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## Good practice for dynamic light scattering (DLS) measurements

*Bonnes pratiques pour l'analyse de la dispersion lumineuse dynamique (DLD)*

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ISO copyright office  
CP 401 • Ch. de Blandonnet 8  
CH-1214 Vernier, Geneva  
Phone: +41 22 749 01 11  
Fax: +41 22 749 09 47  
Email: [copyright@iso.org](mailto:copyright@iso.org)  
Website: [www.iso.org](http://www.iso.org)

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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.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see [www.iso.org/patents](http://www.iso.org/patents)).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see [www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html).

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 24, *Particle characterization including sieving*, Subcommittee SC 4, *Particle characterization*.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at [www.iso.org/members.html](http://www.iso.org/members.html).

## Introduction

Dynamic light scattering (DLS) is a widely used technique for the characterization of particles with equivalent hydrodynamic diameters below a few micrometres. Modern instruments allow users with minimal training or background to use this technique. The downside is that not all users are familiar with the potential pitfalls, limitations and proper interpretation of results for DLS.

Therefore, this document has been developed as a guidance for good practice in DLS and complements ISO 22412:2017.



# Good practice for dynamic light scattering (DLS) measurements

## 1 Scope

This document provides practical guidance for performing and interpreting measurements using dynamic light scattering (DLS) that goes beyond the treatment of measurement artefacts in ISO 22412:2017.

This document is intended to help users with experiments planning, in particular with respect to obtaining the necessary information on the sample and deciding whether DLS is the most appropriate method. It provides information on how to prepare samples in an appropriate way, verify the proper functioning of the instrument and interpret the data correctly, including ways to assess data quality.

This document focuses on the practical steps required to obtain DLS results of good quality, rather than on theoretical considerations, and covers not only the measurement of solid particles, but also emulsions and bubbles.

## 2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

## 3 Terms and definitions

No terms and definitions are listed in this document.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>

## 4 Instrument types

### 4.1 General

A discussion on what constitutes good practices requires knowledge of the instrument type being considered. Different optical configurations require different adjustment to control the optical layout: different signal processing techniques require different techniques to allow for background conditions; different analysis techniques require different conditioning parameters of the processed signal. Two commonly applied variants are homodyne detection with correlation function processing (see ISO 22412:2017, 9.2) and heterodyne detection with frequency spectrum processing (see ISO 22412:2017, 9.3).

Additionally, good practice, as it relates to instrument type, also depends on the scattering angle used for the measurement. For instance large spurious particles generally scatter more power into forward angles than higher angles, so that samples measured in forward-scatter typically require significantly more care regarding the cleanliness of the cuvette used, prior to filling with sample, the filtering of the sample between the particle size distribution (PSD) of interest and unwanted large size fractions and the dispensing to waste of the first few drops of sample from a syringe filter to remove filter spoil. Additionally, the single-scattering relaxation time is known to be well approximated by higher order scattering from concentrated samples as the scattering angle approaches 180 °, thereby allowing the characterization in backscatter of concentrated samples, so long as bulk scattering losses through