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Surrogate Formulations for Thermal Treatment of Low-Level Mixed Waste, Part I: Radiological Surrogates

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

U.S. Department of Energy
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Incinerator Research Facility
International Working Group on Fast Reactors
degrees kelvin
Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory
Mixed Waste Integrated Program
polychlorinated biphenyl
polyvinyl chloride
Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976
supercritical water oxidation process
yttrium-aluminum-garnet (laser)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The evaluation and comparison of proposed thermal treatment systems for mixed wastes can be expedited by tests in which the radioactive components of the wastes are replaced by surrogate materials chosen to mimic, as far as is possible, the chemical and physical properties of the radioactive materials of concern. In this work, sponsored by the Mixed Waste Integrated Project of the U.S. Department of Energy, we have examined reported experience with such surrogates and suggest a simplified standard list of materials for use in tests of thermal treatment systems.

The chief radioactive nuclides of concern in the treatment of mixed wastes are ²³⁹Pu, ²³⁸U, ²³⁵U, ¹³⁷Cs, ¹⁰³Ru, ⁹⁹Tc, and ⁹⁰Sr. These nuclides are largely by-products of uranium enrichment, reactor fuel reprocessing, and weapons program activities. Cs, Ru, and Sr all have stable isotopes that can be used as perfect surrogates for the radioactive forms. Technetium exists only in radioactive form, as do plutonium and uranium. If we wish to preclude radioactive contamination of the thermal treatment system under trial burn, surrogate elements must be chosen for these three. For technetium, we suggest the use of natural ruthenium, and for both plutonium and uranium, we recommend cerium. The seven radionuclides listed can therefore be simulated by a surrogate package containing stable isotopes of ruthenium, strontium, cesium, and cerium.

1. INTRODUCTION

The various U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) research and development sites have accumulated quantities of waste that contain both radioactive elements and other toxic compounds such as hazardous organics and toxic metals, as well as other more innocuous materials. These wastes are known as "mixed wastes." DOE's EM-50 "Mixed Waste Integrated Program" (MWIP) seeks a rationale for safe treatment or disposal of this mixed waste.

An ultimate aim of the waste disposal process is to release the host organization from the expensive responsibilities of containing and safely storing the waste. The disposal of radioactive and toxic substances is regulated by federal and state laws and must be carried out in accordance with these legal requirements. The requirements for ultimate disposal of certain wastes are still in the process of being formulated. This is particularly the case for high-level radioactive waste.

Existing mixed wastes are in various forms.¹ The containment of these wastes is a dynamic situation, with many wastes stored in metal drums or tanks that may be subject to corrosion. While the legal situation for ultimate disposal evolves, it is prudent to consider means for reducing the volume of stored mixed waste and the risk associated with storing it. To be useful, treatment processes need to meet certain requirements as well as comply with legal emission limits.

The treatment system must be an economic one. That is, a system that adds to the ultimate cost of disposal is pointless. A system that succeeds in transforming toxic waste to a "safer" form is not necessarily desirable if its cost exceeds the total life cycle cost of safely storing the existing waste. Treatment systems generally aim at retaining and encapsulating long-lived radioactive elements in a physically stable glassy matrix that meets the leach tests mandated for long-term storage of such material by the regulations of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). If mixed wastes contain valuable metals, it may be desirable to provide means for their recovery as an integral part of the treatment process.

2. THERMAL TREATMENT

Thermal treatment involves heating mixed wastes in an attempt to reduce their volume, to bind and enhance retention of toxic substances, and possibly to recover valuable resources. Frequently, the heating is accompanied by chemical reactions, such as oxidation, which may result in the destruction of toxic organic compounds. Less desirable outcomes such as the generation of nitrogen oxides or the conversion of toxic inorganic materials to more volatile forms may also occur. In addition, complications can arise when the waste containers are themselves directly involved in the reaction processes. For instance, uranium-iron eutectic mixtures formed by the melting of steel containers could result in uranium vapor pressures different from those over the pure metal.

A number of thermal treatment systems are in active development. They include microwave and Joule-heating systems, rotary-kiln and fluidized-bed reactors, and fixed-hearth and centrifugal plasma-arc systems.² Within each of these categories, individual systems can vary widely from one another in the range of operating conditions in the primary combustion chamber, and in the nature of the air pollution control systems required to ensure compliance with the legally regulated emission limits. Systems can often be operated in either a reducing or an oxidizing mode, and several key temperatures may need to be considered within a single system. The internal temperature of a plasma arc can be as high as 10,000–15,000 K, though the melt temperature in the primary chamber is usually ~ 1500 K.³ Temperatures in fluidized-bed and rotary-kiln incinerators are likely to be in the 1000–1500 K region.⁴ Examples of thermal treatment systems include the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) rotary-kiln incinerators at the Oak Ridge, Tennessee, K-25 Site, DOE's only permitted system for burning of organic mixed wastes;⁵ the fluidized-bed incinerator at the Rocky Flats Plant in Colorado;⁶ the fixed-hearth plasma-arc systems in Butte, Montana, and Basel, Switzerland.⁸

3. SURROGATE WASTE PACKAGES

Thermal treatment systems larger than lab scale represent major investments. Both to protect this investment and to ensure that emissions during the testing phase do not exceed mandated levels, it is desirable to use simulated waste packages that mimic, as closely as possible, the physical and chemical properties of the actual wastes. These "surrogate" waste packages should be of minimum toxicity, inexpensive, easily handled and fed to the system, and composed of ingredients that are readily obtainable and easily mixed. In addition, the ingredients should not react with one another in unforeseen ways, should be conveniently detectable, and should not alter flame temperatures or other operating conditions from those expected under actual treatment conditions. Last, the composition of the surrogate should be kept as simple at is consistent with the demands of the testing. Testing protocols must ensure minimum variation between surrogate feeds so that there is consistency within a series of tests on a specific thermal treatment system and consistency between tests on different systems.

3.1 REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCEPTABLE SURROGATES

Unfortunately, the surrogate requirements discussed in Sect. 3 are difficult to meet, even at the elemental level, except in the special case of certain radioactive nuclides of concern, where stable isotopes of the same element can provide a perfect surrogate. Examples of nuclides for which stable isotopes are available are ¹³⁷Cs, ⁹⁰Sr, and ¹³¹I. Different elements have uniquely different chemical and physical properties, so for complete accuracy there can be no substitutions. The situation is further complicated by the degree of complexity likely to be encountered under actual treatment conditions, where many substances are present and the reaction conditions vary from point to point within the primary reaction chamber. A substance that is an excellent surrogate choice at one temperature may not mimic the chemical or physical properties of the waste at another. We have used an approach involving a chemical database and thermodynamic equilibrium calculations in which the Gibbs free energy of the system is minimized at a specific temperature. We have compared elements of most concern from the radioactive viewpoint with possible surrogate elements under simplified reaction conditions where thermodynamic equilibrium is assumed. While this is a reasonable first approach, many uncertainties exist. Actual thermal treatment conditions are expected to be very dynamic. Even if the feed is constant, thermodynamic equilibrium is only a limit, and may or may not be a good approximation depending on the nature of the reactions taking place and their rates. Reaction kinetics and particle formation within the primary chamber may be extremely important. A further difficulty involves the range of temperatures to be considered. Information on temperature distributions within incineration systems is scanty. For a system such as the plasma-arc, in which temperatures within the arc itself are known to be extremely high (10,000-15,000 K), we do not know what temperature is applicable to the primary burn: that is, to the volume in which the initial waste feed is being vaporized. Most likely it is high, but not as high as the arc temperature itself. In our comparisons, temperatures up to 5000 K have been considered. This is a reasonable but conservative approach since other thermal treatment systems such as the rotary kiln and fluidized bed operate at burn temperatures in the 1000-1500 K range. It should be noted that thermodynamic data for temperatures above ~2000 K are in short supply for many compounds. Predictions for higher temperatures, such as those shown in the highertemperature phase stability diagrams provided in the Appendix (Figs. 1-25 and 29-31), usually rely upon extrapolations.

In either the fixed-hearth or centrifugal plasma-arc geometry, the melt is exposed periodically to the plasma torch. On casting and solidification, the melt becomes the stable matrix binding the metallic isotopes of concern. The temperature cycling of the melt itself may therefore be important since the melt may also contribute significantly to the emissions from the primary chamber.

3.2 RADIOISOTOPES

The radioisotopes of chief interest are shown in Table 1, together with some potential surrogates. The radioisotopes ²³⁸U, ²³⁵U, and ²³⁹Pu in DOE wastes are largely by-products of uranium enrichment, reactor fuel reprocessing, and weapons program activities. The fission products ⁹⁹Tc, ⁹⁰Sr, ¹⁰³Ru, and ¹³⁷Cs are long-lived isotopes from fission reactor fuel reprocessing. They are important because their radioactive half-lives are long and their atomic weights are located near the two chief fission yield peaks. They also have biological significance. Cesium is similar to sodium and potassium, and strontium is a "bone seeker" similar to calcium. Cesium, strontium, and ruthenium all have stable isotopes that can be used as perfect surrogates for the radioactive forms. Technetium exists only in radioactive form, as do plutonium and uranium. If we wish to preclude radioactive contamination of the thermal treatment system under trial burn, surrogate elements must be chosen for these three.

Radioisotope	Surrogate	Surrogate qualities	
238U/235U	Мо	Ubiquitous; models volatility of oxides	
	Pr	Unique, fluorescent; models volatility	
" Тс	Mn	Ubiquitous, similar chemistry; models volatility	
	Re	Unique, similar chemistry; volatility uncertain	
	Ru	Unique; models volatility	
¹³⁷ Cs	Natural Cs	Nonradioactive, nonhazardous	
⁹⁰ Sr	Natural Sr	Nonradioactive, nonhazardous	
²³⁹ Pu	Ce	Unique; models volatility	
¹⁰³ Ru	Natural Ru	Unique; doubles as ⁹⁹ Tc surrogate	

Table 1. Radiological/fission product surrogates

Table 2 is taken from the report Development and Use of Sintered Metal Filters with Fluidized Bed and Spray Calcination of Simulated High-Level Waste by W. J. Bjorklund.⁹ Bjorkland's report describes work done at Pacific Northwest Laboratories in Richland, Washington, in the mid 1970s. It is considered here as a good example of previous use of surrogates for radioactive materials. It also includes some discussion of surrogates for radioactive Rb, Y, Re, Rh, and Pd and for the transuranics Np, Am, and Cm. We will not be concerned with these elements in the present report. Comments on surrogate cost are prominent in Table 2. We will return to this issue in Sect. 3.9.

Waste constituent to be substituted	Reason for substitution	Substitute used ⁴	
Rb	Expense	К	
Y and Re	Expensive to simulate fission product spectrum	Commercially available rare earth mixtures	
Тс	No nonradioactive isotopes	Мо	
Ru	Expense	Fe	
Rh	Expense	Со	
Pd	Expense	Ni	
Cs ^b	Expense	К	
U, Np, Pu, Am, and Cm	No nonradioactive isotopes	Rare earths	

Table 2. Chemical stand-ins used to simulate nonradioactive high-level waste

 Substitutes shown are those that have been used in the Waste Fixation Program at Pacific Northwest Laboratory. ١

• Substituted in engineering-scale tests only.

3.3 HSC CHEMISTRY AND PHASE STABILITY DIAGRAMS

The program HSC Chemistry⁹,¹⁰ contains a large chemical database and algorithms for calculations of reaction outcomes, heat and material balances, equilibrium compositions, phase stability diagrams, and electrochemical equilibria. The title "HSC" stands for enthalpy (H), entropy (S), and heat capacity (C). The programs and database have been developed and improved during a period of 10 years by Antti Roine and collaborators at Outokumpu Research Oy in Finland. The version used here is the latest, Version 1.10 for Windows, dated January 1, 1993. We have used HSC Chemistry extensively in this report. It appears to be the most accessible of a number of available programs including the excellent F*A*C*T package available through the McGill University Computing Center.¹¹ We have obtained equivalent results using F*A*C*T and HSC for several calculations when input data and databases were the same. All calculations within either program yield thermodynamic equilibrium outcomes. HSC contains two databases, labeled "main" and "own." The user will normally add new or updated information, in the prescribed H, S, C format for a given temperature, to the "own" database. The program allots this precedence over information from the "main" database but searches both for all relevant input to a given calculation.

In searching for suitable surrogates for Tc, U, and Pu, we have generated phase stability diagrams for these elements and potential surrogates over the temperature range 1000-5000 K. Phase stability diagrams are convenient tools for general comparisons of chemical properties at temperatures likely to be encountered in thermal treatment of wastes. The phase stability diagrams generated by HSC Chemistry are two-dimensional plots for a specified reaction temperature that show the predicted main condensed chemical phases for the element in question as functions of the pressure (in atmospheres) of two reaction partners. In our work, we selected the reaction partners oxygen and chlorine, and oxygen and hydrogen. Most incinerator burns of mixed waste are expected to contain a certain fraction of halogen-containing material, such as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), polyvinyl chloride (PVC), or the like, so the oxygen-chlorine case is an important one. Some incinerator systems contain large quantities of material that strongly binds halogens. This is the case in the Rocky Flats fluidized-bed incinerator, which contains a bed of sodium carbonate that will rapidly bind chlorine. In this case, the oxyhydroxides of refractory metals such as uranium and plutonium are thought to be the most volatile compounds at certain temperatures.¹² For this reason we have also run phase stability diagrams for the oxygen-hydrogen case if data are available. The axes of the diagrams generated for this report cover a much larger range than is employed in thermal treatment. Rather than narrow these ranges, we have retained, in most cases, the default HSC diagrams to illustrate chemical similarity over a wide parameter range.

For many elements, diagrams were generated for 1000, 2000, and 5000 K. For Tc, U, and Pu and for the most likely surrogate choices, phase stability diagrams were generated for 1000, 2000, 3000, 4000, and 5000 K. The candidate surrogates chosen for comparison are essentially baced on choices that seemed reasonable from the periodic table. The elements of the lanthanide series are formed by successive filling of the inner 4f orbitals, while the actinides are formed by the filling of the 5f orbitals. The lanthanides thus show many chemical and physical similarities to the actinides, so we have concentrated on them in the search for surrogates for plutonium and uranium, while also including diagrams on the refractory metals molybdenum and tungsten for comparison with uranium. We generated Ru, Re, and Mn phase stability diagrams for comparison with Tc (stable Ru is likely to be present already as a surrogate for 103 Ru), and in line with Table 2, we have also considered Mo.

We emphasize that the nature of the calculated phase stability diagrams and the accuracy of comparisons drawn from them depend on the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the database. In addition, the species shown in the HSC phase stability diagrams are those for the condensed phase only. In the thermal treatment context, these diagrams are most relevant to predictions of the nature of the melt and to the composition of ash and other residuals rather than to the nature and composition of volatile emissions. In selecting surrogates, both residuals and volatile emissions are important. In Sect. 3.7 we discuss the question of volatility in more detail before turning to a final suggested list of surrogates.

3.4 SURROGATES FOR ⁹⁹Tc

Looking at the oxygen-chlorine phase stability diagrams for Tc (Figs. 1a-1e), and comparing them with those for Ru (Figs. 2a-2e), Re (Figs. 3a-3e), and Mn (Figs. 4a-4c), we can make the following comments:

- Tc₂O₇ is likely to be the dominant phase for reasonable oxygen concentrations and low chlorine concentrations.
- As the chlorine concentration increases, TcCl₅ will become increasingly important. The database contains no information on oxychlorides, which may also be important.
- The phase stability diagrams for Ru, Re, and Mn all show similarities to those for Tc. Ruthenium metal vapor is a more dominant phase at high temperatures than is the case for Tc or the others. At temperatures near 2000 K, rhenium is probably the best overall surrogate match to technetium. At higher temperatures, near 5000 K, ruthenium and rhenium each have advantages. If the quantity of oxygen and chlorine is relatively low in the burn, it is possible that the metal vapor phase would be dominant for technetium and ruthenium but that rhenium would be in oxide form (Re₂O₇). Manganese appears to be the worst overall match; though, for a reasonable range of operating conditions, particularly with low chlorine, a combination of manganese oxides would track Tc₂O₇ fairly well.
- Overall, rhenium appears to be the best match to the properties of technetium. However, if stable isotopes of ruthenium are added to any surrogate mixture as a surrogate for ¹⁰³Ru, it is probably desirable in the interest of simplicity to use stable ruthenium as the surrogate of choice for technetium also.
- The database contains no information on hydrides and oxyhydrides of Tc, Ru, Re, or Mn.

Table 2 suggests the use of molybdenum as a surrogate for technetium. If we compare Figs. 1a-1e for the Tc-O₂-Cl₂ system with Figs. 25a-25e for Mo-O₂-Cl₂, we see that data on technetium oxychlorides are lacking in the HSC database. Apart from this, similarities exist in the two sequences, with the oxides Tc_2O_7 and MoO₃ probably playing a dominant role. If molybdenum were chosen as a surrogate for uranium, perhaps an argument could be made for including it as the surrogate also for technetium. In Sect. 3.6, we argue against the selection of either tungsten or molybdenum as a surrogate for U based on the apparent comparative importance of the oxychloride phases for tungsten and molybdenum at higher temperatures, relative to the situation for uranium. Because of this, and because of the lack of oxychloride information for technetium, making a good comparison with molybdenum is difficult. Thus, using natural ruthenium as a surrogate for Tc. However, this situation could be influenced by cost considerations because molybdenum is much less expensive than ruthenium. Rhenium is an order of magnitude even more expensive. Later in this report, Sect. 3.9 and Table 6 provide some information on the cost issue.

3.5 SURROGATES FOR ²⁹Pu

The lanthanides have properties similar to those of the actinides in many ways. Bates has briefly discussed surrogates for U, Pu, and Am: "While there are no perfect surrogates for these radionuclides, cerium is generally the most conservative (best simulates their behavior). Other less conservative surrogates of plutonium, in the degree of similarity to plutonium are: neodymium > lanthanum > praseodymium > gadolinium > ytterbium > dysprosium > erbium > europium > terbium > lutetium > samarium.¹³ Cerium has been recently used as a surrogate for plutonium in waste treatment investigations employing the supercritical water oxidation process (SCWO). This study was performed at the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory by Shapiro, Garcia, and Bella.¹⁴ Though their work applies to a much lower temperature regime than that encountered in most thermal treatment systems, we mention it here because it lends further credibility to the use of cerium as a surrogate for plutonium. Shapiro, Garcia, and Bella¹⁴ concluded that cerium could be considered a reasonable surrogate for plutonium bearing in mind the following points:

- Cerium exhibits a similar chemistry in that much of its aqueous solution chemistry is similar to that of plutonium.
- Cerium exhibits an oxidation state different from that of plutonium, so it is not directly analogous.
- Cerium potentially can form the strongly oxidizing ceric ion in the SCWO process and enhance rapid corrosion of the reactor.
- Some of cerium's atomic characteristics do not perfectly match those of plutonium, though they are closer than those of other available surrogates.

Cerium has recently been used as a surrogate for plutonium to study various electrorefining parameters.¹⁵ In this context, a comparative study of the physical and chemical properties of cerium and plutonium was carried out by Raraz, Mishra, and Averill.¹⁶ They concluded, "The prominent similarities include the electronic structure, specific heat, standard electrode potential, electrical resistivity, thermodynamic stability of chlorides and oxychlorides, and volume expansion upon solidification. Melting and boiling points, thermal conductivity, density, viscosity, atomic weight, heat of fusion and coefficient of thermal expansion are the prominent dissimilarities that are likely to affect the electro-refining process."

Zirconium can also be an excellent surrogate for plutonium in the low-temperature range when water is present.¹⁷ It readily hydrolyzes to form polymeric species containing both oxoand hydroxy groups, just as plutonium does.

Figures 5a-5e are phase stability diagrams for the plutonium-oxygen-chlorine system, and Figs. 6a-6e are diagrams for the plutonium-oxygen-hydrogen system. Figures 7a-7e and 8a-8e correspondingly describe the cerium-oxygen-chlorine and cerium-oxygen-hydrogen systems from 1000 to 5000 K. It can be seen that a good match exists between oxygen-chlorine data for plutonium and cerium, with the exception that the oxychloride phase is missing in the cerium data. Polycrystalline CeOCl has recently been prepared by Del Cul in connection with Raman and luminescence studies of lanthanide oxyhalides,¹⁸ but the thermodynamic data necessary for its inclusion in the HSC database have yet to be obtained. In the plutonium diagrams, the oxychloride phase becomes less important as the temperature increases. Its absence in the cerium output does not significantly change the fact that, on the basis of these diagrams, cerium appears to be an excellent surrogate for plutonium for most operating conditions. The oxygen-hydrogen diagrams for plutonium and cerium are also essentially similar if allowance is made for the absence of the oxyhydroxide phase from the cerium database. This information has only recently become available for plutonium (and for uranium) due to the experiments of Krikorian and Ebbinghaus and their coworkers at LLNL.¹⁹ These experiments were performed in support of the fluidized-bed incinerator at the Rocky Flats Plant. As mentioned previously, the Rocky Flats system contains sodium carbonate particles in the bed, resulting in low effective halogen concentrations. Under these circumstances, the oxyhydroxides are thought to be the most volatile compounds. In comparing the plutonium and cerium diagrams, allowance also needs to be made for the fact that PuH_2 and PuH_3 both appear, whereas only CeH_2 is shown. This also may be a deficiency of the database. Clearly, additional experimental data on cerium in connection with the oxyhydroxide, hydride, and oxychloride phases would be valuable. Nevertheless, cerium does appear to be a reasonable surrogate for plutonium.

For completeness, Figs. 9-21 show phase stability diagrams for the remaining lanthanides, Nd, La, Pr, Gd, Yb, Dy, Er, Eu, Tb, and Sm. For Nd, La, and Pr, the database contains some information on hydrides, so in these cases oxygen-hydrogen phase stability diagrams are included. Praseodymium and europium are perhaps more interesting to consider as components of a surrogate package than are the other lanthanides, with the exception of cerium, since europium fluoresces in the red and praseodymium in the green when exposed to ultraviolet light.¹⁸ Use of one or both of these materials might permit easy tracking of "hold up" material in thermal treatment systems. The praseodymium phase stability diagrams, Figs. 13a-13e and 14a-14e, are very similar to those of cerium, and with the same provisos with respect to oxyhydroxide, hydride, and oxychloride data, are also similar to plutonium. A good case might thus be made for addition of praseodymium to a surrogate package provided that costs are not too high. Since observed fluorescence intensities for samples, taken say from the primary chamber after a trial burn, will depend both upon the praseodymium density and upon the nature of the sample (its transparency and the form of the bound praseodymium), a rational approach may be to include praseodymium together with cerium in one or two pretests to check the feasibility of the technique. Reference 18 presents a diagram of the "free" ion energy levels of the trivalent lanthanides. With ultraviolet excitation, say from the third harmonic of a pulsed yttrium-aluminum-garnet (YAG) laser (335 nm) or N₂ laser (337 nm), or from a mercury-xenon or mercury arc (various filtered wavelengths <400 nm), efficient conversion within the matrix to the characteristic atomic emissions is expected.²⁰ For praseodymium, the emission of interest is in a band from 454 to 476 nm, and for europium, it is in a band from ~ 670 to 780 nm.²¹ We have recently attempted to observe green fluorescence from both black Pr₆O₁₁ powder and pale green PrO₂ powder irradiated with near ultraviolet light ($\sim 250-390$ nm) from a mercury arc and with 266-nm pulsed YAG fourth-harmonic laser light. We were unable to see any visible green fluorescence. The nature of the sample may be important, or perhaps observations more sensitive than those by the unaided eye are needed.

3.6 SURROGATES FOR URANIUM

Figures 22a-22e and 23a-23e are phase stability diagrams for the uranium-oxygenchlorine and uranium-oxygen-hydrogen systems, respectively. The uranium oxyhydroxide data supplied with the HSC Chemistry program have been updated by new measurements kindly supplied by the LLNL group.^{19,22} When the uranium phase stability diagrams are compared with those for cerium (Figs. 7 and 8), qualitative similarities are evident. Differences also occur in that uranium shows a number of chlorides, whereas cerium shows only one; the oxychloride phase is absent in cerium as noted in Sect. 3.5. This phase appears to be relatively unimportant in uranium. The database contains no information on cerium oxyhydroxide.

Both molybdenum and tungsten have been suggested as surrogates for uranium. As metals, they are even more refractory than uranium. Figures 24 and 25 show phase stability diagrams for tungsten and molybdenum. These diagrams clearly show a major difference from those for uranium in that the oxychloride phase becomes dominant for both tungsten and molybdenum as the temperature increases. This is not the case for uranium, and suggests that tungsten or molybdenum may be a poor surrogate choice for uranium in systems such as the plasma-arc in which first-burn temperatures are likely to be high. Either cerium or praseodymium may be a better choice for such systems. It should also be mentioned that cerium has been used as a surrogate for uranium with some success recently in tests of the ambient temperature magnetic separation process. In this process, micron-sized particles of paramagnetic materials are removed from a slurry pumped through a strong inhomogeneous magnetic field.²³

3.7 VOLATILITIES

Phase stability diagrams can provide a guide to incineration chemistry provided that the elements and temperatures chosen are the dominant ones and that the database contains complete and correct information. To ensure good choices of surrogates, compound volatilities should also be compared. Figures 5 and 7 indicate that PuO_2 and CeO_2 are important contributors to plutonium and cerium volatility at low chlorine and hydrogen concentrations.

Messier²⁴ has investigated the effusion of $PuO_{1.82}$ from a Knudsen cell in the temperature range from 2070 to 2380 K and has fitted the data to an analytical expression of the form

$$\log p = A - B/T,$$

where p is the vapor pressure in atmospheres, T is the temperature in degrees kelvin, and A and B are constants. Similar studies have been performed on CeO_2 by Ackermann and Rauh.²⁵ These results are plotted on an extrapolated temperature range using the program MathCad in Fig. 26. The curve P is that for $PuO_{1.8}$, and the curves Q and R are those for CeO_2 . The P and Q curves show quite good agreement over the entire extrapolated temperature range of the plots in Fig. 26. Even the R CeO_2 curve is well within an order of magnitude of the PuO_{1.82} result over the temperature range of most interest (2000-5000 K). This result reinforces the choice of cerium as a surrogate for plutonium.

Figure 27 shows similar plots for UO_2 . The P and Q plots in this figure were obtained from expressions listed in the *Gmelin Handbook of Inorganic Chemistry*, Supplement C5.²⁶ The P curve is that recommended by the International Working Group on Fast Reactors (IWGFR). The R curve is the result of a least squares fit to earlier data quoted in *The Chemistry of Uranium* by Katz and Rabinowitch.²⁷ Figure 28 shows the quality of a log-linear 1/T least squares fit to the Katz and Rabinowitch data.

The P and R UO₂ curves in Fig. 27 are very similar to the P and Q curves in Fig. 26, i.e., to the $PuO_{1.82}$ and CeO_2 (over congruently evaporating Ce_2O_3) results. This again implies that, as far as the dioxide is concerned, cerium is a good choice as surrogate for uranium. Volatility data for the compounds of most interest to us here are scarce, and Figs. 26 and 27 indicate the kinds of uncertainties and temperature extrapolations involved in using the data that are available.

Recently, Waterland and Fournier have reported on the results of a series of trace metal partitioning tests performed at EPA's Incinerator Research Facility (IRF).²⁸ Their work concentrated on the search for potential surrogates for the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) metals and did not include the species of direct interest in this report. The data, however, indicated that metal partitioning among incinerator system discharges can largely be explained using only vapor pressure/temperature relationships for metal species in thermodynamic equilibrium. Specifically, they suggest that if the volatility temperatures of two metals are similar, then their partitioning within the incinerator systems should be similar and their discharges also similar. The volatility temperature is defined as the temperature at which the "effective" vapor pressure of a metal is 10^{-6} atm. The effective vapor pressure is defined as the combined equilibrium vapor pressures of all species containing the metal, reflecting the quantity of metal that would vaporize under a given set of conditions. In some cases (Sr, Mg, and Cr), the correlations with the observed incinerator run data are good for the Waterland and Fournier study, while in others (Mg and Ba; Bi and Cd; and Bi and Cu vs As, Ba, and Pb), the validity of this approach is less apparent. The volatility temperature calculations were based on the metal and oxide vapor pressures only. In these tests, feed materials were in the form of soluble nitrates with the exception of arsenic, which was added as As_2O_3 . As discussed in the section that follows, nitrate feed can influence emission results under certain conditions. Chlorine content of the burn was also varied from zero to several percent. At the higher percentage values, chlorides and oxychlorides are likely to play a significant role in the incineration equilibrium and should be taken into account in calculating the volatility temperature. Figures 29a and 29b are phase stability diagrams for the Bi-O₂-Cl₂ system at 1000 and 2000 K, respectively. The oxychloride (BiOCl) phase is expected to play a major role based on these equilibrium calculations. Figures 30a and 30b are similar plots for the Cu- O_2 -Cl₂ system. Here CuCl is predicted to be the dominant phase at moderate to low Cl₂ and O₂ concentrations. Figures 31a and 31b show similar results for magnesium. In this case, the chloride phase (MgCl₂) is less dominant, but still important at higher temperatures. Nevertheless, the data of Waterland and Fournier emphasize the general importance of volatility criteria in selecting surrogates for use in thermal treatment systems.²⁸

The Gibbs program section of HSC Chemistry may be employed to estimate volatility temperatures. This program finds the phase combination and composition where the Gibbs energy of the system reaches its minimum value at an initially specified fixed mass balance. The program can also display mole fractions of the gaseous species present in equilibrium as a function of temperature under the fixed mass balance constraint. From this, vapor pressures can be obtained. Table 3 shows calculated volatility temperatures of the rad-metals of concern

	With 0% Chlorine		With 10% Chlorine	
Metal	Volatility Temperature(°C)	Principal Species	Volatility Temperature	Principal Species
Uranium	1210	UO3	1210	UO ₃
Plutonium	3560 (1880) ^a	Pu (PuO ₂)	3550 (1880)°	Pu (PuO ₂)
Ruthenium	775	RuO₄	760	RuO₄
Cesium	375	CsOH/Cs2(OH)2	500	CsCl
Strontium	1250	Sr(OH) ₂	925	SrCl ₂
Cerium	3030 (1734) ^a	CeO (CeO ₂)	1430	CeCl ₃
Zirconium	2700	ZrO ₂	2700	ZrO ₂
Molybdenum	480	$MoO_2(OH)_2$	190	MoO ₂ Cl ₂
Manganese	1580	MnO	525	MnCl ₂

Table 3. Volatility temperature of rad-metals and surrogates

Values in parentheses are obtained from the expressions for the oxide vapor pressures in Figs. 26 and 27.

together with a number of potential surrogates. The two chlorine sets of Table 3 are calculated for 0.1 mole of metal, 10 moles of O₂, 10 moles of H₂O, 0 or 10 moles of Cl₂ (0 or 10%), and 80 or 70 moles of Ar, respectively. The results are not sensitive to the quantity of metal within the range of 0.1 to 1 mole, and for metals with higher volatility temperatures, frequently are insensitive to metal loading orders of magnitude higher. Table 4 lists the species, in both gas and condensed phases, invoked in the HSC database for these calculations. It should be noted that UO_{2} , PuO_{2} , CeO_{2} , and Pu chlorides gas phase data are not present in Table 4. This creates special difficulties for the U, Ce, and Pu cases. The numbers in Table 3 in the parentheses for these cases have been obtained from the vapor pressure expressions for the oxides shown in Figs. 26 and 27. It should be noted that the predicted volatility temperature of Ce is sensitive to the percentage of chlorine, changing from 1900°C to 1430°C as the chlorine percentage is increased from 5% to 10%. Table 5 shows surrogates chosen from Table 3, i.e., based on volatility temperature alone. It can be seen that the recommended choices are very similar to those arrived at earlier using phase stability diagrams and other considerations. This similarity gives us confidence that our choices are rational ones from the point of view of emissions as well as from that of the thermal treatment residuals such as the melt and ash.

3.8 EFFECTS OF PHYSICAL AND CHEMICAL NATURE OF SURROGATE FEED MATERIAL

The document Trial Burn Manual for the Testing of Metals is currently being prepared by a number of authors with coordination by J. Hillary of EG&G Idaho, Inc.²⁹ Initial chapters of this manual address issues associated with the physical and chemical form of metal feed materials. Draft copies of Chapter 1, "Mechanisms Governing the Fate of Metals During Combustion," by J. Wendt, University of Arizona, and Chapter 2, "Waste Streams," by

	Metal Species under Consideration		
	Gas Phase	Condensed Phase	
Uranium (U)	UO ₃ , U, UCl ₃ , UCl ₄ , UCl ₅ , UCl ₆ , UO ₂ (OH) ₂	U, UCl ₃ , UCl ₄ , UCl ₅ , UCl ₆ , UH ₃ , UO, UO ₂ , UO ₃ , UO ₃ (G), U ₃ O ₆ , U ₄ O ₉ , UOCl, UOCl ₂ , UOCl ₃ , UO ₂ Cl ₂ , UO ₃ ·H ₂ O	
Plutonium (Pu)	PuO ₂ (OH) ₂ , PuO ₃ , Pu	Pu, PuCl3, PuH2, PuH3, PuO, PuO2, Pu2O3, PuOCl	
Ruthenium (Ru)	Ru, RuCl3, RuCl4, RuO3, RuO4	Ru, RuCl ₃ , RuO ₂ , RuO ₄	
Cesium (Cs)	Cs, Cs ₂ , CsCl, Cs ₂ Cl ₂ , CsO, Cs ₂ O, CsOH, Cs ₂ (OH) ₂	Cs, CsCl, Cs ₂ Cl ₂ , CsO ₂ , Cs ₂ O, Cs ₂ O ₂ , Cs ₂ O ₃ , CsOH	
Strontium (Sr)	Sr, SrCl, SrCl ₂ , SrH, SrO, SrOH, Sr(OH) ₂	Sr, SrCl ₂ , SrH ₂ , SrO, SrO ₂ , Sr(OH) ₂	
Cerium (Ce)	CeCl ₃ , CeO	Ce, CeCl ₃ , CeH ₂ , CeO ₁₇₂ , CeO ₁₈₃ , CeO ₂ , Ce ₂ O ₃	
Zirconium (Zr)	Zr, ZrCl, ZrCl ₂ , ZrCl ₃ , ZrCl ₄ , ZrH, ZrO, ZrO ₂	Zr, ZrCl ₂ , ZrCl ₃ , ZrCl ₄ , ZrO ₂	
Molybdenum (Mo)	Mo, MoCl ₄ , MoCl ₅ , MoCl ₄ , MoO, MoO ₂ , MoO ₃ , MoOCl ₃ , MoOCl ₄ , MoO ₂ Cl ₂ , MoO ₂ (OH) ₂	Mo, MoCl ₂ , MoCl ₃ , MoCl ₄ , MoCl ₅ , MoCl ₄ , MoO ₂ , MoO ₂₇₅ , MoO ₂₈₇₅ , MoO ₂₈₈₉ , MoO ₃ , MoOCl ₃ , MoOCl ₄ , MoO ₂ Cl ₂	
Manganese (Mn)	Mn, MnCl, MnCl ₂ , MnO	Mn, MnCl ₂ , MnCl ₃ , MnCl ₄ , MnO, MnO ₂ , Mn ₂ O ₃ , Mn ₃ O ₄	

Table 4. Metal species considered in equilibrium calculations

Table 5. Recommended surrogates based on volatility temperature

	Surrogate(s)		
Rad-Metal	Nonchlorinated Waste	Chlorinated Waste	
²³⁶ U/ ²³⁵ U	Mn	Ce	
²³⁹ Pu	Ce	Zr (Ce)	
¹⁰⁰ Ru	Ru, Mo	Ru, Mn	
¹³⁷ Cs	Cs, Mo	Cs, Mn	
*°Sr	Sr, Mn	Sr, Mn	

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J. Hillary, EG&G Idaho, are currently available. Though the emphasis in this document is on the toxic metals regulated by RCRA, much of the reasoning and most of the general comments and conclusions are equally applicable to our report. In particular, Chapter 1 contains a good introduction to the effects of chemical speciation and physical form of the feed on the formation of submicron particles likely to pass through the air pollution control systems and escape from the thermal treatment plant. What follows in this section are some short comments largely derived or quoted from this chapter.

In selecting a metal surrogate, the object is to mimic as closely as possible, but in a conservative way, the behavior of the actual metal as incorporated in the mixed waste. By "in a conservative way," we mean that surrogate emissions should, if anything, be greater than those of the actual metal. Certainly they should not be less. The form of the surrogate feed can influence this situation.

Frequently, the waste metal will initially be contained in contaminated soils or in mixed sludges and slurries. Upon introduction of the substances to a hot furnace, an inorganic mixture will be formed containing both the toxic metal and potential scavenging agents, such as clays and glasses commonly found in many industrial waste streams. Much of the toxic metal will normally react with the clay or glass, and only a little will be released to form a condensible vapor;³⁰ however, it should be noted that deviations from calculated equilibria based on selected pure condensed phases can occur.^{30,31} If the surrogate is fed in a chemical form different from that of the toxic metal or is n t well mixed with the bulk waste (which becomes the clay or glass scavenging agent), it is not clear that its fate will be equivalent.

The primary forms of the toxic metal—reactive metal compound, porous char, and inorganic mixture—undergo further physical transformations in the furnace environment into the following different physical forms: metal vapor, porous metal ash particle, cenospheric (hollow) ash spheroidal particle, or dense ash particle. Upon cooling, the vapor may nucleate to form tiny particles that can subsequently coagulate (homogeneous condensation), it may condense on existing particles (heterogeneous condensation), or it may chemically react on the surface of existing particles or sorbents. The first two processes require the partial pressure of the metal to exceed its vapor pressure at the ruling temperature (supersaturated vapor); the last does not require this. A key point in considering the nature of the initial feed is that chlorinated species have much higher vapor pressures than do the oxide or hydroxide. This means that the presence of chlorine has a very large influence on the volatility of toxic metal. If mixtures of metals are to be tested, but single metals will occur in practice, a large excess of chlorine should be added to yield conservative results (i.e., maximum metal vaporization).

Metal vapor may not be a prerequisite to forming a submicron fume. Mulholland and Sarofim have shown that certain metal nitrates (e.g., nickel nitrate) form hollow cenospheres, which explosively fragment into tiny submicron particles.³² Since nickel nitrate has a low vapor pressure, one would not expect it to vaporize and subsequently condense into tiny nuclei. However, in the experiments of Mulholland and Sarofim, as many submicron particles were formed from nickel nitrate, which did not vaporize, as from lead and cadmium nitrates, which did.³² Since nitrates are soluble in water, the nitrate form has been favored in the past as a convenient route for introducing test metals. Mulholland and Sarofim suggest that the criterion for cenosphere formation and bursting is that the viscous relaxation time be comparable to the nitrate decomposition time.³² During decomposition of the nitrate to the oxide, the release of nitrogen dioxide and oxygen in the core of the viscous melt results in bubble nucleation and growth. When the viscosity during decomposition is sufficiently low that the viscous relaxation time is much less than the nitrate decomposition time, the gas bubble escapes before the shell hardens. As a result, a dense particle forms from the evaporated nitrate droplet. When the viscous relaxation time is much greater than the nitrate decomposition time, a porous particle results. When the two times are comparable, cenosphere formation and bursting occurs. This implies that a critical range of viscosities occupies the region between 10^2 and $10^3 N \cdot s/m^2$ (see Fig. 32). If surrogates are to be fed in nitrate form, it seems advisable to take this criterion into account.

3.9 COST, PURITY, AND SUPPLIERS OF SURROGATE COMPOUNDS

The cost of a surrogate material will depend upon the quantity needed. Other important considerations are its cost relative to that of the testing procedures, and the capital investments involved in the thermal treatment plant. Table 2 contains some comments on cost and suggests, for instance, the use of potassium as a substitute for cesium and the use of iron as a substitute for ruthenium. More exact chemical and physical analogues to radionuclides may be well worth paying for if surrogates are to be used to help qualify emerging technologies for potential use in thermal treatment of mixed wastes. The regulatory and legal issues involved in using surrogates and the relevance of these issues to the "permitting process" have not been fully examined. The issues of surrogate standardization and distribution within the thermal treatment industry also remain open. As an aid to dealing with the issue of surrogate cost, we include Table 6, which lists costs, chemical forms, and suppliers of various potential surrogate materials.

3.10 SURROGATE RECOMMENDATIONS

It is clear that the process of surrogate selection is a complex one from both the scientific and the "real world" points of view. Any proposed list of surrogates necessarily contains compromises. It must draw on previous practical experience and on intuitions and suggestions obtained through modeling. Our knowledge of the complex processes occurring in thermal treatment systems and our ability to model them are both limited. The chemical databases involved are incomplete, and information on relevant kinetics is only slowly accumulating. Nevertheless, from the information and arguments presented in the preceding sections, it seems reasonable to suggest the following surrogates for the radioactive elements listed in Table 1:

Surrogate	
Ce (natural cerium)	
Ru (natural ruthenium)	
Cs (natural cesium)	
Sr (natural strontium)	
Ce (natural cerium)	
Ru (natural ruthenium)	

Radioactive surrogates	Cost	Assay	Impurities	Supplier/comments
CaCO,	\$7.45/lb @ 100 lb	>99.0%	Na - 0.1% Sr - 0.1% Cl - 0.001%	Spectrum Chemicals (800) 772-8786; (908) 214-1300 powder, hygroscopic
CaO	\$1.25/lb @ 100 lb	>95% CaO	N/A	Spectrum/powder, moisture sensitive
Ca(NO ₃) ₂	\$4.25/ìb @ 100 lb	99.0-103.0% as Ca(NO ₃) ₂ • 4H ₂ O	Cl - 0.005% Ba - 0.005% Heavy metals (as PB) - 0.005%	Spectrum/crystal
MoO3	\$17.80/1b @ 55 lb	>99.5%	0.002% Cl Heavy metals (as Pb) - 0.005 %	Spectrum/powder
Mo(CO ₃),	None in Alfa, Sigma, Cerac, Chemical Buyers Directory			
Mo(NO3)6				
K,CO,	\$1.65/Ib @ 100 lb	>99.0%	N/A	Spectrum
KNO,	\$3.75/Ib @ 110 lb	>99.0%	Cl - 0.002% Heavy metals (as Pb) - 0.005%	Spectrum
	\$3 55/h @ 100 lb	>99%		Spectrum/crystal or granular
SrCO,	\$1.40/lb @ 100 lb	98.0%	BaCO ₃ - 0.5% CaCO ₃ - 0.5%	Barium & Chemicals (614) 282-9776 powder—10µm
6-010)	\$1.60/b @ 100 lb	>99.0%		Barium chemicals powder - 200 mesh
$Sr(OH)_2$	\$4.75/1000 lb order			Barium chemicals

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Table 6.	Cost and related	information for	potential	radioactive surr	ogates
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Table 6 (continued)						
Radioactive surrogates	Cost	Assay	Impurities	Supplier/comments		
CeO2	\$55/500g	>99.9%		Aldrich Chemicals (800) 231-8327		
Ce ₂ O ₃	\$949/500g	99.9%		Cerac Inc. (414) 289-9800		
Ce(CO ₃) ₃	\$60/kg @ 100 kg			Alchemie USA Inc. (203) 621-2470		
Ce(NO ₃),	\$214/2 kg	99.5% (metals basis), crystals		Alfa (800) 343-0660		
	\$2.90/lb @ 300 lb	39% aqueous solution		Molycorp (914) 997-8880		
Cs ₂ CO ₃	\$185/kg @ 100 kg	>99.5%	N/A	Alchemie -40 mesh powder		
Cs ₂ O	\$171/50 g	99% (metals basis)		Alfa/<2.5 cm yellow brown pieces		
CsOOCCH,	\$78.00/250 g	Technical		Alfa/lump		
Pr ₆ O ₁₁	\$16.80/Ib @ 300 Ib	96%	<3% Nd <1% Ce	Molycorp		
Pr(NO3)3. 6H2O	\$87.00/ 250 g	99.9% (metals basis)		Alfa/green crystalline		
Pr ₂ (CO ₃) ₃ ·8H ₂ O	\$47.00/100 g	99.9% (metals basis)		Alfa/crystalline		
ReO ₂	\$181/10 g	99.9% (metals basis)		Alfa/black powder		
RuO. XH.O	\$182/25 g	58% Ru		Alchemie/black powder		

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We suggest that the surrogate "spike" package for the radioactive species be composed of the stable oxides of the various elements discussed where these exist, i.e., CeO_2 , Pr_2O_3 , and RuO_2 . For cesium and strontium, the pure metals are flammable under normal atmospheric conditions and the oxides readily hydrolyze. The nitrates or carbonates may be suitable choices (but see Sect. 3.8, "Effects of Physical and Chemical Nature of Surrogate Feed Material"). The issue of chlorine addition to the thermal treatment system is a very important one, which must be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. It is possible that in certain cases, use of the surrogate in chloride form may be more desirable and/or economical than other choices. Another important point is that of possible burn temperature changes caused by surrogate feed. Indirect evidence from the K-25 Site TSCA incinerator indicates that uranium metal within the feed results in high effective uranium burn temperatures and formation of submicron particulates contaminated with uranium.³³ Sulfides or organometallics will tend to raise burn temperatures (they can be combustible), while most other forms will tend to lower the burn temperature if enough surrogate is fed. Again, these factors must be considered on a case-by-case basis.

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Appendix A











Fig. 2a. Phase stability diagram for ruthenium-oxygen-chlorine at 1000 K.
























Fig. 5b. Phase stability diagram for plutonium-oxygen-chlorine at 2000 K.





Fig. 5d. Phase stability diagram for plutonium-oxygen-chlorine at 4000 K.







Fig. 6c. Phase stability diagram for plutonium-oxygen-hydrogen at 3000 K.

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Fig. 7d. Phase stability diagram for cerium-oxygen-chlorine at 4000 K.



Fig. 8a. Phase stability diagram for cerium-oxygen-hydrogen at 1000 K.







Fig. 8e. Phase stability diagram for cerium-oxygen-hydrogen at 5000 K.















Fig. 11b. Phase stability diagram for lanthanum-oxygen-chlorine at 2000 K.



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Fig. 13a. Phase stability diagram for praseodymium-oxygen-chlorine at 1000 K.



Fig. 13b. Phase stability diagram for praseodymium-oxygen-chlorine at 2000 K.



Fig. 13d. Phase stability diagram for preseodymium-oxygen-chlorine at 4000 K.



Fig. 14a. Phase stability diagram for praseodymium-oxygen-hydrogen at 1000 K.



Fig. 14c. Phase stability diagram for praseodymium-oxygen-hydrogen at 3000 K.











Fig. 15b. Phase stability diagram for gadolinium-oxygen-chlorine at 2000 K.



Fig. 16a. Phase stability diagram for ytterbium-oxygen-chlorine at 1000 K.



Fig. 16c. Phase stability diagram for ytterbium-oxygen-chlorine at 5000 K.









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Fig. 20a. Phase stability diagram for terbium-oxygen-chlorine at 1000 K.



Fig. 20c. Phase stability diagram for terbium-oxygen-chlorine at 5000 K.



Fig. 21b. Phase stability diagram for samarium-oxygen-chlorine at 2000 K.


Fig. 22a. Phase stability diagram for uranium-oxygen-chlorine at 1000 K.







Fig. 22e. Phase stability diagram for uranium-oxygen-chlorine at 5000 K.







Fig. 23d. Phase stability diagram for uranium-oxygen-hydrogen at 4000 K.



Fig. 24a. Phase stability diagram for tungsten-oxygen-chlorine at 1000 K.



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Fig. 25d. Phase stability diagram for molybdenum-oxygen-chlorine at 4000 K.



Fig. 25e. Phase stability diagram for molybdenum-oxygen-chlorine at 5000 K.



Fig. 26. Comparison of $PuO_{1.82}$ and CeO_2 vapor pressures.

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Fig. 28. Fit to Katz and Rabinowitch (1951) UO₂ vapor pressure data.



Fig. 29. Phase stability diagrams for bismuth-oxygen-chlorine. (a) At 1000 K, (b) at 2000 K.



Fig. 30. Phase stability diagrams for copper-oxygen-chlorine. (a) At 1000 K, (b) at 2000 K.



Fig. 31. Phase stability diagrams for magnesium-oxygen-chlorine. (a) At 1000 K, (b) at 2000 K.



Fig. 32. Characteristic viscous relaxation time for a $4-\mu m$ particle expanding to 10 μm . Also shown is the characteristic time for nitrate decomposition (dashed-dotted line) for a $4 \mu m$ particle at a furnace temperature of 1200 K. Variations in the results of calculations using a wide range of metal nitrate properties are indicated by error bars. This diagram is Fig. 7 of ref. 32 (Mulholland and Sarofim), reproduced by permission of copyright holder.

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