







# Who needs to test steam quality?

- Manufacturers and processors of sterile products and medical devices within Europe and those who supply Europe.
- The requirement is restricted to the porous loads/dry goods/ equipment processes, which impact on the **sterility of finished products**.

# When & Testing frequency

The only references to the frequency of steam quality testing are to be found in HTM 2010, where it is indicated that steam quality should be tested as part of the annual re-validation exercise for each sterilizer.

Where steam systems are either routinely or irregularly <u>shut down</u>, large quantities of air will be present in the distribution system on restarting.

It is recommended that in such circumstances a comprehensive and validated venting procedure should be applied and testing for noncondensable gases may be appropriate.

### Where - Steam Quality Test Points

- In order to test the steam quality, specific test points on the steam line are required.
- The location of the three test points on the steam supply pipe just prior to the sterilizer.
- This test point is usually installed between the steam main supply isolating valve and the sterilizer.







| Nominal<br>size | Pipe outside<br>diameter<br>(inches/mm) | Pipe wall<br>thickness<br>(mm) | X<br>(mm) | Y<br>(mm) | A - Both<br>ends<br>(mm) | sample<br>points<br>(mm) |
|-----------------|---|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| *1/2" & 3/4"    | ³⁄₄"/19.05                              | 1.65                           | 90        | 400       | 24.9                     | 24.9                     |
| 1"              | 1"/25.4                                 | 1.65                           | 90        | 400       | 50.3                     | 24.9                     |
| 1 1⁄2"          | 1 ½"/38.1                               | 1.65                           | 110       | 400       | 50.3                     | 24.9                     |
| 2"              | 2"/50.8                                 | 1.65                           | 160       | 400       | 64                       | 24.9                     |
| 2 ½"            | 2 ½"/63.5                               | 1.65                           | 225       | 400       | 77.5                     | 24.9                     |
| 3"              | 3"/76.2                                 | 1.65                           | 225       | 400       | 90.9                     | 24.9                     |
| 4"              | 4"/101.6                                | 2.11                           | 253       | 253       | 119                      | 24.9                     |

## Other test conditions

- The standard test procedures require the steam quality to be <u>sampled when steam is first admitted</u> to the sterilizer chamber after a cycle is started.
- While this provides a reference condition, it may be inadequate to <u>fully characterizing the steam system</u> which may perform differently under different flow conditions.
- It is suggested that the steam supplies should be <u>tested under</u> <u>both low and full flow</u> conditions and particularly for the noncondensable gas test, include conditions where the feed water pump switches on and off (where applicable).
- Where aerated water is present, the worst case condition is invariably when water enters the steam generator.



# **Non-Condensable Gases Test**

### **Purpose of the test:**

To demonstrate that the attainment of sterilization conditions in all parts of a sterilizer load (particularly for porous load items) is not impaired by the presence of non-condensable gases.

### Method employed:

The measurement of non-condensable gases is made by cooling a steam sample with a condenser, using water siphoned from a tank at 200ml per minute. The minimum requirements are: a one meter head of water and its temperature below 28°C. A pumped or pressurized water supply is not required.

When the sampled steam is condensed any non-condensable gases present are released and separated from the cooled condensate into two sight glass columns. The gas and steam condensate volumes are measured by 'zeroadjustable' calibrated scales mounted behind the sight glasses. The temperature of the condensate is maintained above 80°C by controlling the steam flow through the inlet needle valve while measuring the condensate temperature from a thermocouple probe on the outlet of the condenser.

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### The Non-Condensable Gas Test method obstacle

- This is exacerbated by the speed at which the test is carried out, the rate determining whether high or low results are obtained.
- Generally, the faster the test is conducted, the higher the test result. In many respects the test method is subjective.
- The test has to be completed when the cooling water temperature reaches 70 degrees Celsius.
- It will be seen that to properly test the steam, it may be necessary to test under different flow conditions.
- The time involved in draining and replacing the cooling water may cause vital information to be lost and an incomplete picture formed.

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# **Superheat Value Test**

### Purpose of the test:

To demonstrate that the amount of moisture in the steam supply is sufficient to prevent the steam from being superheated as it enters the expanded space of a sterilizer chamber.

# Method employed:

The temperature is measured by a thermo-couple placed at the center of an expansion tube placed over the pitot tube as steam passes through its orifice.

The temperature is considered to be **acceptable if it is less than 25° C** above that of the local temperature of boiling water

# Superheat Value Test

### Background

- Superheated steam is steam at a temperature above its boiling point for its pressure.
- Superheated steam is a clear colorless gas that will not condense until its temperature drops to its boiling point.
- Until this occurs the moisture necessary for sterilization cannot be produced and therefore presents a risk to the process.
- Superheated steam acts as hot air and requires sustained high temperatures and long hold times before sterilization can occur.

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## Superheat Value Test

### **Reason of occurrence**

- While superheated steam is not usually intentionally generated in the healthcare or pharmaceutical industries it can be produced as the result of excessive pressure drops.
- If we reduce steam from a high to a low pressure its energy level will remain the same.
- This high energy level will initially result in any moisture present in the steam to be evaporated.
- Any additional energy will then result in a temperature increase in the steam and the superheat phenomena will become evident.

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### **Acceptance Criteria**

- When steam is reduced from line pressure to atmospheric using the pitot and expansion tube shown, the temperature measured should not exceed 25°C above boiling temperature for the atmospheric pressure at the test point (typically the measured value should not exceed 125° C).
- It is stressed that the limit describes the maximum temperature and that no minimum value applies to this test.
- The assumption made by the standards, but not specified, is that if this limit is not reached, when the steam expands into the chamber its condition will be satisfactory.
- In this respect, the test is predictive and its worth is dependent upon the specific configuration of the sterilizer with respect to the pressure drops involved after the test point and any further conditioning that may occur from steam separators etc.

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# <section-header> Methodology Problems • The temperature sensor should be sufficiently small to not represent a large heat sink which will dissipate any superheat. • A bare thermocouple is best in this respect. • The thermocouple should be moved across the steam jet issuing from the pitot tube until the highest temperature is reached. • The value achieved will depend on the dryness of the steam and the size of the pressure drop involved.





### Method employed:

### Heat balance using a stainless steel vacuum flask.

- The principal is that the flask is primed with a known mass of water at a known temperature. Steam is condensed in the flask thus raising the water temperature.
- The final mass and temperature of the water are then measured and placed into a calculation.
- If the final water temperature was lower or the final mass was greater, the steam would be 'wetter' (having a lower value).













|                         | Organisation performing                        | tests: The ValiSteri Company                        |             | 108               | 3TPDA040 |  |  |
|-------------------------|--|---|-------------|-------------------|----------|--|--|
|                         | Site: South West Pharma Farr                   | ner Co. Ltd. Department: Validation                 | Date        | (s) of tests: 7-F | ec-11    |  |  |
| vample of Steam Quality | Sterilizer Manufacturer Mts                    | terX Model: ASTFB321                                | This        | file reference:   |          |  |  |
|                         | Serial number: apo                             | Serial number: apotdng12kt/ Plant ref. number: 1    |             |                   |          |  |  |
| ecords                  |  |   | Unit        | Validation        | Yearly   |  |  |
| CCOTAS                  |  | Test number   |             | 1                 | 1        |  |  |
|                         |  | Cycle number  |             | 321               | 678      |  |  |
|                         |  | Cycle start time (real)                             | hrminis     | 11:01:04          | 09:06:04 |  |  |
|                         |  | Vb (gas volume)                                     | mi          | 4.3               | 2.2      |  |  |
|                         |  | Vc (water volume)                                   | mi          | 120.0             | 100.0    |  |  |
|                         |  | Fraction of gases                                   | %           | 3.6               | 2.2      |  |  |
|                         |  |   |             |                   |          |  |  |
|                         |  | Test such as  |             |                   |          |  |  |
|                         | Non-seadory -t                                 | Test number   |             | 2                 | 2        |  |  |
|                         | Non-condensable                                | Cycle number  | handar      | 322               | 679      |  |  |
|                         | Gases tests                                    | Cycle start time (real)                             | nr:min:s    | 11:30:00          | 09:32:04 |  |  |
|                         |  | Vb (gas volume)                                     |             | 6.5               | 2.0      |  |  |
|                         |  | vc (water volume)                                   | ( 🖤 / (     | 110.0             | 100.0    |  |  |
|                         |  | Fraction of gases                                   | $( \ )$     | 5.9               | 2.0      |  |  |
|                         |  |   |             |                   |          |  |  |
|                         |  | Test number   | $\sum$      | 3                 | 3        |  |  |
|                         |  | Cycle number  | $\gamma$    | 322               | 680      |  |  |
|                         |  | Cycle start time (real)                             | ) jir:min:s | 11:58:00          | 10:12:05 |  |  |
|                         |  | Vb (gas volume)                                     | < m         | 6.0               | 3.4      |  |  |
|                         |  | Vc (water volume)                                   | m           | 100.0             | 100.0    |  |  |
|                         |  | Fraction of gases                                   | %           | 6.0               | 3.4      |  |  |
|                         |  |   |             |                   |          |  |  |
|                         |  | Test number   |             | 4                 | 4        |  |  |
|                         |  | Cycle number  |             | 323               | 681      |  |  |
|                         |  | Cycle start time (real)                             | hr:min:s    | 12:17:08          | 10:47:08 |  |  |
|                         |  | Steam service supply(tertip() )                     | °C          | 145.0             | 161.3    |  |  |
|                         | Superheat test                                 | Te (expansion tube temps)                           | °C          | 127.0             | 106.0    |  |  |
|                         |  | LAP (local atmos.)Pressury)                         | mbar        | 987               | 1020     |  |  |
|                         |  | To (water, boiling point at LAP)                    | °C          | 99.3              | 100.2    |  |  |
|                         |  | Superheat/exel                                      | °C          | 27.7              | 5.8      |  |  |
|                         |  | 10115   |             |                   |          |  |  |
|                         |  | Test-gumber   |             | 5                 | 5        |  |  |
|                         |  | Cycle number  |             | 324               | 682      |  |  |
|                         |  | Cycle start time (real)                             | hominas     | 13:05:08          | 11:25:45 |  |  |
|                         |  | M, (empty flask assembly mass)                      | q           | 541               | 592      |  |  |
|                         |  | M. (filed flask assembly mass)                      | 0           | 1230.1            | 1234.2   |  |  |
|                         | Dryness value test                             | T <sub>*</sub> (initial flask contents temperature) | °C          | 17.3              | 18.2     |  |  |
|                         |  | T <sub>4</sub> (average steam supply temperature)   | °c          | 156.2             | 162.4    |  |  |
|                         |  | T <sub>*</sub> (final flask contents temperature)   | °c          | 81.4              | 79.4     |  |  |
|                         |  | M. (final flack assembly mass)                      | 0           | 1321.0            | 1309.5   |  |  |
|                         |  | D (domass value)                                    | y           | 0.901             | 0.978    |  |  |
|                         |  | D (oryness value)                                   |             | 0.701             | 0.776    |  |  |
|                         | Maximum supply tempe<br>and dryness value test | rature difference between superheat test            | °C          | 11.2              | 1.1      |  |  |
|                         | Test Person signature                          | print name  | date        |                   |          |  |  |
|                         |  |   |             |                   |          |  |  |

















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Sample point

- Air

Condensate

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# **Really FINISHED !**

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### **Pressure/Temperature Comparison**

It is often believed that a simple pressure/temperature comparison using steam tables will allow the presence of non-condensable gases to be discovered. If 1% of air by volume were to be present in the steam supply, a value many times in excess of the 3.5 % limit (0.00206% by volume), using Daltons Law, it will be seen from the table below that the resulting temperature depression will only be 0.33 degrees Celsius. Given the differences in response times and calibration errors between pressure and temperature instruments, it will be seen that such a comparison will only detect very large and wholly unacceptable levels of gases (between 1 and 10%).

The theory of steam flowing through a pipe indicates that any gases present will be adjacent to the pipe wall. Within this will be a layer of condensate and further condensate will be present on the bottom of the pipe.

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### **Dryness Value Test**

Wet steam is undesirable as it has less energy than dry steam and more importantly can cause wet loads. The packaging used for sterile products prevents reinfection when dry, but its bacterial retentive properties will be adversely affected by the presence of moisture. Wet loads can be considered to be unsterile.

The amount of moisture present in steam is measured by the dryness fraction, which is directly proportional to the amount of latent heat present. The dryness fraction describes how dry steam is with a value of 1 representing steam that is 100 dry and therefore free of entrained moisture. Steam with a dryness fraction of 0.99 consists of 99% steam and 1% water. Similarly, steam with a dryness fraction of 0.95 consists of 95% steam and 5% water.

If we measure the latent heat present in steam that has a dryness fraction of 0.99 we will find that it possesses 99% of the full quotient of latent heat. By establishing the amount of latent heat present in steam we can determine its dryness fraction.

### Calorimetry

We measure the latent heat in steam by condensing a sample in a known volume of water having a known starting temperature. The increase in mass of the water represents the amount of steam utilized to heat the water to its new, higher temperature. From this simple exercise we can calculate the amount of energy in the steam.

If we also measure the temperature of the steam supply we can determine from steam tables the latent heat that would be present if the steam was 100% dry. By comparing the two values we establish the dryness fraction of the steam sample. Because the steam is sampled only from the center of the pipe and does not take into account moisture on the pipe wall or condensate at the bottom of the pipe, the test is deemed to be an approximation rather than an absolute value. For this reason, instead of using the term dryness fraction, the test method uses the term **Dryness Value**, and this term is always used when describing test results for steam for sterilization.

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The calculation provided by HTM 2010 takes account of the heat loss from the test kit by the use of a constant that is dependent on the test equipment used. When using the SQ1 Portable Steam Quality Test Kit this constant has been modified to take account of the stainless steel vacuum flask and dip tube construction. This variation is detailed in the calculation in the manual and in the Excel calculation provided on floppy disk. EN285 does not specify the construction of the test equipment that should be used or provide any information on how the constant is calculated.

### Acceptance Criteria

The dryness value of the steam should be equal to or greater than 0.9 for porous loads or 0.95 where metal loads are processed. Invariably this means the latter limit is applicable. In any event, in plant steam terms, steam containing 5% of moisture would be seen to be of poor quality and a dryness value of 0.99 would be more commonly seen to be acceptable.

### Methodology Problems

Out of specification results are often caused by the test method not being strictly followed. Where the test point is not as indicated problems can easily result. Similarly, modifications to the test points by the installation of valves and/or additional pipe fittings etc. can result in additional heat losses being encountered which are not taken into account by the calculation.

The start and end temperatures within the flask should be established by agitating the flask and water until a constant value is reached. The test should be completed when the water temperature reaches 80o C. If the temperature is hotter or localized boiling occurs, energy will be lost in the form of steam venting from the flask and misleading results obtained. To avoid this the flask should be constantly, but gently agitated during the course of the test, and preferably the test completed before rather than after the 80o C limit is reached. It will be found that the effects of agitation following the test will tend to result in an increased temperature rather than a lowering. The use of a sheathed temperature sensing probe results in a relatively slow response time for small changes in temperature and time must be allowed for the sensor to stabilize.

If the test is carried out too slowly, the heat losses tend to increase and have a greater impact as time progresses. The purpose of the pitot tube is simply to provide a controlled flow of steam into the vacuum flak. It is our experience that the use of a pitot tube one size larger than that specified by the standard test method will provide a suitably fast test to avoid such problems. Provided that the water in the flask is not allowed to boil and heat to be lost from the system as steam/vapour, the size of the pitot tube is immaterial. When we conduct the test, we aim to complete it within 10 minutes.

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Great care should be taken with mass measurements and weighing equipment must discriminate to 0.1g. Water droplets on surfaces of the flask that is not subject to the heating effects of the steam can affect the results if present in sufficient quantities. In between tests it is recommended that the flask is dried internally and externally and that fresh water is added in such a fashion that it is not splashed on the outer surface of the flask. When agitating the flask, care should be taken to prevent any loss of water which will affect the outcome of the test.

The temperature of the steam supply should be logged in order that its average temperature may be calculated for the duration of the test. While the pressure of the steam supply would not be expected to fluctuate by more than 10% (EN 285) any fluctuations not recorded will cause misleading results to be generated.

### **Causes of Wet Steam - Plant Steam**

Wet steam may be caused by excessive pressure drops on the boiler due to high demands. As the pressure drops, the size of steam bubbles increase in turn increasing the volume of water in the boiler and causing it to be closer to the steam outlet. The increased size of the steam bubbles results in a more aggressive boiling action, which causes more/larger droplets of water to leave the water surface and enter the steam space and thus be carried over into the steam. Steam at a low pressure occupies more space than steam at a high pressure and a further affect of a pressure reduction is to increase the velocity of the steam leaving the boiler. This can reach such a velocity that it will take some of the boiler water with the steam. Certain contaminants in the boiler water can cause a froth to form on the water surface, again allowing moisture to enter the steam supply.

Once in the distribution system, the quality of steam is likely to deteriorate as the result of heat losses causing further condensation. To minimize such deterioration, the steam distribution system should be well insulated and be provided with a well designed and installed condensate removal system (steam traps and separators). Pipework should always have a fall towards steam traps. A common problem that causes wet steam is where pipework is sagging. This allows pockets of water to accumulate until they are sufficiently large to occlude the steam pipe, causing the increased steam velocity to carry them to the points of use in discrete slugs.

### **Causes of Wet Steam - Pure/Clean Steam**

Pyrogen free steam produced by a clean/pure steam generator should be dry saturated (dryness value of 1). That is to say it should be dry and at its saturation temperature (boiling point for its given pressure). Pure steam generators are normally fitted with a pressure sustain valve which prevents excessive pressure drops and therefore the potential to carry over water with the steam. This valve will prevent pressure drops at the generator by maintaining the generators internal pressure at the expense of the distribution system. As with plant steam its quality can only deteriorate within the steam distribution system as described above, where the same design requirements apply to insulation and condensate removal.



<text><text><image><image><image><image><image><text>



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12. 打開檢測儀上凝結水排放閥以及氣體排放閥。



13. 預先注水至檢測儀的冷卻水槽,觀察視窗水位到"0"刻度時停止進水,並略 為調整刻度表"0"與液面齊平。



14. 將溫度計及不鏽鋼架安裝於檢測儀側邊。





18. 同時慢慢打開檢測儀上蒸汽限制閥,排除檢測儀內之空氣。



19. 當凝結水從凝結排放管流出時,調整觀測窗水位高度歸零(移動刻度板)。



20. 調整蒸汽流量限制閥,以維持凝結水分離排放口溫度介於80°C to 90°C。













4. 將溫度感應探針平行安裝於蒸汽管路。



5. 將3mm直徑之溫度探針B 插入溫度探針位置,調整探針使末端位於蒸汽管路中央, 固定並確認無洩漏等情況。.

6. 將溫度探針C插入擴大管中央位置,末端位於擴大管中央(如下圖)。





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16. 檢測之過熱溫度以不超過25℃為合格之檢測。

17. 在樣本收集與檢測週期完成,將蒸汽供給源切斷,確認供應端與大氣間無壓力差異。



18. 從皮托管處移除擴充管及溫度探針,注意高溫時的個人防護。

19. 移除蒸汽管路上肢温度探針、皮托管,注意高温之人身防護。

20. 將管路系統恢復原狀。







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4. 將溫度探針安裝於蒸汽系統管路。



5. 將3mm溫度探針B安裝於管路上,調整探針長度以確保探針於蒸汽管正中位置。

 連接溫度探針D於溫度計T1位置,量測不銹鋼瓶內溫度;溫度探針B於溫度計 T2位置,量測場內蒸汽溫度。





7. 天平安置於乾燥硬質表面,調整確認水平後,開啟電源。測量重量時,先確認螢幕穩定顯示"0"。

8. 確定橡皮管已連接於不鏽鋼瓶較高的細管。

9. 將橡皮塞與橡皮管至於不鏽鋼瓶上。

10. 量測並記錄不鏽鋼瓶及管重量(Me)。



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17. 啟動溫度計電源,檢視T1與T2分別顯示於螢幕上。

18. 同時確認溫度探針種類為type 'T'。

19.確認滅菌斧艙內淨空後,啟動一滅菌週期,確認蒸汽開始進入滅菌斧。



20. 在檢測過程確認無乾燥或熱源影響。

21. 當蒸汽進入滅菌斧艙內,紀錄啟始不銹鋼瓶溫度 Ts(溫度計上T1數值);並立 即將連接鋼瓶之橡皮管另一端與皮托管連接。由於蒸汽溫度極高,請注意自身安 全並使用隔熱手套。





22. 在溫度計上,連續按三次Mx/Mn按鍵,以便開始記錄平均供應蒸汽溫度 Ta (溫度計上T2數值),不需要考慮T1平均值。



29. 合格的乾燥值讀數條件:

a) 非金屬待滅菌物之乾燥讀數不小於0.9;金屬物不小於0.95。

b) 在過熱檢測時供應蒸汽的溫度變化在3℃範圍內。

30. 當樣本收集與檢測週期完成後,將蒸汽供給源切斷,確認供應端與大氣間無壓 力差異。





31. 使用隔熱手套將溫度探針、皮托管從蒸汽供應管路系統中移除,請注意操作人員自身安全防護。

32. 將現場管路恢復並仔細檢查確認。

33. 將鋼瓶淨空,確實乾燥後裝箱。