

Ion Selective Electrodes



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|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Ammonium Ion-Selective Electrode | (Order Code NH4-BTA or NH4-DIN) |
| Calcium Ion-Selective Electrode | (Order Code CA-BTA or CA-DIN) |
| Chloride Ion-Selective Electrode | (Order Code CL-BTA or CL-DIN) |
| Nitrate Ion-Selective Electrode | (Order Code NO3-BTA or NO3-DIN) |

The Vernier Ion-Selective Electrodes can be used to measure the concentration of a specific ion in aqueous samples. The species available include Nitrate (NO_3^-), Chloride (Cl^-), Calcium (Ca^{2+}), and Ammonium (NH_4^+). They connect to any of the Vernier interfaces (Vernier LabPro[®], Go! Link[®], ULI, or Serial Box Interface), EasyLink[®], as well as the Texas Instruments or CBL 2[™]. These electrodes can be used to perform a wide variety of tests or planned experiments, including the following:

- Water Hardness (Calcium ISE): Calcium is very useful as an indicator of hardness of water in freshwater samples. Even though water hardness is also due to other ions (Mg^{2+} and Fe^{3+}), because Ca^{2+} is normally the predominate hardness ion, hardness as Ca^{2+} is a reliable indicator of water hardness.
- Nitrate Monitoring (Nitrate ISE): Students can use this ISE to qualitatively determine the concentration of the nitrate ion, NO_3^- , in freshwater samples. This ion may appear in samples due to waste or fertilizer runoff. Increased levels of nitrate may also be present in waste from plants or in water samples with animal decay.
- Salinity and Chloride Monitoring in Seawater (Chloride ISE): Use this ISE to determine the concentration of chloride ion, Cl^- , or salinity levels in saltwater samples. The wide range of this electrode allows you to measure salinity (as sodium chloride), chloride concentration, seawater, or brackish water samples.
- Monitoring Streams for Ammonium (Ammonium ISE): Ammonium (NH_4^+) is often present as a result of water runoff from fertilized fields. This ISE gives you an easy way to check for this environmentally important ion.

NOTE: This product is to be used for educational purposes only. It is not appropriate for industrial, medical, research, or commercial applications.

Inventory of Items Included with the ISE

- One Ion-Selective Electrode (Nitrate, Calcium, Chloride, or Ammonium)¹.
- One bottle of High Standard solution with MSDS sheet (1000 mg/L for Ca^{2+} and Cl^- , or 100 mg/L for NO_3^- and NH_4^+).

¹ If the Ion-Selective Electrode has a BNC connector on it, there should also be an ISE Amplifier box included. If the ISE has a BTA or 5-pin DIN connector, the amplifier is built into the handle of the ISE and will not be a separate item.

- One bottle of Low Standard solution with MSDS sheet (10 mg/L for Ca^{2+} and Cl^- , or 1 mg/L for NO_3^- and NH_4^+).
- One ISE Soaking Bottle (empty bottle with insertion cap).

Using the Ion-Selective Electrode with a Computer

The ISE can be used with a computer and any of the following lab interfaces: Vernier LabPro, Go! Link, Universal Lab Interface (ULI), or Serial Box Interface. Here is the general procedure to follow when using the Ion-Selective Electrode with a computer:

Preparing the ISE for Use:

1. The Ion-Selective Electrode (ISE) must be soaked in the High Standard solution (included with the ISE) for approximately 30 minutes. **Important:** Make sure the ISE is not resting on the bottom of the container, and that the small white reference contacts are immersed. Make sure no air bubbles are trapped below the ISE.
2. If the ISE needs to be transported to the field during the soaking process, use the Short-Term ISE Soaking Bottle. Remove the cap from the bottle and fill it 3/4-full with High Standard. Slide the bottle's cap onto the ISE, insert it into the bottle, and tighten. **Important:** Do not leave the ISE soaking for more than 24 hours. Long-term storage should be in the Long-Term ISE Storage Bottle.
3. Connect the ISE to the appropriate port on the interface.
4. Start the Logger Pro[®] or Logger Lite[®] software.
5. The program will automatically identify the ISE, and you are ready to calibrate.²

Calibrating the ISE

1. Choose Calibrate from the Experiment menu and then click .
2. High Standard Calibration Point: The ISE should still be soaking in the High Standard. Enter the concentration value of the High Standard (e.g., 100 for 100 mg/L or 1000 for 1000 mg/L) in the edit box.
3. When the displayed voltage reading for Reading 1 stabilizes (~ 1 minute), click .
4. Low Standard Calibration Point: Remove the ISE from the High Standard, rinse well with distilled water from a wash bottle, and gently blot dry with a paper towel or lab wipe. Place the electrode into the Low Standard (included with your ISE). **Important:** Make sure the ISE is not resting on the bottom of the container, and that the small white reference contacts are immersed. Make sure no air bubbles are trapped below the ISE.
5. Enter the concentration value of the Low Standard (e.g., 1 for 1 mg/L or 10 for 10 mg/L). After 60 seconds, click and then .
6. After calibrating, rinse off the end of the ISE, and blot it dry with a paper towel or lab wipe.
7. Insert the tip of the ISE into the sample to be tested. **Important:** Make sure the ISE is not resting on the bottom of the container, and that the small white reference

² If your system does not support auto-ID, open an experiment file in Logger Pro, and you are ready to collect data.

contacts are immersed. Make sure no air bubbles are trapped below the ISE. **Note:** Do not completely submerge the sensor. The handle is not waterproof.

8. Hold the ISE still for 60 seconds and record the displayed reading.

Using the ISE with TI Graphing Calculators

This sensor can be used with a TI graphing calculator and any of the following lab interfaces: LabPro, CBL 2, and Vernier EasyLink. Here is the general procedure to follow when using the ISE with a graphing calculator:

1. The Ion-Selective Electrode (ISE) must be soaked in the High Standard solution (included with the ISE) for approximately 30 minutes. **Important:** Make sure the ISE is not resting on the bottom of the container, and that the small white reference contacts are immersed. Make sure no air bubbles are trapped below the ISE.
2. If the ISE needs to be transported to the field during the soaking process, use the Short-Term ISE Soaking Bottle. Remove the cap from the bottle and fill it full with High Standard. Slide the bottle's cap onto the ISE, insert it into the bottle, and tighten. Important: Do not leave the ISE soaking for more than 24 hours. Long-term storage should be in the Long-Term ISE Storage Bottle.
3. Connect the data-collection interface to the graphing calculator.
4. Connect the ISE to any of the analog ports on the interface or to EasyLink.
5. Start the EasyData or DataMate App—the application you choose to use depends on your calculator and interface. See the chart for more information.

| Calculator | Interface | Data Collection Program |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| TI-84 Plus Family | EasyLink LabPro or CBL 2 | EasyData EasyData (recommended) or DataMate |
| TI-83 Plus Family | LabPro or CBL 2 | EasyData (recommended) or DataMate |
| All Other (TI-73, TI-83, TI-86, TI-85, TI-82 and Voyage 200) | LabPro or CBL 2 | DataMate |

6. The ISE will be identified automatically, and you are ready to calibrate. If the data-collection application is not on your calculator, use the following instructions to load it onto the calculator.

- **EasyData App**—This program may already be installed on your calculator. Check to see that it is EasyData version 2.0 or newer. If it is not installed or is an older version, it can be downloaded to your computer from the Vernier web site, www.vernier.com/easy/easydata.html. It can then be transferred from the computer to the calculator using TI-Connect and a TI unit-to-computer cable or TI-GRAPH LINK cable. See the Vernier web site, www.vernier.com/calc/software/index.html for more information on the App and Program Transfer Guidebook.
- **DataMate program**—This program can be transferred directly from LabPro or CBL 2 to the TI graphing calculator. Use the calculator-to-calculator link cable to connect the two devices. Put the calculator into Receive mode, and then press the Transfer button on the interface.

- Start the data-collection program, and you are ready to calibrate.

Using the ISE with a Palm Powered™ device

1. Connect the Palm Powered handheld, LabPro, and the ISE.
2. Start Data Pro.
3. Tap New, or choose New from the Data Pro menu. Tap New again. The ISE will be identified automatically.
4. You are now ready to calibrate.

Calibrating the ISE

Enter the calibration routine for your data-collection program.

- **High Standard Calibration Point:** The ISE should still be soaking in the High Standard. Enter the concentration value of the High Standard (e.g., “100” for 100 mg/L or “1000” for 1000 mg/L).
- **Low Standard Calibration Point:** Remove the ISE from the High Standard, rinse well with distilled water from a wash bottle, and gently blot dry with a paper towel or lab wipe. Place the electrode into the Low Standard (included with your ISE). Important: Make sure the ISE is not resting on the bottom of the container, and that the small white reference contacts are immersed. Make sure no air bubbles are trapped below the ISE. After 60 seconds, enter the concentration value of the Low Standard (e.g., “1” for 1 mg/L or “10” for 10 mg/L).

Collecting Data

- After calibrating, rinse off the end of the ISE, and blot it dry with a paper towel or lab wipe.
- Insert the tip of the ISE into the sample to be tested. Important: Make sure the ISE is not resting on the bottom of the container, and that the small white reference contacts are immersed. Make sure no air bubbles are trapped below the ISE. **Note:** Do not completely submerge the sensor. The handle is not waterproof.
- Hold the ISE still for 60 seconds and record the displayed reading.

Storing Your Ion-Selective Electrodes

Proper care and storage of your ISE are important considerations for optimal longevity, especially with the PVC membrane ISEs (Ammonium, Calcium, and Nitrate).

- Long-term storage of ISEs (longer than 24 hours) should be done in the Long-Term ISE Storage Bottle, which is included. The sponge in the bottom of the bottle should be kept moist with distilled water. When you finish using the ISE, simply rinse it off with distilled water and blot it dry using a paper towel or lab wipe. Loosen the lid of the bottle and insert the ISE. NOTE: The tip of the ISE should NOT be touching the sponge. Check to be sure the white ceramic junctions are inside, rather than outside the bottle or under the grommet. Tighten the lid. This storage system keeps the electrode in a humid environment, which prevents the reference junctions from completely drying out.
- Short-term, wet storage (less than 24 hours) can be done by using the Short-Term ISE Soaking Bottle included with the electrode. Fill the bottle 3/4 full with High Standard. Loosen the cap, insert the electrode into the bottle, and tighten.

Specifications

Range of ISE Electrodes:

- Ammonium (NH_4^+) ISE: 0.10 to 18,000 mg/L or ppm (5.5×10^{-6} M to 1.0 M)
- Calcium (Ca^{2+}) ISE: 0.20 to 40,000 mg/L or ppm (5×10^{-6} M to 1.0 M)
- Chloride (Cl^-) ISE: 1.8 to 35,500 mg/L or ppm (5×10^{-5} M to 1.0 M)
- Nitrate (NO_3^-) ISE: 0.10 to 14,000 mg/L or ppm (7×10^{-6} M to 1.0 M)

Resolution (LabPro, Go! Link, ULI II, or Serial Box Interface³): (% of reading, low scale reading, high scale reading):

- Ammonium (NH_4^+) ISE: 0.7% of reading (0.10 ± 0.0007 or $18,000 \pm 130$ mg/L)
- Calcium (Ca^{2+}) ISE: 1.4% of reading (0.20 ± 0.0028 or $40,000 \pm 560$ mg/L)
- Chloride (Cl^-) ISE: 0.7% of reading (1.8 ± 0.013 or $35,500 \pm 250$ mg/L)
- Nitrate (NO_3^-) ISE: 0.7% of reading (0.10 ± 0.0007 or $14,000 \pm 98$ mg/L)

pH Range:

- Ammonium (NH_4^+) ISE: 4 to 10
- Calcium (Ca^{2+}) ISE: 3 to 10
- Chloride (Cl^-) ISE: 2 to 12
- Nitrate (NO_3^-) ISE: 2.5 to 11

Interfering Ions:

- Ammonium (NH_4^+) ISE: K^+
- Calcium (Ca^{2+}) ISE: Pb^{2+} , Hg^{2+} , Sr^{2+} , Cu^{2+} , Ni^{2+}
- Chloride (Cl^-) ISE: CN^- , Br^- , I^- , S^{2-}
- Nitrate (NO_3^-) ISE: ClO_4^- , I^- , ClO_3^- , CN^- , BF_4^-

Electrode Slope (log voltage vs. concentration):

- Ammonium (NH_4^+) ISE: +56 mV/decade
- Chloride (Cl^-) ISE: -56 mV/decade
- Calcium (Ca^{2+}) ISE: +28 mV/decade
- Nitrate (NO_3^-) ISE: -56 mV/decade

Approximate Calibration Voltages:

- Ammonium (NH_4^+) ISE: High (100 mg/L) 2.1 V Low (1 mg/L) 1.3 V
- Calcium (Ca^{2+}) ISE: High (1000 mg/L) 1.9 V Low (10 mg/L) 1.5 V
- Chloride (Cl^-) ISE: High (1000 mg/L) 2.0V Low (10 mg/L) 2.8 V
- Nitrate (NO_3^-) ISE: High (100 mg/L) 1.6 Low (1 mg/L) 2.4 V

Electrode Resistance: 1 to 4 M Ω

Reproducibility: $\pm 5\%$ of reading

Temperature range (can be placed in): 0 to 50°C (no temperature compensation)

Minimum immersion: 1 inch

³ With a 10-bit interface, like the original ULI or the Texas Instruments CBL, the resolution values for each range will be four times as large as those shown for 12-bit interfaces.

Electrode Length: 155 mm

Body Diameter: 12 mm

Cap Diameter: 16 mm

Cable Length: 100 cm

The NH_4 -BTA, CA-BTA, CL-BTA, and NO_3 -BTA versions of these sensors are equipped with circuitry that supports auto-ID. When used with LabPro, Go! Link, EasyLink, or CBL 2, the data-collection software identifies the sensor and uses pre-defined parameters to configure an experiment appropriate to the recognized sensor. If you purchased the NH_4 -DIN, CA-DIN, CL-DIN, or NO_3 -DIN, and wish to use them with LabPro, or CBL 2, you can purchase a DIN-to-BTA adapter (order code DIN-BTA, \$5). However, the auto-ID feature will not be supported using this combination.

How Your Ion-Selective Electrode Works

Vernier Ion-Selective Electrodes (ISEs) are membrane-based electrodes that measure a specific ion (e.g., Ca^{2+}) in an aqueous solution. When the membrane of the electrode is in contact with a solution containing the specific ion, a voltage, dependent on the level of that ion in solution, develops at the membrane. All of our ISEs are combination style; that is, the voltage develops in relation to an internal Ag/AgCl reference electrode. The ISEs measure for the specific ion concentrations directly. Samples need to be aqueous to avoid contaminating or dissolving the membrane. Vernier Ion-Selective Electrodes (ISEs) have two types of membranes:

- **Solid Polymer Membrane:** This type of PVC membrane is used in our Nitrate, Calcium, and Ammonium ISEs. The membrane is a porous plastic disk, permeable to the ion exchanger, but impermeable to water. It allows the sensing cell to contact the sample solution and separates the internal filling solution from the sample. Our PVC membrane electrodes have replaceable membrane modules.
- **Solid State Membrane:** This thin crystal disk, used in our Chloride ISE, is an ionic conductor. It separates the internal reference solution from the sample solution. The Chloride ISE does not have replaceable membrane modules.

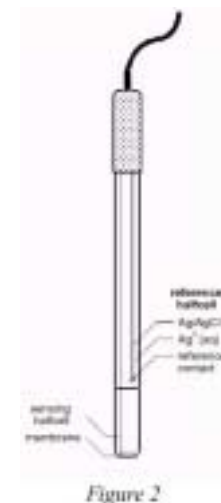
The voltage developed between the sensing and reference electrodes is a measure of the concentration of the reactive ion being measured. As the concentration of the ion reacting at the sensing electrode varies, so does the voltage measured between the two electrodes.

As described in the Nernst equation, ISE response is a linear equation:

$$E = E_o + m(\ln a)$$

where E is the measured voltage, E_o is the standard potential for the combination of the two half cells, m is the slope, ln is natural log, and a is the activity of the measured ion species.

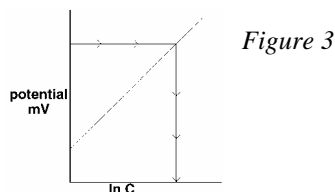
Assuming the ionic strength is fairly constant, the Nernst equation may be rewritten to



describe the electrode response to the concentration, C, of the measured ionic species:

$$E = E_o + m(\ln C)$$

A graph of the natural log of concentration (lnC) vs. potential (V) can be plotted:



The method for determining the concentration of Ca^{2+} , NH_4^+ , NO_3^- , or Cl^- ions using one of our ISEs is based on the following:

- The interface reads a voltage that is related to ion concentration.
- Using the voltage reading and the principle described in Figure 3, the natural log of concentration of the specific ion can be determined.
- The ion concentration can be determined from the natural log of concentration.

Maintaining and Replacing the ISE Standard Calibration Solutions

Having accurate standard solutions is essential for performing good calibrations. The two standard solutions that were included with your ISE can last a long time if you take care not to contaminate them with a wet or dirty probe. At some point, you will need to replenish your supply of standard solutions.

Vernier sells replacement standards in 500 mL bottles for \$12.00. Order codes are

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Ammonium Low Standard: NH4-LST | Ammonium High Standard: NH4-HST |
| Calcium Low Standard: CA-LST | Calcium High Standard: CA-HST |
| Chloride Low Standard: CL-LST | Chloride High Standard: CL-HST |
| Nitrate Low Standard: NO3-LST | Nitrate High Standard: NO3-HST |

To prepare your own standard solutions, use the information in Table 1.

Note: Use glassware designed for accurate volume measurements, such as volumetric flasks or graduated cylinders. All glassware must be very clean.

| Table 1: Replacing ISE Standard Solutions | | |
|--|-------------------------------|--|
| Standard Solution | Concentration (mg/L or ppm) | Preparation Method using High Quality Distilled Water |
| Ammonium (NH_4^+) ISE High Standard | 100 mg/L NH_4^+ as N | 0.382 g NH_4Cl / 1 L solution |
| Ammonium (NH_4^+) ISE Low Standard | 1 mg/L NH_4^+ as N | Dilute the High Standard by a factor of 100 (from 100 mg/L to 1 mg/L).* |
| Calcium (Ca^{2+}) ISE High Standard | 1000 mg/L as Ca | 2.771 g CaCl_2 / 1 L solution or 3.669 g $\text{CaCl}_2 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ / 1 L solution |

| | | |
|---|-----------------------------|---|
| Calcium (Ca^{2+}) ISE Low Standard | 10 mg/L as Ca | Dilute the High Standard by a factor of 100 (from 1000 mg/L to 10 mg/L).* |
| Chloride (Cl^-) ISE High Standard | 1000 mg/L as Cl | 1.648 g NaCl / 1 L solution |
| Chloride (Cl^-) ISE Low Standard | 10 mg/L as Cl | Dilute the High Standard by a factor of 100 (from 1000 mg/L to 10 mg/L).* |
| Nitrate (NO_3^-) ISE High Standard | 100 mg/L NO_3 as N | 0.607 g NaNO_3 / 1 L solution |
| Nitrate (NO_3^-) ISE Low Standard | 1 mg/L NO_3 as N | Dilute the High Standard by a factor of 100 (from 100 mg/L to 1 mg/L).* |

*Perform two serial dilutions as described below.

- Combine 100 mL of the High Standard with 900 mL of distilled water. Mix well.
- Combine 100 mL of the solution made in Step (a) with 900 mL of distilled water. Mix well.

Replacement Membrane Modules (Ammonium, Nitrate, and Calcium only)

The Nitrate, Calcium, and Ammonium ISEs each have a PVC membrane with a limited life expectancy. They are warranted to be free from defects for a period of twelve (12) months from the date of purchase; it is possible, however, that you may get somewhat longer use than the warranty period. If you start to notice a reduced response (e.g., distinctly different voltages or voltage ranges during calibration), it is probably time to replace the membrane module. **Important:** Do not order membrane modules far in advance of the time you will be using them; the process of degradation takes place even when they are stored on the shelf. Note that the Chloride ISE has a solid-state membrane, with a longer membrane life, and does not need a replacement module.

Using ISA (Ionic Strength Adjuster) Solutions to Improve Accuracy

For optimal results at low concentrations of calcium, chloride, and nitrate ions, a standard method for making measurements with ion-selective electrodes is to add ionic strength adjuster (ISA) solutions to each of your standard solutions and samples. Note: Do not use an ISA for low concentrations of ammonium.

Adding an ISA ensures that the total ion activity in each solution being measured is nearly equal, regardless of the specific ion concentration. This is especially important when measuring very low concentrations of specific ions. The ISA contains no ions common to the Ion-Selective Electrode itself. Note: The additions of ISA to samples or standards described below do not need to have a high level of accuracy—combining the ISA solution and sample solution counting drops using a disposable Beral pipet works fine. The following are instructions for using ISA solutions with Vernier Ion-Selective Electrodes.

Calcium ISA: Add the 1.0 M KCl ISA solution (7.46 g KCl / 100 mL solution) to the Ca^{2+} standard or to the solution being measured, in a ratio of 1 part of ISA (by volume) to 50 parts of total solution (e.g., 1 mL of ISA to 50 mL of total solution, or 2 drops of ISA to 5 mL of total solution).

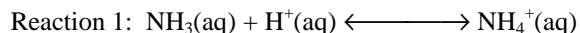
Chloride ISA: Add the 5.0 M NaNO_3 ISA solution (42.50 g NaNO_3 / 100 mL solution) to the Cl^- standard or to the solution being measured, in a ratio of 1 part of

ISA (by volume) to 50 parts of the total solution (e.g., 1 mL of ISA to 50 mL of total solution, or 2 drops of ISA to 5 mL of total solution).

Nitrate ISA: Add the 2.0 M (NH₄)₂SO₄ ISA solution (26.42 g (NH₄)₂SO₄ / 100 mL solution) to the NO₃⁻ standard or to the solution being measured, in a ratio of 1 part of ISA (by volume) to 50 parts of total solution (e.g., 1 mL of ISA to 50 mL of total solution, or 2 drops of ISA to 5 mL of total solution).

Using the Ammonium Ion-Selective Electrode

The Ammonium ISE can be used to determine concentrations of NH₄⁺ ions in aqueous solutions, in units of mg/L, ppm, or mol/L. Concentrations of aqueous ammonium ions should not be mistaken for concentration of aqueous ammonia, or NH₃(aq). The concentrations of these two species, though different, are often involved in the same equilibrium reaction:



In a more acidic environment, higher concentrations of H⁺ ions will cause this reaction to shift toward the right, resulting in higher concentrations of NH₄⁺. In a more basic (alkaline) environment, the concentration of N⁺ will be lower, causing the reaction to shift toward the left, producing higher concentrations of NH₃. At pH values greater than 10 (see Figure 4), most of the ammonium ions will be converted to ammonia. At pH values less than 7.5, most of the aqueous ammonia will be converted to ammonium ions.

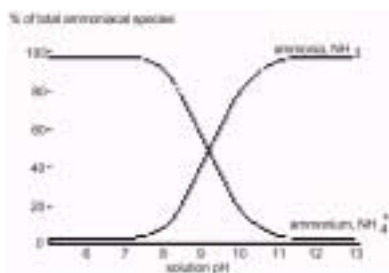


Figure 4

Sampling Freshwater Samples for Ammonium Concentration

While permissible levels of ammonium in drinking water should not exceed 0.5 mg/L, streams or ponds near heavily fertilized fields may have higher concentrations of this ion. Fertilizers containing ammonium sulfate, (NH₄)₂SO₄, or ammonium nitrate, NH₄NH₃, may result in runoff from fields containing higher levels of the ammonium ion, NH₄⁺. Monitoring ammonium levels on a stream that borders fertilized fields may show significant seasonal differences in NH₄⁺ concentrations. In this kind of study, you may also take pH measurements in your water samples; as indicated in the previous paragraph, higher or lower pH values can greatly affect the ratio of NH₄⁺ / NH₃ in a sample. Since the Ammonium ISE measures only NH₄⁺ levels, you may want to adjust your samples to the same pH value each time you make measurements; this may not be necessary if you have relatively “hard” water. Hard water is naturally buffered against changes in pH.

Using the Ammonium ISE at Low Concentration Levels (0.1-0.5 mg/L NH₄⁺-N)

If the concentration of your sample is less than 0.5 mg/L NH₄⁺-N, you will obtain better results if you calibrate the electrode with 0.1 mg/L and 1.0 mg/L NH₄⁺-N. This is because the slope of the calibration changes at these low levels. You can make up the 0.1 mg/L Ammonium Standard by following the directions in Table 1 to make the

1.0 mg/L NH₄⁺-N Standard, then diluting one more time using 100 mL of the 1.0 mg/L with 900 mL of high quality distilled water.

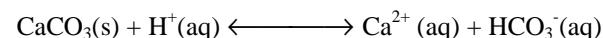
Expressing Ammonium Concentration

Concentrations of ammonium are often expressed in units of mg/L NH₄⁺ as N. Here is a calculation for a 100 mg/L NH₄⁺ as N standard solution that is prepared by adding solid NH₄Cl to distilled water:

$$\frac{100 \text{ mg NH}_4^+}{1 \text{ L}} \times \frac{1 \text{ g NH}_4^+}{100 \text{ mg NH}_4^+} \times \frac{53.5 \text{ g NH}_4\text{Cl}}{14.0 \text{ g NH}_4^+ - \text{N}} = 0.382 \text{ g NH}_4\text{Cl} / \text{L solution}$$

Using the Calcium Ion-Selective Electrode

Your Calcium Ion-Selective Electrode can be used to determine the concentration of aqueous Ca²⁺ ions, in the range of 1.8 to 40,100 mg/L. It can be especially useful in determining “hardness of water.” Calcium ions are often found in freshwater samples as a result of water flowing over soil and mineral deposits containing limestone, chalk, magnesite, or dolomite. In one common reaction, limestone is dissolved according to the reaction



This reaction and others similar to it produce water with a relatively high concentration of Ca²⁺ ions, and lesser concentrations of Mg²⁺ and Fe³⁺ ions—known as hard water.

Using the Calcium ISE to Determine Water Hardness as Ca²⁺

Many methods of determining water hardness use “total hardness,” or the sum of hardness due to Mg²⁺ and Ca²⁺. Since the Ca²⁺ concentration of freshwater usually exceeds that of Mg²⁺, determining the Ca²⁺ concentration alone is a good indicator of water hardness—we will refer to this measurement as “calcium hardness.” For best results, calibrate the Calcium ISE using the 10 mg/L and 1000 mg/L standards.

Using the standard solutions described here, your results will be in units of mg/L of Ca²⁺. Units of calcium hardness are usually expressed as “calcium hardness as CaCO₃”. To convert from units of mg/L of Ca²⁺ (150 mg/L is used in this example) to units of calcium hardness as CaCO₃, in mg/L, you would use this expression:

$$\frac{150 \text{ mg Ca}^{2+}}{1 \text{ L}} \times \frac{100 \text{ g CaCO}_3}{40 \text{ g Ca}^{2+}} = 374 \text{ mg} / \text{L (hardness as CaCO}_3\text{)}$$

It is important to remember that total hardness, taking into account both the Ca and Mg levels, will be about 1.5 times higher than your calcium hardness value. Water hardness varies considerably in different parts of the United States, from levels of less than 60 mg/L (total hardness as CaCO₃) in Washington, Oregon, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, and New England, to levels exceeding 250 mg/L or higher in Midwestern states (Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Oklahoma). Water with a hardness as CaCO₃ level greater than 120 mg/L is considered to be “hard,” while levels exceeding 180 mg/L are referred to as “very hard.” equivalence point occurs first, with the Mg²⁺ equivalence point following; therefore Ca²⁺ can be determined as well as total hardness (as Ca²⁺ and Mg²⁺). A plot of ln [Ca²⁺] (natural log of calcium ion concentration) vs. volume is used to determine the equivalence point. The second derivative can be used to calculate the point of

maximum inflection at the equivalence point of the titration.

Using the Chloride Ion-Selective Electrode

Chloride ions are found in freshwater samples as a result of water flowing over salt-containing minerals. These salts might include either sodium chloride (NaCl) or potassium chloride (KCl). The EPA maximum contamination level for chloride concentration in drinking water is 250 mg/L. The chloride ion concentration in seawater is approximately 19,400 mg/L—well below the upper limit of the Chloride ISE of 35,500 mg/L.

When the response of the Chloride ISE begins to slow, the membrane may need polishing. Cut a small piece (about 1 inch square) from a polishing strip. Wet the end of the electrode and the dull side of the polishing strip thoroughly with distilled water. Using only moderate pressure, polish the end of the electrode by gently rubbing in a circular motion. This will remove the inactive layer of the membrane which impedes measurement. Rinse thoroughly with distilled water and recalibrate in the usual manner.

Sampling Freshwater Samples for Chloride Concentration

For best results, calibrate the Chloride ISE using the 10 mg/L and 1000 mg/L standards.

Measuring Chloride Concentration of Saltwater or Brackish Water

When measuring chloride concentration in seawater or brackish water, calibrate the Chloride ISE using the 1000 mg/L standard included with your Chloride ISE for one calibration point (or 1.806 parts per thousand, or ppt). For the second calibration point, prepare a standard that is 20,000 mg/L Cl⁻ by adding 32.96 g of solid NaCl to enough distilled water to prepare 1 L of solution:

$$\frac{20000 \text{ mg Cl}^-}{1 \text{ L}} \times \frac{1 \text{ g Cl}^-}{1000 \text{ mg Cl}^-} \times \frac{58.5 \text{ g NaCl}}{355 \text{ g Cl}^-} = 32.96 \text{ g NaCl / L solution}$$

If you are calibrating in ppt, call this solution 36.13 ppt.

Determining Salinity of Saltwater or Brackish Water

Salinity is the total of all salts dissolved in water, expressed either as mg/L (equal to parts per million, ppm) or in parts per thousand (ppt). Seawater contains a fairly constant quantity of chloride ions. From your measurement of chloride ion concentration (in the previous section), salinity can be calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Salinity (mg/L or ppm)} = 1.8066 \times [\text{Cl}^- \text{ concentration, mg/L}]$$

Using this formula, the salinity of saltwater is calculated to be:

$$\text{Salinity (mg/L or ppm)} = 1.8066 \times (19400 \text{ mg/L}) = 35,000 \text{ mg/L}$$

The level of salinity of seawater in parts per thousand, or ppt, would be:

$$\text{Salinity (ppt)} = 35000 / 1000 = 35 \text{ ppt}$$

Using the Nitrate Ion-Selective Electrode

Nitrate ions, NO₃⁻, may be found in freshwater samples from a variety of sources. Sewage is often the primary source. Sometimes nitrates are present due to runoff from fertilized fields. Nitrates can also result from the runoff from cattle feedlots and barnyards. In all of these cases, as plant and animal organisms die, bacterial action breaks down the protein into ammonia, NH₃. Some ammonia is converted into

ammonium ions, NH₄⁺. Other bacterial action converts some of the ammonia and ammonium ions into nitrite ions, NO₂⁻, and then into nitrate ions, NO₃⁻.

Units of Nitrate Concentration

Nitrate ion concentration is usually expressed in units of mg/L of NO₃⁻ as N, also known as “nitrate-nitrogen.” This means that the concentration of nitrate is expressed as if the nitrate were only in the form of nitrogen itself. The standards that are included with your Nitrate ISE have concentrations of 1 and 100 mg/L of NO₃⁻ as N. Here is the calculation for making a 100 mg/L NO₃⁻ as N standard starting with solid NaNO₃ (as shown in Table 1). Notice that the atomic weight of N, 14.0, is used instead of the atomic weight of NO₃⁻, 62.0.

$$\frac{100 \text{ mg N}}{1 \text{ L}} \times \frac{1 \text{ g N}}{1000 \text{ mg N}} \times \frac{85.0 \text{ g NaNO}_3}{14.0 \text{ g N}} = 0.607 \text{ g NaNO}_3 / \text{L solution}$$

Unpolluted waters usually have nitrate-nitrogen (NO₃⁻ as N) levels below 1 mg/L. Nitrate-nitrogen levels above 10 mg/L are considered unsafe for drinking water.

Test results are sometimes published in units of mg/L NO₃⁻ instead of NO₃⁻ as N. To convert 100 mg/L NO₃⁻ as N to mg/L NO₃⁻, you would perform this conversion:

$$\frac{100 \text{ mg N}}{1 \text{ L}} \times \frac{62.0 \text{ g NO}_3^-}{14.0 \text{ g N}} = 443 \text{ mg / L NO}_3^-$$

Sampling Freshwater Samples for Nitrate Concentration

For best results, calibrate the Nitrate ISE, using the 1 mg/L and 100 mg/L standards.

How can I have my ISE read mV output instead of mg/L?

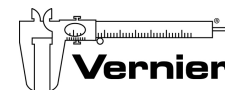
The amplification equation is: V = 0.00727*mV + 1.223

Therefore, the reverse amplification equation, solving for mV, would be:

$$\text{mV} = 137.55 * \text{V} - 0.1682$$

Warranty

Vernier warrants this product to be free from defects in materials and workmanship for a period of five years from the date of shipment to the customer. This warranty does not cover damage to the product caused by abuse or improper use.



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Vernier Software & Technology

13979 S.W. Millikan Way • Beaverton, OR 97005-2886

Toll Free (888) 837-6437 • (503) 277-2299 • FAX (503) 277-2440

info@vernier.com • www.vernier.com

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