

PROCEDURE FOR THE SAMPLING OF EQUIPMENT USING TRANSTUBE SWABS WITH 10ML NEUTRALISING BUFFER.

1 Introduction

The following procedure sets out the methods for sampling swabs from food processing plant surfaces and equipment. This method can be utilised to test defined areas of processing equipment for hygiene testing.

The product consists of a blue plastic shaft swab with rayon bud with a labelled tube. The plastic shaft is blue for visibility. The tube contains 10mL of Neutralising Rinse Solution. The solution will neutralise traces of disinfectants or sanitisers which may be present on the surface being tested. The swab shaft is connected to a blue plastic fluted cap. The swab is supplied complete with a labelled plastic tube for storage prior to use and subsequent transport of sample. Surface swabs are routinely tested for Total Viable Counts (TVC) at 25°C although counts of other organisms such as yeast and moulds or coliforms and *E coli* etc can also be performed. Presence or absence of *Salmonella* spp, *Listeria* spp or *Listeria monocytogenes* can also be determined.

2 Equipment and materials

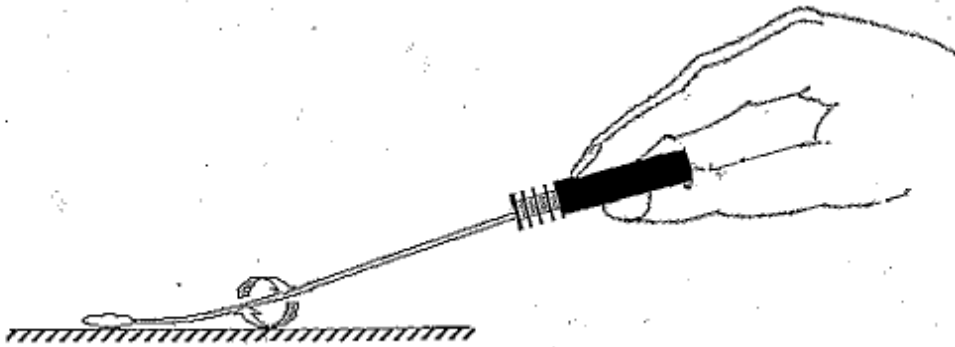
Supplied by the laboratory to sample collectors:

- Food Hygiene Laboratory Swab Request Form
- Sterile package containing a Transtube with 10mL of Neutralising buffer and a sterile Swab Stick
- 100cm² Sampling Template (if required)
- Sterile Gloves

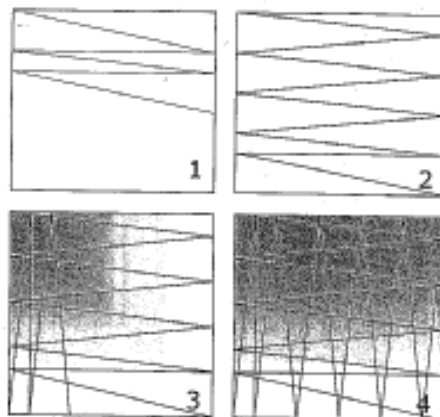
3 Procedure

3.1 Preparation for sampling

- a) Fill in a Food Hygiene Laboratory Swab Request form with all the relevant required details.
- b) Label the Transtube with : site, time, date and operator
- c) Wearing sterile gloves, aseptically open the sterile swab container, using the blue cap as a handle, remove the swab from the sterile kit.
- d) Open the Transtube container and moisten the tip of the swab and press out excess solution against the interior wall of the container with a rotating motion.
- e) Hold the swab handle to make a 30°-angle contact with the surface.



- f) Rub the swab head slowly and thoroughly over the area within the sterile template of 100cm² four times, reversing direction between strokes and rotating the swab tip.



- g) Place the swab head into the tube and push the cap in firmly up to the swab handle.
- h) When sampling utensils such as knives and ladles, moisten the swab with the neutralising solution and run the swab slowly and firmly three times over the significant surfaces of the utensil, reversing the direction each time. Return the swab to the tube as described above.
- i) Transport the swabs in the tubes in an esky with a chilled ice brick to arrive at the laboratory within 24hrs of sampling.

4 References

- 1. Roberts D., Hooper W., Greenwood M. (ed). 1995. Practical Food Microbiology – Methods for the examination of food for micro-organisms of public health significance. PHLS. London.
- 2. Vanderzant C, Splittstoesser D.F. (ed). 1992 Compendium of Methods for the Microbiological Examination of Foods. APHA Washington.
- 3. Biotrace Foss Pacific. Swabbing Instructions.
- 4. NRS Transwab. Neutralising Rinse Swab for environmental monitoring and surface sampling. MW & E. (Medical Wire & Equipment)