The Magee Scientific

Carbonaceous Aerosol Speciation System (CASS)

Discussion Topics concerning the use of Carbonaceous Aerosol Speciation System (CASS)

to deduce the "TC, BC, EC and OC" content of aerosols

Berkeley, Ljubljana February 2020

Executive Summary

The Magee Scientific Carbonaceous Aerosol Speciation System (CASS), is a combined unit of a TCA08 Total Carbon Analyzer, and the Magee Scientific Aethalometer® AE33, providing a revolutionary scientific instrument that measures the Total Carbon Content ("TC"), the Elemental Carbon content (EC), the Organic Carbon content (OC) and the Black Carbon content (BC) of suspended aerosol particles in near-Real Time.

Carbonaceous (OC + EC) matter is usually the largest contributor to PM2.5 mass. Conventional thermal analysis for the 'EC/OC' content of aerosols gives data that is highly dependent on the thermal analysis protocol that is used: 'NIOSH' vs. 'IMPROVE' vs. 'EUSAAR'. The Magee Scientific TC-BC Method yields data that is in the 'center' of this range, but which can be related to primary reference standards.

The mathematical principle is simple:
Total Carbon (TC) = Black (or Elemental) Carbon (BC, EC) + Organic Carbon (OC).

Measure TC with the TCA-08;
Measure BC with the AE33 Aethalometer;
Derive OC immediately in near-Real Time.

The AE33 also identifies 'Brown Carbon' (BrC) by multi-wavelength optical analysis, to separate Biomass Smoke from Fossil Fuel Emissions.

The combination unit CASS thus provides a complete identification and quantitation of the carbonaceous component of ambient aerosols in near-Real Time:

BC ("EC") ; BrC ; OC : TC

in a rugged instrument package suitable for laboratory and Air Quality monitoring applications. The equipment contains "No Glass", and requires "No Gas".

Carbonaceous Aerosols

Carbonaceous aerosols are extremely diverse and are frequently the largest and most important fraction of fine particulate matter mass (PM2.5) (Turpin, 2001; Solomon, 2008). They impact air quality, visibility, climate forcing, cloud nucleation, the planetary radiation balance, and public health.

The carbonaceous fractions are frequently separated into organic carbon (OC) and elemental carbon (EC) based on their volatility using thermal-optical methods. Although the combined measurement of total carbon (TC) concentration is usually reliable, (Karanasiou, 2015), the results for the separation of OC and especially EC fractions vary significantly for different thermal analysis methods (Schmid, 2001; tenBrink, 2004; Bae, 2009).

Colorless 'organic' (OC) compounds usually comprise the largest carbon-containing fraction of ambient aerosols: often more than 50% of the PM2.5 mass. A smaller fraction is categorized as Light-Absorbing Carbon ("LAC"), often described in terms of Black ("BC") and Brown ("BrC") Carbon (Petzold, 2013); or 'Elemental' Carbon ('EC') which is defined instrumentally by thermal analysis methods.

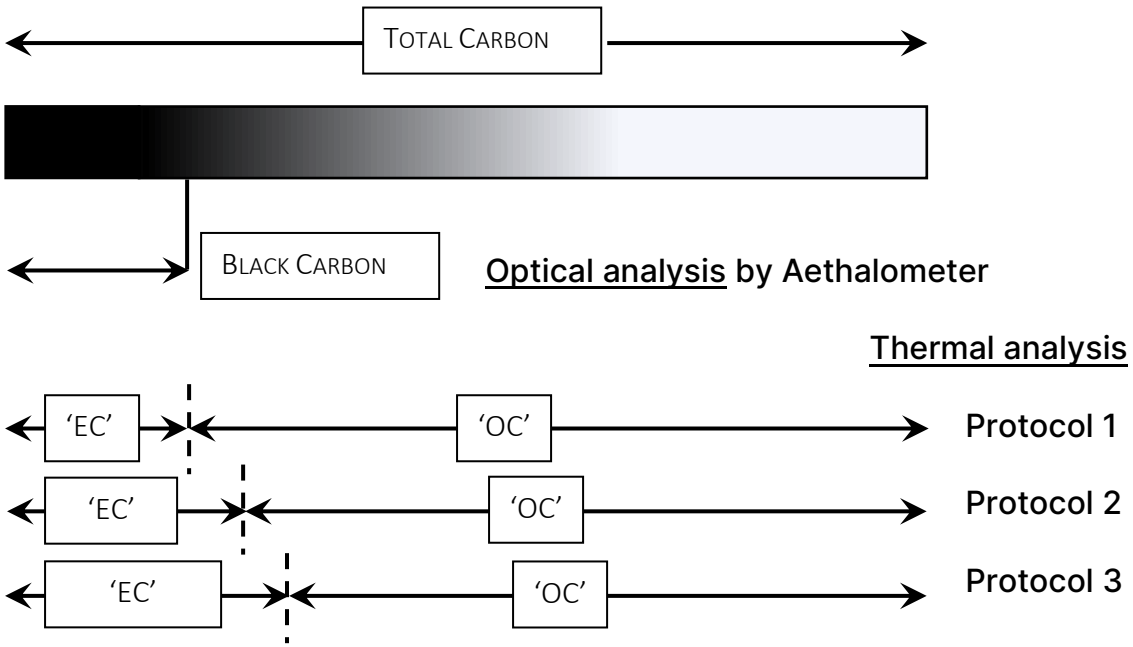
The measurement of Black Carbon (BC) is based upon the absorption of light by carbon in a micro-crystalline graphitic structure (Rosen and Hansen, 1978). This fraction of the total carbon has a very clearly identifiable physical-chemical structure. The measurement of Optical Attenuation can be related to primary photometric standards, (e.g., NIST SRM 8785) and the measurement method may be validated in the field by means of traceable optical test elements (e.g., the Magee Scientific "Neutral Density Optical Filter Kit").

Black Carbon is the major portion of the less-thermally-volatile material. When subjected to thermal analysis, this material is generally denoted as 'Elemental Carbon', even though no definition of 'elementarity' exists. This fraction is defined by its decomposition in either inert or oxygen-containing atmospheres, but these definitions are dependent on the programming of the analytical instrument in terms of time, temperature and atmosphere. At present, three analytical protocols are commonly used: "IMPROVE-A"; "NIOSH"; and "EUSAAR".

Each of these thermal programs attempts (in different ways) to correct for the pyrolysis ("charring") of carbonaceous material, which can convert 'original organic material' into 'apparent elemental material'.

For many reasons, the "EC/OC" separation from the analysis of the same samples; using different thermal protocols; can differ by more than 50%, depending on other aspects of the aerosol sample's composition.

These methods and their differences may be summarized in the following diagram:



Thermal analysis methods usually agree quite well with each other for the determination of the Total Carbon content of the sample: but there may be substantial differences in the "EC/OC" partitioning, depending on the nature of the sample and the thermal protocol which is used for analysis.

Relationship between 'BC' and 'EC'

Part of CASS instrument is the Magee Scientific Aethalometer® model AE33 which measures the Black Carbon component of the ambient aerosol. This measurement is calibrated by comparison of Aethalometer Optical Attenuation versus NIST-traceable photometric standards; and may be validated in the field by the use of the Neutral Density Optical Filter Kit.

Original work by Harvard University (Figure 2, Babich et al., 2000) showed that the 'EC' analysis of ambient aerosol samples using the "IMPROVE" thermal protocol was related to the Aethalometer measurement of BC by a multiplicative factor of 1.3. In other words, the reported values of "elemental" carbon were larger than the data for Black Carbon, by a factor which could represent the effects of pyrolysis ('charring'). Other published work has reported ratios between 1.05 and 1.64 for "IMPROVE" analyses.

A large amount of published work has studied the relationship between Aethalometer BC and “elemental” EC, when thermal analysis was done using the “NIOSH” thermal protocol. These results show a ratio ranging from 0.52 to 0.81, with an average of 0.68. This implies that the EC value reported by “NIOSH” thermal analysis would be approximately only one-half of the EC value reported by “IMPROVE” analysis.

The published results from these analyses are summarized in Table 1.

Finally, the paper by Bae et al. (2009) shows that the comparative difference between ‘NIOSH’ and ‘IMPROVE’ analytical results for co-located sampling, may depend on aerosol composition, season, sources, and aging.

The split between ‘EC’ and ‘OC’ in conventional thermal analysis is not well defined, and depends on the settings and protocol of the thermal analysis used. There is no absolute definition nor standard for ‘elementarity’ that is not linked to the thermal protocol settings: whereas the measurement of Black Carbon by the Aethalometer is always related to primary photometric standards of “blackness”.

Any comparison of Black Carbon with a particular method for ‘EC’, must necessarily specify the ‘EC/OC’ thermal protocol, and acknowledge that the results will be different, if a different thermal protocol had been used.

Extensive research by Magee Scientific / Aerosol Co. has studied this relationship for a range of aerosols, in comparison to thermal analysis using ‘IMPROVE’, ‘NIOSH’ and ‘EUSAAR’ protocols.

Table 1: Published Work on relationship of 'BC' and 'EC'

EC/BC ratio	Thermal protocol	Location	Reference
0.52	NIOSH	Fresno, CA, USA	Chow Watson (2009): AR 93:874
0.57	NIOSH	Columbus, OH, USA	EPA ETV report 2014
0.63	NIOSH	Korea	Bae (2007): AE 41:2791 "Instrument NIER"
0.68	NIOSH	Boston, MA, USA	Kang (2010): JAWMA 60:1327 : impactor inlet
0.71	NIOSH	Boston, MA, USA	Kang (2010): JAWMA 60:1327
0.73	NIOSH	Korea	Bae: (2007): AE 41:2791 "Instrument UT"
0.74	NIOSH	Fresno, CA, USA	Park Chow (2006): JAWMA 56:474
0.76	NIOSH	Helsinki	Timonen (2014): Boreal Environ. Res. 19:71
0.81	NIOSH	Atlanta, GA, USA	Turpin Lim (2002): JGR-A "Atlanta Supersite":
1.05	IMPROVE	Uniontown, PA, USA	Allen (1999): AE 33:817
1.23	IMPROVE	Fresno, CA, USA	Park Chow (2006): JAWMA 56:474 : summer
1.25	IMPROVE	Pittsburgh, PA, USA	EPA ETV report 2001
1.31	IMPROVE	7 cities in US	Babich (2000): JAWMA 50:1095.
1.37	IMPROVE	Fresno, CA, USA	Chow Watson (2009): AR 93:874
1.39	IMPROVE	Fresno, CA, USA	EPA ETV report 2001
1.64	IMPROVE	Fresno, CA, USA	Park Chow (2006): JAWMA 56:474 : winter

Calculation of 'OC'

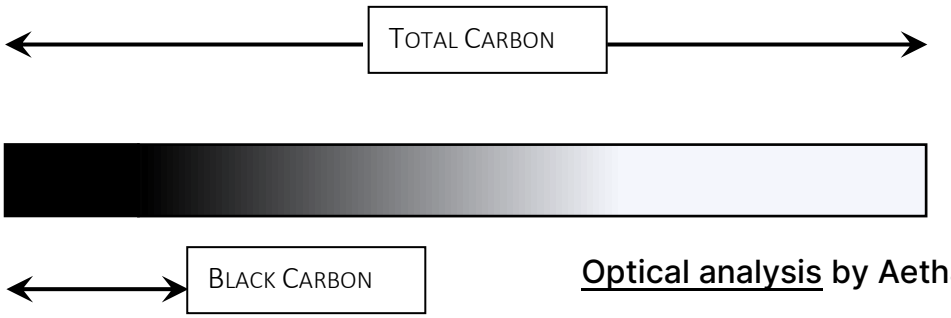
If
Total Carbon (TC) = Black (or Elemental) Carbon (BC, EC) + Organic Carbon (OC);

Then
Organic Carbon (OC) = Total Carbon (TC) - Black (or Elemental) Carbon (BC, EC).

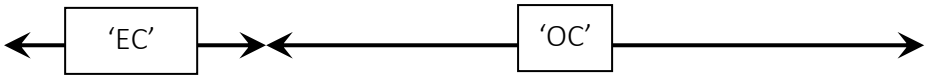
Table 1 (above) shows that parallel analysis of ambient aerosols by co-located thermal analyzers; but using different analytical protocols; shows radically

different relationship between 'EC' and 'BC'. Consequently, the definition of 'OC' is not absolute: instead, it depends on the thermal protocol which was used.

If a certain proportionality is used for the relation between Black Carbon and 'EC'; for example, '(IMPROVE) EC' = 1.3 x BC (Babich et al., 2000);
then this value may be used to calculate what the 'reported' value of OC would have been, if the sample had been analyzed thermally using the 'IMPROVE' protocol.



Multiply BC by 1.3 to estimate "IMPROVE EC": subtract from TC to derive 'OC'.



Fortunately, the 'OC' fraction of ambient aerosols is almost always much larger than the 'EC' fraction. Consequently, the relative uncertainty in an 'OC' determination is reduced. The following two examples illustrate the effect of the mathematics:

Reference	Protocol	EC	TC	Deduced OC
Kang	NIOSH	0.4	3.7	3.3
	IMPROVE	*0.8*		*2.9*
	Aethalometer BC	0.6		3.1
Park	IMPROVE	3.0	13.0	10.0
	NIOSH	*1.5*		*11.5*
	Aethalometer BC	2.2		10.8

The first row of data (in black font) is the actual reported data using the specified thermal protocol.

The second row (in *ITALIC BLUE* font) is the result that "would" have been calculated, if the alternative thermal protocol had been used.

The third row (in RED font) show an estimate of what the Aethalometer BC data might have been; together with the deduced result for 'OC' if that Aethalometer BC value had been used directly for subtraction.

The results for the calculation of OC show that if the direct Aethalometer 'BC' value is used, the resulting calculated 'OC' value is midway between the values that would have been obtained using either of the thermal protocols.

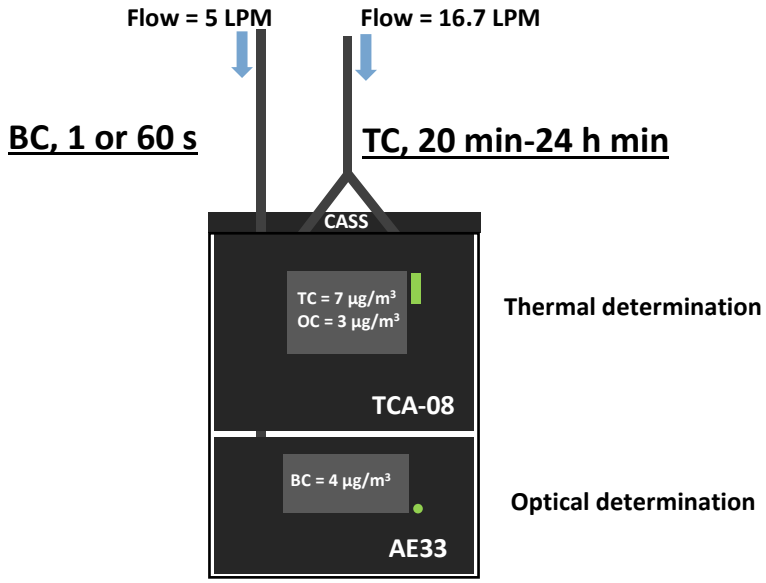
The Magee Scientific TC-BC Method

The principle of the Magee Scientific TC-BC Method is simple:

[1] to robustly measure the Total Carbon (TC) content of the ambient aerosol with CASS (TCA08);
[2] to robustly measure the Black Carbon (BC) content of the aerosol with CASS (AE33);
[3] to calculate the Organic Carbon (OC) content by simple subtraction, after choosing the definition of 'EC' by choosing its proportion to BC.

Simple Equipment Setup

The instrumental setup is simple: CASS consists of a AE33 Aethalometer coupled to the TCA-08 Total Carbon Analyzer. Each instrument is rugged, reliable, and suitable for field operations and are installed in a CASS housing (a defined 19 inch mounting rack) – a typical monitoring setup is shown below:



The TC and BC data are combined to yield the OC result by simple subtraction.

Applications and Utility of the Carbonaceous Aerosol Speciation System (CASS)

The CASS – Carbonaceous Aerosol Speciation System is designed for routine and unattended analysis of ambient aerosols.

It provides a complete speciation and quantitation of the carbonaceous component of ambient aerosols in near-Real Time: BC ("EC") ; BrC ; OC : TC

This equipment package is designed for operation at routine Air-Quality monitoring stations; at scientific research project sites, even at the most remote locations; and in laboratory studies. The unique advantages of the CASS – Carbonaceous Aerosol Speciation System may be summarized very simply:

No Gas

No Catalyst

No Glass

Rugged, Reliable

High Time Resolution

Designed for Routine, Unattended Field Operation

The Carbonaceous Aerosol Speciation System (CASS) has been crafted for simple and complete characterization of the carbonaceous ambient aerosols (Total Carbon, Elemental Carbon, Organic Carbon, Black Carbon and Brown Carbon) and has been widely tested at leading research institutes across the globe and consequently scientifically proven for reliable and autonomic operation.

For further information, detailed specifications, price quotations or to request a demonstration: please contact us as shown on the end-pages of this report.

References

(copies available on request)

Allen, G. A. et al., (1999), "Field validation of a semi-continuous method for aerosol black carbon (Aethalometer) and temporal patterns of summertime hourly black carbon measurements in southwestern PA.", Atmos. Environ, 33, 817-823.

Babich, P., et al., (2000), "Method Comparisons for Particulate Nitrate, Elemental Carbon, and PM2.5 Mass in Seven U.S. Cities", J. Air & Waste Mgmt. Assn., 50, 1095-1105.

Bae, M.-S., et al., (2009), "Seasonal variations of elemental carbon in urban aerosols as measured by two common thermal-optical carbon methods", Sci. Tot. Environ., 407, 5176-5183.

tenBrink, H., et al., (2004), "INTERCOMP2000: the comparability of methods in use in Europe for measuring the carbon content of aerosol", Atmos. Environ., 38, 6507-6519.

Chow, J. C., et al. (2009), "Aerosol light absorption, black carbon, and elemental carbon at the Fresno
Supersite, California", Atmos. Res. 93, 874–887.

Kang, C.-M., et al., (2010), "Hourly Measurements of Fine Particulate Sulfate and Carbon Aerosols at the Harvard–U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Supersite in Boston", J. Air & Waste Mgmt. Assn., 60, 1327-1334.

Karanasiou, A., et al., (2015), "Thermal-optical analysis for the measurement of elemental carbon (EC) and organic carbon (OC) in ambient air a literature review", Atmos. Meas. Tech. Discuss., 8, 9649-9712.

Park., K., et al., (2006), "Comparison of Continuous and Filter-Based Carbon Measurements at the Fresno Supersite", J. Air & Waste Mgmt. Assn., 56, 474-491.

Petzold, A., et al., (2013), "Recommendations for the interpretation of "black carbon" measurements", Atmos. Chem. Phys. Discuss., 13, 9485-9517.

Rosen, H., and A. D. A. Hansen, (1978), "Identification of the optically absorbing component in urban aerosols", Appl. Opt., 17, 3859-3861

Schmid, H., et al., (2001), "Results of the `carbon conference' international aerosol carbon round robin test stage I", Atmos. Environ., 35, 2111-2121.

Solomon, P. A., et al., (2008), "Key Scientific Findings and Policy- and Health-Relevant Insights from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Particulate Matter Supersites Program and Related Studies: An Integration and Synthesis of Results", J. Air & Waste Mgmt. Assn., 58, S3-S92.

Turpin, B. J., and H.-J. Lim, (2001), "Species Contributions to PM2.5 Mass Concentrations: Revisiting Common Assumptions for Estimating Organic Mass", Atmos. Sci. &Technol., 35, 602-610.

Contact

https://www.aerosolmageesci.com/

In Europe, Asia, and Africa, please contact:
Aerosol d.o.o., Kamniška 39 A, SI-1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia, EU
tel: +386 1 4391 700

In the US, please contact:
Aerosol USA Corp., 1916A M.L. King Jr. Way, Berkeley CA 94704, USA
tel: +1 510 646 1600
or the distributor responsible for your country.

AEROSOL
MAGEE SCIENTIFIC

Berkeley, Ljubljana, February 2020