Competitive adsorption capacities of anionic contaminants on cationic surfactant modified powdered activated carbon (PAC) between single and multi contaminant system

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Powdered activated carbon (PAC) modified by cationic surfactant has high adsorption capacities to anionic contaminants. It is used to remove arsenate ($H_2AsO_4^-$), chromate ($CrO_4^{2^-}$) and ferricyanide($Fe(CN)_6^{3^-}$) in this study. Adsorption capacity of virgin activated carbon is less than 0.03 mmol of anionic pollutant per 1 g of PAC. However, adsorption capacity of PAC increases by modifying the virgin PAC with cationic surfactant. Adsorbed mass of $H_2AsO_4^-$, $CrO_4^{2^-}$ and $Fe(CN)_6^{3^-}$ on modified PAC are enhanced as 0.1, 0.25, 0.13 mmol/g, respectively. Adsorbed mass of $CrO_4^{2^-}$ is nearly twice higher than those of $H_2AsO_4^-$ and $Fe(CN)_6^{3^-}$. Adsorption capacity of modified PAC to $H_2AsO_4^-$ and $Fe(CN)_6^{3^-}$ are similar. However, in multi–contaminants system, Adsorption capacities of three anionic contaminants are different. Because of valence effect, trivalent ferricyanide shows the highest adsorption affinity to modified PAC. Therefore adsorption of $Fe(CN)_6^{3^-}$ increases with equilibrium concentration. Whereas adsorbed $CrO_4^{2^-}$ and $H_2AsO_4^-$ are detached to aqueous phase.