

Reduce costs and boost productivity with the Advanced Valve System (AVS) 6 or 7 port switching valve system

Technical Overview



Figure 1. An AVS 7, fitted to an Agilent 5110 ICP-OES instrument.

Make the switch to higher productivity

Double your sample throughput and reduce argon consumption by over 50% with Agilent's Advanced Valve System (AVS) 6 or 7 port switching valve accessory.

The AVS 6/7 is an optional accessory for Agilent's 5100 or 5110 ICP-OES instruments (Figure 1). It features a unique 2 position, 6 or 7 port switching valve (the 7th port is for internal standardization) and a high speed positive displacement pump to rapidly fill the sample loop. Controlled argon bubble injection reduces uptake delay and virtually eliminates rinse times to facilitate high throughput sample analysis.



Agilent Technologies

The Agilent AVS 6 or 7 provides:

Fast, accurate results—the AVS 6/7 rinses the sample introduction system while the next sample is presented to the instrument, virtually eliminating the delay-times of a conventional ICP-OES analysis. Using controlled argon bubble injection between the sample and rinse solution prevents mixing of the sample and rinse reducing uptake and rinse times

Reduced operating costs—Shorter analysis times means argon consumption can be reduced by at least 50% per sample. More efficient analysis minimizes the exposure of torches, nebulizers and pump tubes to aggressive chemicals and harsh samples, increasing the life-time of consumables, further reducing costs

Ease of use—Control of the AVS 6/7 is simple, as it is fully integrated into the ICP-OES hardware and controlled through the ICP Expert software via the optional Pro Pack software module. This ensures optimal timing (unlike third party switching valve accessories with complicated, stand-alone control software)

Easy access—Optimized positioning of the AVS eliminates physical obstruction to the common sample introduction components like torch, spray chamber/nebulizer and pump tubes, when they need to be removed for cleaning or replaced

Reduced carry-over—With argon bubble injection between the sample and rinse solution carry-over is reduced in the ICP-OES spray chamber. Using an Ar bubble instead of air means the plasma is more stable and gives better analytical precision

Improved precision and stability—Analytical precision and long term stability is improved by eliminating the fast pumping of the peristaltic pump between samples which destabilizes the plasma

Higher productivity—Combined with Agilent's fastest ever autosampler, the SPS 4 Sample Preparation System, the AVS 6/7 can double sample throughput

Flexibility—the AVS 6 and 7 are compatible with a wide range of high capacity autosamplers, holding over 700 samples, for overnight unattended operation

Durability—the AVS 6 and 7 are ideal for challenging sample matrices. The constant diameter, metal-free liquid flow path is suitable for samples containing strong acids, HF acid, organic solvents and even high levels of dissolved solids

How does it work?

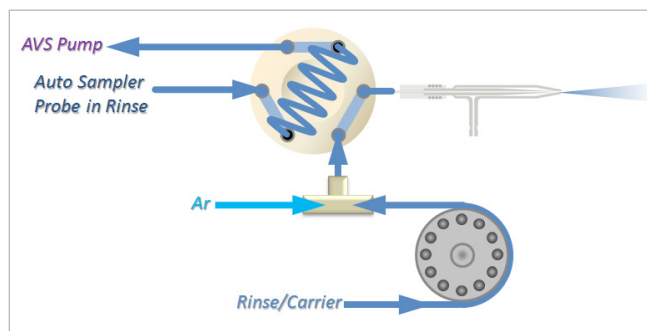


Figure 2a. Stand-by mode

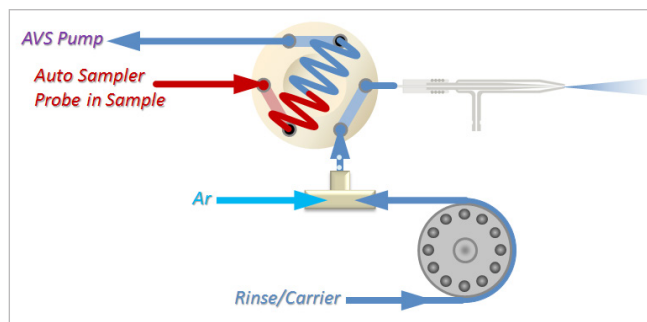


Figure 2b. Sample loading, approximately 5 s

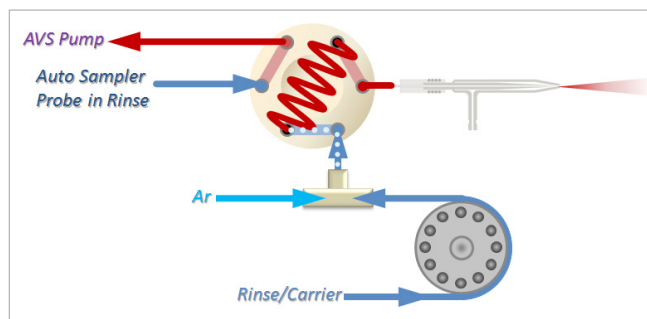


Figure 2c. Stabilization (approx 3 s) and bubble injection

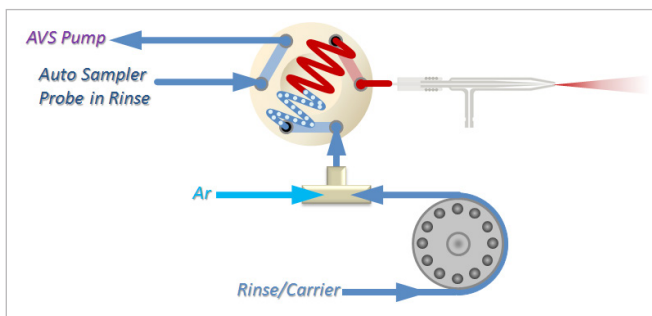


Figure 2d. Analytical measurement

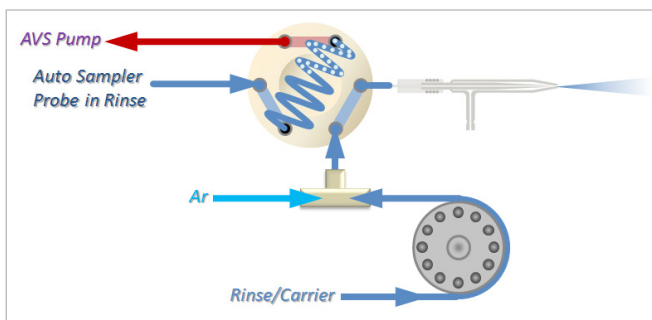


Figure 2e. Return to stand-by mode.

Bubble injection

In the AVS 6 or 7, argon bubbles are injected between the sample and rinse streams to prevent mixing of the two solutions (see Figures 2a-e.) The bubbles separate the two solutions and avoids mixing and dilution in the loop, resulting in longer measurement read times.

For a 1 mL sample loop, bubble injection results in 47 seconds of measurement time versus 20 seconds of stable measurement without bubble injection (Figure 3). Figure 4 displays the effect of bubble injection for a 0.5 mL sample loop. Bubble injection maximizes measurement time and precision for a given sample loop. To increase throughput, a smaller loop can be used which can further reduce uptake delay and reduce rinse times.

Unlike most commercial systems that use air bubble injection, the AVS 6 and 7 use argon to create the segments as argon does not destabilize the plasma like air does, resulting in better analytical precision (see Table 1).

Table 1. Analytical precision of 3 x 5 second replicate measurements of 5 ppm Mn solution, using an AVS 6.

	Analytical precision
5 ppm Mn with Ar injection	0.5% RSD
5 ppm Mn with air injection	1.0% RSD

Analytical throughput

Table 2. Comparison of sample throughput for analysis of wear metals in lubricating oils with and without an AVS 6 accessory.

	With AVS 6	Without AVS 6
Sample to Sample time	22 sec	52 s
Ar consumption per sample	7 L	17.4 L

The AVS 6/7 improves sample throughput by reducing or eliminating delay and rinse times used in normal ICP-OES analyses. Table 2 shows a comparison of the average sample analysis times and Ar consumption for an analysis of lubricating oil with and without the AVS [1]. Twenty two elements were measured and the sample to sample time when using the AVS 6 was 22 seconds with an Ar consumption of 7 L per sample. This compares to 52 seconds and 17.4 L Ar consumption without the use of the AVS 6. The differences in throughput and Ar consumption reflect the reductions in uptake delay and rinse times using the AVS 6.

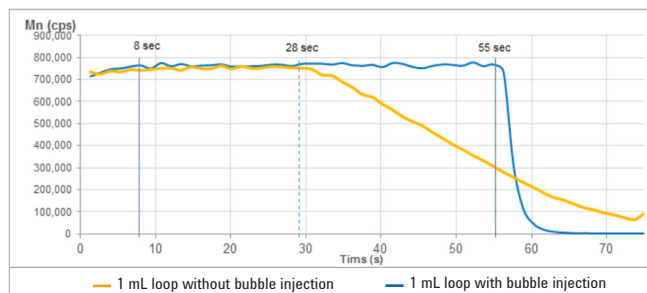


Figure 3. Available measurement time for a 1 mL sample loop with and without bubble injection.

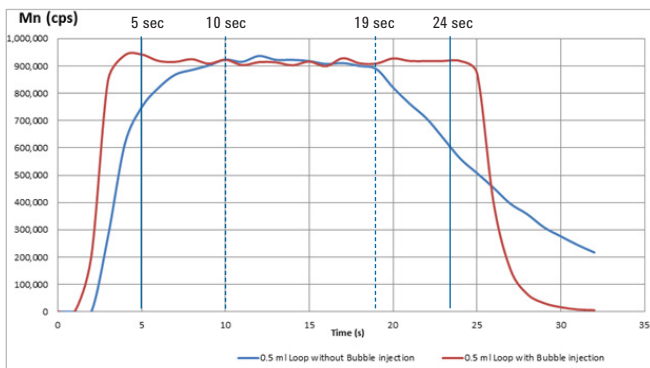


Figure 4. Available measurement time of a 0.5 mL sample loop, showing 19 seconds measurement time versus 9 seconds of measurement time with and without bubble injection, respectively.

Optimization of analytical throughput

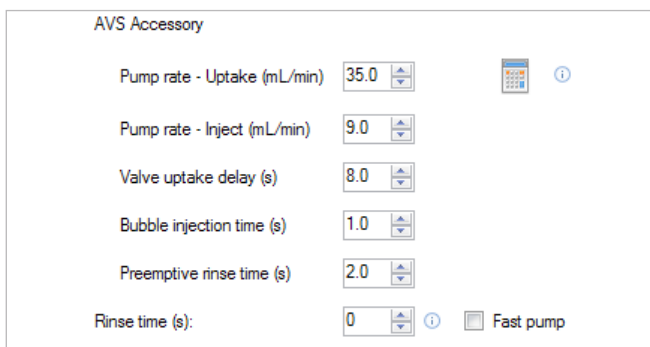


Figure 5. The simple software that controls the AVS 6/7 accessory.

Ensuring no compromise between analytical speed and precision from the AVS 6/7 is easy with the simple control software, that is fully integrated with the ICP Expert software (see Figure 5). The software incorporates the AVS parameter calculator to facilitate with setup and method development. The main parameters used in the software to optimize performance are:

- Pump rate - Uptake, speed in mL/min (typically set to 35 mL/min)
- Valve uptake delay in seconds (typical value of 5 to 6 seconds)
- Stabilization time (about 3 seconds for the standard nebulizer and capillary)

Example analysis



Figure 6. An AVS 6 accessory, integrated with the sample introduction system of an Agilent 5110 ICP-OES

In an experiment designed to demonstrate the capabilities of the AVS 6/7, the following setup was used: An Agilent SPS 4 autosampler with a 1 mm ID probe, standard SeaSpray concentric glass nebulizer with a (default) 50 mm long capillary connecting it to the valve. All tubing was 1 mm ID, and the peristaltic pump tubing was white/white type used at a constant 12 RPM. All valve fittings were inert and designed to prevent carry over. Clear labels on both the valve fittings and ports simplify installation and maintenance (see Figure 7).



Figure 7. The ports on the AVS are clearly labelled.

With this setup, stabilization delay—the time taken for the sample to exit the switching valve and reach the plasma, is typically 3 seconds regardless of sample loop size. Stabilization delay will increase with a longer capillary between the valve outlet and nebulizer and/or slower peristaltic pump speed or narrower peristaltic pump tubing.

In Figure 8 below, we can see the effect on analytical precision of a 5 ppm Mn solution with various uptake delays using a 0.5 mL sample loop.

The uptake delay must be long enough to allow the sample to be transported from the sample tube on the autosampler through the autosampler probe and transfer tubing, and completely fill the sample loop.

During this uptake phase the AVS 6/7 pump operates at high speeds—typically 35 mL/min or greater. The uptake delay is affected by the volume between the sample tube and valve inlet which can be minimized by ensuring the length of the transfer tubing between autosampler and valve is as short as is practical. Maintaining a constant 1 mm ID from sample tube to nebulizer ensures that there is minimal mixing of the sample throughout the flow path.

Figure 8 shows that for a 0.5 mL sample loop, an uptake delay greater than 4 seconds will give a typical short term precision better than 0.5% RSD for 5 ppm Mn.

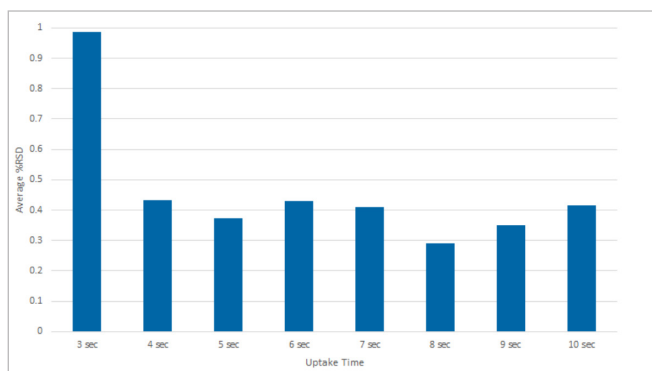


Figure 8. Precision (%RSD) of 5 ppm Mn at various uptake delays using a 0.5 mL sample loop.

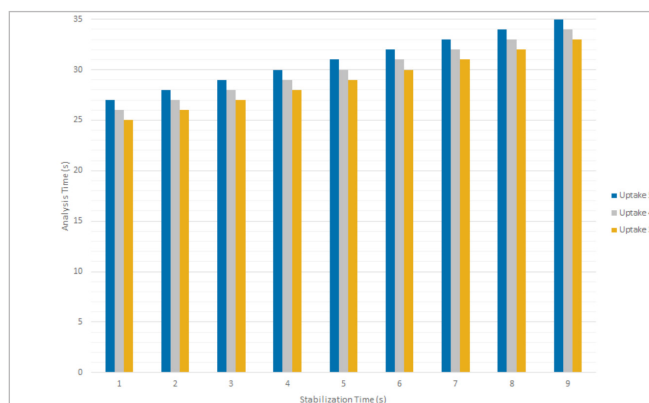


Figure 9. Sample to sample analysis time (in seconds) with various combinations of uptake delay and stabilization delay.

In Figure 9, the sample to sample analysis time is shown for an AVS 6 with a 0.5 mL sample loop at various uptake delays (3, 4 and 5 seconds) and different stabilization times with 3 x 5 second replicates. Optimization for a 0.5 mL loop is achieved with an uptake delay of 4 to 5 seconds and a stabilization delay of 3 seconds giving an analysis time of about 28 to 29 seconds for an analytical precision typically less than 0.5% RSD for 5 ppm Mn. As expected, sample throughput times increase linearly with increasing stabilization delays.

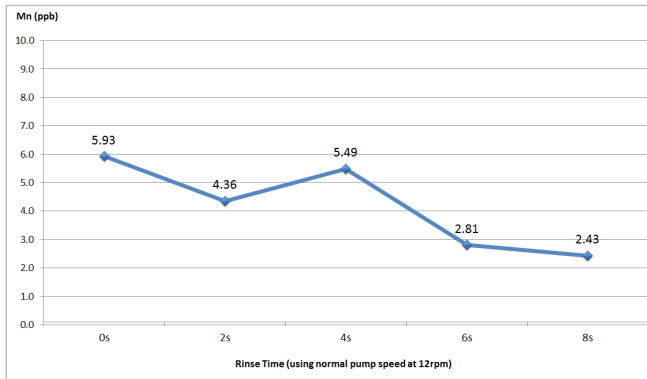


Figure 10. Washout performance of Mn (in ppb) in a blank following a 50,000 ppb Mn solution

The washout performance of the AVS was investigated by measuring a blank solution after measuring a 50,000 ppb Mn solution. Without any method rinse, the Mn concentration was reduced by close to 4 orders of magnitude from 50,000 ppb to 6 ppb. Using additional method rinse the measured Mn concentration did not significantly vary from the 0 sec method rinse, as shown in Figure 10. The experimental results demonstrate 4 order magnitude washout and the excellent washout characteristics of the AVS 6.

Reference

1. Improved productivity for the determination of metals in oil samples using the Agilent 5110 Radial View (RV) ICP-OES with Advanced Valve System. Agilent publication no. 5991-6849EN.

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Published May 1, 2016

Publication number: 5991-6863EN