Molecular Characterization of Alkyl Nitrates in Atmospheric Aerosols by Ion Mobility Mass Spectrometry

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1 **Abstract**

2   We demonstrate the capability of the Ion Mobility Mass Spectrometry (IMS-MS) for

3 molecular characterization of reactive and short-lived alkyl nitrates (ANs) in atmospheric

4 aerosols. We show significantly enhanced sensitivity towards the intact molecules of ANs

5 by ultimately two orders of magnitude with the addition of inorganic anions such as

6 chloride and nitrate to the negative electrospray to promote the ion adduct formation.

7 This approach enables the measurement of ANs that have low tendency to form

8 molecular ions on their own with improved limit of detection in the range of 0.1 to 4.3

9 μM. Molecular identities of the ANs are well constrained by the developed collision

10 cross section vs. mass to charge ratio correlation, which provides a two-dimensional

11 separation of the $-ONO_2$ containing compounds on the basis of their molecular size and

12 geometry. Structural information of the nitrate molecules is further probed by the

13 identification of characteristic fragments produced from the collision induced

14 dissociation of parent AN adducts. Application of the IMS-MS technique is exemplified

15 by the identification of hydroxy nitrates in secondary organic aerosols produced from the

16 photochemical oxidation of isoprene.

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1. Introduction

Alkyl nitrates (ANs; ANs = $RONO_2$) constitute a major fraction and serve as a temporary reservoir of total reactive nitrogen oxides in the atmosphere (Perring et al., 2013). ANs are primarily produced from the hydroxyl radical (OH) initiated oxidation of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in the presence of nitrogen oxides (NO_x) during daytime and the nitrate radical (NO_3) initiated oxidation of alkenes during nighttime. Once formed, ANs are primarily subjected to further chemical transformation leading to the recycling of NO_x, partitioning into the particle phase forming secondary organic aerosols (SOA), or deposition resulting in the loss of atmospheric NO_x. Characterization of alkyl nitrates is of crucial importance in understanding regional NO_x budget, tropospheric ozone production, as well as chemical mechanisms leading to the SOA formation (Brown et al., 2009; Farmer et al., 2011; Rollins et al., 2012; Rosen et al., 2004).

A suite of analytical techniques, such as thermal dissociation laser-induced-fluorescence spectroscopy (TD-LIF) (Thornton et al., 2000; Day et al., 2002; Wooldridge et al., 2010), chemical ionization mass spectrometry (CIMS) (Beaver et al., 2012; Loza et al., 2014; Krechmer et al., 2015; Nguyen et al., 2015; Schwantes et al., 2015; Teng et al., 2015; Xiong et al., 2015; Schwantes et al., 2017b; Lambe et al., 2017), and gas chromatography coupled with electron capture detection (GC-ECD) (Atlas, 1988; O'Brien et al., 1995; He et al., 2011), have been employed for *in situ* measurement of total and individual ANs in the gas phase. Observations of ANs in the particle phase, however, are rather limited due to the intensive denitrification during the preparation and analysis of particle samples. Efforts have been made to characterize the total amount of ANs and the number of $-ONO_2$ functional groups using TD-LIF and Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy (FTIR) (Rollins et al., 2010; Russell et al., 2011). The NO_2^+ / NO^+ ratio derived from the aerosol mass spectrometry (AMS) measurements has also been used as an indicator for the presence of alkyl nitrates in submicrometer particles (Farmer et al., 2010; Kiendler-Scharr et al., 2016; Xu et al., 2017; Xu et al., 2018). These techniques have provided important insights into the prevalence and abundance of ANs in atmospheric aerosols, although the molecular information of individual ANs is lacking. Recent development on the filter inlet for gases and aerosols (FIGAERO) interfaced with the CIMS instrument has allowed for on-line speciation and quantification of functionalized alkyl nitrates in the particle phase (Lee et al., 2016). While the molecular composition of any given compounds can be inferred from the mass spectra, structural

64 information on isomeric and isobaric species that are commonly produced from
65 atmospheric chemical transformation is not available from CIMS measurements.

66   In this study, we present the first demonstration of the Ion Mobility Mass
67 Spectrometry (IMS-MS) interfaced with an Electrospray Ionization (ESI) source that
68 enables the molecular characterization of alkyl nitrates in atmospheric aerosols. The IMS
69 technique has been widely employed in the fields of biochemistry and homeland security.
70 The majority of previous studies that adapted ESI for IMS analysis employed either the
71 Desorption Electrospray Ionization (DESI) to detect trace amounts of ANs on ambient
72 surfaces (Cotte-Rodríguez et al., 2005; Popov et al., 2005; Takáts et al., 2005; Justes et
73 al., 2007) or the Secondary Electrospray Ionization (SESI) for gas-phase ANs
74 measurements (Tam and Hill, 2004; Martínez-Lozano et al., 2009; Crawford and Hill,
75 2013). The analysis of ANs directly from liquid solutions, on the other hand, has not yet
76 been widely explored. Hilton et al. (2010) found that the NO_3^- fragment dominates the
77 IMS spectra of several types of ANs measured in the negative ESI, suggesting these
78 nitrate molecules readily fragment due to the thermally labile nature of the $-ONO_2$
79 functionality, thereby resulting in the loss of molecular information of the targeted
80 compounds. Here we show that with the addition of selected anions including chloride,
81 nitrate, iodide, and acetate into the sprayed solution, molecular structures of ANs are
82 largely maintained by producing ion clusters of the form $[M+Cl]^-$, $[M+NO_3]^-$, $[M+I]^-$,
83 and $[M+Ac]^-$, respectively. The anion attachment represents a new option for the
84 detection of the $-ONO_2$ functionality that is unlikely to produce measurable amount of
85 molecular ions on its own during ESI. The optimal anion concentration to essentially
86 promote the ion adduct formation is on the order of milli-molar, which is significantly
87 higher than the level of those naturally present in ambient aerosols. We develop an
88 intrinsic collision cross section vs. mass to charge ratio correlation based on the ion
89 mobility measurements of five AN standards, providing a two-dimensional identification
90 of unknown molecules that are likely containing the $-ONO_2$ moiety. Additionally, the
91 molecular identity of ANs can be verified via the characteristic fragment produced from
92 the collision induced dissociation of the parent ion adducts. We apply the IMS-MS
93 technique to identify ANs in SOA produced from isoprene photochemistry.

94 **2. Experiments**

95   **2.1. Materials**

96   Organic nitrate and nitro standards stored in acetonitrile ampules, including 1-
97 mononitroglycerin (100 μg/mL, SigmaAldrich), 1,3-dinitroglycerin (100 μg/mL,

107   **2.2. Experiments**

108   SOA samples containing alkyl nitrates were generated from the OH-oxidation of

109   isoprene under high-NO_x conditions in the NCAR 10 m^3 Atmospheric Simulation

110   Chamber (Zhang et al., 2018). H_2O_2 was used as the OH source by evaporating 133 µL

111   aqueous solution (30 wt% in water, SigmaAldrich) into the chamber with 5 L/min

112   purified air for ~120 min, resulting in a starting concentration of ~4 ppm (Wang et al.,

113   2009; He et al., 2010; Zhao et al., 2011; Cappa et al., 2013; Zhang and Seinfeld, 2013;

114   Schwantes et al., 2017a). Isoprene was injected into the chamber by evaporating ~17 µL

115   liquid standard (≥99%, SigmaAldrich) with 5 L/min purified air for ~20 min, resulting an

116   initial concentration of ~500 ppb. NO was injected into the chamber from a concentrated

117   NO cylinder source (NO = 133.16 ppm, balance N_2) to achieve an initial concentration of

118   ~500 ppb. Seed aerosol was injected into the chamber by atomizing 0.06 M aqueous

119   ammonium sulfate solution to provide sufficient surface area for the partitioning of alkyl

120   nitrates (Nguyen et al., 2014a; Nguyen et al., 2014b; Zhang et al., 2014a; Zhang et al.,

121   2015b; McVay et al., 2016; Nah et al., 2016; Huang et al., 2018). The chamber contents

122   were allowed to mix for ~30 min before the onset of irradiation. After ~2 hr

123   photooxidation, NO was nearly depleted (>5 ppb) and the irradiation was ceased. SOA

124   produced was then collected on Teflon filters (47-mm diameter, 0.5-µm pore size,

125   MILLIPORE) through active sampling at a flow rate of 10 L/min for ~3 hr (Schilling

126   Fahnestock et al., 2014; Zhang et al., 2014b; Huang et al., 2016; Thomas et al., 2016).

127   Filters were stored in a -20 °C freezer prior to analysis (Riva et al., 2016). SOA samples

128   were extracted in 20 mL HPLC-grade methanol by 45 min of sonication at ~273 K and

129   then concentrated to ~5 mL with the assistance of a ~2 L/min N_2 stream.

2.3. Instrumental

The Electrospray Ionization Drift-Tube Ion Mobility Spectrometer (DT-IMS) interfaced to a Time-of-Flight Mass Spectrometer (TOFMS) was utilized in the characterization of ANs. The instrument was designed and manufactured by Tofwerk (AG, Switzerland), with detailed descriptions and schematics provided by previous studies (Kaplan et al., 2010; Groessl et al., 2015; Krechmer et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2016b; Zhang et al., 2017). Here we will present the instrument operation protocols specific to the ANs measurement.

AN standards and SOA filter extracts were delivered to the ESI source via a 250 µL gas-tight syringe (Hamilton) held on a syringe pump (Harvard Apparatus) at a flow rate of 1 µL min^{-1}. The optimal ESI potential to readily generate stable ion adducts while minimizing the corona discharge was found to be −1800 V. The negatively charged mist generated at the emitter tip is introduced into the drift tube through a Bradbury-Nielson ion gate located at the entrance with the assistance of 1 L min^{-1} nitrogen sheath gas. The BN ion gate was operated at the Hadamard Transform mode, with a closure voltage of 50 V and a gate pulse frequency of 1.2×10^3 Hz. The drift tube was held at a constant temperature (340±3 K) and atmospheric pressure (~766 *Torr*). A counter flow of N$_2$ drift gas was introduced at the end of the drift region at a flow rate of 1.2 mL min^{-1}. Ion mobility separation was carried out at the field strength ranging from 300 to 400 V cm^{-1}. After exiting from the drift tube, ions were focused into a pressure-vacuum interface that includes two segmented quadrupoles (Q$_1$ and Q$_2$) through an ion lens and a nozzle. Note that the potential gradient applied to the ion lens and nozzle should be limited to 500 V or less to prevent intensive fragmentation of the molecular ions. The frequency and amplitude were set as 1.5×10^6 Hz and 196 V for Q$_1$ and 1.5×10^6 Hz and 250 V for Q$_2$, respectively. Collision induced dissociation (CID) can be performed by adjusting the voltages on the ion optical elements between the two quadruple stages. Over the course of a CID program, the quadrupoles were set to 1.3×10^6 Hz and 120 V for Q$_1$ and 1.2×10^6 Hz and 150 V for Q$_2$, respectively, to ensure good transmission of low masses (*m/z* < 100).

The ESI-IMS-TOFMS instrument was operated in the *m/z* range of 20 to 1500 with a total recording time of 60 s for each dataset. The mass spectrometer was calibrated using sodium nitrate, ammonium phosphate, sodium dodecyl sulfate, sodium taurocholate hydrate, and ultramark 1621 in the negative mode. The ion mobility measurements were calibrated using tetrabutyl ammonium chloride as the instrument standard and 2,4-lutidine as the mobility standard (Zhang et al., 2016b). The average IMS (*t/dt*$_{50}$) and MS

165 (m/dm_{50}) resolving powers are ~80 and ~4000, respectively. Mass spectra and ion

166 mobility spectra were collected by Aquility DAQ v2.1.0 and post processed by Tofware

167 v2.5.3.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Ion adduct formation

170   The strong electron affinity of the $-ONO_2$ functional group makes alkyl nitrate a

171 potential candidate for being analyzed in the negative electrospray ionization mode.

172 However, the ESI(−) mass spectra of the AN standards investigated here are typically

173 characterized by various fragments and clusters due principally to the thermally labile

174 $-ONO_2$ moiety. As shown in Figure 1, no molecular ion ($[M]^-$ or $[M\text{-}H]^-$) is observed

175 on the ESI(−) mass spectra of 1-mononitroglycerin (MNG), 1,3-dinitroglycerin (DNG),

176 and pentaerythritol tetranitrate (PETN). Instead, a small peak appears as a cluster ion of

177 the form $[M+NO_2\text{-}H]^-$. It is worth noting that addition of water to the mobile phase does

178 not promote the molecular ion formation, rather significant nitrate losses via hydrolysis

179 were observed. With the addition of trace amount of salts, i.e., ammonium chloride

180 (NH_4Cl), sodium nitrate ($NaNO_3$), sodium iodide (NaI), and ammonium acetate (NH_4Ac),

181 the overall signal intensities were significantly enhanced through the production of a suite

182 of adduct ions of the form $[M+Cl]^-$, $[M+NO_3]^-$, $[M+I]^-$, and $[M+Ac]^-$, respectively.

183 The relative sensitivities of individual adduct ions increase by ultimately two orders of

184 magnitude, compared with the pure standard in methanol solution. Here the observed ion

185 adduct formation in ESI can be considered as a special case of chemical ionization

186 occurring in solution before the charge separation process takes place.

187   Table 1 lists the characteristic adduct ions formed from three AN standards (MNG,

188 DNG, and PETN) in methanol solution with selected additives (NH_4Ac, NH_4Cl, NaI, and

189 $NaNO_3$). Ion adducts are systematically observed from all of the ANs investigated,

190 regardless of the number of $-ONO_2$ functional groups attached on the molecule. Nitrate

191 (NO_3^-) and chloride (Cl^-) anions were found to be the most effective additives to

192 promote ion adduct formation. Nitrate clusters exhibit the highest signal intensity and

193 lowest limit of detection, especially for the poly-nitrates and functionalized alkyl nitrates

194 investigated. Chloride clusters are characterized by two distinct ions with a mass

195 difference of 2 amu and abundance ratio of 3:1 due to the natural presence of isotopes

196 ^{35}Cl and ^{37}Cl. Also given in Table 1 are the detected negative ions from two organic nitro

197 compounds, i.e., hexahydro-1,3,5-trinitro-1,3,5-triazine (RDX) and 2,4-dinitrotoluene

198 (DNT). In contrast to RDX, which undergoes intensive clustering processes with Cl^-, I^-,

199 and NO_3^- during negative ESI, one dominant molecular ion ($[M-H]^-$) was observed on
200 the ESI(−) mass spectra of DNT. The limits of detection (LOD) towards the nitrate
201 adducts are in the range of 0.1 to 4.3 µM (see Table 1), demonstrating an improved
202 performance of the IMS-MS technique employed here compared with literature data
203 obtained from sprayed solutions (Asbury et al., 2000; Hilton et al., 2010). For example,
204 the LODs for DNT and RDX are 26 µg/L and 40 µg/L, respectively, in Asbury et al.
205 (2000), and the LOD for urea nitrate is 2.5 mg/L in Hilton et al. (2010).

206   The effect of the additive concentrations (NO_3^- and Cl^-) on the ion adduct formation
207 was investigated using an equimolar mixture (5 µM each) of PETN and RDX as
208 representative of nitrates and nitro compounds, respectively, in methanol solution (Figure
209 2). In the absence of any additives, the presence of background anions from either
210 impurities in the solvent or thermal decomposition of alkyl nitrates leads to a detectable
211 amount of ion adducts. With the anion levels on the order of micromolar, ion adducts
212 become dominant in the ESI(−) mass spectra. The optimal anion concentration was found
213 to be in the range of 0.01 mM to 0.1 mM. Progressively rising anion concentrations (>
214 1mM) essentially suppress adduct formation due to the competition for limited resources,
215 such as space and charge (Cech and Enke, 2001). Note that the measured drift time for
216 each ion adduct is constant at anion concentrations ranging from 1 µM to 1 mM,
217 indicative of the absence of ion-molecule clustering in the IMS drift tube.

218   **3.2. Collision cross section vs. mass to charge ratio trend line**

219   Collision cross section (Ω_{N_2}) represents the effective area for interactions between a
220 charged molecule and the surrounding buffer gases (e.g., N_2 herein). It is derived from
221 the mobility measurement in the IMS drift tube, where ions with open conformation
222 undergo more collisions with buffer gas molecules and hence travel more slowly than the
223 compact ones (Shvartsburg et al., 2000). The measured Ω_{N_2} for organic nitrates and nitro
224 compounds given in Table 1 are in good agreement with previous reported values
225 obtained from experiments where the analytes were introduced into the IMS system from
226 the vapor phase (Kaur-Atwal et al., 2009; Kozole et al., 2015). Combination of collision
227 cross section with molecular mass (as denoted by mass to charge ratio, *m/z*) provides a
228 two-dimensional space for separation of species based on their size as well as geometry.
229 We have shown that species of the same chemical class (e.g., amines, alcohols, and
230 carboxylic acids) tend to situate as a narrow band and follow a unique trend line on the 2-
231 D space (Zhang et al., 2016b). Here we demonstrate the presence of a $\Omega_{N_2} - m/z$ trend
232 line for alkyl nitrates. Figure 3 shows that the measured Ω_{N_2} of the AN adducts,

233 regardless of the AN molecular structures and types of anions that promote the adduct
234 formation, appear along the $\Omega_{N_2} - m/z$ trend line predicted by the core model (deviations
235 less than 5.2%). Also shown here are the predicted $\Omega_{N_2} - m/z$ trend lines for *mono*/*multi*-
236 carboxylic acids and organic sulfates, which readily produce molecular ions via
237 deprotonation ([M-H]$^-$) during negative ESI. Alkyl nitrates can be distinguished from
238 carboxylic acids and sulfates based on their distinct collision cross sections vs. mass to
239 charge ratio relationship. Note that other important chemical classes of atmospheric
240 interest, such as amines, alcohols, aldehydes, and peroxides, are suitable for analysis in
241 the positive ESI and their trend lines are not given here.

242 **3.3. Characteristic fragments upon collision-induced dissociation**

243 Molecular structures of selected AN ion adducts were further probed with the
244 assistance of the collision-induced dissociation (CID) analysis, which was performed
245 after the drift tube but prior to the time-of-flight chamber. The resulting daughter ion
246 appears at the same drift time as the parent ion, allowing for a straightforward correlation
247 of any given ion with its fragments. As shown in Figure 4, the nitrate ion (NO_3^-) at *m/z* 62
248 is exclusively observed upon CID of the parent ion adducts formed from MNG, DNG,
249 and PETN by clustering with Cl$^-$, NO_3^-, and Ac$^-$. The NO_3^- fragment resulting from
250 decomposition of the corresponding parent ion adduct can be well separated from that
251 originally added to the AN solution based on their entirely different ion mobilities (as
252 reflected by the measured drift time). Thus NO_3^- is considered as a characteristic
253 fragment upon CID of the parent AN adduct ion and serves as a tracer to verify the
254 presence of the $-ONO_2$ functional group in unknown compounds.

255 The anions (Cl$^-$, NO_3^-, and Ac$^-$) that promote the clustering chemistry were not
256 observed upon CID of the parent AN adducts. Figure 5 shows the profiles of four ion
257 adducts, i.e., [MNG+Cl]$^-$, [MNG+Ac]$^-$, [PETN+Cl]$^-$, and [PETN+I]$^-$, as well as their
258 resulting fragments under a sequence of CID potential gradient. As expected, the
259 abundance of the transmitted parent ion adducts decreases as the CID voltage rises. NO_3^-
260 appears as the largest product ion, and its enhanced abundance with increasing CID
261 voltage is balanced by the decrease in signals of the corresponding parent ion adduct. Cl$^-$
262 and Ac$^-$ remain minor peaks over the entire range of displayed CID potential gradient.
263 Under low-energy collisions, the parent AN ion adduct principally follows two
264 fragmentation pathways, leading to either Cl$^-$/ Ac$^-$/I$^-$ with the neutral AN molecule or
265 the deprotonated AN molecular ion ([M-H]$^-$) via the neutral loss of HCl / HAc / HI. The
266 absence of Cl$^-$ and Ac$^-$ indicates higher gas-phase basicity of Cl$^-$ / Ac$^-$ than [M-H]$^-$.

267   As a result, the mechanism yielding [M-H]$^-$ is the dominant fragmentation pathway of

268   AN ion adducts (with an exception for [PETN+I]$^-$). The resulting molecular ion [M-H]$^-$

269   decomposes promptly to NO_3^- due to the presence of the fragile R–ONO_2 bond.

3.4. Application to isoprene SOA

271   The OH-initiated oxidation of isoprene produces a population of isoprene peroxy

272   radicals (RO_2), the fate of which depends on the level of nitric oxide. Under high-NO

273   conditions as performed in the chamber experiments here, RO_2 radicals preferentially

274   react with NO leading to major first-generation products including isoprene hydroxy

275   nitrates, among which the two β-hydroxy nitrates dominate the isomer distribution. Due

276   to the presence of a double bond, the hydroxy nitrate could undergo OH addition

277   followed again by reactions of RO_2 radicals with NO, leading to a spectrum of products,

278   of which some highly functionalized molecules such as the dihydroxy dinitrate are

279   potential SOA precursors (Wennberg et al., 2018).

280   A pair of ion adducts at *m/z* 261 ([M+^{35}Cl]$^-$) and *m/z* 263 ([M+^{37}Cl]$^-$) with the

281   abundance ratio of 3:1 is observed in the mass spectra of the isoprene SOA extracts in

282   methanol with 0.2 mM sodium chloride as the additive. These two adducts share an

283   identical mobility (DT = ~25.8 ms), which also appears as a small peak (DT = ~25.7 ms)

284   in the mobility spectra of the NO_3^- ion (bottom panel of Figure 6). Further inspection of

285   the 'mobility-selected' mass spectra of the parent ion adduct at *m/z* 261 reveals that NO_3^-

286   is the major fragment ion (top panel of Figure 6). With the application of a CID potential

287   sequence, the intensity of the precursor ion at *m/z* 261 decreases and that of the fragment

288   ion at *m/z* 62 increases (middle panel of Figure 6), a similar pattern observed for the AN

289   standards. We thereby tentatively assign the parent ion adduct at *m/z* 261 to a second-

290   generation oxidation product, dihydroxy dinitrate ($C_5H_{10}O_8N_2$, see the chemical structure

291   given in Figure 6), which is produced from the addition of OH to the two double bonds of

292   isoprene followed by RO_2+NO reactions. It is interesting to note that a small shoulder

293   peak appears at ~26.0 ms in the mobility spectra of the ion adduct at *m/z* 261 (bottom

294   panel of Figure 6), likely representative of the $C_5H_{10}O_8N_2$ isomers generated from the

295   much less favored OH-addition channels that produce primary RO_2 radicals. Quantitative

296   analysis of the dihydroxy dinitrate is complicated by the matrix interference during the

297   ESI process and chromatographic separation prior to infusion to the ESI source is

298   required (Zhang et al., 2015a; Zhang et al., 2016a), which is beyond the capability of the

299   current instrument setup. Further note that first-generation hydroxy nitrates were not

300   detected, due to their relatively high volatility and thus quite limited partitioning onto the

301   particle phase. On the other hand, multiple peaks were observed in the mobility spectra of

the NO_3^- ion (bottom panel of Figure 6), and their drift times are higher than that of the ion assigned to the dihydroxy dinitrate, implying that some high-molecular-weight nitrate products were likely fragmented in the quadrupole interface.

4. Conclusions

The anion attachment chemistry was previously used in the negative ESI operation to effectively induce ion formation from neutral molecules that lack acidic sites (Zhu and Cole, 2000). Here we build upon the use of anion attachment, a special chemical ionization mechanism in solution, to characterize the condensed-phase alkyl nitrates at molecular level. The propensity of the $-ONO_2$ moiety to cluster with a diverse selection of anions, including Cl^-, I^-, NO_3^-, and Ac^-, was observed during the negative electrospray ionization process, and the measured total ion signals were enhanced by ultimately two orders of magnitude. Compared with conventional mass spectrometric techniques, the coupled ion mobility and mass-to-charge ratio measurements provide a two-dimensional separation of alkyl nitrates from other chemical classes commonly detected in negative ESI, such as organic sulfates and carboxylic acids. With the assistance of the collision-induced dissociation analysis, upon which the resulting product ions share the identical drift time as the precursor ion, molecular structures of ANs can be further probed. Regardless of the types of anions attached to the AN molecules, dissociation of the parent adduct ion yields a characteristic fragment, NO_3^- at *m/z* 62, which can be used to verify the presence of the $-ONO_2$ functional group in any given molecule. These new features enable the unambiguous identification of alkyl nitrates in a complex organic mixture, as exemplified by the detection of hydroxynitrates in isoprene derived SOA. The IMS-MS technique for the measurement of condensed-phase ANs is in its early stages of development. Accurate quantification of a given AN molecule by minimizing the ion suppression and improving the long-term stability of ESI is needed for future work.

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Compound	Molecular	Ion	LOD [a]	Ω_{N_2}[b]	Structure

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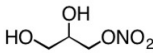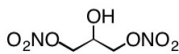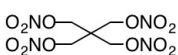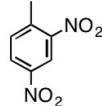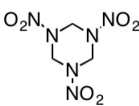
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572 Table 1. Overview of compounds containing $-ONO_2$ and $-NO_2$ functional groups
573 investigated in this study.

	Formula	Formula	m/z	(µM)	(Å^2)	
1-Mononitroglycerin (MNG)	$C_3H_7NO_5$	[M+Cl]$^-$	172.0	0.8	129.4	
		[M+NO$_2$-H]$^-$	182.0	0.7	132.7	
		[M+Ac]$^-$	196.0	0.3	139.2	
1,3-Dinitroglycerin (DNG)	$C_3H_6N_2O_7$	[M+Cl]$^-$	217.0	1.1	151.1	
		[M+NO$_2$-H]$^-$	227.0	4.3	156.6	
		[M+NO$_3$]$^-$	244.0	0.6	151.7	
		[M+I]$^-$	308.9	0.8	177.0	
Pentaerythritol tetranitrate (PETN)	$C_5H_8N_4O_{12}$	[M-H]$^-$	315.0	1.1	181.7	
		[M+Cl]$^-$	351.0	0.5	183.7	
		[M+NO$_2$-H]$^-$	361.0	0.9	190.7	
		[M+NO$_3$]$^-$	378.0	0.2	190.9	
		[M+I]$^-$	442.9	0.1	216.2	
		[2M+Cl]$^-$	667.0	1.0	262.6	
2,4-Dinitrotoluene (DNT)	$C_7H_6N_2O_4$	[M-H]$^-$	181.0	0.6	137.0	
Hexahydro-1,3,5-trinitro-1,3,5-triazine (RDX)	$C_3H_6N_6O_6$	[M+Cl]$^-$	257.0	0.3	149.8	
		[M+NO$_2$-H]$^-$	267.1	1.4	156.3	
		[M+NO$_3$]$^-$	284.0	0.2	160.8	
		[M+I]$^-$	348.9	0.1	181.9	
		[2M+Cl]$^-$	479.0	1.6	203.5	

[a] The limit of detection (LOD) is calculated as LOD = $\sigma \times$(S/N)/k, where S/N is the signal-to-noise ratio, which is taken as 3 here, k is the response factor of IMS-MS towards individual ion adducts produced from 5 µM standard nitrate solution during negative ESI, and σ is the standard deviation of the IMS-MS response over the course of 60 s measurements.

[b] The collision cross section (Ω_{N_2}) is calculated through the modified zero field (so called Mason-Schamp) equation, see more details in Zhang et al. (2016).

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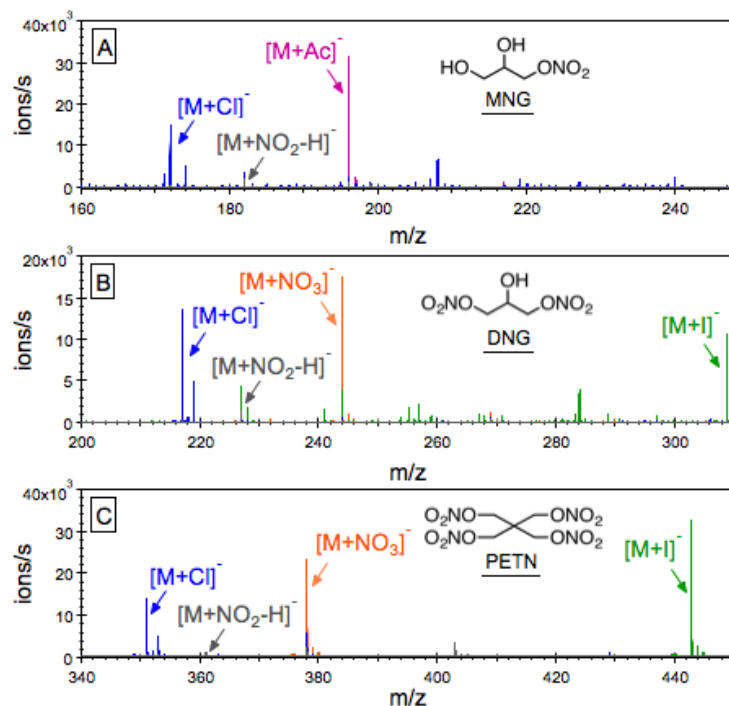


Figure 1. Negative ESI mass spectra of 5 μM 1-mononitroglycerin (MNG), 1,3-dinitroglycerin (DNG), and pentaerythritol tetranitrate (PETN) dissolved in pure methanol (gray), methanol with 0.1 mM ammonium acetate (NH_4Ac, purple), methanol with 0.1 mM ammonium chloride (NH_4Cl, blue), methanol with 0.1 mM sodium nitrate ($NaNO_3$, orange), and methanol with 0.1 mM sodium iodide (NaI, green). These three alkyl nitrates, which do not readily produce significant amount of molecular ions on their own during negative ESI, are observed as clusters with acetate (Ac^-), chloride (Cl^-), nitrate (NO_3^-), and iodide anions (I^-) in the ESI(–) spectra.

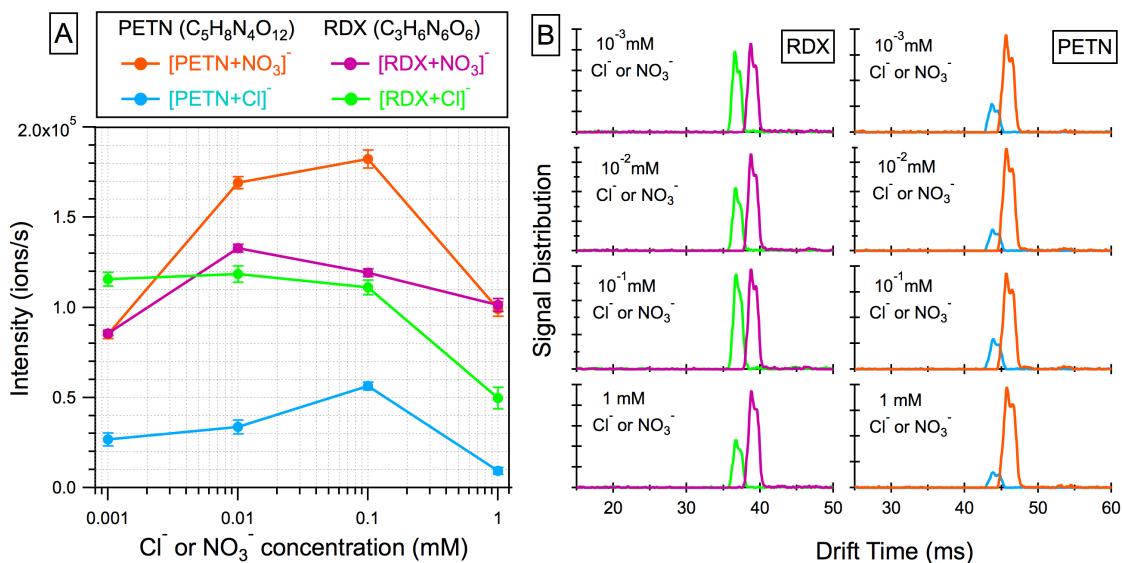



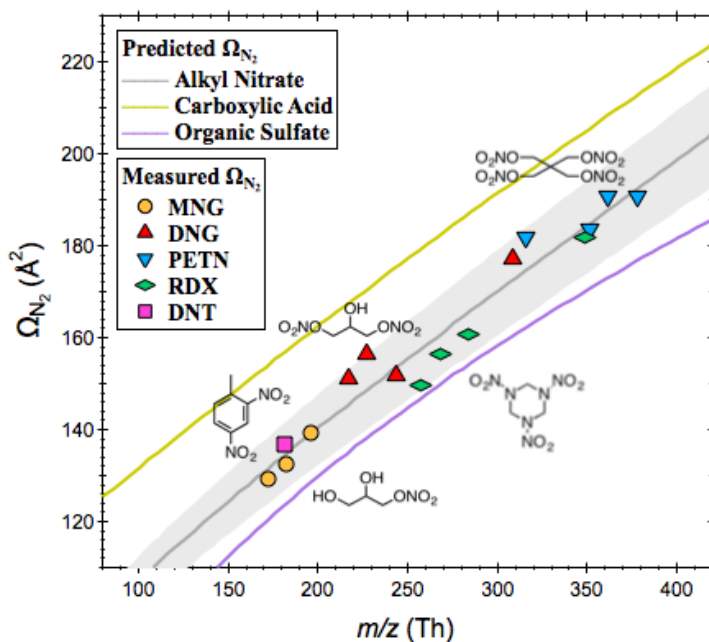
Figure 2. (A) Signals of the ion adducts produced from RDX and PETN by clustering with chloride (Cl^-) and nitrate (NO_3^-) as a function of the corresponding anion concentrations ranging from 1 μM to 1 mM. (B) Drift time distributions of the ion adducts $[RDX+Cl]^-$, $[PETN+Cl]^-$, $[RDX+NO_3]^-$, and $[PETN+NO_3]^-$ are consistent at different anion concentrations.

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Figure 3. Measured collision cross sections (Ω_{N_2}) of the AN ion adducts as a function of their mass-to-charge ratios appear along the predicted $\Omega_{N_2} - m/z$ trend line. Also shown here are the predicted $\Omega_{N_2} - m/z$ trend lines for carboxylic acids and organic sulfates, which are major chemical classes of atmospheric interest detected in the negative ESI mode.

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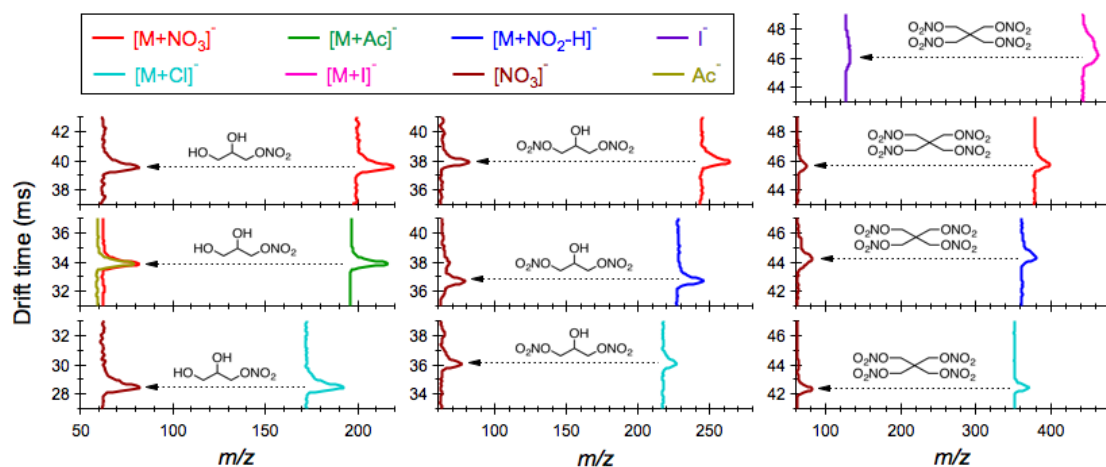
630 Figure 4. Characteristic fragment ions produced from MNG, DNG, and PETN by
631 clustering with acetate (Ac⁻), chloride (Cl⁻), iodide (I⁻), nitrate (NO₃⁻), and nitrite
632 (NO₂⁻) upon collision induced dissociation performed at a CID voltage of 20 V.

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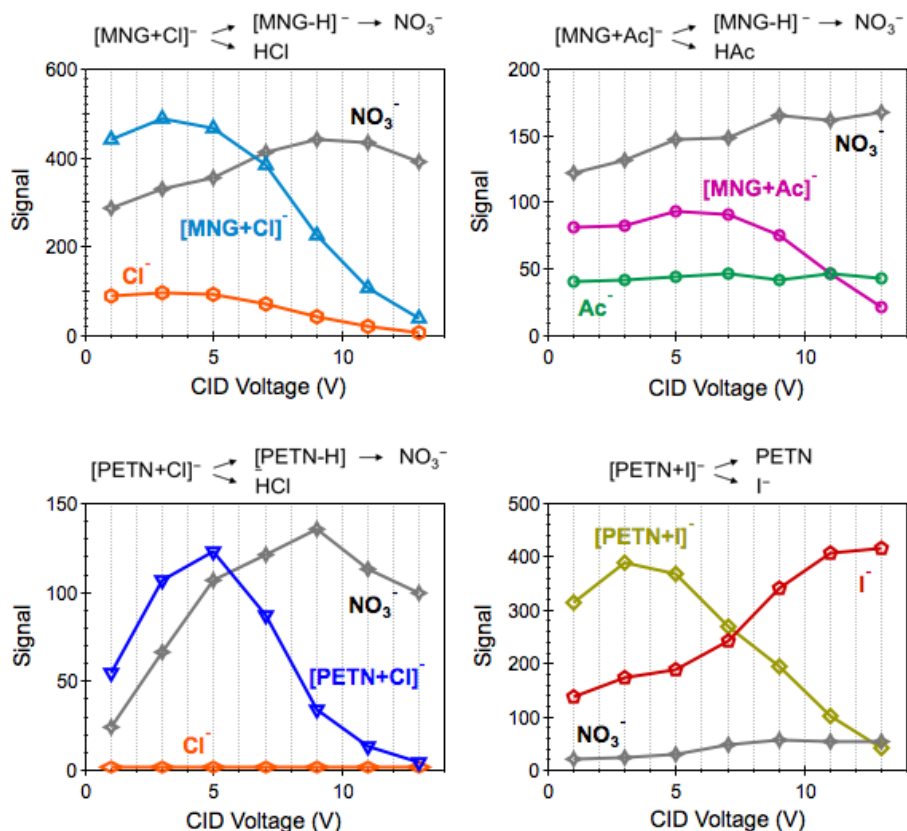
659 Figure 5. Peak intensities of the precursor ion adducts [MNG+Cl]⁻, [MNG+Ac]⁻,
660 [PETN+Cl]⁻, and [PETN+I]⁻ as well as their fragment ions as a function of the collision
661 energy as displayed by the CID voltage.

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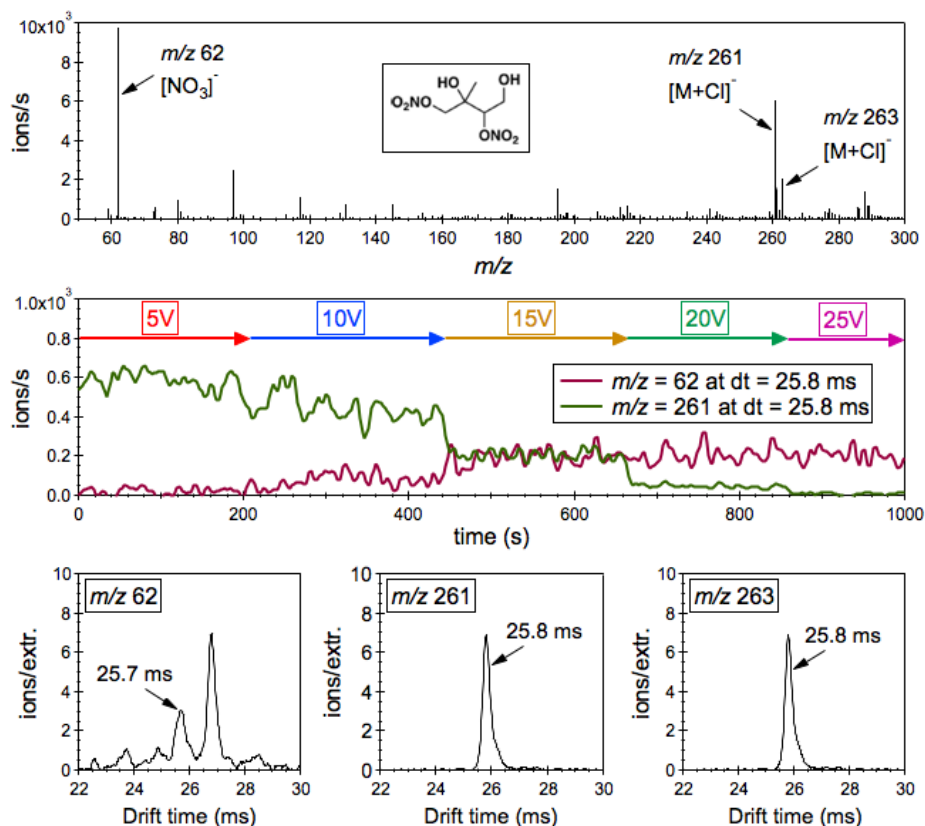
672 Figure 6. (Top panel) The 'mobility-selected' mass spectra of the parent ion adduct at *m/z*
673 261 and its major fragment at *m/z* 62 in isoprene SOA extracts with ~0.2 mM sodium
674 chloride as the additive. (Middle panel) Profiles of the precursor ion adduct at *m/z* 261
675 and its product ion at *m/z* 62 as a function of the CID voltage. (Bottom panel) Drift time
676 spectra of the ion adduct at *m/z* 261, its isotope ion adduct at *m/z* 263, and the fragment
677 ion at *m/z* 62.

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