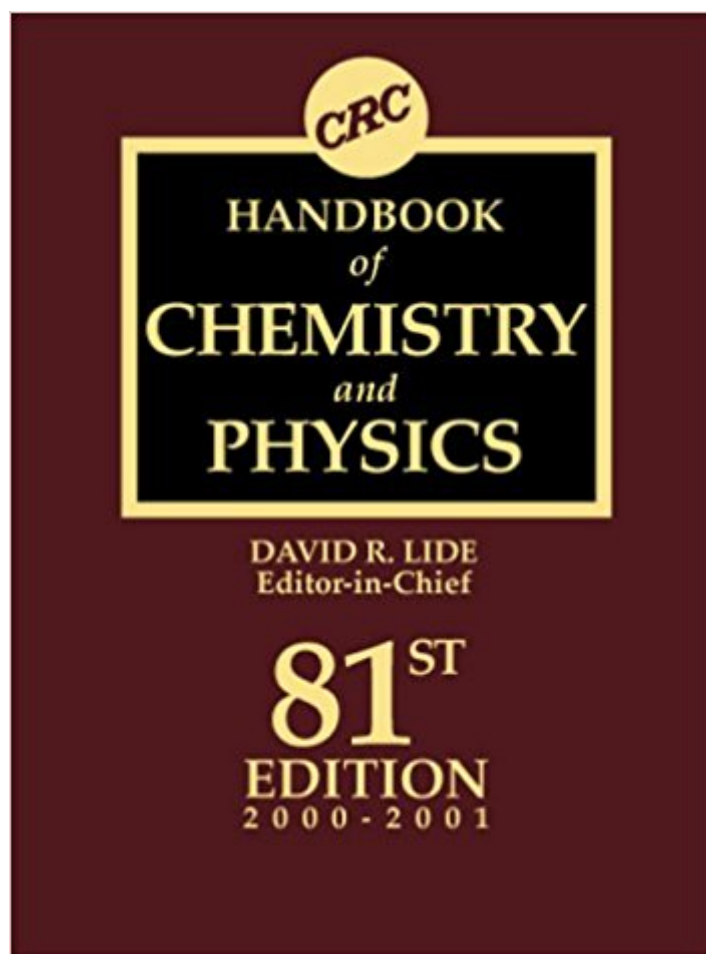


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My old one, the really thick octavo style from 1959 was a little out of date, so I sprung for a much newer edition. Very happy with the purchase.

For 50 years this has been one of my primary reference works, and it still is. It's essential. But over the years, as knowledge has expanded and the book has expanded, the editors have had to make more and more hard choices about what to include and what to leave out. By now, so much is necessarily left out of a single-volume work that I find it less useful than I used to. For example, if I want to find out about the chemistry and toxicology of thorium compounds and the decay processes of thorium isotopes, the CRC handbook doesn't give me enough information to be useful; I must consult more specialized works. Similarly, if I'm interested in a chemical as widely used as hydrogen peroxide, I cannot find enough information here to help me determine the reactivity and hazards of aqueous solutions of hydrogen peroxide in various concentrations; this is essential information for anyone working with hydrogen peroxide in concentrations varying from 30% to 85%. Whether it's kept in a single-volume format or not, I will continue to regard this as an essential reference on my bookshelf, and every few years will buy an updated copy. However, I wish the editors would disentangle it into a series of more specialized volumes, to allow better treatment of much of the material.

For most chemical applications, this book is an invaluable resource for accurate and complete physical data on most common reagents. While it is a bit irrelevant (and perhaps a bit costly) for home/casual use, it is absolutely essential in a lab/academic environment where such information is beneficial or a necessity on a day to day basis. Polished, neat, and comprehensive, it conveys an enormous amount of data in an understandable and easily looked up format.

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