formed for purposes other than evaluating sanitation procedures, interpretation of results must be based on the knowledge of the product, process, and equipment to determine the significance of data. In addition, the objectives of sampling may govern the interpretation of results.

3.82 Sponge Contact Method[86]

3.821 Equipment, Supplies, Solutions, and Media

- Cellulose or polyurethane[68] sponges free of antimicrobial preservatives should be cut into approximately 5 cm × 5 cm pieces, placed in individual Kraft paper bags, and autoclaved. As an alternative, commercially sterile cotton gauze surgical swabs (approximately 10.2 cm × 10.2 cm) may be used. Sterile plastic bags are suitable for containing the sponges after sampling.
- Sterile buffered rinse solution, nutrient broth, or 0.1% peptone water may be used as the rinse solution. If the surface to be sampled contains fatty materials, 0.5% to 1.0% Tween 80 or other noninhibitory surfactant solution may be used. For sampling equipment that may contain residual disinfectants, the use of neutralizers in the buffered rinse solution is recommended (see Section 3.811). It is prudent to incorporate neutralizers in all fluids used to collect samples from equipment and the plant. Neutralizing cocktails and transport media are commercially available.
- Sterile crucible tongs, sterile rubber or plastic gloves, or other means may be used to hold the sponge aseptically during sampling.

3.822 Sampling Procedure

Moisten the sponge with approximately 10 mL of the appropriate sampling fluid. While holding the sponge aseptically with tongs or sterile gloves, swab the surface to be sampled by vigorously rubbing the sponge over the designated area. If the surface is flat, the rinse solution may be applied directly to the surface and then taken up into the sponge by the rubbing action. An area of several meters may be effectively swabbed. After sampling, place the sponge aseptically in a sterile plastic bag and transport it to the laboratory under refrigeration. Analyze the sample within 48 ± 2 hours after collection.[34]

3.823 Plating and Analysis

Because large areas may be sampled with the cellulose sponge, this technique is particularly useful for detecting

removed from the bag, fu
into the desired media fo

After incubation, the
unit surface can be calcul
bed, the amount of dilu
plated. For example, if 50
aliquot derived from a spo
bed 1 m^2, then the count p

3.824 Interpretation

Interpretation of results fro
cleaned and sanitized equi
the interpretation for resu
swabs. The sponge techniqu
sampling the environmen
shows it also is useful for
used to evaluate the efficacy
grams for the environment, p
ogens. Results should obvious
application of appropriate c
dures. Sponge swabs can be
harbor pathogens, and the res
program to control the organis
from samples taken of cleaned
areas where relatively high
expected is affected by the hist
particular sites in a plant. As a
reduction in the residual microb
on most floor surfaces after clea
common approach is to assume
1 ft^2) are unlikely to have 100,0
units (CFUs) via the aerobic pl
growth has occurred. Such fresh
contain aerobic plate counts of
1,000 organisms per sponge an
forms, Enterobacteriaceae, yeast
Listeria-like indicator bacteria tha
appropriate cleaning and sanitiza

3.83 Agar Contact Method[5,4

An agar contact method such as th
provides a simple, valuable conta
ing the sanitary quality of surface
mended particularly when quant
from flat, impervious surfaces. It is
for crevices or irregular surfaces,