

Letter



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# Siloxanes are the most abundant VOC emitted from engineering students in a classroom

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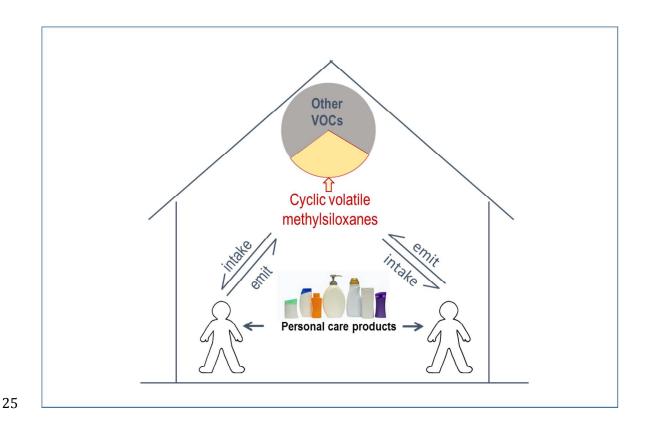
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- 1 Siloxanes are the most abundant VOC emitted from engineering students in
- 2 a classroom
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- 9 Abstract
- 10 Direct human emissions are known to contribute volatile organic compounds
- 11 (VOCs) to indoor air via various mechanisms. However, few measurements
- 12 are available that determine the emissions of a full suite of occupant-
- 13 associated VOCs. We measured occupant-related VOC emissions from
- 14 engineering students in a classroom using a proton-transfer-reaction time-of-
- 15 flight mass spectrometer (PTR-TOF-MS). The dominant compound emitted
- 16 was a cyclic volatile methylsiloxane (cVMS), decamethylcyclopentasiloxane
- 17 (D5), which is a major inactive ingredient in some personal care products
- 18 such as antiperspirants. D5 was found to contribute  $\sim$ 30% of the total indoor
- 19 VOC mass concentration as measured by the PTR-TOF-MS.
- 20 Octamethylcyclotetrasiloxane (D4) and dodecamethylcyclohexasiloxane (D6)
- 21 were detected at one to two orders of magnitude lower abundance. The per-
- 22 person emission rate of these three cVMS declined monotonically from
- 23 morning into the afternoon, consistent with expectations for emissions from
- 24 daily morning application of personal care products.



26

### 27 Introduction

Cyclic volatile methylsiloxanes (cVMS) are manufactured chemicals, most 28 29 commonly containing 4, 5, or 6 "Si-O" units (D4, octamethylcyclotetrasiloxane; 30 D5, decamethylcyclopentasiloxane; D6, dodecamethylcyclohexasiloxane). The 31 cVMS compounds are commonly used in personal care products, such as antiperspirants, cosmetics and hair-care products<sup>1, 2</sup>. A recent review on 32 33 organosiloxanes addressed environmental properties and concerns for cVMS, 34 including bioaccumulation, toxicity and degradation<sup>3</sup>. People expose themselves to cVMS through regular application of personal care products 35 36 (PCPs). A recent study indicated that inhalation may be a more significant contributor to intake of cVMS as compared with transdermal permeation<sup>4</sup>. 37 Since humans spend ~90% of their time indoors<sup>5, 6</sup>, indoor gaseous cVMS are 38 39 likely the major cause of an individual human's intake, whether or not they 40 personally apply cVMS-containing products.

Airborne cVMS have been detected in both indoor and outdoor environments<sup>7-</sup> 41 42 <sup>18</sup>, with much higher concentrations reported indoors<sup>10, 14, 19</sup>. In 1992, Shields and Weschler<sup>11</sup> reported measurements of gaseous cVMS concentrations 43 44 indoors, in a telephone switching center. Their study reported levels of D3, D4 and D5, classifying them as "indoor only" VOCs, and identified the likely 45 46 sources as PCPs, such as deodorants. In 1996, Shields et al. proposed a potential correlation between occupant density and indoor D4 and D5 47 concentrations along with measured outdoor airborne concentrations of D4 48 49 and D510.

50 Since cVMS emissions are presumed to be primarily associated with personal 51 care product use, indoor cVMS levels should depend on occupant density and 52 air-exchange rate. Average emission rates per occupant could be useful for assessing the impact of cVMS on indoor air quality, yet few studies have 53 54 reported such values. In this study, we carried out real-time measurements of 55 VOCs in a classroom using a proton-transfer-reaction time-of-flight mass 56 spectrometer (PTR-TOF-MS). We applied a material balance calculation to 57 determine per-person emission rates from the measured concentrations. We report here the concentrations and emission rates of the three cVMS, the 58 59 relationship between occupancy and emissions, and the relative contribution 60 of cVMS to total VOCs as measured by PTR-TOF-MS in supply air and in the 61 occupied classroom.

#### 62 Methods

Measurements were made in a normally functioning classroom at the
University of California, Berkeley, California, USA. The room volume is 670
m<sup>3</sup>, and its single-pass mechanical ventilation system operates 8:00-20:45.
The mechanical ventilation system provides an air-exchange rate of 5±0.5 h<sup>-1</sup>
when operating. Outdoor air infiltration can be neglected since the classroom
has no windows or exterior doors. During classes, the two interior doors are

69 generally closed. Additional characteristics of the classroom have been
70 described elsewhere<sup>20</sup>.

71 The occupant number and VOC and CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations in the classroom 72 were continuously monitored with high time resolution for five weekdays (Tuesday, two Wednesdays and two Thursdays). An observer recorded 73 minute-by-minute occupancy and remained in the classroom during the 74 75 whole davtime sampling period. For each class, there was a "stable" period 76 during which the number of room occupants  $(\overline{N})$  remained relatively constant; 77  $\overline{N}$  equaled or exceeded 17 occupants for each of the 19 stable class sessions on 78 the five monitored days. Each class session was taught by a faculty member 79 from the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, and the 80 classroom occupants were predominately engineering students.

Sampling was conducted by drawing air through a three-way Teflon<sup>®</sup> solenoid 81 82 valve, with switching between the supply air duct and the classroom air every 5 minutes. An in-line PTFE membrane filter was deployed in front of 83 84 the instrument inlets to remove particulate matter from the sampled air. The 85 classroom air-sampling inlet was situated at the back of the room, two meters above the floor. Previous studies provide strong evidence to support our 86 assumption that the room air was well mixed during times of occupancy<sup>20</sup>. 87 Supply air was sampled by inserting the 0.6-cm (1/4-inch) Teflon<sup>®</sup> sampling 88 89 tube through the ceiling diffuser into the air duct. The VOC composition in the supply air closely resembles outdoor air, with possible modifications by 90 interactions with the air duct and thermal conditioning system. The CO<sub>2</sub> 91 concentration in the classroom and supply air was measured using the same 92 sampling lines using a LI-820 CO<sub>2</sub> analyzer (LI-COR, Inc., Lincoln, 93 Nebraska). 94

The VOCs were monitored by a PTR-TOF-MS (PTR-TOF 8000, IONICON
Analytik GmbH, Austria), using H<sub>3</sub>O<sup>+</sup> as the primary reagent ion, with the

mass spectrum for mass-to-charge ratio (m/z) 30-500 recorded at 1-Hz
averaging time. Detailed description and application of the PTR-TOF-MS can
be found elsewhere<sup>21-24</sup>. The fast response time, low detection limit, and mass
accuracy have made PTR-TOF-MS an increasingly used tool for outdoor and
indoor air VOC measurements<sup>25</sup>.

Individual cVMS standards (analytical grade, purity >98%) were purchased 102 103 from Sigma-Aldrich (St. Louis, MO, USA). A 1µL mL<sup>-1</sup> calibration mixture was made by diluting each cVMS in hexane. A flow tube coupled with an 104 105 adjustable syringe pump was utilized to produce a four-point calibration curve in air, which was in very good agreement  $(\pm 20\%)$  with concentrations 106 107 calculated using the theoretically based relative transmission method. Authentic calibration gas standards (Apel-Riemer Environmental, Inc.) were 108 used to calibrate for 22 additional VOCs and concentrations of the rest of the 109 110 observed organic ions were calculated using the relative transmission method<sup>24, 26</sup>. Details of the standard gas calibration method can be found in 111 112 the supporting information.

113 The mixing ratio (ppb) and corresponding mass concentration (µg m<sup>-3</sup>) for each ion was averaged to 1-min time resolution. To reduce possible effects 114 from valve switching and sampling tube interactions, data for the first two 115 minutes after switching between classroom and supply air sampling was 116 117 discarded and the remaining three minutes were then averaged. Examination of the time-series results indicates that this procedure was 118 effective for separately analyzing room and supply air concentrations. To 119 120 calculate the typical VOC concentrations in an occupied classroom, the 1-min 121 mass concentration of each ion was averaged across the stable periods for every sampling day (~8:15-17:00 PDT). The daily-average mass concentration 122 for total VOC is the sum of that for all detected ions. 123

124 Occupancy-associated emission rates of the cVMS and CO<sub>2</sub> were estimated

125 using a material-balance approach (Equation 1), assuming no other pathways

126 for mass loss except air exchange. Well-mixed conditions and identical flows

127 into and out of the room were assumed.

128 
$$\frac{d(C_{cl})}{dt} = aC_{sa} + \frac{E(t)}{V} - aC_{cl} \tag{1}$$

129 
$$M = \int_{t_0}^{t_1} E(t) dt$$
 (2)

In Equation (1), C is the concentration of the gaseous species ( $\mu g m^{-3}$ ) at time 130 t in the classroom air (cl) and supply air (sa); a is the air exchange rate  $(h^{-1})$ ; 131 E(t) is the emission rate of CO<sub>2</sub> or VOC species at time t associated with 132 133 human occupants ( $\mu$ g h<sup>-1</sup>); and V is the volume of the indoor space (m<sup>3</sup>). In Equation (2), M is the total emitted mass ( $\mu g$ ) from time  $t_0$  to  $t_1$ . The average 134 per-person emission rate (ER) is evaluated, according to Equation (3), as the 135 136 derived quantity M divided by the average occupant number  $(\overline{N})$  and stable 137 period duration  $(t_1 - t_0)$ .

138 
$$ER = \frac{M}{\overline{N}(t_1 - t_0)}$$
(3)

For the cVMS, which were unambiguously associated with occupancy
patterns, we report ER as analyte mass per hour per person (ug h<sup>-1</sup> p<sup>-1</sup>).

#### 141 Results and Discussion

Figure 1 shows the apportionment of the total VOCs among three categories: 142 (i) cVMS, (ii) sum of ions in mass range m/z 30-150, and (iii) sum of "other" 143 ions in mass range m/z 151-500 excluding the three cVMS. The measured 144 145 total VOC mass concentration in the classroom air averaged 3 times higher than in the supply air (200  $\mu$ g m<sup>-3</sup> versus 66  $\mu$ g m<sup>-3</sup>, respectively) for times 146 147 when at least 17 students were present. The mass concentration of three cVMS (63±33 μg m<sup>-3</sup>) contributed ~31% of the total VOC measured in the 148 149 occupied classroom. For the combined cVMS, the occupied classroom-air

150 concentration was an order of magnitude higher than that in the supply air 151  $(4.1\pm1.7 \mu g m^{-3}, Table S1)$ , indicating that these species primarily originated from indoor emission sources. Among the three cVMS, D5 was clearly 152 dominant, comprising >90% of the total ( $60\pm32 \mu g m^{-3}$  for classroom air, 153 3.8±1.5 µg m<sup>-3</sup> for supply air; see Table S2). The predominance of D5, and the 154 155 lesser contributions from D4 and D6, are consistent with other indoor cVMS measurements<sup>9, 12, 14, 27</sup>. The D5 mass concentration was also comparable with 156 previous reported values. For example, the average D5 concentration in 157 offices in the UK and Italy<sup>9</sup> was 54 and 7.5 µg m<sup>-3</sup>; the range of D5 158 159 concentration in a classroom in Albany, New York, USA with 5 occupants 160 was 0.1-1.0 µg m<sup>-3 12</sup> and in two offices in Barcelona, Spain was 2.4±0.2 µg m<sup>-3</sup> and  $1.7\pm0.2 \ \mu g \ m^{-3} \ ^{27}$ . Air samples collected in hair salons have had the 161 highest reported concentrations of D5<sup>12</sup>, which could be attributed to the 162 extensive use of PCPs in that setting. 163

Time resolved (10-min average) mixing ratios of D4, D5, D6 and CO<sub>2</sub> in the 164 165 supply and the classroom air on one sampling day (13 November 2014) are shown in Figure 2. As expected, because of occupant metabolism, we observed 166 synchronous changes of indoor  $CO_2$  concentration with occupant number and 167 the starting and ending times of a class session. The time series of cVMS 168 169 levels showed a clear association with occupancy, but differed interestingly 170 from the  $CO_2$  trend. A clear peak in concentrations of D5 and D6 occurred at the beginning of each class, likely resulting from increased emissions 171 associated with elevated body temperatures due to active movement en route 172 173 to the classroom, and/or from shedding of outer layers of clothing after entering the classroom. For D4, one prominent indoor peak appeared around 174 8:10 when the first class started, then the mixing ratio decayed toward the 175 background level throughout the class period. The maximum mixing ratios 176 for D5 and D6 occurred during the second class, with ~54 occupants, instead 177 178 of during the next two classes, which had more occupants (see Figure 2). A

one-time prominent emission event was observed for D4 that was much
larger than any other during the two-week study. No stable concentration
plateau was reached for any of the three cVMS species, indicating that their
emission sources were not related to metabolism as with CO<sub>2</sub>, but instead
emissions occurred more as a "burst" source when occupants first entered the
room and then declined with time. Further examination focuses on the
average per person emission rates.

The per-person emission rates (ER, mg h<sup>-1</sup> p<sup>-1</sup>) of D4, D5 and D6 are shown 186 for 14 classes on four weekdays (two Wednesdays and two Thursdays) in 187 188 Figure 3. The ERs were consistently higher in the morning and lower in the 189 afternoon. This finding is consistent with previously reported temporal evaporation loss of D5 after the application of PCPs<sup>28, 29</sup>. In contrast, the 190 191 average per-person ER of  $CO_2$  was  $21 \pm 3$  g h<sup>-1</sup> p<sup>-1</sup>, exhibiting a consistent average metabolism rate for occupants throughout each stable class period 192 and also across all class periods. Thus, the time series of cVMS emissions was 193 194 consistent with PCPs being applied by student occupants mainly in the 195 morning before coming to school, and exhibited a different pattern than a 196 metabolic source.

197 The cVMS ERs were dominated by D5. The D4 and D6 ERs were at least one 198 order of magnitude lower than D5, except for one class period on 11/13/2014 when the ER of D4 was comparable to that of D5, consistent with the mixing 199 200 ratios shown in Figure 2. Good agreement was found for the per-capita ER of D5 between our calculation  $(4-235 \text{ mg p}^{-1} \text{ d}^{-1})$  and the few previous studies 201 that have estimated emission rates<sup>30-32</sup>. Results from models simulating 202 ambient air measurements in Zurich<sup>31</sup> and Chicago<sup>30</sup> were 170–690 mg d<sup>-1</sup> 203  $p^{-1}$  and 100–420 mg d<sup>-1</sup>  $p^{-1}$ , respectively. The model-estimated per-capita ER 204 for D6 in Zurich, Switzerland (19–81 mg d<sup>-1</sup> p<sup>-1</sup>) is an order of magnitude 205 higher than our measured values of 0.5–7.3 mg d<sup>-1</sup> p<sup>-1</sup>, suggesting the 206

207 potential importance for this compound of emission sources other than
208 PCPs<sup>31</sup>.

209 Class schedules were the same during the two weeks of the study. Thus, the 210 same group of students was expected to be present in each of the classes (by day and time), as supported by the consistency in numbers of occupants 211 212 (Table 1). The ERs for the two Wednesdays were comparable with each other, whereas the ER for the second Thursday was much higher than on the first 213 Thursday. The amount and types of products used by occupants each day 214 may cause variability in the emitted mass of cVMS as well as in the relative 215 amounts of D4, D5 and D6. The second Thursday (11/13/2014) was the only 216 217 rainy day during the sampling period, and we speculate that the enhanced 218 cVMS emissions per person on that day might be due to wearing of coats and 219 sweaters which were removed upon entering the classroom, causing a burst 220 of emissions.

221 To summarize, in this study, we employed PTR-TOF-MS to examine the 222 sources of VOCs in a university classroom and found that D5 was the 223 dominant chemical emitted. Furthermore, we found that cVMS accounted for  $\sim$ 1/3 of the total observed VOC mass concentration in the occupied classroom. 224 The effective emission rates we determined for D4, D5, and D6 provide useful 225 input data for indoor air quality and exposure assessment models. Further 226 227 investigations on indoor cVMS emissions from different populations are needed to help validate and add to the accuracy of such models. 228

#### 229 ASSOCIATED CONTENT

- 230 Supporting Information
- 231 Supporting Information available:
- 232 Method for the measurement of AER and details on the PTR-TOF-MS
- 233 parameters and calibration;

- Table S1 and S2 provide data on mass concentration and relative fraction of
- the three categories of ions to the total measured VOC mass as well as D4,
- 236 D5 and D6 in the total cVMS mass.
- 237 This material is available free of charge via the Internet at http://pubs.acs.org.

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- 241 Notes
- 242 The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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348

349 Figure and Table captions:

Fig 1. Distribution of cVMS, organic ions in mass range m/z 30-150, and other

ions (m/z range 151-500, excluding the three cVMS) comprising the total

352 VOCs measured by PTR-TOF-MS in the supply air (A) and classroom air (B),

353 respectively. The numerical labels represent the average mass concentration

354 (µg m-3) and fraction for each category under occupied conditions during the

355 five sampling days. Size (area) of each chart represents the total average

356 VOC mass concentration.

357

Fig 2. Time-resolved concentrations of D4, D5, D6 and CO2 in the supply air

359 (dashed line) and the classroom air (solid line with markers) on 13 Nov 2014

as measured by PTR-TOF-MS. The vertical dashed lines define the duration

of each class; the average number of occupants in each class is noted in the

top panel.

- 363
- Fig 3. Per person emission rates, ER (mg h-1 p-1) of D4, D5 and D6 during
- 365 occupied class periods for four weekdays (two Wednesdays and two
- 366 Thursdays). The emissions of cVMS were dominated by D5 and declined over
- 367 the course of each day.
- 368
- Table 1 Measured emission rates (ER) for D4, D5, D6 and total cVMS in each
- 370 class period, with number of occupants, class time, and date indicated.

## Figure captions:

Fig 1. Distribution of cVMS, organic ions in mass range m/z 30-150, and other ions (m/z range 151-500, excluding the three cVMS) comprising the total VOCs measured by PTR-TOF-MS in the supply air (A) and classroom air (B), respectively. The numerical labels represent the average mass concentration ( $\mu$ g m<sup>-3</sup>) and fraction for each category under occupied conditions during the five sampling days. Size (area) of each chart represents the total average VOC mass concentration.

Fig 2. Time-resolved concentrations of D4, D5, D6 and  $CO_2$  in the supply air (dashed line) and the classroom air (solid line with markers) on 13 Nov 2014 as measured by PTR-TOF-MS. The vertical dashed lines define the duration of each class; the average number of occupants in each class is noted in the top panel.

Fig 3. Per person emission rates, ER (mg  $h^{-1} p^{-1}$ ) of D4, D5 and D6 during occupied class periods for four weekdays (two Wednesdays and two Thursdays). The emissions of cVMS were dominated by D5 and declined over the course of each day.

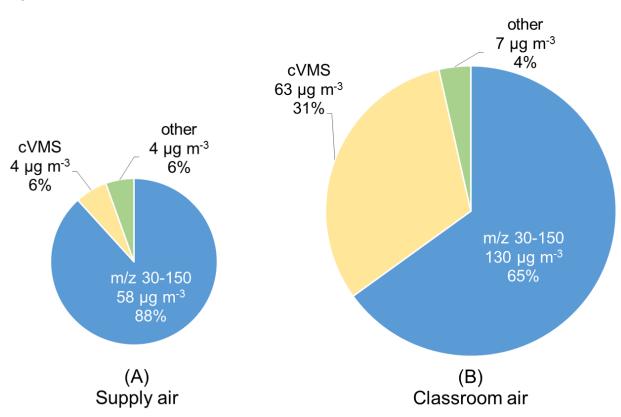
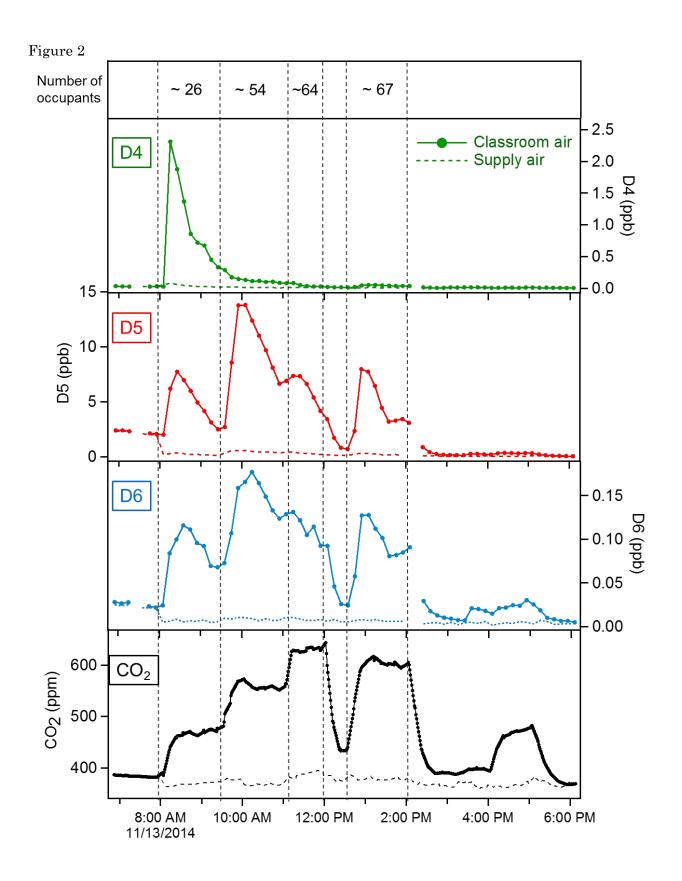


Figure 1





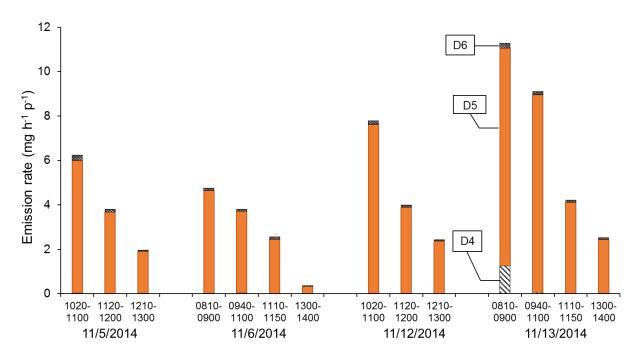


Table 1 Measured emission rates (ER) for D4, D5, D6 and total cVMS in each class period, with number of occupants, class time, and date indicated.

	Class period	Occupant (person)	Emission rate (ER)			
Date			D4	D5	D6	Total
			(µg h⁻¹ p⁻¹)	(µg h⁻¹ p⁻¹)	(µg h⁻¹ p⁻¹)	(mg h <sup>-1</sup> p <sup>-1</sup> )
11/4/2014	0820-0930	26	58	2480	76	2.6
	0940-1010	58	31	4260	303	4.6
	1250-1400	69	6	764	83	0.9
	1410-1600	17	3	183	19	0.2
11/5/2014	1020-1100	62	41	5950	240	6.2
	1120-1200	36	11	3670	116	3.8
	1210-1300	66	20	1900	48	2.0
	1310-1400	29	4	718	26	0.7
11/6/2014	0810-0910	24	15	4640	103	4.8
	0940-1100	57	37	3680	97	3.8
	1110-1150	58	13	2450	105	2.6
	1300-1400	64	2	336	36	0.4
11/12/2014	1020-1100	61	19	7610	156	7.8
	1120-1200	31	11	3880	97	4.0
	1210-1300	65	13	2360	66	2.4
11/13/2014	0810-0910	26	1270	9800	211	11.3
	0940-1100	54	64	8890	157	9.1
	1110-1150	64	13	4110	88	4.2
	1300-1400	67	17	2430	72	2.5