Propylene production exceeds that of most other hydrocarbons worldwide, as it is a key component in many hard plastics, primarily polypropylene, that are used in a broad spectrum of industries. Propylene can be generated by several methods, which utilize various catalysts to increase production efficiency. Methods include recovering propylene as a byproduct from the steam cracking of liquid feedstocks for ethylene production (e.g. naphtha), from the off-gases produced in fluid catalytic cracking units in refineries, or through direct methods, such as propane dehydration. Regardless of the production method, high purity product is extremely important to prevent damage to the catalysts used in production.

Purity often is determined using ASTM Method D2712, a gas chromatography method for determining part-per-million levels of hydrocarbon impurities in propylene concentrates. This test can be performed on any gas chromatographic system capable of detecting compounds at concentrations of at least 20ppm. While a wide variety of column choices are allowed by the method, the packed columns that are commonly used generally involve complex, multiple column setups, and often suffer from poorly resolved peaks or long run times.

Capillary PLOT columns can be an effective alternative to packed columns for propylene analysis; alumina PLOT columns, in particular, offer a high degree of selectivity for resolving low molecular weight hydrocarbons. Deactivation type can also enhance the separation between difficult to resolve compounds. Here, an Rt®-Alumina BOND column with a Na2SO4 deactivation was used to illustrate a simple single column setup that results in fast, baseline resolution of low molecular weight hydrocarbons from propylene.

Separation of the compounds typically encountered in a propylene stream is often difficult to achieve using packed columns. In contrast, all compounds are fully resolved on an Rt®-Alumina BOND/Na2SO4 PLOT column. These highly efficient columns provide excellent separation, even for difficult to resolve compounds like cyclopropane and propylene. The Rt®-Alumina BOND/Na2SO4 PLOT column also exhibits high capacity or loadability, as evidenced by the minimal amount of tailing on the propylene

**Figure 1** Rt®-Alumina BOND columns provide fast, complete separation of hydrocarbon impurities in propylene.

**Peak List**
1. methane
2. ethane
3. ethylene
4. propane
5. cyclopropane
6. propylene
7. isobutane
8. n-butyne
9. propadiene
10. acetylene
11. trans-2-butene
12. 1-butyne
13. isobutylene
14. cis-2-butene
15. isopentane
16. n-pentane
17. 1,3-butadiene
18. methyl acetylene

**Excellent peak shape and response allow accurate analysis at ppm levels.**

**Column:** Rt®-Alumina BOND/Na2SO4, 50m, 0.53mm ID, 10.0µm (cat.# 19756)
**Sample:** propylene and C1-C5 hydrocarbons
**Inj.:** 10µL split, 35mL/min. split vent flow rate
**2mm splitless liner (cat.# 20712)**
**Inj. temp.:** 200°C
**Carrier gas:** helium, constant pressure (10.0psi, 68.9kPa)
**Linear velocity:** 47cm/sec. @ 50°C
**Oven temp.:** 50°C to 150°C @ 6°C/min.
**Det.:** FID @ 200°C
**Instrument:** Agilent 5890
peak. Improved peak shape for high concentration compounds minimizes the difficulty in identifying and quantifying other compounds that elute near the tailing edge of the major peak.

In addition to the complete separation of all compounds on a single column, another advantage of using the Rt®-Alumina BOND/Na2SO4 PLOT column is the fast analysis time than can be achieved. In comparison to packed column methods, which can require multiple columns and up to 45 minutes per run, the total run time using the Rt®-Alumina BOND/Na2SO4 PLOT column is only 17 minutes. High sample throughput is further supported by the short temperature program used here, as compared to some of the isothermal conditions and longer run times noted in the method.

In conclusion, the analysis of impurities in propylene can be significantly improved by using a single Rt®-Alumina BOND/Na2SO4 PLOT column instead of a multiple-column packed column setup. When testing for hydrocarbon impurities in propylene using ASTM D2712-91, the use of an Rt®-Alumina BOND/Na2SO4 column provides the greatest degree of separation in the least amount of time.

**Rt®-Alumina BOND/Na2SO4 Columns**

(RF fused silica PLOT) (Na2SO4 deactivation)

Rt®-Alumina BOND/Na2SO4 columns replace GS-Alumina, CP-AL2O3/Na2SO4, HP-PLOT S, and AT Alumina columns. Switch today and benefit from:

- More symmetric peaks, due to higher loadability.
- High response for low-level impurities.
- Predictable retention times run-to-run and column-to-column.
- No particle loss, due to unique bonding technology.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>dI (µm)</th>
<th>temp. (°C)</th>
<th>length</th>
<th>cat. #</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.32mm</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30-Meter</td>
<td>19757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.32mm</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50-Meter</td>
<td>19758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.53mm</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30-Meter</td>
<td>19755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.53mm</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50-Meter</td>
<td>19756</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Restek Electronic Leak Detector**

*Why have a small leak turn into a costly repair? Protect your data and analytical column by using a Restek Leak Detector.*

Features & Benefits include:

- Optimized sample flow path.
- New ergonomic, hand-held design.
- Rugged side grips for added durability.
- Handy probe storage for cleanliness and convenience.
- Longer lasting battery, up to 6 hours of continuous use.
- Automatic shut-off.
- A convenient carrying and storage case.
- Easy to clean probe assembly.
- A universal charger set (US, European, UK, and Australian plugs included).

Backed by a 1-year warranty, the new Restek Leak Detector sets an industry standard for performance and affordability in hand-held leak detectors.

**Leak Detector Facts**

Detectable gases: helium, nitrogen, argon,
carbon dioxide, hydrogen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gas</th>
<th>Minimum Detectable Leak Rate (ulm/cc/sec)</th>
<th>Detecting LED Color</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helium</td>
<td>1.0 x 10^4</td>
<td>red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydrogen*</td>
<td>1.0 x 10^4</td>
<td>red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nitrogen</td>
<td>1.4 x 10^4</td>
<td>yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argon</td>
<td>1.0 x 10^4</td>
<td>yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbon Dioxide</td>
<td>1.0 x 10^4</td>
<td>yellow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Description**

Leak Detector with Hard-Sided Carrying Case and Universal Charger Set (US, UK, European, Australian)

- ea. 22839

Soft-Side Storage Case

- ea. 22657

Small Probe Adaptor

- ea. 22658

Avoid using liquid leak detectors on a GC! Liquids can be drawn into the system.

*Caution: The Restek Electronic Leak Detector is designed to detect trace amounts of hydrogen in a noncombustible environment. It is NOT designed for determining leaks in a combustible environment. A combustible gas detector should be used for determining combustible gas leaks under any condition. The Restek Electronic Leak Detector may be used for determining trace amounts of hydrogen in a GC environment only.*

**Contact support@restek.com for helpful, knowledgeable technical support.**