

Australian Standard™

**Plastic materials—Determination of the
ultimate aerobic biodegradability in an
aqueous medium—Method by analysis
of evolved carbon dioxide**

This Australian Standard was prepared by Committee EV-017, Degradability of Plastics. It was approved on behalf of the Council of Standards Australia on 27 January 2005. This Standard was published on 7 April 2005.

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Australian Chamber of Commerce
Australian Conservation Foundation Inc
Australia Retailers Association
Department of Environment and Heritage (Federal)
Keep Australia Beautiful National Association
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PREFACE

This Standard was prepared by Standards Australia Committee EV-017, Degradability of Plastics.

This Standard is identical with and has been reproduced from ISO 14852:1999, *Determination of the ultimate aerobic biodegradability of plastic materials in an aqueous medium—Method by analysis of evolved carbon dioxide*.

The objective of this Standard is to specify a method, for measuring the amount of carbon dioxide evolved for the determination of the degree of aerobic biodegradability of plastic materials, including those containing formulation additives.

As this Standard is reproduced from an international Standard, the following applies:

- (a) Its number does not appear on each page of text and its identity is shown only on the cover and title page.
- (b) In the source text 'this International Standard' should read 'this Australian Standard'.
- (c) A full point substitutes for a comma when referring to a decimal marker.
- (d) An upper case 'L' substitutes for 'l' when referring the symbol for the unit, litres.

EV-017 agreed that readers of the Standard should be advised that in Clause 7.1, the conical flask should be reinforced for safety.

The term 'informative' has been used in this Standard to define the application of the appendix to which it applies. An 'informative' appendix is only for information and guidance.

The references to International Standards should be replaced by references to the following Australian Standards.

<i>ISO Standards</i>		<i>Australian Standards</i>	
ISO		AS	
10634	Water quality—Guidance for the preparation and treatment of poorly water-soluble organic compounds for the subsequent evaluation of their biodegradability in an aqueous medium	4351	Biodegradability—Organic compound in an aqueous medium
		4351.6	Guidance for the determination of biodegradability of poorly soluble organic compounds

Only international references that have been adopted as Australian Standards have been listed.

INTRODUCTION

With the increasing use of plastics, their recovery and disposal have become a major issue. As a first priority, recovery should be promoted. Complete recovery of plastics, however, is difficult. For example, plastic litter, which comes mainly from consumers, is difficult to recover completely. Additional examples of plastics which are difficult to recover are fishing tackle, agricultural mulches and water-soluble polymers. These plastic materials tend to leak from closed waste-management cycles into the environment. Biodegradable plastics are now emerging as one of the options available to solve such environmental problems. Plastic materials, such as products or packaging, which are sent to composting facilities should be potentially biodegradable. Therefore it is very important to determine the potential biodegradability of such materials and to obtain an indication of their biodegradability in natural environments.

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