

2.0 THEORY & METHODS

Samples are analysed according to the scheme illustrated in Figure 1 which shows the order and type of analysis for both screening and detailed tests.

2.1 Screening Analyses of Whole Rock Samples

2.1.1 Headspace/Cuttings Gas Analysis

The headspace sample is usually provided in a sealed tin can which holds both cuttings and water to approximately three quarters capacity. This allows the volatile hydrocarbons to diffuse easily into an appreciable headspace.

The gas is taken into a syringe through a silicone seal on the lid of the container and analysed by packed column gas chromatography using the following conditions:

Instrument:	Shimadzu GC-8APF
Column:	6'x 1/8" Chromosorb 102
Injector/Detector Temperature:	120° C
Column Temperature:	110° C
Carrier Gas:	Nitrogen

Cuttings gas analysis is performed in the same manner but on samples which do not liberate volatile gases readily. These sediments are subjected to very vigorous agitation prior to sampling.

Values are given as volume of gas per million volumes of sediment (ppm) for each hydrocarbon (methane, ethane, propane, iso- and n-butane), as composite values including C₅-C₇, and as ratios.

Headspace/cuttings gas analyses are used as a screening technique to identify zones of significant gas generation and out-of-place gas (Letran et al, 1974). The classification for gas content is listed below:

Total gas content (C ₁ ; C ₂ -C ₄ ; or C ₅ -C ₇)	Description
10 - 100ppm	very lean - lean
100 - 1,000	lean - moderate
1,000 - 10,000	moderate - rich
10,000 - 100,000	rich - very rich

The abundance of C₂-C₄ components (wet gas) is used to locate the zone of oil generation, since wet gas is commonly associated with petroleum (Fuex, 1977).

It is important to ensure that the gases analysed are not of a biogenic origin, so an anti-bacterial agent must be added to the cuttings when they are stored in water.