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Sterilization of health care products — Chemical indicators —

Part 3: Class 2 indicator systems for use in the Bowie and Dick-type steam penetration test

Stérilisation des produits de santé — Indicateurs chimiques —

*Partie 3: Systèmes d'indicateurs de Classe 2 pour utilisation lors de
l'essai de Bowie et Dick de pénétration de la vapeur*



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Contents

Page

Foreword	iv
Introduction	v
1 Scope	1
2 Normative references	1
3 Terms and definitions	2
4 General requirements	2
5 Indicator system format	2
6 Performance requirements	2
7 Packaging and labelling	3
8 Quality assurance	4
Annex A (normative) Determination of strength after steam sterilization	5
Annex B (normative) Estimation of visual difference between colour of the substrate and the changed (or unchanged) indicator system by determination of relative reflectance density	6
Annex C (normative) Determination of indicator colour change on exposure to dry saturated steam	10
Annex D (normative) Determination of indicator colour change on exposure to dry heat	11
Annex E (normative) Accelerated ageing of test samples	12
Annex F (normative) Determination of transfer of indicator to standard test pack on processing	13
Annex G (normative) Determination of shelf life of the product	14
Annex H (normative) Steam exposure apparatus	15
Annex I (normative) Determination of sensitivity of the indicator to the presence of air	17
Annex J (normative) Air injection system	18
Annex K (normative) Standard test pack	20
Bibliography	21

Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

The main task of technical committees is to prepare International Standards. Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

ISO 11140-3 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 198, *Sterilization of health care products*.

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO 11140-3:2000) which has been technically revised.

ISO 11140 consists of the following parts, under the general title *Sterilization of health care products — Chemical indicators*:

- *Part 1: General requirements*
- *Part 3: Class 2 indicator systems for use in the Bowie and Dick-type steam penetration test*
- *Part 4: Class 2 indicators as an alternative to the Bowie and Dick-type test for detection of steam penetration*
- *Part 5: Class 2 indicators for Bowie and Dick-type air removal tests*

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Introduction

The Bowie and Dick test is a performance test for steam sterilizers for wrapped goods and porous loads. As such it is performed during the demonstration of conformance of steam sterilizers to EN 285 and as a routine test of performance in ISO 17665-1. The test method is described in EN 285.

A failure of the Bowie and Dick test is symptomatic of a number of potential problems with the sterilizer that could compromise the uniform sterilization of a load to be processed. This failure is not conclusive proof that the fault in the sterilizer is due to air retention, air leakage or non-condensable gases and it can be necessary to investigate other causes of failure.

The Bowie and Dick test was conceived as a test for successful air removal from high-vacuum porous-load sterilizers used in the sterilization of health care products ^[1]. A successful Bowie and Dick test indicates rapid and even penetration of steam into the test pack. The presence of air within the pack, due to an inefficient air removal stage, an air leak during this stage or non-condensable gases in the steam supply, is a circumstance which can lead to failure of the test. The result of the test may also be affected by other factors which inhibit steam penetration. The test does not necessarily demonstrate either achievement of the required temperature or maintenance of that temperature for the required time to achieve sterilization.

A test pack for the Bowie and Dick test consists of two components:

- a) a small standardized test load;
- b) a chemical indicator to detect the presence of steam.

The Bowie and Dick test as originally described ^[1] utilized huckaback towels as the material for the test load. The test as described in EN 285 uses cotton sheets for this purpose.

Because a range of different tests in different countries has historically been termed the Bowie and Dick test, the term "Bowie and Dick-type test" is used in this part of ISO 11140.