
Question 58: What techniques do you use to rapidly detect fouling in the top section of the crude tower besides top section differential pressure?

SAM LORDO (Nalco Champion)

Besides the use of flow-normalized pressure drop, another observable parameter that can be used is the distillation overlap of the overhead distillation curves. Additional indications would be flowing control valve operation on pump around and product circuits.

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Monitoring temperature profile is key, though it is not a rapid detection method. Understanding water dew point and salt formation temperatures will help in defining an operational envelope that avoids/mitigates fouling. The column's top arrangement, including reflux system and pumparounds, will also help define the latitude present in system in order to adjust temperature profile for operation.

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