

Technical Report No. 48
Moist Heat Sterilizer Systems:
Design, Commissioning,
Operation, Qualification and
Maintenance



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**Moist Heat Sterilizer Systems:
Design, Commissioning, Operation, Qualification and Maintenance Task Force**

Kimberly Brown, PhD, Amethyst Technologies, LLC

Linda M. Graf, Pfizer, Inc.

Michael J. Guyader, Lonza

Matthew E. Hofacre, Steris Corporation

Richard E. Kettlewell, GlaxoSmithKline

Colin Meldrum, Ciba Vision Sterile Manufacturing

Ronald J. Nekula Sr., Bayer Healthcare

Anton Ponomarenko, Bayer Healthcare

Cody Riley, Amgen, Inc.

Christopher J. Smalley, PhD, Pfizer, Inc.

Victor Tsui, P.E., cGMP Associates, Inc.

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Table of Contents

1.0 INTRODUCTION	4	5.2 Qualification	30
1.1 Purpose / Scope	4	5.2.1 Static Equipment Qualification or IQ	30
2.0 GLOSSARY OF TERMS	7	5.2.1.1 Steam Quality Testing.....	30
3.0 STERILIZATION PROCESSES	12	5.2.1.1.1 Prerequisites to Physical, Chemical and Endotoxin Testing of Pure Steam.....	30
3.1 Saturated Steam Processes	12	5.2.1.1.2 Physical, Chemical and Endotoxin Testing	31
3.1.1 Gravity Displacement Process	13	5.2.2 Dynamic Equipment Qualification or OQ ..	31
3.1.2 Pre-Vacuum Process.....	13	5.2.2.1 Empty Chamber Temperature Distribution	31
3.2 Air Overpressure Processes	14	6.0 CYCLE DEVELOPMENT	32
3.2.1 Steam Air Mixture Process and Superheated Water Process	14	6.1 Preliminary System Testing.....	32
3.3 Decontamination Processes	15	6.2 Thermal Measurement Test Equipment	32
3.4 GMP and Non-GMP Sterilizers.....	16	6.3 Sterilization Cycle Optimization	33
4.0 COMPREHENSIVE STERILIZER SYSTEM DESIGN	18	6.3.2 Pressure Vacuum (Pre-vacuum) Cycle Development.....	42
4.1 User Requirements Specifications.....	19	7.0 ON-GOING CONTROL	43
4.1.1 Equipment Location, Installation, and Maintenance Access Considerations.....	19	7.1 Sterilizer System Maintenance.....	43
4.1.2 Assessing Process Requirements.....	22	7.2 Calibration	44
4.2 System Control.....	23	7.2.1 Calibration Records.....	45
4.3 Functional Requirements Specifications	24	8.0 DOCUMENTATION	46
4.4 Detailed Design Specification	25	9.0 APPENDIX	47
5.0 EQUIPMENT VERIFICATION & QUALIFICATION	26	Appendix A: Design Considerations	47
5.1 Commissioning.....	26	Appendix B: Sterilizer Verification Activities.....	58
5.1.1 Factory Acceptance Testing	27	Appendix C: Documentation.....	62
5.1.1.1 Leveraging the FAT	28	10.0 REFERENCES	63
5.1.1.2 Software Tests	29		
5.1.2 Site Acceptance Testing	29		

FIGURES AND TABLES INDEX

Figure 1.1-1	Validation Life-Cycle Activities 6	Figure 6.3-3	Example of Heating Uniformity Progression During Cycle Development Study..... 35
Table 3.3-1	BioSafety Levels and Sterilizer Requirements 15	Table 6.3-1	Cycle Optimization Considerations Table..... 36
Figure 3.3-1	Decontamination and Standard Steam Flow Cycle Comparison 16	Figure A-1	Example of Sterilizer Chamber 47
Table 3.4-1	GMP and Non-GMP Comparison Chart 17	Figure A-2	Example of Sliding Door 49
Table 4.0-1	Design Qualification Example 18	Figure A-3	Example of Swing Door 49
Figure 4.1.1-1	Facility Design Example One 20	Figure A-4	Example of Active Door Gasket 50
Figure 4.1.1-2	Example of Dual Wall Seals 21	Figure A-5	Example of Inlet Air Filter..... 52
Figure 4.1.1-3	Example of Wall Seal Facility Design 21	Figure A-6	Example of Typical Liquid Ring Vacuum Pump 52
Figure 5.1.1-1	Sterilizer Manufacture and Testing 28	Figure A-7	Example of Sterilizer Control Panel with HMI 53
Figure 6.3-1	Example of Heating Uniformity Problem During Initial Development Study..... 34	Figure A-8	Example of Electric Steam Generator 55
Figure 6.3-2	Example of Heating Uniformity Progression During Cycle Development Study..... 34	Figure A-9	Example of Air Differential Seal 57
		Figure A-10	Example of Biological Safety Seal..... 57
		Figure C-1	Documentation..... 62

1.0 Introduction

Moist Heat Sterilization is a process that uses moist heat as the lethal agent to render liquid and porous/hard goods items free of viable microorganisms. There are two main types of processes used in moist heat sterilization: saturated steam sterilization and air overpressure sterilization. Saturated steam sterilization is used primarily for porous, hard goods loads, while air overpressure is used for liquid loads.

Sterilizers are used to sterilize many types of articles, including:

- Porous/hard goods, e.g., equipment, tools, laboratory glassware, product components, packaging, or devices
- Product components that are not part of a porous or liquid load, e.g., vials and syringes
- Cleaning materials and product intermediates
- Product in final containers (terminal sterilization)
- Heat labile media
- Biological solutions and products, equipment, tools

Air over-pressure applications are used to minimize destruction or distortion of plastic containers or syringes containing liquids.

The primary objective of the task force was to develop a science-based technical report on moist heat sterilizers that may be used in all regulatory environments and can be used by organizations to develop their own program for equipment qualification. To this end, prescription has been avoided, and region-specific regulatory expectations are not always addressed. This report should be considered a guide and is not intended to establish standards for sterilization systems. It is intended to be a single-source overview that complements existing documents listed in the reference section. References to appropriate and up-to-date scientific publications, international regulatory documents, journal articles, technical papers and books are used where more detail and supportive data can be found.

The task force was composed of European and North American industry professionals to ensure the methods, terminology and practices of sterilization science presented reflect sound science and can be used globally. This technical report was disseminated in draft for public review and comment.

1.1 Purpose / Scope

This Technical Report addresses moist heat sterilizers intended for use in the pharmaceutical, medical device and biotechnology industries. This technical report focuses on the design and operation of moist heat sterilizers, from the development of User Requirements Specifications (URS) through equipment qualification (Installation Qualification (IQ)/Operational Qualification (OQ)) and culminating with ongoing maintenance requirements. The focus of this report does not include Performance Qualification (PQ). The reader is directed to *PDA Technical Report No. 1: Validation of Moist Heat Sterilization Processes Cycle Design, Development, Qualification and Ongoing Control* for discussion of load cycle development and process Performance Qualification. (1)

This technical report addresses:

- Setting User Requirements and Specifications
- Design Qualification (DQ)
- Equipment and Control System Design
- Functional Requirements for the moist heat sterilizer and expectations for utilities supporting the sterilizer