
**Packaging for terminally sterilized
medical devices —**

**Part 1:
Requirements for materials, sterile barrier
systems and packaging systems**

Emballages des dispositifs médicaux stérilisés au stade terminal —

*Partie 1: Exigences relatives aux matériaux, aux systèmes de barrière
stérile et aux systèmes d'emballage*



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ISO copyright office
Case postale 56 • CH-1211 Geneva 20
Tel. + 41 22 749 01 11
Fax + 41 22 749 09 47
E-mail copyright@iso.org
Web www.iso.org

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Contents

Page

Foreword	iv
Introduction	v
1 Scope	1
2 Normative references	1
3 Terms and definitions	1
4 General requirements	5
4.1 General.....	5
4.2 Quality systems	5
4.3 Sampling.....	6
4.4 Test methods.....	6
4.5 Documentation	6
5 Materials and preformed sterile barrier systems	7
5.1 General requirements.....	7
5.2 Microbial barrier properties	9
5.3 Compatibility with the sterilization process.....	10
5.4 Compatibility with the labelling system	10
5.5 Storage and transport	10
6 Design and development requirements for packaging systems	11
6.1 General.....	11
6.2 Design	11
6.3 Packaging-system performance testing.....	12
6.4 Stability testing	12
7 Information to be provided	13
Annex A (informative) Guidance on medical packaging	14
Annex B (informative) Standardized test methods and procedures that may be used to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of this part of ISO 11607	17
Annex C (normative) Test method for resistance of impermeable materials to the passage of air	21
Bibliography	22

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.

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

The main task of technical committees is to prepare International Standards. Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

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.

ISO 11607-1 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 198, *Sterilization of health care products*.

ISO 11607-1 and ISO 11607-2 cancel and replace ISO 11607:2003, which has been technically revised.

ISO 11607 consists of the following parts, under the general title *Packaging for terminally sterilized medical devices*:

- *Part 1: Requirements for materials, sterile barrier systems and packaging systems*
- *Part 2: Validation requirements for forming, sealing and assembly processes*

Introduction

The process of designing and developing a packaging system for terminally sterilized medical devices is a complicated and critical endeavour. The device components and the packaging system should be combined to create a product that performs efficiently, safely, and effectively in the hands of the user.

This part of ISO 11607 specifies the basic attributes required of materials and pre-formed systems intended for use in packaging systems for terminally sterilized medical devices, while considering the wide range of potential materials, medical devices, packaging system designs, and sterilization methods. ISO 11607-2 describes the validation requirements for forming, sealing and assembly processes. This part of ISO 11607 is harmonized with EN 868-1 and specifies general requirements for all packaging materials whereas EN 868 Parts 2 to 10 specify particular requirements for a range of commonly used materials. Both parts of ISO 11607 were designed to meet the Essential Requirements of the European Medical Device Directives.

European standards that provide requirements for particular materials and preformed sterile barrier systems are available and known as the EN 868 series. This part of ISO 11607 has been developed as a means to show compliance with the relevant Essential Requirements of the European Directives concerning medical devices. Compliance with EN 868 Parts 2 to 10 can be used to demonstrate compliance with one or more of the requirements of this part of ISO 11607.

The goal of a terminally sterilized medical device packaging system is to allow sterilization, provide physical protection, maintain sterility up to the point of use and allow aseptic presentation. The specific nature of the medical device, the intended sterilization methods(s), the intended use, expiry date, transport and storage all influence the packaging system design and choice of materials.

One significant barrier to harmonization was terminology. The terms “package”, “final package”, “final pack”, “primary pack”, and “primary package” all have different connotations around the globe, and choosing one of these terms to be the harmonized basis for this part of ISO 11607 was considered a barrier to successful completion of this document. As a result, the term “sterile barrier system” was introduced to describe the minimum packaging required to perform the unique functions required of medical packaging: to allow sterilization, to provide an acceptable microbial barrier, and to allow for aseptic presentation. “Protective packaging” protects the sterile barrier system, and together they form the packaging system. “Preformed sterile barrier systems” would include any partially assembled sterile barrier systems such as pouches, header bags or hospital packaging reels. An overview of sterile barrier systems can be found in Annex A.

The sterile barrier system is essential to ensure the safety of terminally sterilized medical devices. Regulatory authorities recognize the critical nature of sterile barrier systems by considering them as an accessory or a component of a medical device. Preformed sterile barrier systems sold to healthcare facilities for use in internal sterilization are considered as medical devices in many parts of the world.

Packaging for terminally sterilized medical devices —

Part 1:

Requirements for materials, sterile barrier systems and packaging systems

1 Scope

This part of ISO 11607 specifies the requirements and test methods for materials, preformed sterile barrier systems, sterile barrier systems and packaging systems that are intended to maintain sterility of terminally sterilized medical devices until the point of use.

This part of ISO 11607 is applicable to industry, to health care facilities, and wherever medical devices are placed in sterile barrier systems and sterilized.

This part of ISO 11607 does not cover all requirements for sterile barrier systems and packaging systems for medical devices that are manufactured aseptically. Additional requirements might also be necessary for drug/device combinations.

This part of ISO 11607 does not describe a quality assurance system for control of all stages of manufacture.

2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 5636-5:2003, *Paper and board — Determination of air permeance and air resistance (medium range) — Part 5: Gurley method*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

3.1

aseptic presentation

introduction and transfer of a sterile product using conditions and procedures that exclude microbial contamination

3.2

bioburden

population of viable microorganisms on or in a product or sterile barrier system

[ISO/TS 11139:2006]

3.3

closure

means used to close a sterile barrier system where no seal is formed

NOTE For example, a sterile barrier system can be closed by a reusable container gasket or sequential folding to construct a tortuous path.

3.4

closure integrity

characteristics of the closure, which ensures that it prevents the ingress of microorganisms under specified conditions

NOTE See also 3.8.

3.5

expiry date

indication of the date, by which the product should be used, expressed at least as the year and month

3.6

labelling

written, printed, electronic or graphic matter affixed to a medical device or its packaging system; or accompanying a medical device

NOTE Labelling is related to identification, technical description and use of the medical device but excludes shipping documents.

3.7

medical device

any instrument, apparatus, implement, machine, appliance, implant, in vitro reagent or calibrator, software, material or other related article, intended by the manufacturer to be used, alone or in combination, for human beings for one or more of the specific purpose(s) of

- diagnosis, prevention, monitoring, treatment or alleviation of disease;
- diagnosis, monitoring, treatment, alleviation of or compensation for an injury;
- investigation, replacement, modification or support of the anatomy or of a physiological process,
- supporting or sustaining life,
- control of conception,
- disinfection of medical devices,
- providing information for medical purposes by means of in vitro examination of specimens derived from the human body;

and which does not achieve its primary intended action in or on the human body by pharmacological, immunological or metabolic means, but which may be assisted in its function by such means

[ISO 13485:2003]

NOTE This definition from ISO 13485:2003 has been developed by the Global Harmonization Task Force (GHTF 2002).

3.8

microbial barrier

property of the sterile barrier system that prevents the ingress of microorganisms under specified conditions

3.9

packaging material

any material used in the fabrication or sealing of a packaging system

3.10**packaging system**

combination of the sterile barrier system and protective packaging

[ISO/TS 11139:2006]

3.11**preformed sterile barrier system**

sterile barrier system (3.22) that is supplied partially assembled for filling and final closure or sealing

EXAMPLE Pouches, bags, and open reusable containers.

[ISO/TS 11139:2006]

3.12**product**

result of a process

[ISO 9000:2000]

NOTE For the purpose of sterilization standards, product is tangible and can be raw material(s), intermediate(s), sub-assembly(ies) and health care product(s).

[ISO/TS 11139:2006]

3.13**protective packaging**

configuration of materials designed to prevent damage to the sterile barrier system and its contents from the time of their assembly until the point of use

NOTE Adapted from ISO/TS 11139:2006.

3.14**recycled material**

material that has been reprocessed through a production process of waste materials for their original purpose or for other purposes

3.15**repeatability**

closeness of the agreement between the results of successive measurements of the same particular quantity subject to measurement (measurand) carried out under the same conditions of measurement

NOTE 1 These conditions are called repeatability conditions.

NOTE 2 Repeatability conditions can include the following:

- the same measurement procedure;
- the same observer;
- the same measuring instrument, used under the same conditions;
- the same location;
- repetition over a short period of time.

NOTE 3 Repeatability may be expressed quantitatively in terms of the dispersion characteristics of the results.

NOTE 4 Adapted from *International Vocabulary of Basic and General Terms in Metrology*, 1993, definition 3.6.

3.16

reproducibility

closeness of the agreement between the results of measurements of the same particular quantity subject to measurement (measurand) carried out under changed conditions of measurement

NOTE 1 A valid statement of reproducibility requires specification of the conditions changed.

NOTE 2 The changed conditions can include:

- principle of measurement;
- method of measurement;
- observer;
- measuring instrument;
- reference standard;
- location;
- conditions of use;
- time.

NOTE 3 Reproducibility may be expressed quantitatively in terms of the dispersion characteristics of the results.

NOTE 4 Adapted from *International Vocabulary of Basic and General Terms in Metrology*, 1993, definition 3.7.

3.17

reusable container

rigid sterile barrier system designed to be repeatedly used

3.18

seal

result of joining surfaces together

NOTE For example, surfaces can be jointed together by use of adhesives or thermal fusion.

3.19

seal integrity

characteristics of the seal, which ensures that it prevents the ingress of microorganisms under specified conditions

NOTE See also 3.8.

3.20

seal strength

mechanical strength of the seal

3.21

sterile

free from viable microorganisms

[ISO/TS 11139:2006]

3.22

sterile barrier system

minimum package that prevents ingress of microorganisms and allows aseptic presentation of the product at the point of use

[ISO/TS 11139:2006]

3.23**sterile fluid-path packaging**

system of protective port covers and/or packaging designed to ensure sterility of the portion of the medical device intended for contact with fluids

NOTE An example of sterile fluid-path packaging would be the interior of the tubing for administration of an intravenous fluid.

3.24**sterilization compatibility**

attributes of the packaging material and/or system that allow it to both withstand the sterilization process and attain the required conditions for sterilization within the packaging system

3.25**sterilizing agent**

physical or chemical entity, or combination of entities having sufficient microbicidal activity to achieve sterility under defined conditions

[ISO/TS 11139:2006]

3.26**terminal sterilization**

process whereby product is sterilized within its sterile barrier system

3.27**useful life**

the time period during which all the performance requirements are met

3.28**validation**

(general) confirmation by examination and provision of objective evidence that the particular requirement for a specific intended use can be consistently fulfilled

NOTE This definition is applicable to validation of test methods and design.

3.29**validation**

(process) documented procedure for obtaining, recording and interpreting the results required to establish that a process will consistently yield product complying with predetermined specifications

NOTE Adapted from ISO/TS 11139:2006.

4 General requirements**4.1 General**

Compliance with one or more requirements of this part of ISO 11607 may be demonstrated by using one or more parts of the series EN 868-2 to EN 868-10.

4.2 Quality systems

4.2.1 The activities described within this part of ISO 11607 shall be carried out within a formal quality system.

NOTE ISO 9001 and ISO 13485 contain requirements for suitable quality systems. Additional requirements may be specified by a country or region.

4.2.2 It is not necessary to obtain third-party certification of the quality system to fulfil the requirements of this part of ISO 11607.

4.2.3 Health care facilities may use the quality system required by their country or region.

4.3 Sampling

The sampling plans used for selection and testing of packaging systems shall be applicable to packaging systems being evaluated. Sampling plans shall be based upon statistically valid rationale.

NOTE Examples of suitable sampling plans are given in ISO 2859-1 or ISO 186. Additional sampling plans may be specified by countries or regions.

4.4 Test methods

4.4.1 All test methods used to show compliance with this part of ISO 11607 shall be validated and documented.

NOTE Annex B contains a list of suitable test methods.

4.4.2 The test method validation shall demonstrate the suitability of the method as used. The following elements shall be included:

- establishment of a rationale for the selection of the appropriate tests for the packaging system;
- establishment of acceptance criteria;

NOTE Pass/fail is a type of acceptance criterion.

- determination of test method repeatability;
- determination of test method reproducibility; and
- establishment of test method sensitivity for integrity tests.

4.4.3 Unless otherwise specified in the test methods, test samples shall be conditioned at $(23 \pm 1) ^\circ\text{C}$ and $(50 \pm 2) \%$ relative humidity for a minimum of 24 h.

4.5 Documentation

4.5.1 Demonstration of compliance with the requirements of this part of ISO 11607 shall be documented.

4.5.2 All documentation shall be retained for a specified period of time. The retention period shall consider factors such as regulatory requirements, expiry date and traceability of the medical device or sterile barrier system.

4.5.3 Documentation of compliance with the requirements may include, but is not limited to, performance data, specifications and test results from validated test methods.

4.5.4 Electronic records, electronic signatures and handwritten signatures executed to electronic records that contribute to validation, process control or other quality decision-making processes shall be reliable.

5 Materials and preformed sterile barrier systems

5.1 General requirements

5.1.1 The requirements on materials referenced shall apply to those used in preformed sterile barrier systems, as well as sterile barrier systems.

5.1.2 The requirements listed in this subclause (5.1) are not intended to be all-inclusive. Materials which have characteristics not listed in this subclause may be evaluated using the performance criteria given in Clause 6.

5.1.3 The conditions under which the material and/or preformed sterile barrier system are produced and handled shall be established, controlled and recorded, if applicable, in order to ensure that:

- a) the conditions are compatible with the use for which the material and/or sterile barrier system is designed;
- b) the performance characteristics of the material and/or sterile barrier system are maintained.

5.1.4 As a minimum, the following shall be considered:

- a) temperature range;
- b) pressure range;
- c) humidity range;
- d) maximum rate of change of the above, where necessary;
- e) exposure to sunlight or UV light;
- f) cleanliness;
- g) bioburden;
- h) electrostatic conductivity.

5.1.5 The source, history and traceability of all materials, especially recycled materials, shall be known and controlled to ensure that the finished product will consistently meet the requirements of this part of ISO 11607.

NOTE With current commercial technologies, it is unlikely that anything other than virgin manufacturing waste will be used in recycled materials, due to insufficient controls to allow the safe use of other recycled material in sterile barrier systems.

5.1.6 The following properties shall be evaluated:

- a) microbial barrier (see 5.2);
- b) biocompatibility and toxicological attributes;

NOTE This is usually restricted to material in contact with the device. Guidance on biocompatibility is given in ISO 10993-1.

Sterilization effects on biocompatibility should be evaluated.

- c) physical and chemical properties;
- d) compatibility with respect to forming and sealing processes;
- e) compatibility with respect to the intended sterilization process(es) (see 5.3);

- f) any shelf-life limitations for pre-sterilization and post-sterilization storage.

5.1.7 Materials, e.g. wrapping materials, paper, plastic film, nonwovens or reusable fabrics, shall meet the following general performance requirements.

- a) Materials shall be non-leaching and odourless under specified conditions of use, to such an extent that neither performance nor safety is impaired and the medical devices with which they are in contact are not adversely affected.

NOTE Odour determination does not require a standardized test method, since objectionable odours are readily evident.

- b) Materials shall be free of holes, cracks, tears, creases or localized thickening and/or thinning sufficient to impair functioning.
- c) Materials shall have a basis weight (mass per unit area) which is consistent with the specified value.
- d) Materials shall exhibit acceptable levels of cleanliness, particulate matter and linting.
- e) Materials shall comply with established specific or minimum physical properties, such as tensile strength, thickness variation, tear resistance, air permeance and burst strength.
- f) Materials shall comply with established specific chemical characteristics (such as pH value, chloride, and sulfate content) to meet the requirements of the medical device, packaging system or sterilization process.
- g) Materials shall not contain or release material known to be toxic in sufficient quantity to cause a health hazard either before, during or after sterilization under the conditions of use.

5.1.8 In addition to the requirements given in 5.1.1 through 5.1.7, adhesive-coated materials shall meet the requirements listed below.

- a) Coating patterns shall be continuous without skips or breaks in the pattern sufficient to cause a discontinuity in the seal.
- b) Coating mass shall be consistent with the stated value.
- c) Materials shall demonstrate minimum specified seal strength when a seal is formed with another specified material under specified conditions.

5.1.9 In addition to the requirements given in 5.1.1 through 5.1.7 and, if appropriate, 5.1.8, sterile barrier systems and preformed sterile barrier systems shall meet the requirements listed below.

- a) Materials and components, e.g. coatings, ink or chemical indicators, shall not adversely affect the medical device by reaction, contamination and/or transfer before, during or after the defined sterilization process.
- b) If formed by sealing, the specified requirements for seal width and seal strength (tensile and/or burst) shall be met.
- c) Peel-open characteristics shall be continuous and homogeneous, without delamination or tearing of the material that can affect aseptic opening and presentation.

NOTE 1 Paper bags and heat-sealable pouches and reels have construction and design requirements, as well as performance requirements.

NOTE 2 A maximum seal strength may be necessary, if seals are intended to be opened for aseptic presentation.

- d) Seals and/or closures shall provide a barrier to microorganisms.

5.1.10 In addition to the requirements given in 5.1.1 through 5.1.7, reusable containers shall meet the requirements given below.

- a) The container shall be fitted with a tamper-evident system to provide a clear indication when the closure integrity has been compromised.
- b) The sterilizing agent port shall provide a barrier to microorganisms, during removal from the sterilizer, transport and storage (see 5.2).
- c) After forming the sterile barrier system, the closure shall provide a barrier to microorganisms.
- d) The container shall be constructed to facilitate inspection of all essential parts.
- e) Acceptance criteria shall be established for inspection prior to each reuse.

NOTE 1 Whilst visual inspection is the most common procedure, there could be other acceptable methods.

- f) Individual components of the same model containers shall be either completely interchangeable or designed such that the components cannot be interchanged.

NOTE 2 Suitable coding and/or labelling can address this design requirement.

- g) Service, cleaning procedures and the manner of inspection, maintenance and replacement of components shall be specified.

NOTE 3 For additional guidance on reusable containers, see EN 868-8.

5.1.11 In addition to the requirements given in 5.1.1 through 5.1.7 and, if appropriate, 5.1.8, reusable fabrics shall meet the requirements given below:

- a) Performance requirements shall be met after any repairs to the material and after every sterilization cycle.
- b) Processing procedures for laundering and refurbishing shall be established and documented.

NOTE This may include visual inspection, other test methods and acceptance criteria for reuse.

- c) Processing procedures shall conform to the product labelling.

5.1.12 For reusable sterile barrier systems including containers and fabrics, it shall be determined if processing in accordance with the provided instruction leads to a degradation that will limit the useful life. Where such degradation is predicted, the number of reprocessing cycles that can be tolerated shall be stated in the product labelling, or the end of the useful life shall be detectable.

5.2 Microbial barrier properties

5.2.1 The impermeability of a material shall be determined in accordance with Annex C.

NOTE The microbial barrier properties of materials used in the construction of sterile barrier systems are critical for ensuring integrity and product safety. The methods used for evaluation of the microbial barrier properties are divided into two categories: those that are appropriate for impermeable materials, and those that are appropriate for porous materials.

5.2.2 Demonstrating that the material is impermeable shall satisfy the microbial barrier requirement.

5.2.3 Porous materials shall provide an adequate microbial barrier to microorganisms in order to provide integrity of the sterile barrier system and product safety.

NOTE There is no universally accepted method of demonstrating microbial barrier properties. Evaluation of the microbial barrier properties of porous materials is typically conducted by challenging samples with an aerosol of bacterial spores or particulates, under a set of test conditions which specify the flow rate through the material, microbial challenge

to the sample, and duration of the test. The microbial barrier properties of the material, under these specified test conditions, are determined by comparing the extent of bacterial or particulate penetration through the material with the original challenge. Data from a validated physical test method that correlates with a validated microbiological challenge method are considered acceptable for determining the microbial barrier properties. As validated microbial challenge methods for materials and sterile barrier systems become available, they will be considered for inclusion in future editions of this part of ISO 11607. (For further information, see Sinclair and Tallentire 2002^[41], Tallentire and Sinclair 1998^[40], Scholla et al. 1995^[39], and Scholla et al. 2000^[38]).

5.3 Compatibility with the sterilization process

5.3.1 It shall be demonstrated that the materials and preformed sterile barrier system are suitable for use in the specified sterilization process(es) and cycle parameters.

5.3.2 Sterilization compatibility should be determined using a sterilizer designed, constructed and operated in accordance with the requirements of the relevant International or European Standards.

NOTE For example, see ISO 17665-1, ISO 11135, ISO 11137 (all parts), ISO 14937, EN 285, EN 550, EN 552, EN 554, EN 1422 or EN 14180. Efforts are under way to harmonize these International Standards and European Standards.

5.3.3 The performance of the materials shall be evaluated to ensure that the material performance remains within specified limits after exposure to all the specified sterilization processes.

5.3.4 Specified sterilization processes may include multiple exposures of the same or different sterilization processes.

5.3.5 Determination of suitability for the intended purpose shall include consideration of material variations that will occur during normal routine supply.

5.3.6 Where the product is enclosed by multiple wrappings or layers, different limits on material properties may be set for inner and outer layers.

5.3.7 Determination of suitability may be carried out concurrently with validation of the sterilization process(es) to be used.

5.4 Compatibility with the labelling system

The labelling system shall

- a) remain intact and legible until the point of use,
- b) be compatible with the materials, sterile barrier system and medical device during and after the specified sterilization process(es) and cycle parameters and shall not adversely affect the sterilization process, and
- c) not be printed or written in ink of a type which can be transferred to the medical device nor react with the packaging material and/or system to impair the utility of the packaging material and/or system, nor change colour to an extent which renders the label illegible.

NOTE Labelling systems can take a number of forms, including printing or writing directly on the material and/or sterile barrier system, or labels consisting of another layer of material attached to the surface of the material and/or system by adhesion, fusion or other means.

5.5 Storage and transport

5.5.1 Materials and preformed sterile barrier systems shall be packaged to provide the protection necessary to maintain the performance characteristics during transport and storage.

5.5.2 Materials and preformed sterile barrier systems shall be transported and stored under conditions that ensure that the performance characteristics remain within specified limits (see 5.1).

This can be accomplished by:

- a) demonstrating retention of these characteristics under defined storage conditions, and
- b) ensuring that storage conditions remain within specified limits.

6 Design and development requirements for packaging systems

6.1 General

6.1.1 The packaging system shall be designed to minimize the safety hazard to the user and patient under the intended specified conditions of use.

6.1.2 The packaging system shall provide physical protection and maintain integrity of the sterile barrier system.

6.1.3 The sterile barrier system shall allow for sterilization and be compatible with the chosen process(es).

6.1.4 The sterile barrier system shall maintain sterility until the point of use or until the expiry date.

NOTE See also 6.4.1.

6.1.5 Maintenance of sterile barrier integrity may be used to demonstrate maintenance of sterility.

NOTE See ANSI/AAMI ST65:2000 and Hansen et al. 1995^[36]. The loss of sterility is regarded as event-related rather than time-related.

6.1.6 When similar medical devices use the same packaging system, a rationale for establishing similarities and identifying the worst-case configuration shall be documented. As a minimum, the worst-case configuration shall be used to determine compliance with this part of ISO 11607.

NOTE For example, similarity could be established by different sizes of the same product.

6.2 Design

6.2.1 There shall be documented procedures for the design and development of packaging systems.

6.2.2 The sterile barrier system shall allow the product to be presented in an aseptic manner.

6.2.3 The design and development of a package system shall consider many factors that include, but are not limited to:

- a) customer requirements;
- b) the mass and configuration of the product;
- c) the presence of sharp edges or protrusions;
- d) the need for physical and other protection;
- e) the sensitivity of the product to particular risks, e.g. radiation, moisture, mechanical shock, static discharge;
- f) the number of products per package system;
- g) package labelling requirements;

- h) environmental limitations;
- i) expiry date limitations of the product;
- j) distribution, handling, storage environment;
- k) sterilization compatibility and residuals.

6.2.4 The product components and constructions which constitute sterile fluid-path closure assemblies shall be identified and specified. These should include, but are not limited to:

- materials;
- finish;
- component dimensions;
- assembly dimensions (e.g. tolerances for interference fits).

6.2.5 The results of the design and development process (6.2.1, 6.2.3 and 6.2.4) shall be recorded, verified and approved prior to release of the product.

6.3 Packaging-system performance testing

6.3.1 Integrity of the sterile barrier system shall be demonstrated after sterilization and subsequent performance testing.

6.3.2 Physical tests, along with microbial barrier testing of porous packaging materials, can be used to establish the capability of the sterile barrier system to maintain sterility. For a review of this topic, refer to ANSI/AAMI ST65:2000 and Hansen et al. 1995^[36].

6.3.3 Standardized test methods for evaluating the integrity of the sterile barrier system are preferred. However, in the absence of applicable validated sterile barrier system integrity tests, microbial barrier performance characteristics can be established by testing the microbial barrier properties of materials and the integrity of the seals and closures.

6.3.4 Performance testing shall be conducted on the worst-case sterile barrier system produced at the specified process limits of forming and sealing and after exposure to all the specified sterilization processes.

NOTE Specified sterilization processes may include multiple exposures of the same or different sterilization processes.

6.3.5 The packaging system shall provide adequate protection to the product through the hazards of handling, distribution and storage.

6.4 Stability testing

6.4.1 Stability testing shall demonstrate that the sterile barrier system maintains integrity over time.

6.4.2 Stability testing shall be performed using real-time aging.

6.4.3 Stability testing, using accelerated aging protocols, shall be regarded as sufficient evidence for claimed expiry dates until data from real-time aging studies are available.

6.4.4 Real-time and accelerated aging tests should begin simultaneously.

NOTE Stability testing and performance testing are separate entities. Performance testing evaluates the interaction between the packaging system and the products in response to the stresses imposed by the manufacturing and sterilization processes and the handling, storage and shipping environment.

6.4.5 When expiry dates are based upon product performance, stability testing for expiry dating should be conducted along with package stability testing.

6.4.6 If accelerated aging tests are performed, a documented rationale for the accelerated aging conditions and test duration chosen shall be established.

6.4.7 When it is demonstrated that the product does not interact with the specified sterile barrier system over time, previously documented data for stability testing shall be sufficient to be in accordance with 6.4.1.

7 Information to be provided

7.1 The following information shall be provided with the material, preformed sterile barrier system or sterile barrier system:

- the type, size or grade;
- batch number or other means of tracing the manufacturing history;
- the intended sterilization process(es);
- the expiry date, if applicable;
- any specific storage conditions, if applicable;
- any known restrictions on handling or use (e.g. environmental conditions), if applicable;
- for reusable materials and/or preformed sterile barrier systems, the frequency and nature of maintenance.

7.2 When national or regional regulations require additional information for preformed sterile barrier systems which are placed on the healthcare market, this additional information shall be provided.

Annex A (informative)

Guidance on medical packaging

A.1 Factors influencing the choice of the materials and design of the packaging system

The specific nature of the medical device, the intended sterilization methods(s), and the intended use, expiry date, transport and storage all influence the packaging system design and choice of materials. Choosing appropriate materials for terminally sterilized medical device packaging systems is influenced by the interrelationships that are illustrated in Figure A.1.

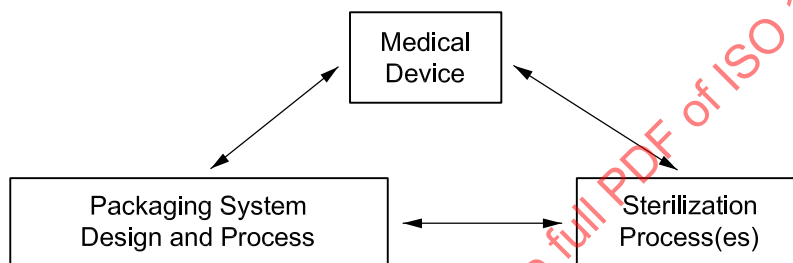


Figure A.1 — Interrelationships influencing the choice of appropriate materials for terminally sterilized medical packaging systems

A.2 Sterilization processes and considerations

A.2.1 The choice of sterilization processes include, but are not limited to, ethylene oxide (EO), gamma irradiation (γ), electron beam (e-beam), steam, and low-temperature oxidative sterilization processes. If the device is intended to be sterilized by EO, steam, or oxidizing processes, the sterile barrier system has a permeable component to allow the sterilizing gases to enter, kill the microorganisms, and escape without significant residual concentrations.

A.2.2 If the device is to be sterilized by irradiation (γ or e-beam), a permeable component may not be required and the sterile barrier system can be made entirely of impermeable materials. The manufacturer of a medical device chooses the appropriate sterilization processes for each device and their choice is dependent upon several factors. If the device is constructed of materials that are not irradiation stable, EO, steam, and oxidizing agents are typically used. Alternatively, if a device tends to retain high residual concentrations of EO, the device manufacturer may choose irradiation.

A.3 Sterile barrier systems

A.3.1 Sterile barrier systems for medical devices can have many characteristics in common. The majority have a top-web, a bottom web, and a means to join the webs together. In the case where a peelable seal is required, a sealant layer is applied to allow heat-sealing of the two layers together. The sealant layer, which is commonly known as coating, has traditionally been applied to the permeable web. Today, many films incorporate the sealant layer as (a) layer(s) in the film construction. Where a weld seal is required, compatibility of the webs is required to allow joining by heat, or other methods such as ultrasonic welding.

A.3.2 There are many types and variations of sterile barrier systems used to package sterile medical devices. The first type is the pre-formed rigid tray with a die-cut lid. The tray is usually preformed by a thermoforming or pressure-forming process. The die-cut lid can be permeable or impermeable and typically will have a sealant layer used to heat-seal the lid to the tray. Rigid trays with die-cut lids are commonly used for large profile and heavy devices, such as orthopaedic implants and pacemakers, as well as surgical kits.

A.3.3 The second type is the flexible peel pouch. A pouch is typically constructed of a film on one side and either film, paper, or nonwoven on the other. Pouches are typically supplied as preformed sterile barrier systems where all the seals have been formed except for one (typically at the bottom). This remains open so that the device can be placed inside and then the final seal applied prior to sterilization. Vast arrays of different medical devices use pouches as the sterile barrier system, due to their wide availability in a variety of sizes. These devices are typically low profile and lightweight. Pouches can come with a variety of design features. (For example, gussets may be included to allow for higher profile devices.)

A.3.4 The third type is the sterilization bag. A sterilization bag is constructed from a single web of porous medical-grade paper that has been folded to form a long tube with or without side gussets. The tube is sealed along its length by a double line of adhesive. It is then cut to the required size and one end is sealed by one or more applications of adhesive. Additional folds may also be used to further strengthen the closure. The open end normally has either a lip or a thumb cut to facilitate ease of opening. Final closure of the bags is applied prior to sterilization.

A.3.5 The fourth type is the header bag. The header bag is primarily a welded seal bag fabricated from two impermeable but compatible film webs. One of the webs is usually offset by several inches. Across this offset area, a permeable material, with adhesive, is heat-sealed. This permeable material can later be peeled off allowing access to the interior of the bag. Header bags are popular for bulky items such as kits.

A.3.6 The fifth type is the process known as form/fill/seal (FFS). The sterile barrier systems that are manufactured via FFS can look just like pouches, rigid trays with lids, or can have a flexible film bottom web that has been drawn or shaped. In FFS, the top and bottom web materials are placed on the FFS machine. The machine manufactures the sterile barrier system by forming the bottom web, filling the form with the device, and applying the top-web and sealing the sterile barrier system.

A.3.7 The sixth type is the four-side-sealing (4SS) process. 4SS is a non-stop packaging process like flowpack. Most commonly it employs rotary sealing equipment to form the seal. In the 4SS process, the bottom and top webs are placed on the 4SS machine. The product is placed onto the bottom web. The top web is applied above it and, finally, all four sides are sealed. 4SS is used for packaging of gloves and wound-care products, for instance.

A.3.8 The above list of sterile barrier systems is not meant to be all inclusive. Other constructions can be acceptable as sterile barrier systems.

A.3.9 Medical devices with a sterile fluid path may use unique sterile fluid-path packaging systems directly affixed to the device fluid-path access points. These may consist of caps, plugs, covers, or other device-specific closure designs. In these cases, the primary layer of product packaging may be represented by one of the four styles discussed above, but may not be required to provide a microbial barrier for the devices.

A.3.10 Healthcare facilities typically use sterile barrier systems in the form of pouches, reels, paper bags, sterilization wrap or reusable containers.

A.3.11 Sterilization wrap is used to provide a sterile barrier system for many devices sterilized in healthcare facilities. Instead of forming a heat or adhesive seal, the wrapping and folding process provides a tortuous path that maintains sterility. Devices are typically contained in organizing instrument trays prior to wrapping and subsequent sterilization.

A.3.12 Reusable containers are constructed of metal or synthetic polymeric materials capable of withstanding repeated exposures to hospital sterilization cycles. These containers typically have matched tops and bottoms with a gasket that provides an impervious seal between the two parts. A venting system allows the sterilizing agent gasses to enter and escape from the container. The vent design and materials used for providing microbial filtration vary widely. Devices sterilized in containers may require specific preconditioning or a longer exposure time to ensure that the sterilization process is complete.

A.3.13 Terminal sterilization and sterility maintenance are essential for patient safety, irrespective of the facility that conducts these processes. This part of ISO 11607 provides minimum requirements for using packaging systems that provide appropriate sterile barrier systems.

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Annex B (informative)

Standardized test methods and procedures that may be used to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of this part of ISO 11607

B.1 General

The following documents contain provisions that may be used to demonstrate compliance with provisions of this International Standard. For dated references, subsequent amendments to, or revisions of, any of these publications should be considered. Specific requirements for the use of test methods are found in 4.4.

The criteria for inclusion of test methods and procedures in this annex are that they must be nominated for inclusion and commercially available from a standards development organization, trade association or national standards body. Consequently, the Bibliography contains additional test methods that were published in the literature. This annex is not intended to be all-inclusive and the development of new test methods is known to be underway at the time of publication.

B.2 Packaging materials and preformed sterile barrier systems

Accelerated aging	ASTM F1980:2002	Standard guide for accelerated aging of sterile medical device packages
	EN 868-8:1999	Packaging materials and systems for medical devices which are to be sterilized — Part 8: Re-usable sterilization containers for steam sterilizers conforming to EN 285 — Requirements and test methods
Air permeance	ISO 5636-2:1984	Paper and board — Determination of air permeance (medium range) — Part 2: Schopper method
	ISO 5636-3:1992	Paper and board — Determination of air permeance (medium range) — Part 3: Bendtsen method
	ISO 5636-5:2003	Paper and board — Determination of air permeance and air resistance (medium range) — Part 5: Gurley method
	EN 868-2:1999	Packaging materials and systems for medical devices which are to be sterilized — Part 2: Sterilization wrap — Requirements and test methods (Annex C: Method for the determination of the pore size)
Basis weight	ASTM D 737-04	Standard test method for air permeability of textile fabrics
	ISO 536:1995	Paper and board — Determination of grammage
	ASTM D4321:1999	Standard test method for package yield of plastic film
	ASTM D3776:1996	Standard test methods for mass per unit area (weight) of woven fabric
Biocompatibility	ISO 10993-1:2003	Biological evaluation of medical devices — Part 1: Evaluation and testing
	USP < 87>	Biological reactivity test, in vitro
Burst strength	ISO 2758:2001	Paper — Determination of bursting strength

Cleanliness	TAPPI T 437-OM-96	Dirt in paper and paperboard
Chlorides	ISO 9197:1998	Paper, board and pulps — Determination of water-soluble chlorides
Coat weight	ASTM F 2217:2002	Standard practice for coating/adhesive weight determination
Conditioning	ISO 187:1990	Paper, board and pulps — Standard atmosphere for conditioning and testing and procedure for monitoring the atmosphere and conditioning of samples
	ASTM D4332: 2001	Standard practice conditioning containers, packages or packaging components for testing
	ISO 2233:2000	Complete, filled transport packages and unit loads — Conditioning for testing
Dimensions	ASTM F2203-02 (E01)	Standard test method for linear measurement using precision steel rule
Drapability	ISO 9073-9:1995	Textiles — Test methods for nonwovens — Part 9: Determination of drape coefficient
	ISO 2493:1992	Paper and board — Determination of resistance to bending
	DIN 53121:1978	Testing of paper and board — Determination of the bending stiffness by the beam method
Flexural durability	ASTM F392: 1999	Standard test method for flex durability of flexible barrier materials
Gas sensing	ASTM F2228-2002	Standard test method for non-destructive detection of leaks in medical packaging which incorporates porous barrier material by CO ₂ tracer gas method
Integrity	ASTM F 1929:1998	Standard test method for detecting seal leaks in porous medical packaging by dye penetration
	ASTM F2227: 2002	Standard test method for non-destructive detection of leaks in non-sealed and empty medical packaging trays by CO ₂ tracer gas method
Internal pressure	ASTM F2096:2002	Standard test method for detecting gross leaks in porous medical packaging by internal pressurization (Bubble test)
Low-tension surface liquid resistance	IST 80-8	Alcohol repellency on nonwoven fabrics
Microbial barrier	ASTM F1608: 2000	Standard test method for microbial ranking of porous packaging materials (Exposure chamber method)
	DIN 58953-6:1987	Sterilization — Sterile supply — Sterilization paper for bags and tube packings — test; subclause 2.14: Testing for germ proofness in moisture and clause 15: Testing for germ proofness with passage of air
	BS 6256:1989	Specification for paper for steam sterilization paper bags, pouches and reels for medical use Appendix C: Methods for determination of methylene blue particulate penetration
	ASTM F 2101-01	Test method for evaluating the bacterial filtration efficiency (BFE) of medical face masks materials, using a biological aerosol of staphylococcus aureus
	SS 876 0019	Health care textiles — Bacterial penetration — Wet

Peel-open characteristic	EN 868-5:1999	Packaging materials and systems for medical devices which are to be sterilized — Part 5: Heat and self-sealable pouches and reels of paper and plastic film construction — Requirements and test methods (Annex C: Determination of peel characteristics of paper/plastic laminate products)
Performance testing	ASTM D4169:2001	Practice for performance testing of shipping containers and systems
	ISTA 1,2, and 3 Series	International Safe Transit Association Preshipment Test Procedures
	ISO 4180-1:1980	Complete, filled transport packages — General rules for the compilation of performance test schedules — Part 1: General principles
	EN 868-8:1999	Packaging materials and systems for medical devices which are to be sterilized — Part 8: Re-usable sterilization containers for steam sterilizers conforming to EN 285 — Requirements and test methods
pH	ISO 6588-1:2005	Paper, board and pulps — Determination of pH of aqueous extracts — Part 1: Cold extraction
	ISO 6588-2:2005	Paper, board and pulps — Determination of pH of aqueous extracts — Part 2: Hot extraction
Pressure leak	ASTM F 2338:2003	Standard Test Method for Nondestructive Detection of Leaks in Packages by Vacuum Decay
Printing and coating	ASTM F2250:2003	Standard Practice for Evaluation of Chemical Resistance of Printed Inks and Coatings on Flexible Packaging Materials
	ASTM F2252:2003	Standard Practice for Evaluating Ink or Coating Adhesion to Flexible Packaging Materials Using Tape
Puncture	ASTM D1709:2001	Standard test method for impact resistance of plastic film by free-falling dart method
	ASTM F1306:1998	Standard test method for slow rate penetration resistance of flexible barrier films and laminates
	ASTM D3420:2002	Standard test method for pendulum impact resistance of plastic film
Seal strength	ASTM F88:2000	Standard test method for seal strength of flexible Barrier materials
	ASTM F1140:2000	Standard test methods for failure resistance of unrestrained and nonrigid packages for medical applications
	ASTM F2054:2000	Standard test method for burst testing of flexible package seals using internal air pressurization within restraining plates
	EN 868-5:1999, Annex D	Packaging materials and systems for medical devices which are to be sterilized — Part 5: Heat and self-sealable pouches and reels of paper and plastic film construction — Requirements and test methods
Static electricity	BS 6524:1989	Method for determination of the surface resistivity of a textile fabric
Sulfates	ISO 9198:2001	Paper, board and pulps — Determination of water-soluble sulfates