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## Removing Hydrochloric Acid Exhaust Products from High Performance Solid Rocket Propellant Using Aluminum-Lithium Alloy

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### Highlights

- Al-Li alloy propellant has increased ideal specific impulse over neat aluminum
- Al-Li alloy propellant has a near complete reduction in HCl acid formation
- Reduction in HCl was verified with wet bomb experiments and DSC/TGA-MS/FTIR

### Abstract

Hydrochloric acid (HCl) pollution from perchlorate based propellants is well known for both launch site contamination, as well as the possible ozone layer depletion effects. Past efforts in developing environmentally cleaner solid propellants by scavenging the chlorine ion have focused on replacing a portion of the chlorine-containing oxidant (i.e., ammonium perchlorate) with an alkali metal nitrate. The alkali metal (e.g., Li or Na) in the nitrate reacts with the chlorine ion to form an alkali metal chloride (i.e., a salt instead of HCl). While this technique can potentially reduce HCl formation, it also results in reduced ideal specific impulse ( $I_{SP}$ ). Here, we show using thermochemical calculations that using aluminum-lithium (Al-Li) alloy can reduce HCl formation by more than 95% (with lithium contents  $\geq 15$  mass %) and increase the ideal  $I_{SP}$  by  $\sim 7$  seconds compared to neat aluminum (using 80/20 mass % Al-Li alloy). Two solid propellants were formulated using 80/20 Al-Li alloy or neat aluminum as fuel additives. The halide scavenging effect of Al-Li propellants was verified using wet bomb combustion experiments ( $75.5 \pm 4.8\%$  reduction in pH,  $\propto [HCl]$ , when compared to neat aluminum). Additionally, no measurable HCl evolution was detected using differential scanning

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