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FINAL REPORT

BACTERIAL FILTRATION EFFICIENCY TEST (BFE) AT
AN INCREASED CHALLENGE LEVEL

LABORATORY NO. 286732

PREPARED FOR:

Sanders Inc.

SUBMITTED BY:

NELSON LABORATORIES, INC.
6280 SOUTH REDWOOD ROAD
SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84123-6600
801-963-2600

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BACTERIAL FILTRATION EFFICIENCY TEST (BFE) AT AN INCREASED CHALLENGE LEVEL

LABORATORY NUMBER: PROCEDURE NUMBER: SAMPLE SOURCE: SAMPLE
IDENTIFICATION: DEVIATIONS:
DATA ARCHIVE LOCATION: SAMPLE RECEIVED DATE: LAB PHASE START DATE:
LAB PHASE COMPLETION DATE: REPORT ISSUE DATE:
TOTAL NUMBER OF PAGES:

Sanders Inc. Refer to Table 1
None

REFERENCE:

MIL-M-36954C. 1975. Headquarters, Defense Personnel Support Center, Philadelphia, PA.

Andersen 2000 Inc. 1976. Viable (Microbial) Particle Sizing Samplers
Operating Manual. Andersen 2000 Inc., Atlanta, GA.

ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA:

The mean particle size of the challenge aerosol must be maintained at $3.0 \pm 0.3 \mu m$.

The average % BFE for the reference material must be within the upper and lower control
limits established for the BFE test.

INTRODUCTION:

This report describes the procedure and results of the bacterial filtration efficiency (BFE) at increased challenge level testing. This procedure was performed to determine the filtration efficiency of the test materials using a ratio of the challenge to effluent to determine percent efficiency. This procedure allowed a reproducible aerosol challenge to be delivered to each of the test materials. This test procedure employed a challenge level of greater than 10^6 colony forming units (CFU) per test sample, providing a higher challenge than would be expected in normal use.

JUSTIFICATION:

This BFE test provides a number of advantages over other filtration efficiency tests. The use of all glass impingers (AGIs) in the collection process allowed a high concentration of challenge to be delivered to each test material. The aerosol challenge particle size can be tightly controlled by monitoring the airflow and challenge flow through the nebulizer. The aerosol particles can be sized using a six-stage viable particle Andersen sampler.

PROCEDURE:

Approximately 100 ml of soybean casein digest broth (SCDB) was inoculated with *Staphylococcus aureus*, ATCC #6538, and incubated with mild shaking for 24 ± 4 hours at $37 \pm 2^\circ\text{C}$. The culture suspension was pumped through a 'Chicago' nebulizer using a peristaltic pump at a controlled flow rate and fixed air pressure. The constant challenge delivery formed aerosol droplets of defined size. The challenge level was adjusted to provide a consistent challenge of greater than 10^6 CFU per test sample.

The droplets were generated in a glass aerosol chamber and drawn through the sample holder and into AGIs in parallel. The AGIs contained 30 ml aliquots of sterile peptone water to collect the aerosol droplets. The aerosol challenge flow rate through the test filter was maintained at 30 Lpm.

The challenge was delivered for a 1 minute interval and sampling through the AGIs was conducted for 2 minutes to clear the aerosol chamber. Control runs (no media in sample holder) were performed after every 5-7 test samples to determine the number of viable particles being generated in the challenge aerosol.

The assay fluid in the AGIs was assayed using standard plate count or membrane filtration techniques. All plates were incubated at $37 \pm 2^\circ\text{C}$ for 48 ± 4 hours prior to counting.

STATEMENT OF UNCERTAINTY:

Due to the large number of data points available for the standard reference material used in the BFE test, the Type B uncertainty factors have been determined to be incorporated into the Type A uncertainty. The combined uncertainty and expanded uncertainty for the BFE test are calculated as follows:

Statistical analysis of the BFE data resulted in the following:

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Mean Bacterial Filtration Efficiency = 99.98%
Standard Deviation = 0.0016%

The combined standard uncertainty for the BFE test is 0.0016%BFE and the expanded uncertainty at a 95% confidence level is 0.003%BFE.

It should be noted that the statistical analysis was conducted on data from Nelson Laboratories' standard reference material with a mean BFE of 99.98%. It is expected that materials submitted for BFE testing which have a %BFE lower than 99.98 would have a combined uncertainty and an expanded uncertainty greater than the uncertainty values reported here. Conversely, test materials with %BFE values greater than 99.98 would be expected to yield a combined uncertainty and an expanded uncertainty less than the uncertainty values reported here.

RESULTS:

The filtration efficiencies were calculated using the following equation:

$$BFE \% = \frac{C - T}{C} \times 100$$

Where: C ::: Average of control values.
T ::: Count total for test material.

The mean particle size (MPS) of the challenge aerosol was determined using a six-stage Andersen sampler. The challenge level, MPS, and filtration efficiencies of the samples are summarized in Table 1.

TABLE 1. BFE Results
Sanders series 150 With 17 g/m² Cover Web Both Sides,

SAMPLE IDENTIFICATION	TOTAL CFU RECOVERED	FILTRATION EFFICIENCY
150/15 PPCW-2 #1	16	99.99971%
150/15 PPCW-2 #2	11	99.99980%
150/15 PPCW-2 #3	10	99.99982%

Challenge Level: 5.6 x 10⁶

CFU Mean Particle Size

(MPS): 3.0 μ m

