7.0 What Reagents and Standards Do I Need?

You will need to use attenuators (i.e., neutral density filters) to check the daily calibration drift and calibration error of a COMS. Attenuators are designated as either primary or secondary based on how they are calibrated.

7.1 Attenuators are designated primary in one of two ways:

(1) They are calibrated by NIST; or

(2) They are calibrated on a 6-month frequency through the assignment of a luminous transmittance value in the following manner:

(i) Use a spectrophotometer meeting the specifications of section 6.3 to calibrate the required filters. Verify the spectrophotometer calibration through use of a NIST 930D Standard Reference Material (SRM). A SRM 930D consists of three neutral density glass filters and a blank, each mounted in a cuvette. The wavelengths and temperature to be used in the calibration are listed on the NIST certificate that accompanies the reported values. Determine and record a transmittance of the SRM values at the NIST wavelengths (three filters at five wavelengths each for a total of 15 determinations). Calculate a percent difference between the NIST certified values and the spectrophotometer response. At least 12 of the 15 differences (in percent) must be within ±0.5 percent of the NIST SRM values. No difference can be greater than ±1.0 percent. Recalibrate the SRM or service the spectrophotometer if the calibration results fail the criteria.

(ii) Scan the filter to be tested and the NIST blank from wavelength 380 to 780 nm, and record the spectrophotometer percent transmittance responses at 10 nm intervals. Test in this sequence: blank filter, tested filter, tested filter rotated 90 degrees in the plane of the filter, blank filter. Calculate the average transmittance at each 10 nm interval. If any pair of the tested filter transmittance values (for the same filter and wavelength) differ by more than ±0.25 percent, rescan the tested filter. If the filter fails to achieve this tolerance, do not use the filter in the calibration tests of the COMS.

(iii) Correct the tested filter transmittance values by dividing the average tested filter transmittance by the average blank filter transmittance at each 10 nm interval.

(iv) Calculate the weighted (to the response of the human eye), tested filter transmittance by multiplying the transmittance value by the corresponding response factor shown in table 1-1, to obtain the Source C Human Eye Response.

(v) Recalibrate the primary attenuators semi-annually if they are used for the required calibration error test. Recalibrate the primary attenuators annually if they are used only for calibration of secondary attenuators.

7.2 Attenuators are designated secondary if the filter calibration is done using a laboratory-based transmissometer. Conduct the secondary attenuator calibration using a laboratory-based transmissometer calibrated as follows:

(i) Use at least three primary filters of nominal luminous transmittance 50, 70 and 90 percent, calibrated as specified in section 7.1(2)(i), to calibrate the laboratory-based transmissometer. Determine and record the slope of the calibration line using linear regression through zero opacity. The slope of the calibration line must be between 0.99 and 1.01, and the laboratory-based transmissometer reading for each primary filter must not deviate by more than ±2 percent from the linear regression line. If the calibration of the laboratory-based transmissometer yields a slope or individual readings outside the specified ranges, secondary filter calibrations cannot be performed. Determine the source of the variations (either transmissometer performance or changes in the primary filters) and repeat the transmissometer calibration before proceeding with the attenuator calibration.

(ii) Immediately following the laboratory-based transmissometer calibration, insert the secondary attenuators and determine and record the percent effective opacity value per secondary attenuator from the calibration curve (linear regression line).

(iii) Recalibrate the secondary attenuators semi-annually if they are used for the required calibration error test.