

PICOSPRITZER III User Guide
REV 03/2007



Parker Hannifin
Pneutronics Division
New Jersey Operations
45 Route 46 East
Pine Brook, NJ 07058
Tel: 973-575-4844
<http://www.parker.com/pneutronics>

NJ Mailing Address:
PO Box 778
Pine Brook, NJ 07058

PICOSPRITZER[®] III

***Pressure Systems for Ejection of
Picoliter Volumes in Cell Research***



PICOSPRITZER® III

Pressure Systems for Ejection of Picoliter Volumes in Cell Research

OPERATING MANUAL

I. INTRODUCTION

Please read this entire set of instructions before attempting to use this instrument for intracellular or extracellular ejections. These instructions cover all currently produced systems (single channel, two channel, and vacuum loading models).

The Picospritzer III is a self-contained, rack-mountable system which supplies repeatable pressure pulses. Volumes dispensed are linear with time and pressure. The system can be initiated three ways: front panel push button external stimulator (5 volt), or remote push button/foot pedal. The Picospritzer III pressure system was designed for rapid and reproducible ejections of picoliter to nanoliter volumes used in conjunction with intracellular or extracellular studies while avoiding the inherent desensitization of nerve cells which accompanies Iontophoretic methodology.

Intracellular applications range from femtoliter ejections of RNA into small (50m diameter) cells to nanoliter ejections into oocytes. Extracellular applications range from picoliter applications of dilute neuroactive substances onto neurons during intracellular recording to the presentation of chemical stimuli to whole animals.

The system comes complete with high speed valve(s) and the necessary tubing assemblies (less pipette and holder). It is designed to fit a standard 19" relay rack. The Picospritzer III comes fully adjusted and ready to use. Set-up entails the following steps:

Contents

INTRODUCTION	2
SPECIFICATIONS.....	3
CONTROLS AND USE	4
BACKGROUND	6
PICOSPRITZER® III MODELS.....	11

1. Position the control unit in the desired location. Position the remote valve box within two feet of the experimental site (VELCRO[®] is supplied for mounting) and within 6 feet of the control unit.
2. Connect the black ¼ inch pressure tubing to the side port on the front panel regulator and to a source of clean dry compressed gas (air, nitrogen, CO₂, or argon) at a maximum of 150 PSI (10 bar). **DO NOT USE OXYGEN OR COMBUSTABLE GASES.** The fitting on the regulator is a quick-connect type. The end of the tubing should be cut cleanly and inserted fully into the opening in the fitting. An o-ring seals around the outside of the tube. To remove the tubing from the fitting you must first vent the pressure from the line then press the ring on the end of the fitting (around the tubing) toward the body of the fitting while pulling on the tubing.
3. Use the 6-foot long 1/8-inch tubing assembly to connect the front panel regulator to the remote valve box. The connection at the regulator is also a quick-connect type while that to the remote valve box is threaded (1/4-28 male). There should be a ferrule pressed in to this end of the tubing.

4. The 3-foot long 1/16-inch tubing assembly is used to connect the remote valve box to a pipette holder (optional). Both ends of this assembly have ¼-28 nuts and ferrules pre-assembled to it.

PLEASE NOTE: An important detail in arranging the location of the solenoid in relation to the pipette holder is to maintain a loose coil in the interconnecting small bore (1/16 inch) Teflon[®] tubing to absorb or dampen the pressure pulse, thus avoiding movement of the pressure pipette. **DO NOT** stretch the tubing out tight between the valve housing and the pipette holder.

II. SPECIFICATIONS

Useful Pressure Range:

10-100 PSI, self-bleeding pressure regulator (lower pressure ranges available).

Maximum Inlet Pressure:

150 PSI
(Do not use oxygen or combustible gas.)

Pulse Durations:

2 to 999 ms, 1 ms intervals, 0.1 to 99.9 seconds, 0.1 to 99.9 minutes

Pulse Initiation:

Pushbutton on panel, external stimulator, or remote pushbutton/footswitch

Time Mark:

5-volt TTL from Channel One

Power Requirements:

Universal 90-250 V.A.C.
50-60 Hz.

Unit is equipped with a universal power supply which matches available line voltage ranging from 90 to 250 V.A.C.

III. CONTROLS AND USE

The unit is activated when the power switch is in the ON position and the red pilot light is on. The unit must be connected to a source of clean, dry compressed gas at a pressure at least as high as that desired for ejections. Clockwise rotation of the knurled knob on the right of the rack mount panel will increase the pressure (indicated on adjacent gauge) available for injection purposes. This unit contains a self-bleeding regulator so that the pressure may be reduced by simply rotating the pressure control knob counter-clockwise.

The system is rated to operate up to 100 PSI (6.7 bar). One can be assured that all the connections are gas-tight by rotating the knob on the front panel so that the meter indicates approximately 80 PSI of pressure and then shutting off the main source of pressure to the panel. If a gradual reduction of pressure is observed, it indicates that there is a leak somewhere between the remote valve housing and the main pressure source. The site of this leak may be found by carefully listening for a hissing sound or by application of a dilute soap solution (or “snoop”) and watching for the formation of bubbles at various connections. It is essential to have leak proof connections throughout the system to assure reproducible results and to avoid unnecessary loss of gases.

Volume ejected is a linear function of both pulse duration and pressure (see references 1, 3). The pulse duration has a greater dynamic range with more accurate and reproducible

settings. Thus, pulse duration will be changed frequently during the course of the experiment while pressure settings will be changed relatively little on a daily basis.

DURATION SETTING

The pulse duration is indicated by the setting on the three digit thumbwheel switch and the extended range switch (see Extended Range). It may be initiated by pressing the adjacent button on the front panel by remote push button, or by an external input signal. The circuit has a “debounce” control which restricts the action of the push button so that only one pulse is initiated per button press, even if the button is continuously held down. It also restricts the interval between repetitive pulses initiated by the push button to approximately 200 milliseconds. The “PULSE” indicator will light during the course of the pulse.

EXTENDED RANGE

The basic Picospritzer is furnished with extended range timing controlled by a three-position toggle switch located at the right side of the “Duration” thumbwheel. The top position (labeled “MSEC”), selects timing in the milliseconds range (2 to 999 milliseconds). In the center position (labeled “SEC”), the range is from 0.1 to 99.9 seconds (not the decimal). In the bottom position (labeled “MIN”), the range is from 0.1 to 99.9 minutes.

INDICATORS

The Picospritzer III contains four LED indicators. “ON” is the power indicator. The “PULSE” indicator shows that the timer is active; the channel 1 and channel 2 indicators show when each channel is active.

INPUT TRIGGER

The internal timer now has a separate BNC jack to allow it to be triggered from an external source. A low to high (+5 volts)

transition on this BNC will trigger the internal timer just as if the manual pushbutton had been pressed. If a pulse train is applied to this jack, care should be taken to ensure that the duration setting is less than the period of the pulse. Otherwise pulses will be skipped.

REMOTE PUSH BUTTON

A jack on the front panel of the Picospritzer is provided for attachment of an optional remote push button or foot pedal for initiating a pulse. This convenience permits the investigator to be some distance from the rack mount panel and to view an ejection through a microscope while initiating the ejection. When using a remote push button, the button has the same function as the panel push button. Optional hand or foot activated switches are available. Refer to Picospritzer Accessories list for additional information.

EXTERNAL INPUT

For additional flexibility in experimental use, the Picospritzer III has a front panel BNC jack for each channel which permits independent activation of the two channels from external sources. The selector toggle switch above each jack determines the source of the control signal for that channel. In the "EXTERNAL" position, it operates by energizing the valve whenever the input signal is high (+5 V.D.C.) and de-energizes it when the signal returns to ground. This allows for pulse durations longer than the capacity of the internal timer. In the "TIMER" position, the channel is connected to the internal timer and will activate

whenever that timer is triggered (either manually or externally).

SECOND CHANNEL

The Picospritzer III is equipped with a separate BNC jack and selector toggle for each of the two channels. This allows 2 external signals to be used to operate the 2 channels independently when the selector toggles are set to the "EXTERNAL" position. Placing a selector toggle to the "TIMER" position connects that channel to the internal timer for operation whenever the timer is triggered (either manually or externally). To prevent a channel from triggering, place the selector switch in the "EXTERNAL" position and do not make a connection to the BNC for that channel.

All Picospritzer III's are designed with a second-channel capability. See Replacements/Spare Parts list to order the remote valve box and tubing for a second channel upgrade.

MARKER

The time mark provides a convenient indication of the duration of the pulse with respect to a biological signal much like that of the "artifact" associated with iontophoresis. It is a 5-volt TTL signal controlled by channel one. The time mark not only provides a useful indication of the duration of the pulse, but it may also serve as a sync-out signal for triggering the sweep of an oscilloscope, etc.

VACUUM LOADING BOX

This special valve box is connected to the electrical jacks for both channels. Signals sent to the channel with a "#1" cable attached will yield pressure pulses like a standard Picospritzer valve box (Positive Pressure).

Signal's sent to the channel with a "#2" cable attached will yield vacuum pulses which can be used to load the pipette (Negative Pressure). The vacuum is generated in a *venturi* within the valve box. Consequently, the magnitude of the vacuum is dependent on the pressure setting and the duration setting.

Pneumatic connections to this valve box are similar to those for a standard valve box.

HOLDERS FOR PRESSURE PIPETTES

Standard and recording pipette holders are available for pipettes with diameters of 1.0 mm to 2.0 mm in 0.2 mm increments.

For prices and dimensions, see the Picospritzer Accessories list.

No internal adjustment of the Picospritzer should be undertaken by the user.

Return & Repair Information

All returns and repairs must reference a "Return Material Authorization" (RMA), number. Please call Pneutronics Customer Service Department at 1-603-595-1500 to obtain a RMA number. See Catalog PLS01-1001/US, [Order Policy & Product Warranty Info](#), for additional information on returns and warranty.

IV. BACKGROUND

In 1977, Dr. R.E. McCaman and associates provided a complete description (1) of a pressure ejection system that utilized a high speed valve. This valve continues to be the heart of the pressure system offering very precise control of ejection volumes (in the picoliter range) and ejection times (in the millisecond range).

Furthermore, these investigators described a series of holders that permitted ejection through micropipettes with sufficiently small tips that could be used for simultaneous intracellular recordings during ejections.

These systems have been used for intracellular as well as extracellular ejections. In listing advantages of the pressure system, these investigators emphasize that the linear relationship between ejection volume and either duration of the pulse or of the applied pressure permits a rapid, convenient and reliable calibration of each pipette (1, 3), unlike that for electrophoretic techniques (7-9).

Pressure ejection seems an ideal approach to delivering uncharged substances such as peptides (4, 6), steroids (4), and enzymes (2, 5). The solutions used for pressure ejections are usually several orders of magnitude more dilute than those used for electrophoretic ejection (1, 3), thus avoiding receptor desensitization commonly experienced with iontophoresis. The fact that the ejection efficiency of the pneumatic systems is not influenced by solute concentration nor by net charge, makes them ideal for intracellular injections of radiolabeled or tracer substances (13-15).

Thus, pressure systems have been used for intracellular injection of radiolabeled precursors or neurotransmitters (10, 11) and

[H3] –sugars as precursors of glycoproteins (12) in order to study neuron-specific transmitter biosynthesis, axonal transport and cellular topography. The reproducible and quantifiable ejections obtained with pressure systems make them ideal for neuropharmacological studies of agonist and drug interactions with membrane receptors (1, 3, 4).

As you find additional uses for your Picospritzer, please send us a reprint for addition to our reference section so that others may benefit from your experience.

N.B.; H3=radioactivity (tritium) label substance.

REFERENCES

References describing the use and unique advantage of pressure systems in several types of experimentation in the field of neurobiology, cell biology, and biophysics are:

1. McCaman, R.E., Mc Kenna, D.G. and Ono, J.K. "A pressure system for intracellular and extracellular ejections of picoliter volumes." *Brian Research* 136:141 (1977).
2. Sakaki, M., Sakai, H and Woody, C.D. "Intracellular staining of cortical neurons by pressure micro-injection of horseradish peroxidase and recovery by core biopsy." *Exp. Neurol.* 58:138 (1978)
3. Sakai, M. Swartz, B.E. and Woody, C.D. "Controlled micro release of pharmacological agents: measurements of volume ejected in vitro through fine tipped glass microelectrodes by pressure." *Neuropharmacol.* 18:209 (1979)
4. Dufy, B. Vincent J-D. Fluery, H., Pasquier, P., Gourdji, D., and Tixler-Vidal, A. "Membrane effects of thyrotropin-releasing hormone and estrogen shown by intracellular recording from pituitary cells." *Science.* 204:509 (1979)
5. Tauc, L., Hoffman, A., Tsuji, S., Hinzen, D. and Faille, L. "Transmission abolished in a cholinergic synapse after injection of acetylcholinesterase into the presynaptic neuron." *Nature*, 250, 496 (1974)
6. Chang, J.J., Gelperin, A., and Johnson, F.H. "Intracellularly injected aequorin detects transmembrane calcium flux during action potentials in an identified neuron from the terrestrial slug." *Brain Research* 77:431 (1974)
7. Krnjevic, K., Mitchell, J.F., and Szerb, J.C. "Determination of iontophoretic release of acetylcholine from micropipettes." *J.Physiol.* 165:421 (1963)
8. Zieglgansberger, W., Southmann, G., and Herz, A. "Iontophoretic release of substances from micropipettes in vitro." *Neuropharmacol.* 13:417 (1974)
9. Kuffler, S. and Yoshikami, D. "The number of transmitter molecules in a quantum: an estimate from iontophoretic application of acetylcholine at the neuromuscular synapse." *J. Physiol.* 251:465 (1975)
10. Eisenstadt, M., Goldman, J.E., Kandel, E.R., Koike, H., Koester, J. and Schwartz, J. "Intrasomatic injection of radioactive precursors

- for studying transmitter synthesis in identified neurons of Aplysia.” *Proc. Nat. Acad. Sci.* 70:3371 (1973)
11. Schwartz, J.H. “Synthesis, axonal transport and release of acetylcholine by identified neurons of Aplysia.” *Proc. Nat. Acad. Sci.* 70:3371 (1973)
 12. Thompson, E.B., Schwartz, J.H. and Kandel, E.R. “A radio autographic analysis in the light and electron microscope of identified Aplysia neurons and their processes after intrasomatic injection of L-H3-Fucose.” *Brain Research.* 112:251 (1976)
 13. Baux, G., Simonneau, M. Tauc, L. “Transmitter release, Ruthenium red used to demonstrate a possible role of sialic acid containing substrates.” *J. Physiol.* 291, 161-178 (1979)
 14. Sakai, M., Sakai, H., and Woody, C.D. “Sampling distribution of morphologically identified neurons of coronal-pericruciate cortex of awake cats following intracellular injection of HRP.” *Brain Research.* 152: 329-333 (1978)
 15. Amaral, D.G. and Price, J.L. “An air pressure system for the injection of tracer substances into the brain.” *Jrnl. Neuroscience Methods.* 9:35-34 (1983)

FIGURE 1
DROPLET CALIBRATION CHART

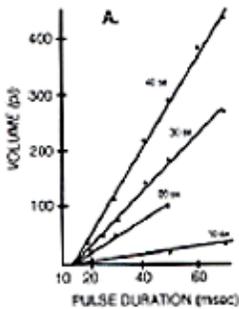
(4/3) 4.2 x r ³ DIAM.	RADIUS	PICOLITER VOL(F1)
10 μm	5	.52
20	10	4.2
30	15	14.2
40	20	33.6
50	25	65.6
60	30	113
65	32.5	144
70	35	180
75	37.5	221
80	40	269
90	45	383
100	50	525
110	55	699
120	60	907
125	62.5	1025
140	70	1441
150	75	1772
160	80	2150
170	85	2579
175	87.5	2814
180	90	3062
200	100	4200
225	112.5	5900
250	125	8203
275	137.5	11037
300	150	14175
325	162.5	18022
350	175	22509
375	187.5	27685
400	200	33600
450	225	47840
500	250	65625
600	306	113,000
625	312.5	128,000
750	375	221,480

Calibration chart provided courtesy of Dr. Joyce K. Ono, Department of Biological Science, California State University

**FIGURE 2
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE
PRESSURE EJECTION SYSTEM**

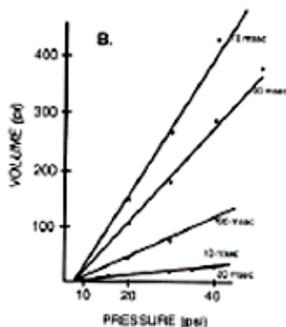
The diameter of the droplet ejected in air was measured with an ocular micrometer in a dissecting microscope. The volume was calculated for droplets formed by varying pressure or pulse duration parameters. The following graphs demonstrate that each pipette can be calibrated by varying these two major determinants of the volume ejected.

**FIGURE 2A: LINEARITY OF
VOLUME EJECTED WITH
VARYING PULSE DURATION
AT CONSTANT PRESSURE**



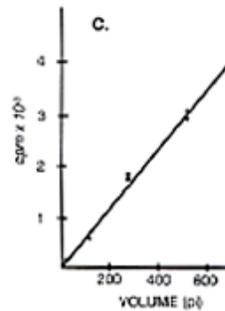
The X-intercept (15 MSEC) represents the mechanical lag time of the particular solenoid valve.

**FIGURE 2B: LINEARITY OF
VOLUME EJECTED WITH
VARYING PRESSURE AT
CONSTANT PULSE, DURATION**



The X-intercept (7.5PSI) represents the minimum pressure necessary for ejection and is a characteristic of a particular pipette.

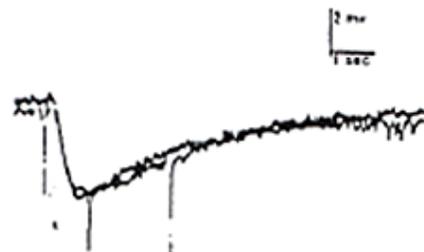
**FIGURE 2C: LINEARITY OF THE
AMOUNT OF AN H3 STANDARD
WITH VARIOUS EJECTED VOLUMES**



The points of this graph are highly correlated (R=.97) with the independently determined specific activity (6.5×10^6 CPM/mL) of the radioactive solution.

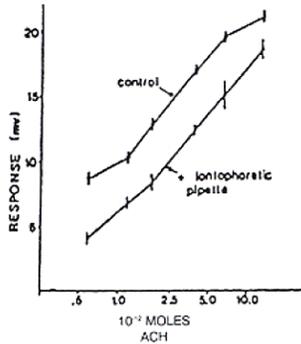
**FIGURE 3
COMPARISONS OF RESPONSES OF
APLYSIA CALIFORNICA NEURONS
TO IONTOPHORETIC AND PRESSURE
APPLICATION OF COMPOUNDS**

FIGURE 3A:



Superimposed traces of *Aplysia* buccal neuron responses to ACh delivered by an iontophoretic pulse (1 μ amp, 80 MSEC) and a pressure pulse (40 PSI, 60 MSEC, 60 μ m diameter droplets of 10-3 M ACh). The amplitude and polarity of the pressure artifacts (negative square pulse in this case) can be manipulated.

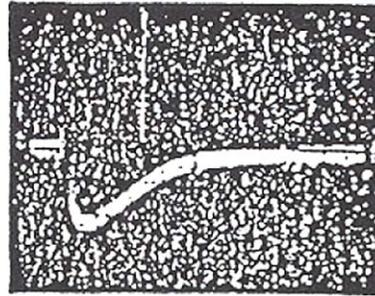
FIGURE 3B:



Comparisons of responses to pressure ejected acetylcholine (ACh) in *Aplysia* neuron in the absence (control) and presence of an iontophoretic pipette (70 MEGOHMS) containing 1 M ACh. The dose-responsive curve is shifted to the right because of desensitization from ACh leaking out of iontophoretic pipette. Each point is the mean response \pm standard error of the mean.

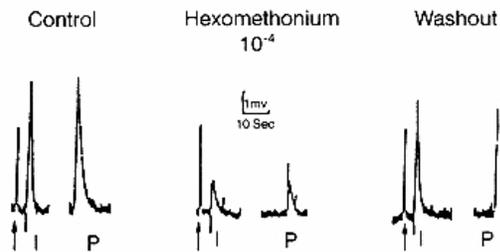
Problems of desensitization can be circumvented with a pressure pipette since the pipette is usually filled with agonists in the concentrations of 10^{-6} to 10^{-3} M in contrast to iontophoretic pipettes. Braking current is not necessary for the pressure pipette, thus avoiding inconsistent ejection of compounds.

FIGURE 3C:



Reproducibility of 12 consecutive responses to acetylcholine (ACh) delivered by a pressure pulse to an *Aplysia* (Sea Hare) neuron. A 10^{-4} M solution of ACh was ejected by 22 PSI for 5 MSEC to produce a droplet estimated to be 10 PL (=1 Femtomole of ACh). Calibration: 2 mV, .02 Sec.

FIGURE 3D:



Comparison of response to iontophoretic (I) and pressure (P) applied ACh in a drug study. Both responses are equally antagonized by hexamethonium, even though the ACh in the pressure pipette is ejected in a droplet of normal artificial seawater. Similar results are obtained during substitution experiments. The arrows in the figure point to an input resistance test pulse.



**PICOSPRITZER® III MODELS
SINGLE CHANNEL UNITS**

P/N 051-0500-900
0-100 PSI regulator
P/N 051-0560-900
0-60 PSI regulator
P/N 051-0530-900
0-30 PSI regulator
P/N 051-0510-900
0-10 PSI regulator

TWO CHANNEL UNITS

P/N 052-0500-900
0-100 PSI regulator
Available with any of the four
regulator assemblies.

VACUUM LOADING UNITS

P/N 052-0400-900
0-100 PSI regulator
Available with any of the four
regulator assemblies.

**PICOSPRITZER
REPLACEMENT /
SPARE PARTS
UPGRADE KIT**

(for single channel)
P/N 052-0100-010-1
Includes second valve box and
tubing assemblies to convert a
single channel to a two channel.

**REGULATOR
& GAUGE ASSEMBLY**

P/N 050-0010-400-1	0-100 PSI
P/N 050-0010-420-1	0-60 PSI
P/N 050-0010-430-1	0-30 PSI
P/N 050-0010-440-1	0-10 PSI

**VALVE BOX
& CABLE ASSEMBLY**

P/N 051-0009-401-1
(9-82-902 valve)

P/N 051-0009-402-1
(9-65-902 valve)
P/N 052-0401-402-1
(Vacuum loading)

AIR SUPPLY TUBING & CONNECTOR

P/N 033-0250-170-1
Nylon tubing, ¼ inch OD
P/N 011-0054-040-1
Quick disconnect fitting for ¼ inch OD
tubing to ¼ NPT male thread.

TEFLON® TUBING ASSEMBLIES

P/N 039-0125-062-72
1/8 inch OD tubing, 6 feet long,
nut & ferrule on one end.
P/N 035-0125-062-72
1/8 inch OD tubing, 6 feet long,
nut & ferrule on both ends.
P/N 035-0062-032-36
1/16 inch OD tubing, 3 feet long,
nut & ferrule on both ends.

**REPLACEMENT GASKETS
FOR PIPETTE HOLDERS**

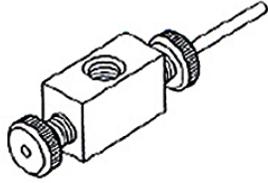
P/N 50-00XX-GSK-001 *
*Pipette holders (and gaskets) are
available for pipettes from 1.0mm to
2.0mm in 0.2mm increments (plus
1.5mm). The two XX's in the part number
should be replaced by the pipette glass size
in 10ths of millimeters. For example, part
number 050-0012-130-1 would be for
1.2mm outer diameter pipettes.

PICOSPRITZER® ACCESSORIES

Pushbutton & Cable Assembly
P/N 050-0000-800-1
Footswitch & Cable Assembly
P/N 050-0000-801-1

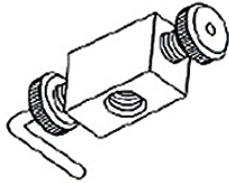
PIPETTE HOLDERS

Pressure Systems for Ejection of
Picoliter Volumes in Cell Research



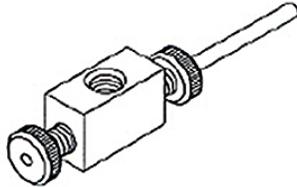
P/N 050-00XX-110-1*

Standard straight holder with a 0.080 inch diameter by 1.5 inch long mounting rod.



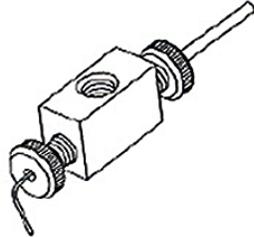
P/N 50-00XX-120-1*

Standard holder with the 0.080 inch diameter mounting rod bent 90 degrees at the midpoint.



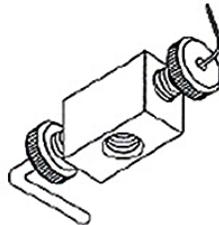
P/N 50-00XX-130-1*

Standard straight holder with a .186 inch diameter by 3.5 inch long mounting rod.



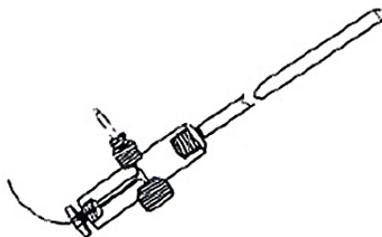
P/N 50-00XX-210-1*

Straight recording holder with a 0.080 inch diameter by 1.5 inch long mounting rod. Recording is accomplished through the mounting rod.



P/N 50-00XX-220-1*

Recording holder with a 0.080 inch diameter mounting rod bent 90 degrees at the midpoint. Recording is accomplished through the mounting rod.

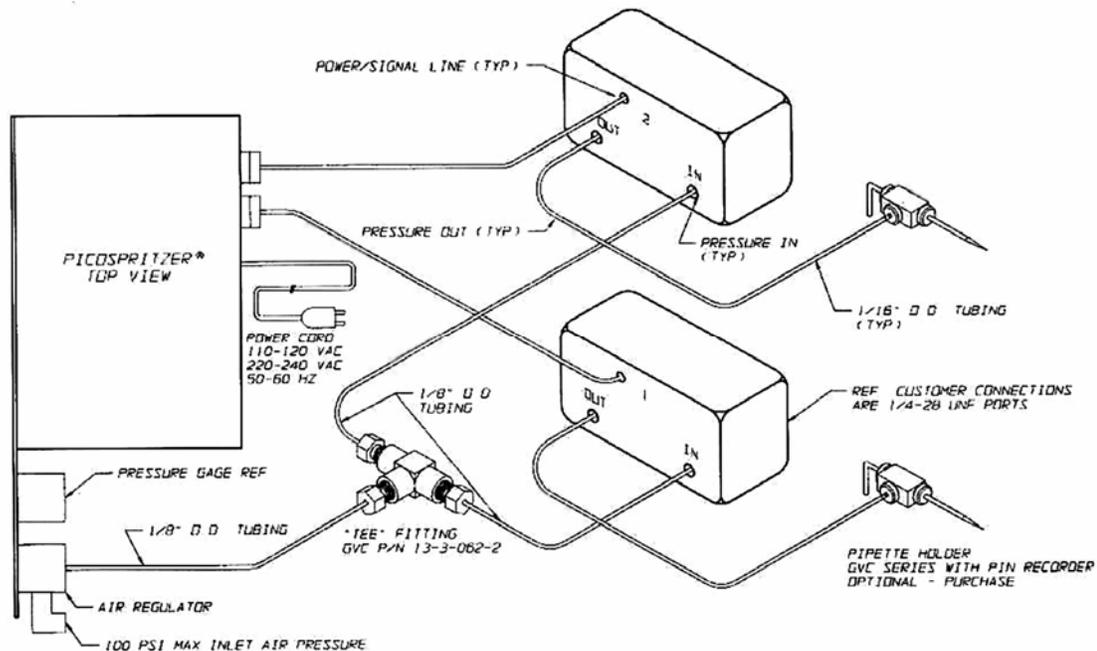


P/N 50-00XX-230-1*

Straight recording holder with a 0.186 inch diameter by 3.5 inch long mounting rod. Recording is accomplished through a separate 0.080 inch diameter pin.

PICOSPRITZER® III

Pneumatic assembly



Note: Single channel and vacuum loading models have only one valve box and the “tee” fitting is omitted.

PICOSPRITZER® III MODELS

- A. Single Chanel (Basic Model): The PICOSPRITZER III comes complete except for pipettes and pipette holders. One valve box and cable is supplied as well as the tubing required to connect it to the front panel mounted regulator assembly and to a pipette holder. 12 feet of ¼ inch OD tubing are supplied to make the connection between the regulator assembly and the compressed gas supply (maximum 150 psig). Expansion capability for a second valve box is built in.
- B. Two Channel: This PICOSPRITZER uses the same electrical chassis as the single channel but includes two valve boxes and the tubing assemblies to connect both to the front panel regulator and to pipette holders (pipettes and holders are not included).
- C. Vacuum Loading PICOSPRITZER: This model uses a special valve box that is connected to both channel jacks on the back of the chassis. It delivers the normal pressure pulses when valve 1 is triggered (either internally or externally) and vacuum pulses when valve 2 is triggered. The vacuum is generated using the compressed gas source so a separate vacuum source is not required. The operating pressure is adjusted from the front panel regulator just as in a standard unit. Since there is only one valve box the tubing assemblies for the pneumatic connections are the same as those for the single channel model. The vacuum level generated is a function of the pressure supplied to the valve box, the duration of the pulse and the gas flow from the pipette. It was designed to allow aspiration of small volumes for subsequent ejection.

Any PICOSPRITZER III with two channel capability (whether originally purchased as a single or two channel unit) can be converted to a vacuum loading model by purchasing a vacuum loading valve box (P/N 052-0401-402-1). This valve box uses both channels of the unit so no other valve boxes may be attached at the same time.