

Reference neutron radiations — Characteristics and methods of production of simulated workplace neutron fields

ICS 13.280

National foreword

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**Reference neutron radiations —
Characteristics and methods of production
of simulated workplace neutron fields**

*Rayonnements neutroniques de référence — Caractéristiques et méthodes
de production de champs de neutrons simulant ceux de postes de travail*



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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.

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 3.

Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this International Standard may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

International Standard ISO 12789 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 85, *Nuclear energy*, Subcommittee SC 2, *Radiation protection*. It is based on data published by the International Commission on Radiological Protection and by the International Commission on Radiation Units and Measurements, as well as on several scientific and technological investigations carried out by Subcommittee members.

Annex A of this International Standard is for information only.

Introduction

ISO 8529-1, ISO 8529-2 and ISO 8529-3 deal with the production, characterization and use of neutron fields for the calibration of personal dosimeters and area survey meters. These standards describe reference radiations with neutron energy spectra that are well defined and well suited for use in the calibration laboratory. However, the neutron spectra commonly encountered in routine radiation protection situations are, in many cases, quite different from those produced by the sources specified in the ISO standards. Since personal neutron dosimeters, and to a lesser extent survey meters, are generally quite energy-dependent in their dose equivalent response, it may not be possible to achieve an appropriate calibration for a device that is to be used in a workplace where the neutron energy spectrum and angular distribution differ significantly from those of the reference radiation used for calibration. ISO 8529-1 describes four radionuclide-based neutron reference radiations in detail. This International Standard includes the specification of neutron reference radiations that were developed to closely resemble radiations that are encountered in practice. Specific examples of simulated workplace neutron source facilities are included in annex A, for illustration.

Reference neutron radiations — Characteristics and methods of production of simulated workplace neutron fields

1 Scope

This International Standard gives guidance for producing and characterizing simulated workplace neutron fields that are to be used for calibrating neutron-measuring devices for radiation protection purposes. Both calculational and spectrometric measurement methods are discussed. Neutron energies in these reference fields range from approximately thermal neutron energies to several hundred GeV. The methods of production and the monitoring techniques for the various types of neutron fields are discussed, and the methods of evaluating and reporting uncertainties for these fields are also given.

2 Normative references

The following normative documents contain provisions which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this International Standard. For dated references, subsequent amendments to, or revisions of, any of these publications do not apply. However, parties to agreements based on this International Standard are encouraged to investigate the possibility of applying the most recent editions of the normative documents indicated below. For undated references, the latest edition of the normative document referred to applies. Members of ISO and IEC maintain registers of currently valid International Standards.

ISO 8529-1:—¹⁾, *Reference neutron radiations — Part 1: Characteristics and methods of production*.

ISO 8529-2:2000, *Reference neutron radiations — Part 2: Calibration fundamentals of radiation protection devices related to the basic quantities characterizing the radiation field*.

ISO 8529-3:1998, *Reference neutron radiations — Part 3: Calibration of area and personal dosimeters and determination of response as a function of energy and angle of incidence*.

Guide to the expression of uncertainty in measurement, 1993, BIPM, IEC, IFCC, ISO, IUPAC, IUPAP, OIML.

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this International Standard, the following terms and definitions apply.

NOTE 1 The definitions follow the recommendations of ICRU Report 51^[8] and ICRU Report 33^[4].

NOTE 2 Multiples and submultiples of SI units are used throughout this International Standard.

1) To be published.

3.1 neutron fluence

Φ
dN by da, where dN is the number of neutrons incident on a sphere of cross-sectional area da:

$$\Phi = \frac{dN}{da}$$

The unit of the neutron fluence is m⁻².

3.2 neutron fluence rate

ϕ
dΦ by dt, where dΦ is the increment of neutron fluence in the time interval dt:

$$\phi = \frac{d\Phi}{dt} = \frac{d^2N}{da dt}$$

NOTE The unit of neutron fluence rate is m⁻²·s⁻¹.

3.3 spectral distribution of the neutron fluence

Φ_E
dΦ by dE, where dΦ is the increment of neutron fluence in the energy interval between E and E + dE:

$$\Phi_E = \frac{d\Phi}{dE}$$

NOTE The unit of the spectral distribution of the neutron fluence is J⁻¹·m⁻².

3.4 ambient dose equivalent

$H^*(d)$
<at a point in a radiation field> the dose equivalent at a point in a radiation field that would be produced by the corresponding expanded and aligned field in the ICRU sphere at a depth d on the radius opposing the direction of the aligned field

NOTE 1 For strongly penetrating radiation, a depth of 10 mm is currently recommended.

NOTE 2 The unit of ambient dose equivalent is J·kg⁻¹ with the special name of sievert (Sv).

3.5 personal dose equivalent

$H_p(d)$
the dose equivalent in soft tissue at an appropriate depth d below a specified point on the body

NOTE 1 For strongly penetrating radiation, a depth of 10 mm is currently recommended.

NOTE 2 The unit of personal dose equivalent is J·kg⁻¹ with the special name of sievert (Sv).

NOTE 3 ICRU Report 39^[5] defines the mass composition of soft tissue as: 76,2 % O; 10,1 % H; 11,1 % C; 2,6 % N.

NOTE 4 In ICRU Report 47^[7], the ICRU has considered the definition of the personal dose equivalent to include the dose equivalent at a depth d in a phantom having the composition of ICRU tissue. Then, $H_p(10)$ for the calibration of personal dosimeters is the dose equivalent at a depth of 10 mm in a phantom composed of ICRU tissue, but of the size and shape of the phantom used for calibration (a 30 cm × 30 cm × 15 cm parallelepiped).

3.6

neutron-fluence to dose-equivalent conversion coefficient

h_{Φ}

dose equivalent divided by neutron fluence

$$h_{\Phi} = \frac{H}{\Phi}$$

NOTE 1 The unit of the neutron-fluence to dose-equivalent conversion coefficient is Sv·m².

NOTE 2 Any statement of a fluence to dose-equivalent conversion coefficient requires the statement of the type of dose equivalent, e.g. ambient or personal dose equivalent.

4 Simulated workplace neutron fields

The neutron fluence spectra for a number of neutron fields have been available for some time^[9, 10]. Neutron fluence spectra, measured at workplaces and in simulated workplace calibration fields, are included in a catalogue resulting from work sponsored by the European Commission^[11]. This catalogue also contains response functions for common detectors and dosimeters in addition to fluence to dose-equivalent conversion coefficients.

Measurements in nuclear power plants^[12-15], in the vicinity of transport casks containing spent fuel elements^[14, 15], and in factories producing radionuclide neutron sources^[15, 16] and reprocessing fuel elements^[17] have demonstrated that neutron energy spectra in such environments can be described as a superposition of the following components: a high-energy component representing the uncollided neutrons, a scattered component with an approximately $1/E_n$ dependence (where E_n is the neutron energy), and a thermal-neutron component. For these types of spectra, the design of simulated workplace neutron fields requires a knowledge and consideration of the components mentioned above because the relative fractions of these components can be very different in different situations.

Other radiation environments may contain neutrons having much higher energies. For example, neutrons with energies greater than 10 MeV, contributing 30 % to 50 % of the ambient dose equivalent and personal dose equivalent, have been found in the vicinity of high-energy particle accelerators^[18, 19] and in aircraft flying at altitudes of 10 km to 15 km^[20].

Because of the characteristics of available neutron dosimeters and survey meters, it is difficult to obtain proper measurements in the workplace based on the calibration sources specified in ISO 8529-1 when the workplace spectrum differs markedly from the calibration source spectrum. This can result in an inaccurate estimate of dose equivalent when such devices are used. At least two possibilities exist for improving the situation. First, the neutron spectrum of the workplace field can be measured, and a correction factor calculated to normalize the energy-dependent response of the detector. Secondly, a facility can be constructed to produce a neutron field that simulates the energy spectrum found in the workplace. When this field has been properly characterized, it can be used for the direct calibration of personal dosimeters and survey meters. This latter approach has been employed at a number of laboratories, and this International Standard gives guidance for producing and characterizing simulated workplace neutron spectra for the purpose of calibrating dosimeters and survey meters.

The establishment of simulated workplace neutron spectra in the calibration laboratory is necessary because the laboratory setting offers the possibility of controlling most influence quantities. The environmental parameters, such as temperature and humidity, can be maintained at a constant level. The materials used in the construction of the various pieces of equipment can also be specified and controlled in the laboratory. The general layout as well as the sources of neutron scatter can also be controlled, or at least maintained constant, in the calibration laboratory.

Simulated workplace neutron spectra that have been established in the calibration laboratory can be used to study the effects of changes in the neutron spectrum on the responses of personal dosimeters and survey meters. Dosimeter algorithms may also be tested with such sources used in conjunction with the other radionuclide sources recommended in ISO 8529-1. For these reasons, simulated workplace neutron fields should be provided for the investigation and calibration of neutron personal dosimeters and survey meters that are used in any of the workplace locations mentioned above.