

# Electron Impact Fragmentations of Chlorinated Organophosphorus Pesticides

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Mass spectral fragmentations of six chlorinated organophosphorus pesticides were investigated using electron impact mass spectrometry. Understanding the fragmentation pathways, based on the fragment ions of mass spectra, should be useful in the structural elucidation and chemical identification of these compounds. The proposed fragmentation pathways were verified by collision-induced dissociation B/E-linked scan spectra. In most cases, the structures of characteristic fragment ions could be expected by the observation of the peak clusters due to  $^{35}\text{Cl}$  and  $^{37}\text{Cl}$  isotopes. According to substituted groups on phosphorus atom, phosphate and phosphorothioate exhibited significantly different fragmentation patterns. Especially, phosphate and phosphorothioate with diethyl ester produced more diverse fragment ions than that with dimethyl ester.

## Introduction

The importance of mass spectrometry for pesticide chemistry, particular for the identification of small quantities encountered in environmental residue, has been recognized.<sup>1-3</sup> Mass spectrometry of pesticides, using a variety of ionization techniques such as electron impact (EI), chemical ionization (CI) and fast atom bombardment (FAB) has been intensively studied.<sup>4-6</sup> Especially, EI method has been popularly used for the determination of pesticides in a various environmental samples due to its easy combination with gas chromatography and to an excellent sensitivity. Moreover, EI mass spectral method provides structurally important information of pesticides and their environmental metabolites. However, in the case of mass spectral fragmentation studies, the reliability of fragmentation pathways and their mechanisms based on the ordinary mass spectrometric method is doubtful. Thus, several tandem mass spectrometric methods such as daughter ion scan, parent ion scan, neutral loss scan and selected reaction monitoring are necessary for the identification of pesticides.<sup>7,8</sup> Each method has its own advantage, particularly for the structural identification of a class of compounds by characteristic reactions.<sup>9</sup>

Although mass fragmentation patterns of organophosphorus pesticides have been intensively studied according to phosphorus groups such as phosphates, phosphorothioates and phosphorusdithioates,<sup>10-12</sup> the fragmentation processes and mechanisms for chlorinated organophosphorus pesticides have not been studied in detail. We have been interested in the structural determination of chlorinated organophosphorus pesticides under EI mode because of their importance in environmental and agricultural aspects. The information obtained is useful for the determination of chlorinated phosphorus pesticides in environmental samples.

We studied the general fragmentation processes of chlorinated organophosphorus pesticides using EI mode. Moreover, the mechanisms of the fragmentations for chlorinated organophosphorus pesticides have been elucidated using collision-induced dissociation (CID) B/E-linked scan technique.

## Experimental Section

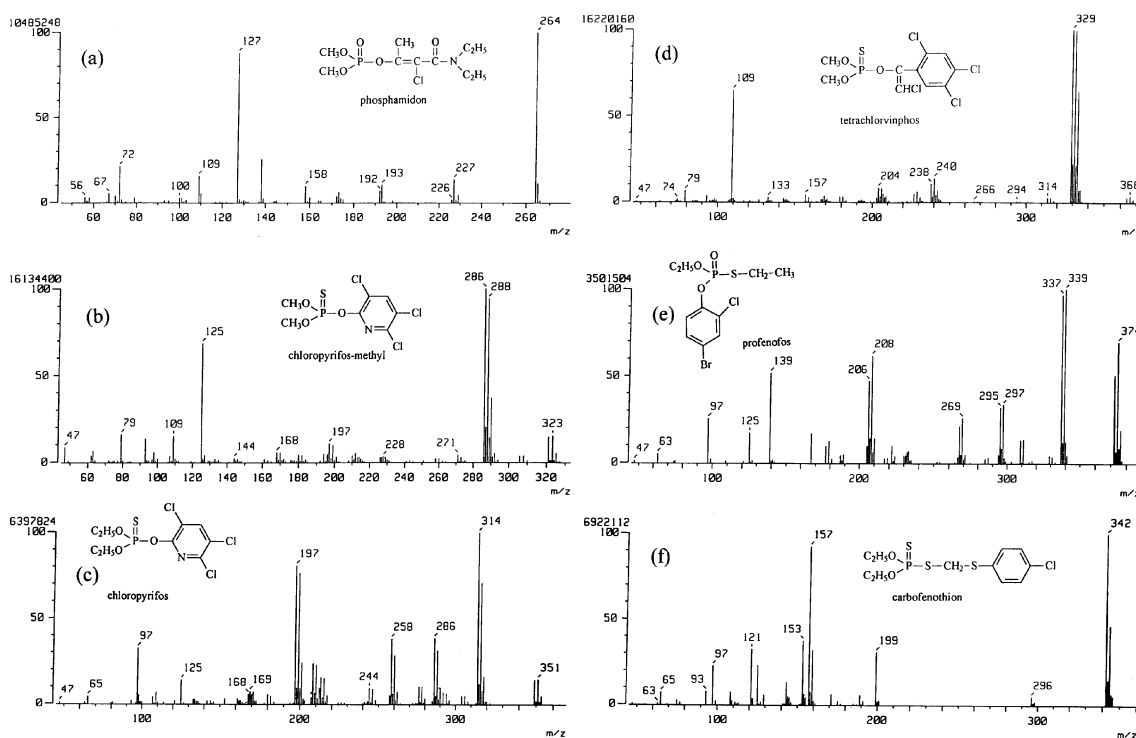
Six chlorinated organophosphorus pesticides were purchased from Dr. Ehrenstrofer (Germany) and Chem Service (U. S. A.) with 97-99% purity and used without any further purification. All solvents were HPLC grade and purchased from J. T. Baker (Phillisburg, NJ, U. S. A.).

Mass spectra were recorded on a JEOL SX-102A double focusing instrument (JEOL Ltd., Akishima, Japan) with BE reverse geometry using direct probe insertion which could be operated at temperatures varying between 30 and 200 °C. The temperature of ion source was maintained at 180 °C. The compounds were ionized by 70 eV electron energy and accelerated to 10 kV. The products ions generated by collision-induced dissociation (CID) in the first field-free region of the instrument were analyzed using linked scanning at constant B/E ratio. The collision gas (helium) pressure was adjusted for a 50% attenuation of the primary ion beam. The mass scan range was between 0 and 400 amu every 12 sec.

## Results and Discussion

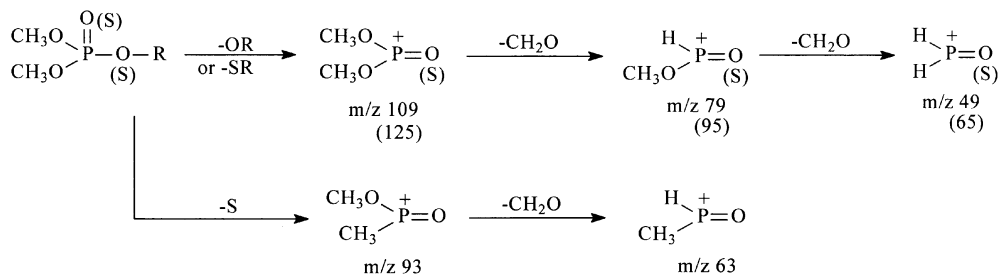
The EI-mass spectra of six chlorinated organophosphorus pesticides studied are shown in Figure 1. Mass spectra of chlorinated organophosphorus pesticides can be characterized by the presence of isotopic distributions in fragment ions from  $^{37}\text{Cl}$  and  $^{34}\text{S}$  and the presence of common fragment ions produced from organophosphorus moiety under EI mode. The pathways for the production of fragments with organophosphorus moiety are shown in Scheme 1. For phosphorus moiety with dimethylester, characteristic ions are generated by the successive losses of formaldehydes via

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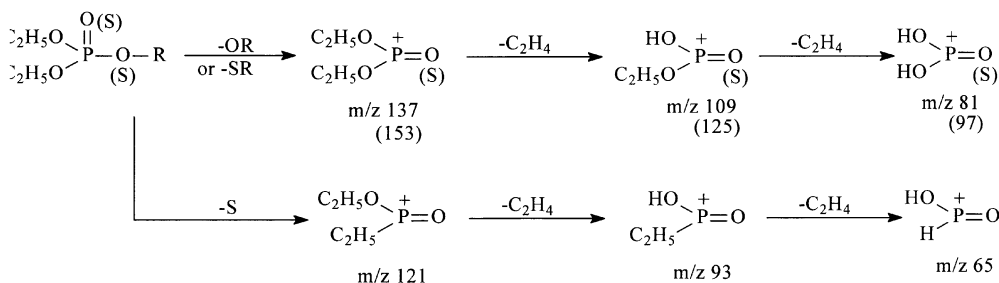


**Figure 1.** EI mass spectra of six chlorinated organophosphorus pesticides: (a) phosphamidon, (b) chloropyrifos-methyl, (c) chloropyrifos, (d) tetrachlorvinphos, (e) profenofos, and (f) carbofenthothion.

#### A. In the case of dimethyl phosphate or phosphorothioate



#### B. In the case of diethyl phosphate or phosphorothioate



**Scheme 1.** Basic fragmentation patterns of dimethyl and diethyl phosphate moiety.

four-centered transition state. On the other hand, characteristic ions of phosphorus moiety with diethylester are formed by the successive elimination of ethene molecules through four-centered transition state. Moreover, the relative abun-

dance of ions (m/z 153, 137, 125, 109, 93 and 79) indicative of organophosphorus moiety is influenced by the substituents on organophosphorus group, as shown in Figure 1. To further confirm the fragmentation pathways, CID B/E-linked



**Table 2.** CID B/E-linked scan spectra of product ions for chloropyrifos-methyl

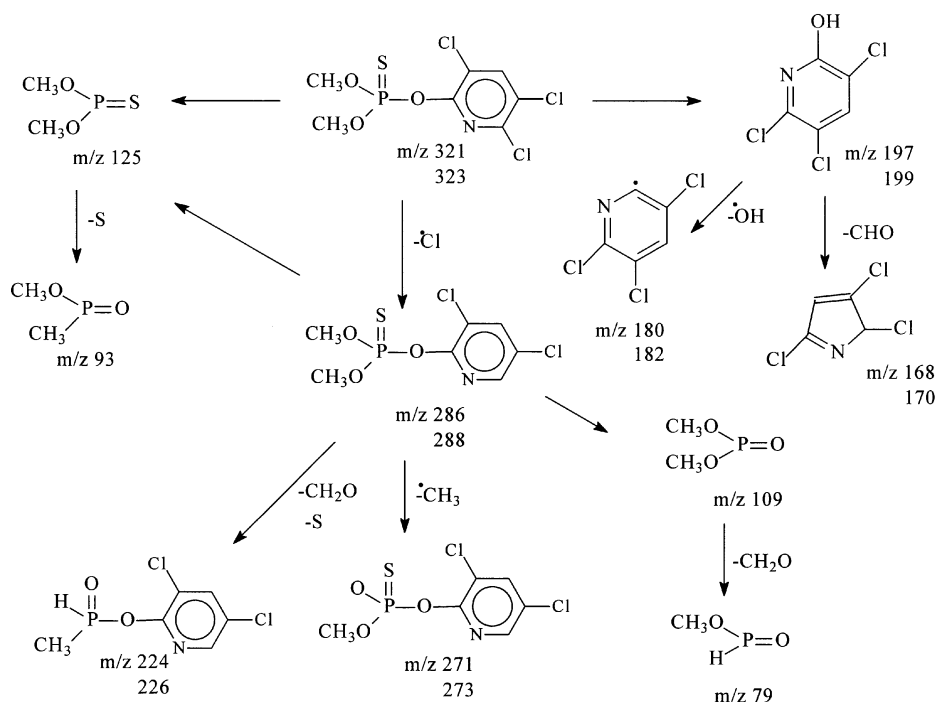
Precursor ion (m/z)	R.A. (%)	Product ion (m/z)	R.A. (%)
321 [M] <sup>+</sup>	100	306 [M-CH <sub>3</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>	22
		286 [M-Cl] <sup>+</sup>	92
		197 [trichloropyriol] <sup>+</sup>	10
		180 [trichloropyriol-OH] <sup>+</sup>	12
		125 [(CH <sub>3</sub> O) <sub>2</sub> P=S] <sup>+</sup>	54
		109 [(CH <sub>3</sub> O) <sub>2</sub> P=O] <sup>+</sup>	28
		93 [(CH <sub>3</sub> O)(CH <sub>3</sub> )P=S] <sup>+</sup>	21
		271 [P-CH <sub>3</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>	18
286 [M-Cl] <sup>+</sup>	100	224 [P-CH <sub>2</sub> O-S] <sup>+</sup>	13
		208 [P-(CH <sub>3</sub> O) <sub>2</sub> -S+O] <sup>+</sup>	14
		125 [(CH <sub>3</sub> O) <sub>2</sub> P=S] <sup>+</sup>	18
		109 [(CH <sub>3</sub> O) <sub>2</sub> P=O] <sup>+</sup>	20
		93 [(CH <sub>3</sub> O)(CH <sub>3</sub> )P=S] <sup>+</sup>	45
197 [trichloropyriol] <sup>+</sup>	100	180 [P-OH] <sup>+</sup>	28
		168 [P-CHO] <sup>+</sup>	22
		134 [P-CO-Cl] <sup>+</sup>	13
		107 [P-C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>2</sub> NOCl] <sup>+</sup>	38

R.A.: relative abundance.

ion cluster at m/z 286, 288 and 290, as shown in Figure 1(b). The CID B/E-linked scan spectral data for the characteristic ions of chloropyrifos-methyl are summarized in Table 2. The suggested fragmentation pathways of chloropyrifos-methyl are shown in Scheme 3. The fragment ions at m/z 286 and 306 are formed by the consecutive loss of Cl and CH<sub>3</sub> radicals from molecular ion, respectively. However, the fragment ions lost formaldehyde molecule from M<sup>+</sup> and [M-Cl]<sup>+</sup>

ions are not produced, as shown in Table 2. The CID B/E-linked scan spectrum of precursor ion at m/z 286 exhibits diverse fragment ions at m/z 271 (by the loss of CH<sub>3</sub> radical), 224 (by the losses of CH<sub>2</sub>O and S atom) and 109. However, the product ion at m/z 224 is not observed in EI mass spectrum of chloropyrifos-methyl. The ion cluster (m/z 197, 199 and 201) can be assigned trichloropyriol ion which is formed through  $\gamma$ -hydrogen rearrangement. The CID B/E-linked scan spectrum of the ion at m/z 197 produces the product ions at m/z 180 and 168 which are generated by the losses of OH and CHO radical, respectively. These product ions are also observed in the CID B/E-linked scan spectrum of the ion at m/z 197 for chloropyrifos. In addition, the characteristic ions of dimethyl phosphorothioate moiety, at m/z 125, 109 and 93 are also observed in EI-mass spectrum of chloropyrifos.

**Chloropyrifos.** The chemical structure of chloropyrifos is very similar to that of chloropyrifos-methyl, while its fragmentation pattern is significantly different from that of latter, as shown in Figure 1(b) and (c). The fragmentation pathways are depicted in Scheme 4. The base peak is appeared the ion at m/z 314 by the loss of Cl radical from molecular ion. The significantly abundant ions at m/z 286 and 258 are formed by the successive elimination of ethene molecules from [M-Cl]<sup>+</sup> ion. The product ion at m/z 208 may be formed by the concerted losses of OC<sub>2</sub>H<sub>5</sub> radical and S atom from the ion at m/z 286. Unfortunately, the formation mechanism of this ion can not be clearly explained at the moment. Particularly, the loss of OC<sub>2</sub>H<sub>5</sub> radical from molecular ion produces the ion at m/z 304. The fragment ion at m/z 276 is produced by the loss of ethene molecule from the ion m/z 304. Subsequent loss of S atom may yield the fragment ion

**Scheme 3.** Mass spectral fragmentation pathways of chloropyrifos-methyl.

**Table 3.** CID B/E-linked scan spectra of product ions for chloropyrifos

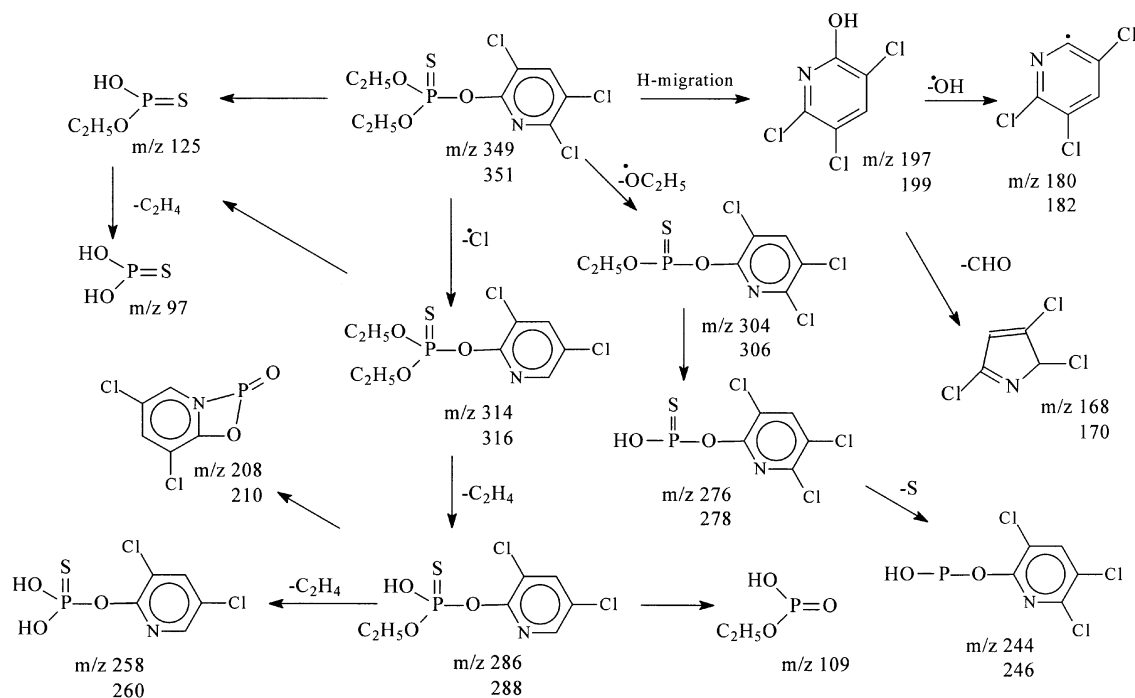
Precursor ion (m/z)	R.A. (%)	Product ion (m/z)	R.A. (%)
349 [M] <sup>+</sup>	100	314 [M-Cl] <sup>+</sup>	92
		286 [M-Cl-C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>4</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>	52
		276 [M-(C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>4</sub> ) <sub>2</sub> -OH] <sup>+</sup>	21
		258 [M-Cl-(C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>4</sub> ) <sub>2</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>	43
		208 [M-Cl-(C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>5</sub> O) <sub>2</sub> -S+O] <sup>+</sup>	31
		197 [trichloropyriol] <sup>+</sup>	19
314 [M-Cl] <sup>+</sup>	100	286 [P-C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>4</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>	74
		258 [P-(C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>4</sub> ) <sub>2</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>	26
		208 [P-(C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>5</sub> O) <sub>2</sub> -S-O] <sup>+</sup>	17
		190 [1-ethoxy, 2,4-dichloropyridine] <sup>+</sup>	20
		125 [P-(C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>5</sub> O)(OH)P=S] <sup>+</sup>	22
		93 [P-(C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>5</sub> )(OH)P=O] <sup>+</sup>	25
304 [M-OC <sub>2</sub> H <sub>5</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>	100	276 [P-C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>4</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>	35
		244 [P-C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>4</sub> -S] <sup>+</sup>	24
		241 [P-Cl] <sup>+</sup>	16
		238 [P-C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>4</sub> -S] <sup>+</sup>	24
286 [M-Cl-C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>4</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>	100	258 [P-C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>4</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>	63
		208 [P-OC <sub>2</sub> H <sub>5</sub> -OH-S+O] <sup>+</sup>	13
		190 [1-ethoxy, 2,4-dichloropyridine] <sup>+</sup>	10
197 [trichloropyriol] <sup>+</sup>	100	180 [P-OH] <sup>+</sup>	32
		168 [P-CHO] <sup>+</sup>	22
		134 [P-CO-Cl] <sup>+</sup>	13
		107 [P-C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>2</sub> NOCl] <sup>+</sup>	38
		79 [P-S] <sup>+</sup>	22
153 [(C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>5</sub> O) <sub>2</sub> P(S)] <sup>+</sup>	100	125 [P-C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>4</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>	53
		121 [P-S] <sup>+</sup>	22
		97 [P-2C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>4</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>	18

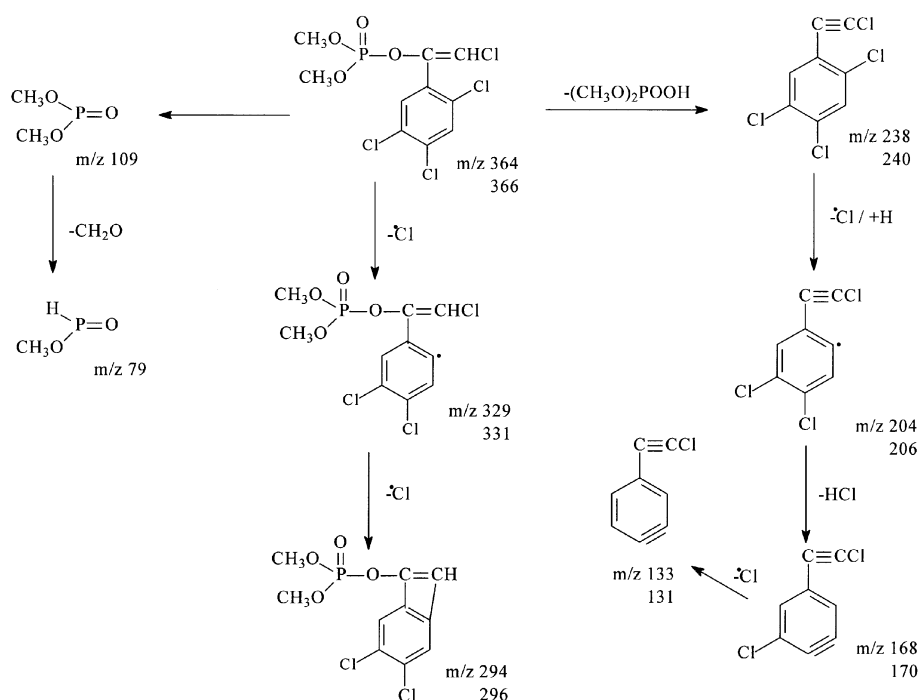
R.A.: relative abundance.

at m/z 244. The trichloropyriol ion, also appeared with low intensity in the mass spectrum of chloropyrifos-methyl, exhibits prominently in this mass spectrum. It can be explained that trichloropyriol from chloropyrifos is formed by hydrogen migration from diethyl group to oxygen atom attached to benzene ring *via* sterically favorable six-membered cyclic transition state whereas that from chloropyrifos-methyl is generated by hydrogen migration from dimethyl group to oxygen through four-centered cyclic transition state. Furthermore, fragmentations of diethyl phosphorothioate moiety yield the characteristic ions at m/z 125 and 97 but do not produce other characteristic ions at m/z 153 and 121.

**Tetrachlorvinphos.** Tetrachlorvinphos yields a weak molecular ion due to easy loss of Cl radical and produces a few significant fragments, as shown in Figure 1(d). The base peak at m/z 329 is formed by the loss of Cl radical from molecular ion and consecutive loss of Cl radical yields the product ion at m/z 294 to form rigid side ring on benzene group, as depicted in Scheme 5. The ion cluster at m/z 238 and 240 must be arisen *via* the elimination of phosphoric acid from molecular ion, accompanied with hydrogen transfer from the ethylene moiety. As shown in Table 4, the characteristic ion at m/z 204 from the ion at m/z 238 may be formed by the substitution of Cl by H. The consecutive elimination of HCl and Cl radical from the ion at m/z 204 leads to the fragment ions at m/z 168 and 133, respectively. Characteristic ions of dimethyl phosphorothioate moiety are also abundantly observed at m/z 109 and 79 but another characteristic ion at m/z 125 is not observed.

**Profenofos.** As seen in Figure 1(e), profenofos gives a strong molecular ion cluster and several characteristic ions

**Scheme 4.** Mass spectral fragmentation pathways of chloropyrifos.



**Scheme 5.** Mass spectral fragmentation pathways of tetrachlorvinphos.

**Table 4.** CID B/E-linked scan spectra of product ions for tetrachlorvinphos

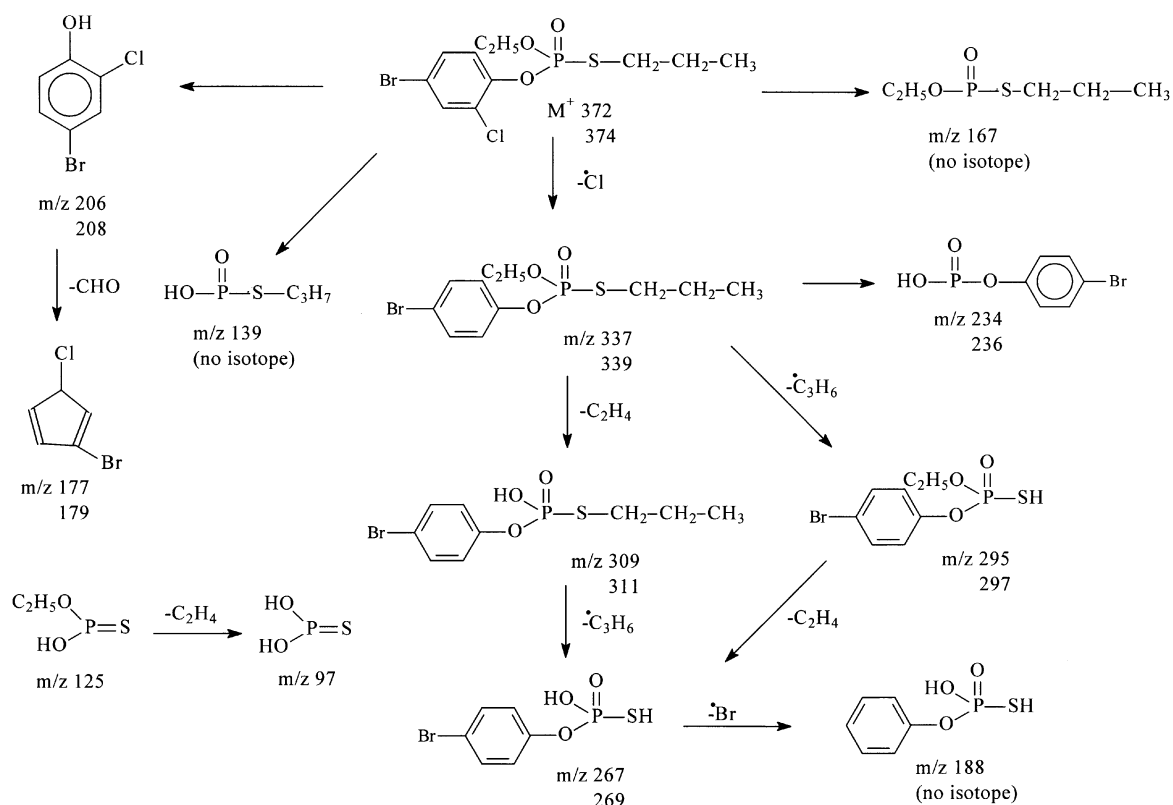
Precursor ion (m/z)	R.A. (%)	Product ion (m/z)	R.A. (%)
364 [M] <sup>+</sup>	100	329 [M-Cl] <sup>+</sup>	95
		238 [M-(CH <sub>3</sub> O) <sub>2</sub> POOH] <sup>+</sup>	28
		204 [M-Cl-(CH <sub>3</sub> O) <sub>2</sub> PO <sub>2</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>	30
		109 [(CH <sub>3</sub> O) <sub>2</sub> P=O] <sup>+</sup>	75
		79 [(CH <sub>3</sub> O)(H)P=O] <sup>+</sup>	28
329 [M-Cl] <sup>+</sup>	100	294 [P-Cl] <sup>+</sup>	18
		109 [(CH <sub>3</sub> O) <sub>2</sub> P=O] <sup>+</sup>	42
		79 [(CH <sub>3</sub> O)(H)P=O] <sup>+</sup>	22
238 [M-(CH <sub>3</sub> O) <sub>2</sub> POOH] <sup>+</sup>	100	204 [P-Cl+H] <sup>+</sup>	35
		168 [P-Cl <sub>2</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>	26
		133 [P-Cl <sub>2</sub> -Cl] <sup>+</sup>	32
		98 [P-Cl <sub>4</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>	24

R.A.: relative abundance.

are produced in its mass spectrum because of the presence of phosphorothioate group containing the chlorine and bromine substituted on benzene ring. Most of the ions containing the aromatic ring are of significant intensity due to a stable aromatic system. The fragmentation pathways of profenofos are depicted in Scheme 6. The CID B/E-linked scan spectral data are summarized in Table 5. The abundant ion at m/z 339 is due to the <sup>81</sup>Br isotopic peak of m/z 337 ion which is formed by the loss of Cl radical from molecular ion. As shown in Scheme 6 and Table 5, a various product ions of m/z 337 by CID B/E-linked scan is generated. The product ions at m/z 309, 295 and 234 are formed by the loss of C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>4</sub>, C<sub>3</sub>H<sub>6</sub> and [SC<sub>3</sub>H<sub>6</sub> + C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>4</sub>]<sup>+</sup> ion, respectively. The fragment ion at m/z 267 is formed by the elimination of C<sub>3</sub>H<sub>6</sub> radical

and C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>4</sub> molecule from the ions at m/z 309 and 295, respectively. The ions at m/z 167 and 139 having no halogen isotopic peak are generated from the fragmentation of molecular ion, since they are not observed in the CID B/E-linked scan spectra of other characteristic ions, as can be seen in Table 5. The dominant ion cluster at m/z 206 and 208 can be assigned as 2-chloro, 4-bromophenol ion, based on the isotopic analysis. This ion produces a characteristic ion cluster at m/z 177 and 179 eliminating CHO radical in the CID B/E-linked scan mode. The fragment ions at m/z 125 and 97 as the characteristic ions of ethyl phosphorothioate group are also observed.

**Carbofenothion.** The molecular ion is observed as base peak, as shown in Figure 1(f). The fragmentation pathways of carbofenothion are depicted in Scheme 7, based on the CID B/E-linked scan spectral data (Table 6). The fragment ion cluster at m/z 296 and 298 with low abundance is formed by the elimination of CH<sub>2</sub> = S *via* four-centered transition state. The fragment ion at m/z 199 is produced by the loss of SPhCl radical from molecular ion through the  $\alpha$ -cleavage with charge retention on the sulfur atom attached to phosphorus atom, and successive losses of C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>4</sub> molecules yield the product ions at m/z 171 and 143. The abundant ion cluster at m/z 157 and 159 may be formed by the  $\alpha$ -cleavage with charge retention on the sulfur atom attached to benzene ring. The fragment ion at m/z 121 is originated from the loss of Cl radical from the ion at m/z 157. The characteristic ions of diethyl phosphorodithioate moiety such as the fragment ions at m/z 153, 125, 121, 105, 97, 93, and 65 are appeared by the consecutive elimination of C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>4</sub> molecules, the removal of oxygen and sulfur atoms, as shown in Scheme 7. In particular, the conversion of the ion at m/z 153 to the ion at m/z 121 through the removal of



**Scheme 6.** Mass spectral fragmentation pathways of profenofos.

**Table 5.** CID B/E-linked scan spectra of product ions for profenofos

Precursor ion (m/z)	R.A. (%)	Product ion (m/z)	R.A. (%)
372 [M] <sup>+</sup>	100	337 [P-Cl] <sup>+</sup>	68
		295 [M-Cl-C <sub>3</sub> H <sub>6</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>	18
		267 [M-Cl-C <sub>3</sub> H <sub>6</sub> -C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>4</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>	16
		206 [2-chloro, 4-bromophenol] <sup>+</sup>	38
		167 [M-OC <sub>2</sub> H <sub>5</sub> BrCl] <sup>+</sup>	34
		139 [M-C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>4</sub> -OC <sub>2</sub> H <sub>5</sub> BrCl] <sup>+</sup>	12
		97 [(OH) <sub>2</sub> P=S] <sup>+</sup>	21
337 [M-Cl] <sup>+</sup>	100	309 [P-C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>4</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>	26
		295 [P-C <sub>3</sub> H <sub>6</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>	20
		267 [P-C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>4</sub> -C <sub>3</sub> H <sub>6</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>	41
		188 [P-C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>4</sub> -C <sub>3</sub> H <sub>6</sub> -Br] <sup>+</sup>	14
309 [M-Cl-C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>4</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>	100	267 [P-C <sub>3</sub> H <sub>6</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>	52
		234 [P-SC <sub>2</sub> H <sub>5</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>	20
		188 [P-C <sub>3</sub> H <sub>6</sub> -Br] <sup>+</sup>	22
295 [M-Cl-C <sub>3</sub> H <sub>6</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>	100	267 [P-C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>4</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>	45
		188 [P-C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>4</sub> -Br] <sup>+</sup>	10
267 [M-Cl-C <sub>2</sub> H <sub>4</sub> -C <sub>3</sub> H <sub>6</sub> ] <sup>+</sup>	100	249 [P-H <sub>2</sub> O] <sup>+</sup>	21
		188 [P-Br] <sup>+</sup>	13
206 [2-chloro, 4-bromophenol] <sup>+</sup>	100	177 [P-CHO] <sup>+</sup>	14
		170 [P-HCl] <sup>+</sup>	10

R.A.: relative abundance.

sulfur atom and followed by the rearrangement of oxygen is still ambiguous mechanism, even though previously pro-

posed by Pritchard *et al.*<sup>14</sup> In this study, this conversion ion is also observed in the CID B/E-linked scan spectrum of the precursor ion at m/z 153. On the other hand, the product ion at m/z 121 is not observed in the CID B/E-linked scan spectrum of the precursor ion at m/z 153 of chlorpyrifos. Moreover, the CID B/E-linked scan spectrum of the precursor ion at m/z 121 (not shown in here) yields the product ions at m/z 93 and 65 due to the successive loss of C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>4</sub> molecules.

### Conclusion

The mass fragmentation pathways for chlorinated phosphorus pesticides have been suggested on the basis of the spectra obtained from CID B/E-linked scan. The losses of formaldehyde for dimethyl phosphorus moiety and ethene for diethyl phosphorus moiety were commonly observed by rearrangement reactions where hydrogen transfers to the phosphorus to eliminate formaldehyde and to the oxygen to eliminate ethene. However, such rearrangement reactions were not observed in CID B/E-linked scan spectra for molecular ion. For dimethyl phosphorus moiety, the molecular and [M-Cl]<sup>+</sup> ions preferably lost CH<sub>3</sub> radical instead of formaldehyde. For diethyl phosphorus moiety, [M-Cl]<sup>+</sup> ion proceeded the consecutive loss of C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>4</sub> molecule to form [M-Cl-C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>4</sub>]<sup>+</sup> and [M-Cl-2C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>4</sub>]<sup>+</sup> ions, whereas molecular ion produced [M-OC<sub>2</sub>H<sub>5</sub>]<sup>+</sup> ion. The fragmentation mechanism for these compounds could be extended to interpret the mass spectra of other pesticides.

