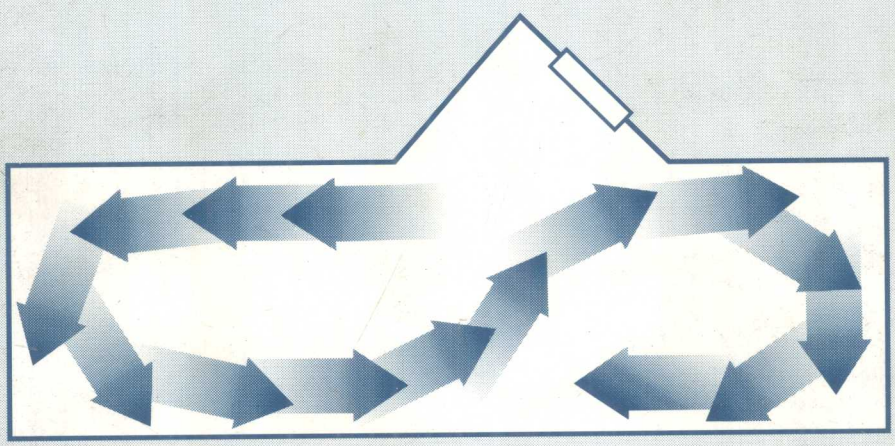
MODELING OF INDOOR AIR QUALITY AND EXPOSURE



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Foreword

This publication, *Modeling of Indoor Air Quality and Exposure*, contains papers presented at the symposium of the same name held in Pittsburgh, PA on 27–28 April 1992. The symposium was sponsored by ASTM Committee D-22 on Sampling and Analysis of Atmospheres and Subcommittee D22.05 on Indoor Air. Dr. Niren L. Nagda of ICF Incorporated in Fairfax, VA presided as symposium chairman and is the editor of the resulting publication.

Overview

Concern for the quality of air in buildings and exposures to toxic substances has been rising in recent years. Mathematical modeling of indoor air quality is commonly used to improve the understanding of chemical and physical processes that affect indoor pollutant concentrations and to predict indoor concentrations and human exposures under different situations.

Most indoor air quality models are based on the principle of conservation of mass: the accumulation of a contaminant is equal to the difference between the mass generated within or entering a particular air space and the mass leaving that air space. In this conceptual framework, pollutant concentrations are increased by emissions within a defined volume and by transport from other air spaces, including the outdoors. Similarly, concentrations are decreased by transport exiting the air space, by removal to chemical and physical sinks within the air space, or by conversion of the contaminant to other forms. Relationships are in the form of one or more differential equations representing the rate of accumulation and the contaminant gain and loss.

Models to quantify human inhalation exposure to contaminants need to consider air quality in various microenvironments such as residences, workplaces, and outdoors. Because many people spend a large fraction of their time indoors, inclusion of an indoor air quality model is an important component of total or 24-h exposure modeling. Another important component of exposure modeling is consideration of human activity patterns, that is, where and how people spend their time during the conduct of their daily activities.

In the past, simplifying assumptions have been made in modeling, such as a constant source rate over time, a negligible sink rate, steady-state conditions, or an isothermal air mass. In addition, activity patterns have not been considered or have been treated with simplistic assumptions. These may be appropriate assumptions under some limited circumstances but, to obtain greater generalizability and to better understand the behavior of indoor contaminants or the factors that affect exposures, it is important to examine situations in a more realistic manner.

This Special Technical Publication (STP) has been published as a result of the 1992 symposium entitled, "Modeling of Indoor Air Quality and Exposure" held in Pittsburgh, PA in an effort to present recent advances in various aspects of indoor air and exposure modeling. The papers presented at this symposium are grouped in three areas:

(1) Modeling and measuring sources and sinks,
(2) Model validation and application, and
(3) Modeling of exposures.

Research over the last several years has shown that emissions from indoor sources dominate indoor air concentrations and exposures much more so than factors such as ventilation. Understanding of complexities such as re-emitting sinks is just beginning. As sources and sinks are basic components of indoor air quality modeling, and considerations of sources and sinks are often linked, the papers on that subject form the first major section of the STP.

The second section of this STP contains papers that address a variety of indoor air quality modeling issues: validation of models, modeling of air flows, including consideration of computational fluid dynamics, and application of models to predict indoor air concentrations of contaminants. The third section extends considerations of indoor air quality modeling to exposure modeling. Activity patterns are treated as assumed scenarios, as measured profiles for specific individuals, and as general mobility patterns for subgroups defined by factors such as age and occupation.

Individuals who are involved in indoor air quality and exposure research can use this STP to assess the state-of-the-art, and as a foundation to further on-going research. The STP will assist environmental and public health officials with responsibilities in the areas of indoor air quality and public health in understanding the impact of various factors on indoor concentrations and exposure. With the diversity of topics covered in this STP, all focused towards modeling, it should be a valuable resource for undergraduate and graduate students and faculty.

The remainder of this overview provides some highlights of the papers included in the STP.

Modeling and Measuring Sources and Sinks

Clausen et al. determined time-varying profiles for emissions of cyclohexanone and phenol from a vinyl floor covering using two 234-L chambers and a much smaller, 0.035-L chamber. The emission rates of both compounds decreased rapidly during the first 24 h followed by a much slower decrease over the next several days. The experimental data for the initial period indicated evaporation-controlled emissions; the authors have suggested diffusion-controlled emissions for the period after the first 24 h. However, parameters for the diffusion-controlled model could not be reproduced with the data collected from this study.

Keating and McKone measured and modeled the water-to-air transfer efficiency for trichloroethylene (TCE) during showering using a specially constructed chamber and different nozzles. As expected, the nozzle producing smallest drop diameters had the highest transfer efficiency. Significant differences were observed between measured air concentrations and those predicted using transfer efficiencies and air exchange rates. The authors examined possible impacts of various factors such as measurement precision, aerosol concentrations, scavenging, deposition, and incomplete mixing. In a different study, Borrozzo et al. measured partition coefficients for TCE and ethanol to nylon, wool, polypropylene, jute, styrene-butadiene rubber (SBR), glass, cotton and polyester surfaces, as well as partition coefficients for chloroform, tetrachloroethylene, and p-dichlorobenzene to nylon, cotton, wool, and glass surfaces. For nonpolar species, sorption to polypropylene and SBR was greater than sorption to nylon or wool. For polar species, the opposite was true. The authors suggested that "*ad*sorption" can explain the majority of the experimental results but "*ab*sorption" may be a dominant mechanism in some cases. Since various components of a composite material may display different affinities for a single compound and different mechanisms of interaction, first-order kinetics may not adequately describe sorption of indoor volatile organic compounds.

Complexities of source and sink terms are further magnified when mixtures of compounds, such as environmental tobacco smoke, are considered. In such cases, it is not practical to measure or even model all constituents of the mixture as one considers their transport and removal in an indoor environment, thereby making the selection of suitable tracers an important issue in modeling. Eatough examined various components of environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) with respect to uniqueness to ETS, ease of determination at concentrations present in indoor air, and relationship to other components of ETS. The author contends that gas-phase 3-ethenylpyridine and isoprene, and particulate-phase solanesol could be better ETS tracers than nicotine and respirable particles, that have been used as tracers in the past.

The existence of re-emitting sinks for VOCs is well recognized, but the mechanisms by which VOC sinks operate are not well understood. Diffusion mechanisms have been considered to play a role in interactions of VOCs with indoor sinks. Dunn and Chen proposed and tested three unified, diffusion-limited mathematical models to account for such interactions. The phrase "unified" relates to the ability of the model to predict both in the sink accumulation and decay phases. A linear isotherm model adequately described data when a pillow functioning as a sink was exposed to ethylbenzene and a single-parameter diffusion model described pillow-sink/perchloroethylene data well, but neither could adequately describe data for carpet when exposed to ethylbenzene. A

hybrid, sorption/desorption model was required to describe carpet-sink/ethylbenzene data, consistent with the complex nature of that sink.

The concept of "deposition velocity," as used in describing the interaction between an airborne contaminant and indoor surfaces, is defined as the net flux of a species to a surface divided by the concentration of that species in air. Deposition velocities have been used in modeling the amount of a given substance removed by indoor surfaces. Nazaroff et al. discussed, measured, and modeled deposition velocities for four different species: fine particles, radon progeny, ozone, and nitrogen dioxide. The authors showed that the factors that may limit useful application of the concept include lack of uniform mixing in the indoor space, limited data on air motion near surfaces within buildings, spatial variability of deposition, and the inflexibility of the concept to deal with subsequent release or re-emission of contaminants into indoor air.

Sorption of contaminants on suitable filtration media is one means of improving the quality of air in buildings, yet models that fully accommodate filtration processes are not availble. Axley and Lorenzetti proposed models formulated as mass transport modules that can be combined with existing indoor air quality models. Four generic families of models proposed by the authors include: equilibrium adsorption, boundary layer diffusion, porous adsorbent diffusion transport, and convection-diffusion transport. The authors present applications of these models and propose criteria for selection of models that are based on the boundary layer/conduction heat transfer problem.

Model Validation and Application

Model validation is perhaps the weakest aspect of indoor air quality model development. Recognizing a critical need, ASTM has published a *Standard Guide for Statistical Evaluation of Indoor Air Quality Models* (ASTM D 5157) that provides quantitative tools for evaluation of indoor air quality models. These tools include statistical formulas for assessing the general agreement between predicted and measured values as well as for evaluating bias. The guide also proposes specific ranges of values for various statistical indicators that can be used in judging model performance.

As in the case of indoor air quality models in general, Guo observed that few source and sink models have been validated. The author outlined five major problems areas: (1) elusive model parameters, that result from attempts to model complex reality with a simple model, so that some adjustable parameters are necessary; (2) confusion in parameter estimation methods, specifically uncertainty in selecting appropriate regression models to accurately fit various portions of emissions decay; (3) uncertainty in scale-up and misleading scaling factors, for example, the commonly used ratio of air exchange rate to the chamber loading factor is incorrect unless the source is constant at steady state; (4) unspecified valid range, particularly the limited time over which a model is valid and the limited degree of air turbulence for which a model is valid; and (5) weakness in quantitative comparisons between models and observations, that is caused by an almost exclusive dependence upon graphic comparisons and a failure to use statistical methods.

Solutions suggested by Guo included the need to check the agreement between the model and multiple sets of observations as well as performing scale-up verification. This should be coupled with the use of statistical comparisons to complement graphic comparisons. Finally, he proposed that the key to developing relatively simple mass transfer models lies in selecting proper expressions for mass transfer coefficients, and he suggested criteria for choosing an expression. It was also noted that the degree of accuracy of model predictions necessary is an important consideration; in some cases, a simple model may do a reasonable job.

Girman expanded in some detail upon one of the concerns described by Guo: chamber air velocity and its effect on the scale-up of model results. Through simple modeling of air with chambers of different dimensions, Girman suggested that air velocities in small test chambers as currently operated may be essentially stagnant, possibly resulting in inaccurate emission factors. He proposed that boundary-layer effects be examined for a range of representative materials, es-

pecially wet sources, to determine the importance of controlling air velocities in small chambers. If chamber air velocities are currently too low to obtain representative emission factors, guidance for selecting appropriate operating conditions was suggested: operating chambers with high loading and high air exchange rates to produce representative chamber concentrations and representative air velocities. Other suggestions include varying the design of chamber air inlets and outlets.

Yamamoto et al. present a model that can be used as an analytical tool for engineers to evaluate potential ventilation performance and indoor-air-quality implications of a proposed indoor space design. The ventilation model is capable of determining distributions of time-averaged, steady-state flow fields, assuming isothermal conditions. Klobut demonstrated, through a modeling simulation, that unevenly distributed thermal load tends to increase the spread of contaminants in the building. His numerical simulations consider non-isothermal, two-way flow through large openings and illustrate differences among different scenarios, including an isothermal case with examples. Although his work represents an important step, the potential sources of uncertainties, especially those introduced by flow relations for each path, still need to be examined. The author urges a comprehensive verification of the simulation through measurements.

Jones and Waters dealt with the application of airflow and smoke modeling for building environmental design using three-dimensional computational fluid dynamics (CFD). CFD modeling can assist in design of a building in three main areas: (1) comfort, by predicting variation in thermal comfort due to air temperature and velocity and permitting optimization of space heating or cooling efficiencies; (2) health, by predicting ventilation effectiveness of the spatial distribution of fresh air; and (3) safety, by predicting the movement of smoke during a fire for a given smoke management strategy. The authors presented examples of applications of CFD modeling including design and assessment of natural ventilation strategies and prediction of smoke movement arising from accidental fires for the development of a smoke ventilation strategy.

As a number of buildings, especially in Europe, rely exclusively on natural means for ventilation, natural ventilation systems are important for indoor air quality. Panzhauser et al. pointed out that few generally accepted design rules and codes are available to assist in the design of natural ventilation systems. An effective design of natural ventilation systems could be achieved through properly designed and constructed window and shaft systems that consider regional climate, occupancy requirements, and geometric configuration of the building. Based on long-term studies of residual buildings in Austria, and mathematical modeling, the authors have developed a single-cell model to support the design and evaluation of natural ventilation systems. The model has undergone limited testing and enhancements are planned.

Applications of indoor air quality modeling to specific pollutants are presented in three papers: Panzhauser and Mahdavi predict formaldehyde concentrations and Wray et al. and Persily address radon. Panzhauser and Mahdavi extend the work on formaldehyde conducted almost 20 years ago to distinguish two types of formaldehyde sources, those that depend on indoor air conditions and those that do not. Their model calculates formaldehyde concentrations under steady-state and dynamic conditions for different sources, spaces and boundary conditions. Wray et al. used a model to make a comparative assessment of the effectiveness of subslab radon mitigation systems in residential structures. They found that, consistent with the measured data, a subslab depressurization system was more successful than a subslab pressurization system in reducing indoor radon concentrations. Persily presents results of a limited number of computer simulations of multizone airflow and radon transport for a simplified representation of a multi-family, high-rise building. His simulation considers the influence of two different radon source terms, indoor-outdoor temperature difference, and exterior wall leakage. Although the analysis is limited by the lack of measurement data, one conclusion of the study is that vertical shafts are critical pathways for air and radon transport in these tall buildings.

Modeling of Exposures

Sparks et al. have developed an indoor-air-quality based exposure model that enables analysis of individual exposures for a wide variety sources and sinks. Assuming certain activity scenarios, the model allows for calculating exposures in a multiroom residential environment. The authors provided examples to explain the impact of source emissions on exposures and modifications to those exposures due to behavior of sinks.

Rosenbaum and Anderson summarized a demonstration study of the use of dispersion modeling to estimate carcinogenic risk to residents of southern California from benzene emitted into the atmosphere. The model addresses exposures and risks due to inhalation of contaminants considering different geographic subregions, age-occupation groups, daily activities, and respiration rates. The impact of building ventilation rates on indoor air quality is considered, but indoor sources and sinks are not included in this model. With the exclusion of indoor sources and sinks in their model, the opportunity to test the correspondence between predicted and observed concentration is limited: the results of the model are in the same range as the measured outdoor benzene concentrations.

Koontz et al. described a model that is under development for estimating the distribution of Californians' indoor exposures to various pollutants. The model will address various contaminants such as VOCs, inorganic gases, and particulate matter. The model can either use existing indoor concentration and exposure information to generate exposure distributions across microenvironments or it can estimate indoor air concentration distributions for different microenvironments based on principles of indoor air quality modeling. The model utilizes recently collected data on individual activity profiles of California residents and will use Monte Carlo techniques to combine data on activity patterns, microenvironmental concentration distribution, and mass-balance parameters.

Behar et al. simulate exposures of a sample of residents in an urban area during the conduct of their daily lives and combine the exposure levels with pharmacokinetic models. The estimates of exposure are based on human activity patterns, indoor concentration distributions, and outdoor concentration distributions and are simulated using Monte Carlo techniques. The results indicate: (1) that contributions to exhaled air and arterial blood concentrations from indoor air exposures are large compared to those solely resulting from outdoor exposures, and (2) that changes in exposure rapidly translate into similar changes in blood and exhaled breath concentrations.

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Modeling and Measuring Sources and Sinks

Modeling and Measuring Sources and Sinks

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Emission of Volatile Organic Compounds from a Vinyl Floor Covering

REFERENCE: Clausen, P. A., Laursen, B., Wolkoff, P., Rasmusen, E., and Nielsen, P. A., **"Emission of Volatile Organic Compounds from a Vinyl Floor Covering,"** *Modeling of Indoor Air Quality and Exposure, ASTM STP 1205*, Niren L. Nagda, Ed., American Society for Testing and Materials, Philadelphia, 1993, pp. 3–13.

ABSTRACT: The emission of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from a vinyl floor covering has been evaluated in two small climatic chambers and a microchamber using different air exchange rates and loading factors. The concentration versus time emission curves for cyclohexanone and phenol were decreasing. Evaluation of the emission data showed that a first order decay model was insufficient to describe the emission adequately. However, in spite of the different air exchange rates and chamber concentrations, the first order rate constant could be reproduced when the model was fitted to simultaneous measurements in the three chambers. This indicated that the emission was controlled by internal diffusion. A simplified model for emission controlled by internal diffusion in the source was developed, applying a diffusion coefficient which depends exponentially on the concentration in the source. This model described the emission curves satisfactorily. However, the model parameters were not reproducible, probably because the samples were inhomogeneous with respect to VOC content and effective thickness. All results indicated that the concentrations of cyclohexanone and phenol were almost homogeneous at test start (because of the wrapping of the samples during storage prior to testing) and that the emission after a short initial period became controlled by internal diffusion in the source.

KEY WORDS: vinyl floor covering, volatile organic compounds, emission, internal diffusion model

The purpose of the work presented here was to evaluate the emission of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from a vinyl floor covering in chamber tests using different air exchange rates and loading factors. Initial examination of the emission data using a first order decay model showed that this model was insufficient to describe the emission adequately. However, it was indicated that the emission was controlled by internal diffusion. A model for emission controlled by internal diffusion in the source had to be developed. It was a requirement that the model should have few parameters to be estimated so it could be applied on a limited data set.

Theory

It is commonly assumed that the emission rates of VOCs from finite thin film sources decrease approximately by a first order decay, as shown in Eq 1,

$$R = R_0 \exp(-k_1 t) \tag{1}$$

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where

R = emission rate, mg · m^{-2} · h^{-1},
R_0 = initial emission rate, mg · m^{-2} · h^{-1},
k_1 = first order rate constant, h^{-1}, and
t = time, h.

First order decay models incorporating sink and vapor pressure effects for concentration of an emission in a well-mixed chamber have been proposed by Dunn and Tichenor [*1*]. Solutions to the simplest model (that is, neglecting sink and vapor pressure effects) can be found by insertion of Eq 1 into the mass balance equation for the chamber,

$$V \cdot dC = A \cdot R \cdot dt - k_2 \cdot V \cdot C \cdot dt \tag{2}$$

where

C = chamber air concentration, mg · m^{-3},
A = area of source, m^2,
k_2 = air exchange rate, h^{-1}, and
V = chamber volume, m^3.

Given that $C = 0$ when $t = 0$, the solution to Eq 2 with Eq 1 inserted is

$$C = AR_0[\exp(-k_1 t) - \exp(-k_2 t)]/[V(k_2 - k_1)] \tag{3}$$

The first order decay model can be developed assuming that the emission is limited by evaporation from the surface (diffusion in the boundary layer) and that the concentration in the source is homogeneous [*2*]. However, internal diffusion in the source may become limiting. This implies that a concentration gradient will develop in the source. Dunn has proposed a model for an infinitely deep source [*3*]. However, this model is nonphysical for a finite source (for example, vinyl floor covering) in that a steady-state emission is reached. In addition, the diffusion coefficients of VOCs in a polymer matrix are probably not constant but depend strongly on the concentration of the VOC itself. Hansen [*4*] has shown that the exponential variation of the solvent-in-polymer diffusion coefficient is very important for lacquer film drying

$$D = D_0 \exp [kC(x)] \tag{4}$$

where

D = diffusion coefficient, m^2 · h^{-1},
D_0 = diffusion coefficient at zero concentration, m^2 · h^{-1},
k = proportionality constant, m^3 · mg^{-1}, and
$C(x)$ = concentration in the source at location x, mg · m^{-3}.

Model for Emission Controlled by Diffusion in the Source (Diffusion Model)

Consider the following cross-sectional schematic of the source and test chamber (Fig. 1). Let $C(x)$ denote the concentration of the VOC of interest at location x at any time, t, and let L denote the thickness (length) of the source. Assume that the diffusion coefficient $D = D_0 \exp [kC(x)]$ where D_0 and k are constants characteristic of the VOC of interest and the source matrix. This implies that, after a short initial period, there will be established a relatively stable concentration gradient profile which will be steep near the surface and almost flat in the remaining part of the

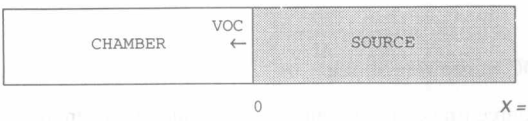

FIG. 1—*Cross-sectional schematic of the source and test chamber.*

source. After this initial period the flux will be F_s at the surface and decrease to zero at $x = L$. It is assumed that the flux at location x, $F(x)$, can be approximated by

$$F(x) = F_s\,(1 - x/L) \tag{5}$$

where

$F(x)$ = flux at location x in the source, mg · m^{-2} · h^{-1},
F_s = flux at the surface of the sources, mg · m^{-2} · h^{-1},
x = location in the source perpendicular to the surface, m, and
L = thickness (length) of the source, m.

The justification of this assumption is that the shape of the concentration gradient profile will be approximately constant during emission when the diffusion coefficient depends exponentially on concentration [*4*]. This implies that the removal rate (amount/time) of a VOC is approximately equal at all locations x (except just within the surface) and thereby $dF(x)/dx$ = constant.

Assuming that the movement within the source is controlled by Fick's Law $[dC(x)]/dx = F\,[(x)/D]$, the concentration gradient profile at any time can be found from the differential equation

$$dC(x)/dx = F_s(1 - x/L)/\{D_0 \exp\,[kC(x)]\} \tag{6}$$

Assuming that $C(x) = C_s$ when $x = 0$, the solution to Eq 6 is

$$C(x) = \{\ln\,[x/L_0 - x^2/(2 \cdot L \cdot L_0) + \exp\,(kC_s)]\}/k \tag{7}$$

where

$L_0 = D_0/kF_s$, m, and
C_s = surface concentration, mg · m^3.

The quantity L_0 depends on the flux at the surface and thereby the time. The mass of the VOC of interest in the source can be calculated as a function of the flux by integration of Eq 7. However, the second term in Eq 7 can be neglected for $x << L$ and for $x = L$ if $L >> L_0$. In the latter case the relative error for neglecting the second term is ln (2)/ln(L/L_0). Approximation of the third term in Eq 7 [exp (kC_s)] to 1 (C_s, very low) has only minor significance for the calculated mass of VOC in the source when $L >> L_0$. Thus, assuming that $L >> L_0$, Eq 7 can be approximated to

$$C(x) = \{\ln\,[(x/L_0) + 1]\}/k \tag{8}$$

The mass of VOC in the source as a function of the flux at the surface is then

$$M(F_s) = \int_0^L C(x)dx = \{(L + L_0)\ln\,[(L/L_0) + 1] - L\}/k \tag{9}$$

where

$M(F_s)$ = mass of VOC in the source, mg · m^{-2}.

The flux out of the source (the emission rate) can be found by differentiation of the mass emitted to the chamber

$$F_s = -dM/dt \tag{10}$$

It is assumed that $M(t)$ only depends on time through $F_s(t)$ so that

$$dM/dt = dM/dF_s \cdot dF_s/dt \tag{11}$$

Insertion of Eq 10 into Eq 11 and rearrangement gives

$$dF_s/dt = -F_s/(dM/dF_s) \tag{12}$$

Differentiation of Eq 9 with respect to F_s (dM/dF_s) and insertion into Eq 12 gives

$$dF_s/dt = kF_s^2/\{L_0 \ln [(L/L_0) + 1] - L\} \tag{13}$$

The functional form of $F_s(t)$ cannot be found from this differential equation. However, for $L \gg L_0$ (that is, F_s is large), Eq 13 simplifies to

$$dF_s/dt = -kF_s^2/L \tag{14}$$

Given that $F_s = F_0$ when $t = 0$, the solution to Eq 14 is

$$F_s(t) = 1/[(k/L)t + F_0^{-1})] \tag{15}$$

where

F_0 = initial flux at the surface, mg · m^{-2} · h^{-1}.

This model for emission controlled by internal diffusion in the source is valid when the diffusion coefficient depends exponentially on the concentration in the source. The model shows that the emission rate may be approximately proportional to $1/t$ when F_s is large and after a stable concentration gradient profile has been established. The model is not valid when F_s is small (that is, when $L \sim L_0$).

Experimental

Test Material

The vinyl floor covering was produced with an oak wood parquet look and had a smooth surface with "wood grain" grooves. It consisted of three layers: 0.3-mm wear layer, 0.7 to 1-mm foam layer, and approximately 1.5-mm synthetic felt backing. The VOC emission from the vinyl floor covering was evaluated prior to the chamber experiments by gas chromatography/mass spectrometry (GC/MS) [*5*]. The major VOCs in the emission from the floor covering were cyclohexanone, phenol, and 2,4,4-trimethyl-1,3-pentanediol diisobutyrate (TXIB).