$  and has been calculated by statistical analysis of our production system and incorporates uncertainty of the purity factor, material density, and mass".

Analytical Verification of Concentration & Homogeneity  
Gravimetrically prepared concentration is verified analytically. Acceptance criteria incorporates variability of the analysis. Homogeneity is verified analytically by analyzing ampoules pulled from across the lot.

Traceability Statement describing traceability to SI units  
"Gravimetrically prepared using qualified balances calibrated semi-annually by Mettler Toledo using NIST traceable weights. Calibration verification performed weekly and prior to each use utilizing NIST traceable weights. Each balance has been assigned a minimum weighing by Mettler Toledo taking into consideration the balance and installed environmental conditions to ensure weighing complies with USP tolerances of no more than 0.1% relative error".

# What Makes a Good Reference Material?

- Fully characterized high purity neat materials and high purity diluents
  - Careful assignment of chromatographic purity by multiple methods
  - Analysis of residual impurities including water, inorganics and solvent
- Validated preparation process ensuring consistency and accuracy of solution concentration, purity & stability
- Qualified balances in their installed state with minimum weighings set for <0.1% relative error
- Gravimetric approach in solvent addition
- Traceability to SI units
- Uncertainty statement encompassing all aspects of standard preparation from neat material characterization to solution preparation.
- Prepared in a stable ampouled format
- Preparation and certification by an ISO Guide 34 and ISO 17025 accredited laboratory



Pre-made Ampouled Certified Solution Standards - A significant advantage over neat reference materials



**Cerilliant**<sup>®</sup>  
Analytical Reference Standards

For information on products and  
services stop by Booth 208



science, smarter.<sup>®</sup>

Cerilliant Quality

**ISO GUIDE 34**  
CERTIFICATE AR1353

**ISO/IEC 17025**  
CERTIFICATE AT1352

**ISO 9001:2008**  
CERTIFICATE 3854