

2. SAMPLE PREPARATION

- a) Cuttings
Cuttings samples are inspected by our qualified geological staff and then water washed according to the drilling mud content and lithology. In special cases (e.g. diesel contamination) it is necessary to lightly solvent wash samples. After washing, the samples are air dried, either sieved or picked free of cavings, and crushed to 0.1mm using a ring pulveriser.
- b) Sidewall Cores
Sidewall samples are freed of mud cake and any other visible contaminants, and are also inspected for lithologic homogeneity. For homogeneous samples, the minimum amount of material required for the requested analyses is air dried and handcrushed to 0.1mm. For non-homogeneous samples, the whole sample is air dried and handcrushed to 0.1mm.
- c) Conventional Core and Outcrop Samples
These sample types are firstly inspected for visible contaminants, and where applicable, are freed of these contaminants to the best of our ability. Commonly, the surface of conventional core and outcrop samples are lightly solvent washed. The samples are then crushed to approximately 1/8" chips using a jaw crusher, air dried, and finally further crushed to 0.1mm using a ring pulveriser.
- d) Petroleum/Aqueous Mixtures
The most common sample type in this category are RFT tests containing oil, water and mud. The mixture is placed in a separation funnel and allowed to stand for several hours which enables the petroleum and water/mud fractions to separate. The neat petroleum is isolated by removal of the lower layer (water/mud) from the funnel. To remove the last traces of water and mud, the neat petroleum is centrifuged at moderate speed.

When the volume of petroleum accounts for only a very small part of the sample the method above is unsatisfactory and the petroleum is solvent extracted from the mixture with dichloromethane. The petroleum is recovered by careful evaporation of the solvent from the organic layer.

3. TOTAL ORGANIC CARBON DETERMINATION

The total organic carbon value (TOC) is determined on the unextracted sediment sample. The value is determined by treating a known weight of sediment with hot dilute HCl for 1 hour to remove carbonate minerals, and then heating the residue to 1700 Deg. C (Leco Induction Furnace CS-044) in an atmosphere of pure oxygen. The carbon dioxide produced is transferred to an infra-red detector which has been calibrated with a series of standards, and the microprocessor of the Leco unit then automatically calculates the % TOC in the sample. To ensure reliable data a standard is run after every 10 samples, regular sample repeats are carried out, and at least one blank determination is carried out for each batch of samples.

The following scales are normally used for source rock classification based on % TOC data: