

MEMORANDUM

State of Alaska

Department of Environmental Conservation
Division of Air and Water Quality - Air Quality Maintenance

TO: John F. Kuterbach, Program Manager

DATE: October 27, 2000

THRU: Bill MacClarence, Operating Permits Supervisor

FROM: Matt Wilkinson
Air Quality Maintenance

SUBJECT: Maximum SO₂ Concentration
from the combustion of natural
gas

EPA in their Title V permit reviews is requiring the department to demonstrate that limiting hydrogen sulfide content of the natural gas to 4000 ppmv will ensure compliance with our 500 ppmv SO₂ limit. This memorandum sets forth engineering calculations which demonstrate that combustion of natural gas containing hydrogen sulfide up to 4000 ppmv will always comply with the 500 ppmv SO₂ limit regardless of the source involved. I recommend that we reference these calculations in future "statements of basis" that we send to EPA with our draft operating permits.

Summary

This engineering calculation examined the stoichiometric combustion of natural gas and calculated the maximum sulfur dioxide content of the flue gases. The maximum sulfur dioxide concentration will result from the combustion of pure methane, whereas heavier hydrocarbons (e.g. ethane or propane) with the same volumetric hydrogen sulfide concentration will result in a lower concentration of sulfur dioxide. Typically, combustion of 4000-ppmv-hydrogen sulfide natural gas can produce up to 470 ppmv SO₂ in the flue gas and will never exceed the 500ppm limit.

I conclude that combustion of 4000-ppmv-hydrogen-sulfide natural gas with air will always comply with the 500ppmv emission limit.

Assumptions

All constituents of the fuel are burned proportionally.

Any excess air typical of combustion would tend to dilute the SO₂ concentration of the flue gas, therefore only theoretical air is considered.

Natural gas is composed of carbon, hydrogen, sulfur, and negligible amounts of water and ash.

Ignore the water because the standard is a dry standard and the water will drop out of any calculations.

The heavier hydrocarbons have a higher weight percent of hydrocarbons for a given volumetric hydrogen sulfide concentration that dilutes the SO₂ concentration of the flue gas, therefore the natural gas is entirely made up of methane—the lightest hydrocarbon.

By Dalton's Law and by the Ideal Gas Law, the molar fraction is equal to the volume fraction. Therefore, for 100 moles of 4000-ppmv-hydrogen sulfide natural gas there are $100 \times (4,000 / 1,000,000) = 0.4$ moles of hydrogen sulfide and there are $100 - 0.4 = 99.6$ moles of hydrocarbons.

By definition, the formula showing the composition of hydrocarbons is C_mH_n. Each mole of hydrocarbon supplies "m" moles C and supplies "n"/2 moles H₂. Each mole of hydrogen sulfide supplies one mole S and one mole H₂.

Therefore, the following equations can be used for 100 moles of a natural gas composed of 4000-ppmv hydrogen sulfide and only of one type of hydrocarbon:

$$\text{moles C} = 99.6 \times m$$

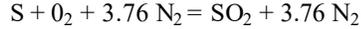
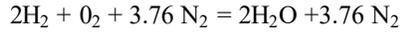
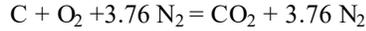
$$\text{moles H}_2 = (99.6 \times n / 2) + 0.4$$

moles S = 0.4

Using normal air for combustion (79% N₂ and 21% O₂):

For each lb-mole of Oxygen in Air, there are 3.76 lb-mole Nitrogen (1 lb-mole O₂) = (0.79/0.21) = 3.76 lb-mole N₂

The stoichiometric equations are:



To calculate the dry exhaust gases (CO₂, N₂, SO₂) the following equations are used:

moles CO₂ = moles C

moles N₂ = (3.76 X moles C) + (1.88 X moles H₂) + (3.76 X moles S)

moles SO₂ = moles S

Then, by Avogadro's Law and the definition of mole:

ppmv SO₂ = 1,000,000 x [moles SO₂/(moles CO₂ + moles N₂ + moles SO₂)]

Results

Using 100 moles of fuel (i.e. 99.6 moles of hydrocarbon and 0.4 moles of hydrogen sulfide) as a basis, we examined the following three cases:

Case	Moles of Fuel		
	Carbon	Hydrogen	Sulfur
Methane = CH ₄	99.6	199.6	0.4
Ethane = C ₂ H ₆	199.2	299.2	0.4
Propane = C ₃ H ₈	298.8	398.8	0.4

	Methane	Ethane	Propane
moles CO ₂	99.6	199.2	298.8
moles N ₂	751.2	1313.0	1874.7
moles SO ₂	0.4	0.4	0.4
Total Dry Moles	851.2	1512.6	2173.9
ppmv SO ₂	470	264	184

Conclusion

The above calculations show that 4000-ppmv-hydrogen-sulfide natural gas combusted with air will always comply with the 500 ppmv SO₂ limit. The calculations use the conservative assumptions of complete combustion and no excess air. The real-world includes partial combustion and excess air, both of which would tend to dilute the SO₂ concentration in the exhaust effluent.

The equations above can be used as an initial screening for other gaseous petroleum fuels even with a higher hydrogen sulfide content.

If you agree this memorandum has value, please share it with the rest of the AQM staff.