



Standard Guide for Design Criteria for Plutonium Gloveboxes¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation C852; the number immediately following the designation indicates the year of original adoption or, in the case of revision, the year of last revision. A number in parentheses indicates the year of last reapproval. A superscript epsilon (ε) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

1. Scope

1.1 This guide defines criteria for the design of glovebox systems to be used for the handling of plutonium in any chemical or physical form or isotopic composition or when mixed with other elements or compounds. Not included in the criteria are systems auxiliary to the glovebox systems such as utilities, ventilation, alarm, and waste disposal. Also not addressed are hot cells or open-face hoods. The scope of this guide excludes specific license requirements relating to provisions for criticality prevention, hazards control, safeguards, packaging, and material handling. Observance of this guide does not relieve the user of the obligation to conform to all federal, state, and local regulations for design and construction of glovebox systems.

1.2 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as the standard. The values given in parentheses are for information only.

1.3 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety problems, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:²

- A193/A193M Specification for Alloy-Steel and Stainless Steel Bolting for High Temperature or High Pressure Service and Other Special Purpose Applications
- A240/A240M Specification for Chromium and Chromium-Nickel Stainless Steel Plate, Sheet, and Strip for Pressure Vessels and for General Applications
- A269 Specification for Seamless and Welded Austenitic Stainless Steel Tubing for General Service
- A312/A312M Specification for Seamless, Welded, and

- Heavily Cold Worked Austenitic Stainless Steel Pipes
- A376/A376M Specification for Seamless Austenitic Steel Pipe for High-Temperature Central-Station Service
- A480/A480M Specification for General Requirements for Flat-Rolled Stainless and Heat-Resisting Steel Plate, Sheet, and Strip
- A999/A999M Specification for General Requirements for Alloy and Stainless Steel Pipe
- A1016/A1016M Specification for General Requirements for Ferritic Alloy Steel, Austenitic Alloy Steel, and Stainless Steel Tubes
- C859 Terminology Relating to Nuclear Materials
- C1454 Guide for Pyrophoricity/Combustibility Testing in Support of Pyrophoricity Analyses of Metallic Uranium Spent Nuclear Fuel
- F837 Specification for Stainless Steel Socket Head Cap Screws

2.2 Other Standards

- ANSI N13.1 Guide to Sampling Airborne Radioactive Materials in Nuclear Facilities³
- ANSI/ASME NQA-1 Quality Assurance Requirements for Nuclear Facility Applications³
- ANSI/ASME AG-1 Code on Nuclear Air and Gas Treatment³
- NFPA-70 National Electrical Code⁴
- NFPA 72 National Fire Alarm Code⁴
- DOE-HDBK-1081-94 DOE Handbook on Primer of Spontaneous Heating and Pyrophoricity⁵
- 10 CFR 20 Standards for Protection Against Radiation⁶
- 10 CFR 50 Domestic Licensing of Production and Utilization Facilities⁶
- 40 CFR 260–279 Solid Waste Regulations—Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA)⁶
- 10 CFR 830 Subpart A Quality Assurance Requirements⁶

¹ This guide is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee C26 on Nuclear Fuel Cycle and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee C26.14 on Remote Systems. Current edition approved June 1, 2009. Published July 2009. Originally approved in 1977. Last previous edition approved in 1997 as C852 – 93 (1997) which was withdrawn January 2006 and reinstated in June 2009. DOI: 10.1520/C0852-09.

² For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

³ Available from American National Standards Institute (ANSI), 25 W. 43rd St., 4th Floor, New York, NY 10036, <http://www.ansi.org>.

⁴ Available from National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169-7471, <http://www.nfpa.org>.

⁵ Available to the public from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Technology Administration, National Technical Information Service, Springfield, VA 22161.

⁶ Available from U.S. Government Printing Office Superintendent of Documents, 732 N. Capitol St., NW, Mail Stop: SDE, Washington, DC 20401, <http://www.access.gpo.gov>.

AGS-G001-2007 Guideline for Gloveboxes⁷

AGS-G006-2005 Standard of Practice for the Design and Fabrication of Nuclear-Application Gloveboxes⁷

AGS-G005-2003 Standard of Practice for the Specification of Gloves for Gloveboxes⁷

3. Significance and Use

3.1 The purpose of this guide is to establish criteria for the design of gloveboxes as primary confinement systems to ensure the safety of the workers and the protection of the environment when storing, handling, processing, and disposing of both combustible and non-combustible forms of plutonium. The use of this standard will provide the user with guidance to design a successfully performing glovebox system.

4. Quality Assurance

4.1 A quality assurance program should be established for the design, fabrication, construction, acceptance testing, and operation, including modifications, repairs, replacement and maintenance of structures, systems, and components important to safety. Quality assurance requirements should be specified in the purchase order or contract (see 10 CFR 50 Appendix B, 10 CFR 830 Subpart A, and ANSI/ASME NQA-1).

5. Design Considerations

5.1 Design considerations should include engineered safety features and redundant plant services to achieve confinement reliability. Reliability should be considered in the light of the risk associated with postulated accidents (for example, accidents resulting from pyrophoric behavior of metallic plutonium), the probability of occurrence of the accidents, and the severity of their consequences, as well as in the light of normal processing requirements. See Guide C1454. The design for the glovebox system should consider all of the following subjects:

- 5.1.1 Fire,
- 5.1.2 Explosions,
- 5.1.3 Seismic events,
- 5.1.4 Installation and removal from service,
- 5.1.5 Automated equipment,
- 5.1.6 Glovebox process operations,
- 5.1.7 Criticality,
- 5.1.8 Confinement system leaks,
- 5.1.9 Power failure,
- 5.1.10 Service water failure,
- 5.1.11 Other services failure,
- 5.1.12 Glovebox pressurization,
- 5.1.13 Glovebox evacuation,
- 5.1.14 Health physics, and
- 5.1.15 Need for glovebox isolation or compartmentalization, or both.

6. Glovebox System Design Features

6.1 The glovebox system is defined as a series of physical barriers provided with glove ports and gloves, through which process and maintenance operations may be performed, to-

gether with an operating ventilation system. The glovebox system should minimize the potential for release of radioactive material to the environment under normal and abnormal conditions, protect the operators from contamination under normal operating conditions, and mitigate the consequences of abnormal conditions to the maximum extent practical. Where feasible and practical, the glovebox should incorporate passive safety controls rather than active safety controls. In the event that the glovebox is used to process and handle metallic plutonium, it should provide a dry inert atmosphere such as nitrogen or argon to prevent combustion or pyrophoric behavior of the plutonium. Guide C1454. Compartmentalization within and between gloveboxes should be considered and installed as necessary to mitigate the potential seriousness of accidents involving fire, explosion, or criticality. The glovebox system design should consider interconnecting tunnels, conveyors, and passageways for transferring materials between adjacent gloveboxes. Provision for containment should be provided.

6.2 Confinement:

6.2.1 The glovebox should be designed to operate at 125 to 250 Pa (0.5 to 1.0 in. H₂O gauge) pressure negative to the room in which it is located. The glovebox and its accessory equipment should be designed to prevent liquid flooding or subjection of the box to excessive vacuum or pressure. Control devices, such as oil filtered U-tubes to relieve pressure, shall be positive-acting or automatic, or both. See USAEC Report TID 24236.⁸

6.2.2 The glovebox, when assembled and blanked off (evacuated to a given negative pressure and sealed off from further evacuation source), should pass a leak-rate not to exceed 0.3 volume % air/h when tested at an initial pressure differential of one kPa (4 in. H₂O gauge) for four hours. Penetrations in the glovebox (such as conduits, ports, ducts, pipes, and windows) shall be constructed to prevent the release of radioactive material under normal operating conditions. See AGS-G001-2007.

6.2.3 The design of gloveboxes should include means to control and minimize the release of radioactive materials to the plant system during normal plant operation and under a postulated design basis accident.

6.3 *Glovebox Construction*—Gloveboxes should be constructed using appropriate materials and workmanship to ensure confinement and to minimize leakage. The glovebox and support structure should be designed for the heaviest anticipated loading in the glovebox. Combustible materials should be held to a minimum. See AGS-G001-2007 and AGS-G006-2005.

6.3.1 *Materials*—Gloveboxes should be constructed of materials that will be compatible with intended use for structural strength, corrosion resistance, resistance to radiation degradation, and radiation shielding. Gloveboxes should be tested to the highest expected abnormal conditions. The containment

⁷ Available from the American Glovebox Society, P.O. Box 9099, Santa Rosa, CA, 95405, <http://www.gloveboxsociety.org>.

⁸ "Glovebox Window Materials: a Glovebox Fire Safety Application," TID-24896, United States Atomic Energy Commission, Factory Mutual Research Corporation, 1969, <http://www.osti.gov/energycitations/servlets/purl/4822006-KYw7jb/>.

structure should be constructed from a minimum of 3-mm (0.120 in.) thick 304L or 316L series stainless steel per Specifications **A240/A240M** and **A480/A480M**. The interior should be smooth and free of crevices and sharp objects. Internal radii should be compatible with decontamination and radiation monitoring in accordance with AGS standards. Strip-pable surface coatings may be applied to the interior of the glovebox to facilitate cleaning or decontamination. Surface coatings on the interior of the glovebox may be required for protection when certain acids (hydrochloric, sulphuric, or hydrofluoric) or other corrosive materials are present in the glovebox. Any coatings applied to the interior of the glovebox must be considered as part of the combustible material loads for that glovebox. Glovebox fabrication tolerances should be specified. See USAEC Report TID-24236,⁸ USAEC Report TID-16020,⁹ and AGS-G001-2007 for options.

6.3.2 Windows—Windows should be conveniently located for the worker, and should be constructed of noncombustible or fire-resistant materials that are resistant to mechanical shock and radiation. Gloveboxes intended for the processing and handling of metallic plutonium or uranium should avoid using windows made of plastic or other combustible materials. Laminated glass or a combination of laminated glass and polycarbonate is the preferred construction. The windows shall be securely fastened and should be gasketed or sealed with material that will resist deterioration by chemical attack and radiation degradation, and permit replacement with minimum risk of contamination to the facility. See USAEC Report TID-24896¹⁰ and AGS-G001-2007 for types of material.

6.3.3 Glove Ports—Glove ports should be designed to allow replacement of gloves without compromising the glovebox atmosphere or contamination control. Ports should be located to facilitate both operating and maintenance work, and take into account the need for two-handed operation, depth of reach, operator comfort from an ergonomic perspective, and positioning with respect to other ports. A detailed dimensional analysis of the operations would assist in eliminating blind spots or inaccessible areas.

6.3.4 Gloves—Gloves should be chosen on the basis of resistance to possible corrosive atmospheres in the glovebox; resistance to radiation degradation, tearing, and puncturing; and their capability to provide some radiation shielding to the hands. Consideration should be given to high or low temperature sources within the glovebox and their proximity to the gloves. Pinch points and sharp corners should be avoided to the greatest extent possible consistent with ergonomic considerations. Gloves should also be selected on the basis of maintaining maximum dexterity of hand movement. See AGS-G005-2003.

6.4 Equipment Insertion-Removal—Bagout ports, sphincter seals, and air locks should be designed and installed to facilitate the introduction or removal of needed equipment without compromising the glovebox atmosphere or contamination controls.

6.5 Lighting—1076-lx (100 foot candles) lighting should be provided on all surfaces for close work, and 538-lx (50-fc) lighting should be provided for general illumination within the glovebox. The lighting should be adjusted to compensate for glare, reflection, heat, and light intensity prior to going operational. To the maximum extent practical, lighting fixtures should be mounted on the glovebox exterior to facilitate repair and replacement and to avoid the possibility of broken glass within the glovebox. Consideration should be given to lighting systems that minimize power consumption, minimize heat generation, and provide maximum flexibility for maintenance and control, such as LED (light emitting diode) type systems. See AGS-G001-2007.

6.6 Ventilation:

6.6.1 The ventilation system should be designed so that its capacity is sufficient to provide and maintain the design negative pressure during normal operation and the design flow through a breach during abnormal conditions.

6.6.2 Where the source of combustible solvents, gases, or vapors can be identified or postulated, explosive conditions shall be precluded and suitable monitoring and alarm systems should be installed for control. Electrical systems shall be compatible with potentially flammable atmospheres per the appropriate codes. See NFPA-70.

6.6.3 When handling plutonium as an oxide or other basically non-combustible chemical form there shall be exhaust capacity on demand that will promptly cause an inflow of air of at least 38 linear m/min (125 linear ft/min) through a potential breach of a single glovebox penetration. See AGS-G001-2007.

6.6.4 If desired, a portion of the atmosphere may be recirculated within each glovebox, thus lessening the load on heating, cooling, and moisture control equipment. Other glovebox atmospheres may be employed for special uses, such as recirculating dry inert gas for handling pyrophoric or unusually reactive materials such as metallic plutonium. Recirculation systems should be equipped with air-cleaning equipment. Continuous radioactive monitors or samplers may be used to assist in maintaining air quality in such systems.

6.6.5 Filters, scrubbers, demisters, and other air-cleaning devices should be provided to remove excessive moisture, toxic or noxious gases, and airborne particulates exhausted to the ventilation system to levels that are as low as reasonably achievable; requirements should be specified by the user. An easily replaced HEPA filter should be installed at each glovebox atmosphere exit to minimize contamination of duct-work and loading of the final filtration system. A HEPA filter should be installed on the air inlet to the glovebox to preclude the spread of contamination in the event of airflow reversal. Moreover, such filter protection should be extended to the vents of any pressure relief device serving the glovebox. Consider adding a replaceable pre-filter prior to the outlet HEPA filter to capture larger particulates and installing in-place testing ports in accordance with ANSI/ASME AG-1. See USAEC Report TID-24236,⁸ USAEC Report TID-16020,⁹ and AGS-G001-2007.

6.7 Fire Protection—Fire protection includes fire detection and suppression. Fire-suppression systems may be omitted where a detailed evaluation shows that fire protection can be

⁹ Garden, Nelson B., et al, AdHoc Committee on Gloveboxes, United States Atomic Energy Commission, Factory Mutual Research Corporation, 1969.

¹⁰ "Glovebox Window Materials," Factory Mutual Research Corp., 1969.

provided by the use of a detection system only. The glovebox design shall take into account the fire potential from probable box contents (plutonium metal, organics, sodium, other pyrophoric metals, electrical fixtures, etc.) and should be equipped with a manual or automatic fire suppression system. The fire suppression and detection system should be located near the exit of the exhaust air stream and other locations as appropriate. The glovebox ventilation inlet and outlet should be equipped with fire screens or flame arrestors to protect the upstream and downstream HEPA filters. The design of the system should be verified by a qualified fire protection engineer or agency. For fire protection, the use of bromotrifluoromethane, CO₂, or other approved fire extinguishing systems should be considered. The potential for excessive gas generation from suppressants and the need to relieve the pressure should be evaluated. See USAEC Report TID-24236⁸ and AGS-G001-2007 for options. Water fire suppression systems should not be installed in Pu gloveboxes. Pressure-relief devices should be installed depending on the results of the evaluation (NFPA 72).

6.8 Criticality Prevention—In all cases where the design provides for the introduction of moderating material (such as water) into a glovebox, suitable drains, overflow devices, or limited volume supply shall be provided to prevent criticality or flooding of the enclosure. The drains shall be protected against plugging and shall drain to a critically safe configuration. This criterion applies where more than a minimum critical mass can be present. Alternatively, an evaluation may be performed to demonstrate that under any credible circumstances a criticality accident could not occur in the event of flooding.

6.9 Services and Utilities—Utility services should be designed in a manner that does not compromise radioactive materials confinement, consistent with the potential hazard for all design basis conditions. Any gas supply system connected directly to the box should be designed to prevent flow in excess of exhaust capacity and prevent back flow of contamination. Those services and utilities important to continuity of essential plant function, such as ventilation systems and criticality alarms, should be designed to the same integrity level as the function they serve (AGS-G001-2007).

6.10 Radiation Shielding—Personnel radiation exposure limits may require special structural and spatial provisions. Structures should be designed such that, in conjunction with process equipment and associated confinement devices, normal operation and maintenance can be performed quickly and efficiently, thus minimizing radiation exposure. Generally, the majority of radiation exposure from Pu gloveboxes comes from radiation penetrating through the gloves, bagout ports and transfer ports. When not in use, these ports should be shielded to reduce operator exposure. The shielding design should utilize adequate fixed and movable shielding and accommodate hand operation of equipment and the use of handling devices where necessary. Shielding materials should be fire-retardant or noncombustible. Consideration should be given to providing means for the addition of shielding that may be required due to changes in glovebox duty. A time-motion study should be performed with shielding calculations to evaluate personnel exposure. In addition, a reliability, availability, and maintain-

ability study may be performed to determine overall operability limits. This type of study may help maximize overall operability and provide guidance on redundancy features, safety enhancements, and preferred maintenance approaches to minimize worker exposure (10 CFR 20).

6.11 Waste Systems:

6.11.1 Radioactive Liquid Waste—Sufficient holdup capacity should be provided for the retention of liquid process wastes until they can be analyzed and shown to be within acceptable limits for discharge. In the event that a discharge of liquid wastes to external sumps is provided, liquid traps or seals are necessary to retain ventilation integrity.

6.11.2 Solid Waste Containing Radioactivity—Provisions should be made for the safe collection, packaging, storage, removal, and disposal of solid waste generated in the operation of the glovebox systems. Gloveboxes intended for use with metallic plutonium shall have provisions for the safe storage, handling, and removal of plutonium scrap materials, small irregular pieces, and particulate residues. Disposal containers, such as scrap buckets, shall be configured in terms of size, geometry, and glovebox atmosphere in a manner such as to preclude spontaneous ignition or other pyrophoric reaction. Provisions and ergonomic considerations should be included in the design of the glovebox to accommodate solid waste transfers, that is, bagout ports, double-door transfer ports, etc.

6.12 Monitoring and Alarm Systems:

6.12.1 Ventilation System Interface—Indicating instruments shall be provided for all essential system operating parameters. These parameters include pressure differentials, safety control valve positions, and temperatures that may indicate space or equipment overheating problems. Alarms should be provided at a continuously manned control panel to annunciate any abnormal operating condition of essential instrumentation.

6.12.2 Gaseous Effluents—Provisions shall be made to enable the sampling of effluents from the glovebox system to be exhausted through ducts or stacks. The probes of fixed samplers shall be designed for isokinetic sampling in accordance with ANSI N13.1.

6.12.3 Fire Detection—Gloveboxes should be equipped with fire detection devices best suited for each specific glovebox operation and the chemical form of the plutonium, as described in NFPA 72 and DOE-HDBK-1081-94.¹¹ All components should be approved by a nationally recognized testing laboratory. The type, spacing, sensitivity, and location of the detectors shall be designed to ensure rapid response. All fire detectors and automatic extinguishing systems shall be alarmed. The fire alarm annunciators shall be sufficiently subdivided to indicate the location of the fire, and should annunciate locally, and at a continuously manned or otherwise monitored control panel. The alarms should be both audible and visible.

6.12.4 Service Systems—The failure of power to the glovebox or a any safety system failure should annunciate an alarm.

¹¹ Handbook on Primer of Spontaneous Heating and Pyrophoricity, Available to the public from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Technology Administration, National Technical Information Service, Springfield, VA 22161.

6.13 *Safeguards*—Requirements to meet safeguards systems must be considered as they impact the design of gloveboxes.

6.14 *Decommissioning*—Requirements for decontaminating, dismantling, and disposal of the glovebox should be factored into the materials selection and design considerations of the glovebox. Any material, fitting, or component that would be a hazardous waste in accordance with the Resource Con-

servation and Recovery Act (RCRA) when disposed should be identified, documented, and a waste path determined early in the design process (40 CFR 260–279).

7. Keywords

7.1 glovebox; nuclear materials handling; plutonium

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