

## Desorption of PCBs from Soil Using the HTD

The presence of pollutants such as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in soil is a serious environmental problem. Frequently it is desirable to obtain a rapid measurement of the level of contaminants present in order to discern the sample size required for more elaborate testing. For these screening tests, a rapid and reliable method of removing and analyzing the volatiles and semivolatiles present in soil is required. The use of thermal desorption techniques, in which the sample material is desorbed directly to a gas chromatograph, simplifies the testing procedure by eliminating both solvent extraction and sample sparging.

To desorb the volatiles and semivolatiles from soil quantifiably, the thermal desorption system used must rapidly heat the entire soil sample in a controlled manner, so that no portion overheats, which could result in breakdown products, and no cold spots remain, which would make the analysis unreliable. The *CDS Analytical High Temperature Desorber (HTD)* is controlled by the CDS Analytical Pyroprobe temperature controller using the same resistive heating system as the Pyroprobe. Sample sizes up to desired temperature up to 1400 C. Using the Pyroprobe 2000 control system, the steps.

Samples for the HTD are placed into a quartz tube 25 mm in length and 6 mm inside diameter. This tube is then inserted into the HTD controlled by the Pyroprobe. The sample coil is

Figure 1

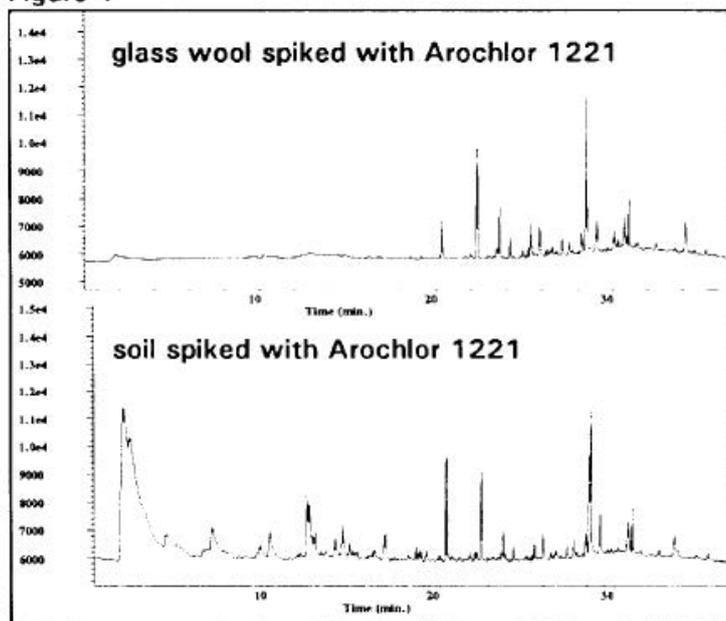
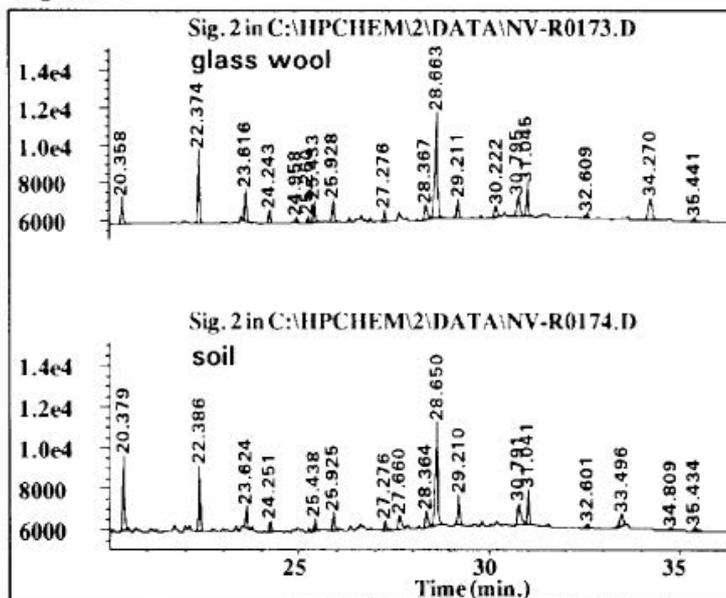


Figure 2



placed into the GC carrier gas stream in a heated interface, then rapidly heated to desorb the volatile and semivolatile contaminants. Starting the analysis with a temperature burst to 1000 C for a few seconds facilitates heating the interior of the soil sample.

In these experiments, a solution of Arochlor 1221 in methanol was placed onto soil samples and allowed to sit overnight to evaporate the solvent. The samples were desorbed in the HTD using the conditions given below.

Figure 1 compares the GC/FID chromatogram of the desorption of Arochlor 1221 from an inert substrate (glass wool) with the same sample from soil. The glass wool or 30 mg soil was spiked with Arochlor at 27 ppm. The other substances present in the chromatogram of the sample desorbed from soil are organic materials found in the soil.

Because of the levels of other contaminants present in soil samples, the peak assignments can be questionable. Figure 2 compares the section of the two chromatograms found in Figure 1 that encompasses the retention times of Arochlor 1221. The perfect match of times for most of the peaks indicates that this section of the chromatogram from soil is indeed caused by Arochlor. A comparison of the area counts of these peaks shows that 98% of the Arochlor was desorbed from the soil under these conditions.

## Experimental Conditions

### Desorption

Instrument: CDS Analytical HTD

Program:

	Interface	Probe
Start	150 C	0
Step 1	300 C at 60 C/min hold 10 min	1000 Cat 20 C/mSec hold 3 sec
Step 2		450 Cat 20 C/sec hold 3 min

### Gas Chromatography

Instrument: HP 5890 GC

Column: 30 m x 0.53 mm SE-54

Carrier: Helium at 10 ml/min

Program: 50 C, 4 min; 10 C/min  
to 280 C.

Detector: FID

Analyte Recovery from Soil: 98%

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### Headquarters

JSB International  
Tramstraat 15  
5611 CM Eindhoven  
T +31 (0) 40 251 47 53  
F +31 (0) 40 251 47 58

Zoex Europe  
Tramstraat 15  
5611 CM Eindhoven  
T +31 (0) 40 257 39 72  
F +31 (0) 40 251 47 58

### Sales and Service

Netherlands  
Apolloweg 2B  
8239 DA Lelystad  
T +31 (0) 320 87 00 18  
F +31 (0) 320 87 00 19

Belgium  
Grensstraat 7  
Box 3 1831 Diegem  
T +32 (0) 2 721 92 11  
F +32 (0) 2 720 76 22

Germany  
Max-Planck-Strasse 4  
D-47475 Kamp-Lintfort  
T +49 (0) 28 42 9280 799  
F +49 (0) 28 42 9732 638

UK & Ireland  
Cedar Court,  
Grove Park Business Est.  
White Waltham, Maidenhead  
Berks, SL6 3LW  
T +44 (0) 16 288 220 48  
F +44 (0) 70 394 006 78

[info@go-jsb.com](mailto:info@go-jsb.com)  
[www.go-jsb.com](http://www.go-jsb.com)

