

**SS ISO 11138-7 : 2019**  
**ISO 11138-7:2019, IDT**  
(ICS 11.080.01)

**SINGAPORE STANDARD**

**Sterilisation of health care products –  
Biological indicators**

– Part 7 : Guidance for the selection, use and  
interpretation of results

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**Contents**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>National Foreword</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Foreword</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>1 Scope</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>2 Normative references</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>3 Terms and definitions</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>4 General</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>5 Characteristics of biological indicators</b> .....	<b>16</b>
5.1 General .....	16
5.2 Test organism suspension for direct inoculation of products .....	17
5.3 Inoculated carriers .....	18
5.4 Self-contained biological indicators .....	19
<b>6 Selection of supplier</b> .....	<b>20</b>
6.1 General .....	20
6.2 Documentation .....	21
6.2.1 General .....	21
6.2.2 Manufacturer audit .....	21
<b>7 Biological indicators in process development</b> .....	<b>22</b>
7.1 General .....	22
7.2 Overkill approach .....	23
7.3 Combined biological indicator and bioburden method .....	24
7.4 Bioburden method .....	25
<b>8 Biological indicators in sterilization validation</b> .....	<b>25</b>
8.1 General .....	25
8.2 Placement and handling of biological indicators .....	26
8.3 Sterilizer qualification .....	26
8.4 Performance qualification .....	26
8.5 Review and approval of validation .....	27
8.6 Requalification .....	27
<b>9 Biological indicators in routine monitoring</b> .....	<b>27</b>
9.1 General .....	27
9.2 Placement and handling of biological indicators .....	28
9.3 Process challenge device .....	28
<b>10 Interpretation and acceptance criteria</b> .....	<b>29</b>
10.1 General .....	29
10.2 Interpretation of results .....	29
<b>11 Application of biological indicator standards</b> .....	<b>30</b>
11.1 General assessment of biological indicator performance by the user .....	30
11.2 Nominal population of test organism .....	30
11.3 Resistance determination .....	31
11.3.1 General .....	31
11.3.2 Survivor curve method .....	32

11.3.3	Fraction-negative method.....	32
11.3.4	Survival-kill response characteristics.....	32
11.4	<i>z</i> value determination.....	33
11.4.1	General.....	33
11.4.2	Graphically plotting the <i>z</i> value.....	33
11.4.3	Mathematically calculating the <i>z</i> value.....	34
11.4.4	Correlation coefficient, <i>r</i> , for the <i>z</i> value.....	34
11.5	$F_{(T,z)}$ equivalent sterilization value determination.....	34
11.6	Establishing spore-log-reduction.....	35
11.7	Sterility assurance level calculation.....	36
11.8	Test equipment.....	36
12	Culture conditions.....	36
12.1	General.....	36
12.2	Incubation temperature.....	37
12.3	Incubation period.....	37
12.4	Choice of growth medium.....	38
13	Third-party considerations.....	38
13.1	General.....	38
13.2	Minimum requirements from ISO 11138-1 for replicates and total number of biological indicators.....	39
13.3	Test equipment.....	39
14	Personnel training.....	40
15	Storage and handling.....	40
16	Disposal of biological indicators.....	40
Annex A (informative) Microbiological inactivation kinetics and enumeration techniques.....		41
Annex B (informative) Process challenge devices.....		45
B.1	General.....	45
B.2	Helices.....	45
B.3	Standard test packs.....	45
B.4	User's process challenge devices.....	45
B.5	Biological test packs.....	45
Annex C (informative) Formulae for <i>D</i> value determination by fraction-negative method.....		46
C.1	Principles.....	46
C.2	Materials.....	46
C.3	Procedure.....	47
C.3.1	Holcomb-Spearman-Karber Procedure (HSKP).....	47
C.3.1.1	Procedure.....	47
C.3.1.2	Calculations using the HSKP.....	47
C.3.1.3	Example calculations using the HSKP.....	50
C.3.2	Limited Holcomb-Spearman-Karber Procedure (LHSKP).....	54

C.3.2.1	Calculations using the LHSKP .....	54
C.3.2.2	Example calculations using the LHSKP.....	56
C.3.3	Stumbo-Murphy-Cochran Procedure (SMCP) .....	58
C.3.3.1	Procedure.....	58
C.3.3.2	Calculations using the SMCP.....	58
C.3.3.3	Example calculations using the SMCP .....	59
Annex D (informative)	Examples of documentation for biological indicators prepared by the user .....	62
D.1	General.....	62
D.1.1	Sources of microorganisms .....	62
D.1.2	Documentation.....	62
D.2	Commercially available suspension .....	63
D.3	Suspension from a commercially available strain .....	63
D.4	Suspension from in-house isolates .....	64
D.5	Inoculated carriers.....	65
D.5.1	General.....	65
D.5.2	Documentation of fluid carrier materials .....	65
D.5.3	Documentation of solid carrier materials.....	65
D.5.4	Documentation of inoculated carriers used for <i>D</i> value determinations .....	66
Annex E (informative)	Calculation of <i>z</i> value .....	67
Annex F (informative)	<i>D</i> value determination by survivor curve method .....	70
F.1	Principle .....	70
F.2	Materials.....	70
F.3	Procedure.....	70
Table F.1	— Examples of regression analysis .....	71
Table F.2	— Examples of calculations for slope .....	72
Annex G (informative)	Survival-kill response characteristics.....	74
G.1	Principle .....	74
G.2	Materials.....	74
G.3	Procedure.....	74
Bibliography	.....	76



## National Foreword

This Singapore Standard was prepared by the National Mirror Working Group on ISO/TC 210 set up by the Technical Committee on Quality Management Systems under the purview of BHSC.

This standard is identical with ISO 11138-7:2019, “Sterilization of health care products – Biological indicators – Part 7: Guidance for the selection, use and interpretation of results”, published by International Organization for Standardization.

NOTE 1 – Reference to International Standards are replaced by applicable Singapore Standards/Technical References.

NOTE 2 – Where numerical values are expressed as decimals, the comma is read as a full point.

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

### NOTE

1. *Singapore Standards (SSs) and Technical References (TRs) are reviewed periodically to keep abreast of technical changes, technological developments and industry practices. The changes are documented through the issue of either amendments or revisions. Where SSs are deemed to be stable, i.e. no foreseeable changes in them, they will be classified as “Mature Standards”. Mature Standards will not be subject to further review, unless there are requests to review such standards.*
2. *An SS or TR is voluntary in nature except when it is made mandatory by a regulatory authority. It can also be cited in contracts making its application a business necessity. Users are advised to assess and determine whether the SS or TR is suitable for their intended use or purpose. If required, they should refer to the relevant professionals or experts for advice on the use of the document. Enterprise Singapore and the Singapore Standards Council shall not be liable for any damages whether directly or indirectly suffered by anyone or any organisation as a result of the use of any SS or TR. Although care has been taken to draft this standard, users are also advised to ensure that they apply the information after due diligence.*
3. *Compliance with a SS or TR does not exempt users from any legal obligations.*

## 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.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

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. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see [www.iso.org/patents](http://www.iso.org/patents)).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see [www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html).

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 198, *Sterilization of health care products*.

This first edition cancels and replaces ISO 14161:2009, which has been technically revised.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at [www.iso.org/members.html](http://www.iso.org/members.html).

## Introduction

This document provides guidance regarding the selection, use and interpretation of results of biological indicators used to develop, validate and monitor sterilization processes. The procedures described in this document are of a general nature and do not, of themselves, constitute a comprehensive development, validation or monitoring programme with regard to the sterilization of health care products. The intent of this document is not to stipulate the use of biological indicators in a process but, if they are used, to provide guidance for their proper selection and use in order to avoid misleading results.

In this document, users will find guidance on selection of the correct biological indicator for their particular sterilization process (see the ISO 11138 series) and critical parameters as well as guidance on its appropriate use.

The selection of an appropriate biological indicator for the particular process used is critical. There is a wide variety of sterilization processes in common use, and biological indicator manufacturers are not able to foresee all possible uses of their product. Manufacturers, therefore, label biological indicators according to their intended use. It is the responsibility of the users of biological indicators to select, use, recover and interpret the results as appropriate for the particular sterilization process used.

The performance of a biological indicator can be adversely affected by the conditions of storage and transport prior to its use, by inappropriate/non-indicated use of the biological indicator or by the sterilizer process parameters. In addition, the incubation procedure used after exposure to the process, including incubation temperature and culture medium type, supplier and specific batch, can affect measured resistance as a function of recovery and growth. For these reasons, the recommendations of the biological indicator manufacturer for transportation, storage and use should be followed. After exposure, the aseptic transfer (if applicable) and incubation of biological indicators as specified by the biological indicator manufacturer is critical for obtaining correct results.

It is important to note that biological indicators are not intended to indicate that the products in the load being sterilized are sterile. Biological indicators are utilized to test the effectiveness of a given sterilization process and the equipment used, by assessing microbial lethality according to the concept of sterility assurance level. Suitable training is necessary for personnel conducting these studies.

**NOTE** The general information provided in this document can have useful application for processes and biological indicators not currently addressed by existing International Standards, e.g. new and developing sterilization processes.

# **Sterilization of health care products — Biological indicators —**

Part 7:

## **Guidance for the selection, use and interpretation of results**

### **1 Scope**

This document provides guidance for the selection, use and interpretation of results from application of biological indicators when used in the development, validation and routine monitoring of sterilization processes.

It does not consider those processes that rely solely on physical removal of microorganisms, e.g. filtration.

It is not applicable to combination processes using, for example, washer-disinfectors or flushing and steaming of pipelines.

It does not specify requirements for the selection and use of biological indicators intended to monitor vaporised hydrogen peroxide processes for isolator and room biodecontamination processes at atmospheric pressure.

It is not applicable to liquid immersion sterilization processes.

### **2 Normative references**

There are no normative references in this document.