



Food and Environmental Proficiency Testing Unit

The final date for return of results is indicated on the accompanying request/report form

Contact details:

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Results should be returned on-line using the web-based reporting system. Go to: www.phe-eqa.org.uk. You will need your log-in details for this process. Please contact us if you experience problems with the on-line system.

www.gov.uk/government/collections/external-quality-assessment-eqa-and-proficiency-testing-pt-for-food-water-and-environmental-microbiology#standard-scheme

Standard Scheme – Instruction Sheet

Each distribution consists of **two** evacuated glass vials containing mixtures of freeze-dried micro-organisms. The vial contents require reconstitution prior to examination.

Important information to note:

You can now analyse and report up to three sets of results for any of the tests for the Standard Scheme you participate in.

Please note as only 200g of simulated food is provided you are advised that for tests where an enrichment step is required, you will need to use the enriched sample for staff to examine from.

Refer also to the Safety Data Sheet:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/safety-data-sheet-freeze-dried-food

For a video on sample processing click on the link below and scroll to the bottom of the page:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/standard-scheme-sample-instruction-sheets

Storage:

Store the samples at 2 - 8°C on receipt.

Safety Recommendation:

The samples contain micro-organisms of ACDP Hazard Groups 1 and 2. Your laboratory must undertake a risk assessment before handling these samples with particular consideration to the conditions and procedures for opening evacuated vials to prevent the risk of aerosol.

Opening Vials:

Remove the plastic tear-off seal by positioning the vial with the arrow on the plastic flip-top pointing away from you, flip the top up then carefully but deliberately pull downwards and to the right (or the left if you are left handed) until the seal separates; then still holding onto the plastic top, gently remove altogether and discard into a sharps container.

Reconstitution:

The samples are reconstituted in **200mL** nutrient broth (**pre-warmed** to $30 \pm 2^{\circ}\text{C}$) as follows:

- Aseptically remove the rubber stopper from the vial of the freeze-dried sample.
- Transfer approximately 1mL of the **200mL** warmed nutrient broth to the vial and allow to stand for 2 - 5 minutes.
- Transfer the vial contents back to the remaining nutrient broth.
- Rinse the vial a further 3 - 4 times with the **200mL** nutrient broth sample.
- Shake the reconstituted samples before examination.

Examination:

- **Each reconstituted sample is equivalent to a 200g food sample.**
- Undertake the examinations listed on the request/report form between 30 - 45 minutes of reconstitution.
- Examine in accordance with routine procedures.

Return of Results:

- Return your results on-line using the web-based reporting system.
- The distribution will be closed on the deadline date for return of results.
- Results cannot be accepted after the distribution has closed.