

Annex 6

Good manufacturing practices for sterile pharmaceutical products

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Introductory note

This document is a revision of section 17 of Part Three of “Good manufacturing practices [GMP] for pharmaceutical products” (1), which emphasizes specific points for the manufacture of sterile preparations to minimize the risks of microbiological, particulate and pyrogen contamination. It is not exhaustive in character, and some technical requirements may change in line with developments in the field of GMP or advances in engineering design.

1. General considerations

1.1 The production of sterile preparations should be carried out in clean areas, entry to which should be through airlocks for personnel and/or for equipment and materials. Clean areas should be maintained to an appropriate standard of cleanliness and supplied with air that has passed through filters of the required efficiency.

1.2 The various operations of component preparation (such as those involving containers and closures), product preparation, filling and

sterilization should be carried out in separate areas within a clean area. These areas are classified into four grades (see section 4.1).

1.3 Manufacturing operations are divided here into two categories: first, those where the product is terminally sterilized, and second, those which are conducted aseptically at some or all stages.

2. **Quality control**

2.1 Samples taken for sterility testing should be representative of the whole of the batch, but should, in particular, include samples taken from parts of the batch considered to be most at risk of contamination, for example:

- (a) for products that have been filled aseptically, samples should include containers filled at the beginning and end of the batch and after any significant interruption of work;
- (b) for products that have been heat sterilized in their final containers, consideration should be given to taking samples from that part of the load that is potentially the coolest.

2.2 The sterility of the finished product is ensured by validation of the sterilization cycle in the case of terminally sterilized products, and by “media-fills” runs for aseptically processed products. Batch processing records and, in the case of aseptic processing, environmental quality records, should be examined in conjunction with the results of the sterility tests. The sterility test procedure should be validated for a given product. Pharmacopoeial methods must be used for the validation and performance of the sterility test.

2.3 For injectable products, the water for injection and the intermediate and finished products should be monitored for endotoxins, using an established pharmacopoeial method that has been validated for each type of product. For large-volume infusion solutions, such monitoring of water or intermediates should always be done, in addition to any tests required by an approved monograph for the finished product. When a sample fails a test, the cause of such failure should be investigated and remedial action taken where necessary.

3. **Sanitation**

3.1 The sanitation of clean areas is particularly important. They should be cleaned frequently and thoroughly in accordance with an approved written programme. Monitoring should be regularly undertaken in order to detect the emergence of resistant strains of microorganisms. In view of its limited effectiveness, ultraviolet light should not be used as a substitute for chemical disinfection.

Table 1

Limits for microbiological contamination^a

Grade ^b	Air sample (CFU/m ³)	Settle plates (diameter 90mm) (CFU/4 hours) ^c	Contact plates (diameter 55mm) (CFU/plate)	Glove print (5 fingers) (CFU/glove)
A	<3	<3	<3	<3
B	10	5	5	5
C	100	50	25	—
D	200	100	50	—

^a These are average values. The grades are defined in section 4.1.

^b The airborne particulate classification for the four grades is given in Table 2.

^c Individual settle plates may be exposed for less than 4 hours.

3.2 Disinfectants and detergents should be monitored for microbiological contamination; dilutions should be kept in previously cleaned containers and should only be stored for defined periods unless sterilized. Disinfectants and detergents used in grade A and B areas (see section 4.1) should be sterilized before use.

3.3 In order to control the microbiological cleanliness of the various grades in operation, the clean areas should be monitored. Where aseptic operations are performed, monitoring should be frequent and methods such as settle plates, and volumetric air and surface sampling (e.g. swabs and contact plates) should be used. The zones should not be contaminated through the sampling methods used in the operations. The results of monitoring should be considered when batch documentation for release of the finished product is reviewed. Both surfaces and personnel should be monitored after critical operations.

3.4 Levels (limits) of detection of microbiological contamination should be established for alert and action purposes, and for monitoring the trends in air quality in the facility. Limits expressed in colony-forming units (CFU) for the microbiological monitoring of clean areas in operation are given in Table 1. The sampling methods and numerical values included in the table are not intended to represent specifications, but are for information only.

4. Manufacture of sterile preparations

4.1 Clean areas for the manufacture of sterile products are classified according to the required characteristics of the environment. Each manufacturing operation requires an appropriate environmental cleanliness level in the operational state in order to minimize the risks of particulate or microbiological contamination of the product or materials being handled.

Table 2

Airborne particulate classification for manufacture of sterile pharmaceutical preparations

Grade	At rest		In operation	
	Maximum number of particles permitted/m ³		Maximum number of particles permitted/m ³	
	0.5–5.0 μm	>5.0 μm	0.5–5.0 μm	>5.0 μm
A	3500	0	3500	0
B	3500	0	350 000	2000
C	350 000	2000	3 500 000	20 000
D	3 500 000	20 000	Not defined	Not defined

In order to meet “in operation” conditions, these areas should be designed to reach certain specified air-cleanliness levels in the “at rest” occupancy state. This latter state is the condition where the installation is complete, and production equipment has been installed and is operating, but no operating personnel are present. The “in operation” state is the condition where the installation is functioning in the defined operating mode and the specified number of personnel are present.

For the manufacture of sterile pharmaceutical preparations, four grades are distinguished here, as follows:

- *Grade A*: The local zone for high-risk operations, e.g. filling and making aseptic connections. Normally such conditions are provided by a laminar-airflow workstation. Laminar-airflow systems should provide a homogeneous air speed of approximately $0.45 \text{ m/s} \pm 20\%$ (guidance value) at the working position.
- *Grade B*: In aseptic preparation and filling, the background environment for the grade A zone.
- *Grades C and D*: Clean areas for carrying out less critical stages in the manufacture of sterile products.

The airborne particulate classification for the four grades is given in Table 2.

To obtain air of the required characteristics, methods specified by national authorities should be used. It should be noted that:

- In order to reach the B, C and D air grades, the number of air changes should be appropriate for the size of the room and the equipment and personnel present in it. At least 20 air changes per hour are usually required for a room with a good airflow pattern and appropriate high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters.

Table 3

Comparison of different airborne particulate classification systems for clean areas^a

WHO (GMP)	United States (209E)	United States (customary)	ISO/TC (209)	EEC (GMP)
Grade A	M 3.5	Class 100	ISO 5	Grade A
Grade B	M 3.5	Class 100	ISO 5	Grade B
Grade C	M 5.5	Class 10000	ISO 7	Grade C
Grade D	M 6.5	Class 100000	ISO 8	Grade D

EEC: European Commission; ISO/TC: International Organization for Standardization Technical Committee.

^a Source: references 1–4.

- Detailed information on methods for determining the microbiological and particulate cleanliness of air, surfaces, etc. is not given here. Reference should be made to other guidelines published in compendia such as the European, Japanese or United States pharmacopoeias, or in documents issued by the European Committee for Standardization and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

The different airborne particulate classification systems for clean areas are shown in Table 3.

4.2 The particulate conditions given in Table 2 for the “at rest” state should be achieved in the absence of the operating personnel after a short “clean-up” period of about 15–20 minutes (guidance value), after completion of the operations. The particulate conditions given in Table 2 for grade A “in operation” should be maintained in the zone immediately surrounding the product whenever the product or open container is exposed to the environment. It is accepted that it may not always be possible to demonstrate conformity with particulate standards at the point of fill when filling is in progress, owing to the generation of particles or droplets from the product itself.

4.3 In order to control the particulate cleanliness of the various clean areas during operation, they should be monitored.

4.4 Appropriate alert and action limits should be set for the results of particulate and microbiological monitoring. If these limits are exceeded, the appropriate corrective actions should be taken, as prescribed in the operating procedures.

4.5 The area grades as specified in sections 4.6–4.14 must be selected by the manufacturer on the basis of the nature of the process operations being performed and validation runs (e.g. sterile media fills). The determination of an appropriate process area environment and

a time limit should be based on the microbiological contamination (bioburden) found.

Terminally sterilized products

4.6 Components and most products should be prepared in at least a grade D environment in order to give low microbial and particulate counts, suitable for filtration and sterilization. Where the product is at unusual risk of microbial contamination (e.g. because it actively supports microbial growth, must be held for a long period before sterilization, or is necessarily not processed mainly in closed vessels), the preparation should generally be done in a grade C environment.

4.7 The filling of products for terminal sterilization should generally be done in at least a grade C environment.

4.8 Where the product is at unusual risk of contamination from the environment (e.g. because the filling operation is slow or the containers are wide-necked or are necessarily exposed for more than a few seconds before sealing), the filling should be done in a grade A zone with at least a grade C background.

4.9 The preparation and filling of ointments, creams, suspensions and emulsions should generally be done in a grade C environment before terminal sterilization.

Aseptic preparation

4.10 Components after washing should be handled in at least a grade D environment. The handling of sterile starting materials and components, unless subjected to sterilization or filtration through a microorganism-retaining filter later in the process, should be done in a grade A environment with a grade B background.

4.11 The preparation of solutions which are to be sterile filtered during the process should be done in a grade C environment; if not sterile filtered, the preparation of materials and products should be done in a grade A environment with a grade B background.

4.12 The handling and filling of aseptically prepared products, as well as the handling of exposed sterile equipment, should be done in a grade A environment with a grade B background.

4.13 The transfer of partially closed containers, as used in freeze-drying, should, before stoppering is completed, be done either in a grade A environment with a grade B background or in sealed transfer trays in a grade B environment.

4.14 The preparation and filling of sterile ointments, creams, suspensions and emulsions should be done in a grade A environment with a

grade B background when the product is exposed and is subsequently filtered.

Processing

4.15 Precautions to minimize contamination should be taken during all processing stages, including the stages before sterilization.

4.16 Preparations containing live microorganisms should not be made or containers filled in areas used for the processing of other pharmaceutical products; however, vaccines consisting of dead organisms or of bacterial extracts may be dispensed into containers, after validated inactivation and validated cleaning procedures, in the same premises as other sterile pharmaceutical products.

4.17 The validation of aseptic processing should include simulating the process using a nutrient medium. The form of the nutrient medium used should generally be equivalent to the dosage form of the product. The process-simulation test should imitate as closely as possible the routine aseptic manufacturing process and include all the critical subsequent manufacturing steps. Consideration should be given to simulation of the worst expected condition. The process-simulation test should be repeated at defined intervals and after any significant modification to the equipment and process. The number of containers used for a medium fill should be sufficient to ensure a valid evaluation. For small batches, the number of containers for the medium fill should be at least equal to the size of the product batch.

4.18 Care should be taken to ensure that any validation does not compromise the processes.

4.19 Water sources, water-treatment equipment and treated water should be monitored regularly for chemicals, biological contamination and contamination with endotoxins to ensure that the water complies with the specifications appropriate to its use. Records should be maintained of the results of the monitoring and of any action taken.

4.20 Activities in clean areas, especially when aseptic operations are in progress, should be kept to a minimum, and the movement of personnel should be controlled and methodical, so as to avoid excessive shedding of particles and organisms due to over-vigorous activity. The ambient temperature and humidity should not be uncomfortably high because of the nature of the garments worn.

4.21 The presence of containers and materials liable to generate fibres should be minimized in clean areas and avoided completely when aseptic work is in progress.

4.22 Components, bulk-product containers and equipment should be handled after the final cleaning process in such a way that they are not recontaminated. The stage of processing of components, bulk-product containers and equipment should be properly identified.

4.23 The interval between the washing and drying and the sterilization of components, bulk-product containers and equipment, as well as between sterilization and use, should be as short as possible and subject to a time-limit appropriate to the validated storage conditions.

4.24 The time between the start of the preparation of a solution and its sterilization or filtration through a bacteria-retaining filter should be as short as possible. A maximum permissible time should be set for each product that takes into account its composition and the prescribed method of storage.

4.25 Any gas that is used to purge a solution or blanket a product should be passed through a sterilizing filter.

4.26 The bioburden of products should be monitored before sterilization. There should be a working limit on the contamination of products immediately before sterilization that is related to the efficiency of the method to be used and the risk of pyrogens. All solutions, in particular large-volume parenterals, should be passed through a microorganism-retaining filter, if possible immediately before the filling process. Where aqueous solutions are held in sealed vessels, any pressure-release outlets should be protected, e.g. by hydrophobic microbiological air filters.

4.27 Components, bulk-product containers, equipment and any other articles required in a clean area where aseptic work is in progress should be sterilized and, wherever possible, passed into the area through double-ended sterilizers sealed into the wall. Other procedures that prevent the introduction of contamination (e.g. triple wrapping) may be acceptable in some circumstances.

4.28 The efficacy of any new processing procedure should be validated, and the validation should be repeated at regular intervals thereafter or when any significant change is made in the process or equipment.

5. **Sterilization**

5.1 Whenever possible, products intended to be sterile should preferably be terminally sterilized by heat in their final container. Where it is not possible to carry out terminal sterilization by heating due to the instability of a formulation, a decision should be taken to use an

alternative method of terminal sterilization following filtration and/or aseptic processing.

5.2 Sterilization can be achieved by the use of moist or dry heat, by irradiation with ionizing radiation (but not with ultraviolet radiation unless the process is thoroughly validated), by ethylene oxide (or other suitable gaseous sterilizing agents) or by filtration with subsequent aseptic filling of sterile final containers. Each method has its particular advantages and disadvantages. Where possible and practicable, heat sterilization is the method of choice.

5.3 The microbiological contamination of starting materials should be minimal, and their bioburden should be monitored before sterilization. Specifications should include requirements for microbiological quality when the need for this has been indicated by monitoring.

5.4 All sterilization processes must be validated. Particular attention should be given when the adopted sterilization method is not in accordance with pharmacopoeial or other national standards or when it is used for a preparation that is not a simple aqueous or oily solution.

5.5 Before any sterilization process is adopted, its suitability for the product and its efficacy in achieving the desired sterilizing conditions in all parts of each type of load to be processed should be demonstrated by physical measurements and by biological indicators, where appropriate. The validity of the process should be verified at scheduled intervals, at least annually, and whenever significant modifications have been made to the equipment. Records should be kept of the results.

5.6 For effective sterilization, the whole of the material should be subjected to the required treatment and the process should be designed to ensure that this is achieved.

5.7 Biological indicators should be considered only as an additional method of monitoring the sterilization process. They should be stored and used according to the manufacturer's instructions, and their quality checked by positive controls. If they are used, strict precautions should be taken to avoid any transfer of microbiological contamination from them.

5.8 There should be a clear means of differentiating products that have not been sterilized from those that have. Each basket, tray, or other carrier of products or components should be clearly labelled with the name of the material, its batch number, and an indication of whether or not it has been sterilized. Indicators such as autoclave tape may be used, where appropriate, to indicate whether or not a batch

(or sub-batch) has passed through a sterilization process, but they do not give a reliable indication that the batch is, in fact, sterile.

5.9 Sterilization records should be available for each sterilization run. They should be approved as part of the batch-release procedure.

6. Terminal sterilization

Sterilization by heat

6.1 Each heat-sterilization cycle should be recorded by means of appropriate equipment of suitable accuracy and precision, e.g. on a time/temperature chart with a suitably large scale. The temperature should be recorded by a probe at the coolest part of the load or loaded chamber, this point having been determined during the validation; the temperature should preferably be checked against a second independent temperature probe located at the same position. The chart, or a photocopy of it, should form part of the batch record. Chemical or biological indicators may also be used but should not take the place of physical controls.

6.2 Sufficient time must be allowed for the whole of the load to reach the required temperature before measurement of the sterilizing time is started. This time must be determined for each type of load to be processed.

6.3 After the high-temperature phase of a heat sterilization cycle, precautions should be taken against contamination of a sterilized load during cooling. Any cooling fluid or gas in contact with the product should be sterilized.

Sterilization by moist heat

6.4 Sterilization by moist heat (heating in an autoclave) is suitable only for water-wettable materials and aqueous formulations. Both temperature and pressure should be used to monitor the process. The temperature recorder should normally be independent of the controller, and there should be an independent temperature indicator, the reading from which should be routinely checked against the chart recorder during the sterilization period. For sterilizers fitted with a drain at the bottom of the chamber, it may also be necessary to record the temperature at this position throughout the sterilization period. There should be regular leak tests on the chamber when a vacuum phase is part of the cycle.

6.5 The items to be sterilized, other than products in sealed containers, should be wrapped in a material that allows the removal of air and the penetration of steam but prevents recontamination after

sterilization. All parts of the load should be in contact with water or saturated steam at the required temperature for the required time.

6.6 Care should be taken to ensure that the steam used for sterilization is of suitable quality and does not contain additives at a level that could cause contamination of the product or equipment.

Sterilization by dry heat

6.7 Sterilization by dry heat may be suitable for non-aqueous liquids or dry powder products. The process used should include air circulation within the chamber and the maintenance of a positive pressure to prevent the entry of non-sterile air. If air is supplied, it should be passed through a microorganism-retaining filter (e.g. an HEPA filter). Where sterilization by dry heat is also intended to remove pyrogens, challenge tests using endotoxins will be required as part of the validation.

Sterilization by radiation

6.8 Sterilization by radiation is used mainly for the sterilization of heat-sensitive materials and products. Many pharmaceutical products and some packaging materials are radiation-sensitive, so this method is permissible only when the absence of deleterious effects on the product has been confirmed experimentally. Ultraviolet irradiation is not an acceptable method for terminal sterilization.

6.9 If sterilization by radiation is carried out by an outside contractor, the manufacturer is responsible for ensuring that the requirements of section 6.8 are met, and that the sterilization process is validated. The responsibilities of the radiation plant operator (e.g. for using the correct dose) should also be specified.

6.10 During the sterilization procedure, the radiation dose should be measured. For this purpose, the dosimeters used must be independent of the dose rate and must provide a quantitative measurement of the dose received by the product itself. Dosimeters should be inserted in the load in sufficient number, and close enough together to ensure that there is always a dosimeter in the chamber. Where plastic dosimeters are employed, they should be used within the time-limit of their calibration. Dosimeter absorbances should be read shortly after exposure to radiation. Biological indicators may be used only as an additional control. Radiation-sensitive colour discs may be used to differentiate between packages that have been subjected to irradiation and those that have not; they are not indicators of successful sterilization. The information obtained should constitute part of the batch record.

6.11 Validation procedures should ensure that consideration is given to the effects of variations in the density of the packages.

6.12 Handling procedures should prevent any misidentification of irradiated and non-irradiated materials. Each package should carry a radiation-sensitive indicator to show whether or not it has been subjected to radiation treatment.

6.13 The total radiation dose should be administered within a predetermined period of time.

Sterilization by gases and fumigants

6.14 This method of sterilization should only be used for products where there is no suitable alternative.

6.15 Various gases and fumigants may be used for sterilization (e.g. ethylene oxide, hydrogen peroxide vapour). Ethylene oxide should be used only when no other method is practicable. During process validation it should be shown that the gas has no damaging effect on the product and that the conditions and time allowed for degassing are such as to reduce any residual gas and reaction products to defined acceptable limits for the type of product or material concerned. These limits should be incorporated in the specifications.

6.16 Direct contact between gas and microorganisms is essential; precautions should therefore be taken to avoid the presence of organisms likely to be enclosed in materials such as crystals or dried protein. The nature and quantity of packaging materials can significantly affect the process.

6.17 Before exposure to the gas, materials should be brought into equilibrium with the humidity and temperature required by the process. This requirement should be balanced against the need to minimize the waiting time before sterilization.

6.18 Each sterilization cycle should be monitored with suitable biological indicators, using the appropriate number of test pieces distributed throughout the load. The information so obtained should form part of the batch record.

6.19 Biological indicators should be stored and used according to the manufacturer's instructions, and their performance checked by positive controls.

6.20 For each sterilization cycle, records should be made of the time taken to complete the cycle, of the pressure, temperature and humidity within the chamber during the process, and of the gas concentration. The pressure and temperature should be recorded on a chart throughout the cycle. The records should form part of the batch record.

6.21 After sterilization, the load should be stored in a controlled manner under ventilated conditions to allow concentrations of residual gas and reaction products to fall to their prescribed levels. This process should be validated.

7. Aseptic processing and sterilization by filtration

7.1 The objective of aseptic processing is to maintain the sterility of a product that is assembled from components, each of which has been sterilized by one of the above methods (see sections 5 and 6).

7.2 The operating conditions should be such as to prevent microbial contamination.

7.3 In order to maintain the sterility of the components and the product during aseptic processing, careful attention needs to be given to: (a) the environment; (b) the personnel; (c) the critical surfaces; (d) the container/closure sterilization and transfer procedures; (e) the maximum holding period of the product before filling into the final container; and (f) the sterilizing filter.

7.4 Certain solutions and liquids that cannot be sterilized in the final container can be filtered through a sterile filter of nominal pore size $0.22\ \mu\text{m}$ (or less), or with at least equivalent microorganism-retaining properties, into a previously sterilized container. Such filters can remove bacteria and moulds, but not all viruses or mycoplasmas. Consideration should be given to complementing the filtration process with some degree of heat treatment.

7.5 Owing to the potential additional risks of the filtration method as compared with other sterilization processes, a double filter layer or second filtration via a further sterilized microorganism-retaining filter immediately prior to filling may be advisable. The final sterile filtration should be carried out as close as possible to the filling point.

7.6 The fibre-shedding characteristics of filters should be minimal (virtually zero). Asbestos-containing filters must not be used under any circumstances.

7.7 The integrity of the filter should be checked by an appropriate method such as a bubble-point, diffusive-flow or pressure-hold test, immediately after use (it may also be useful to test the filter in this way before use). The time taken to filter a known volume of bulk solution and the pressure difference to be used across the filter should be determined during validation, and any significant differences from these values should be noted and investigated. The results of these checks should be recorded in the batch record. The integrity of critical

gas and air vent filters should be confirmed after use. The integrity of other filters should be confirmed at appropriate intervals. Consideration should be given to increased monitoring of filter integrity in processes that involve harsh conditions, e.g. the circulation of high-temperature air.

7.8 The same filter should not be used for more than 1 working day unless such use has been validated.

7.9 The filter should not affect the product either by removing ingredients from it or by releasing substances into it.

8. Personnel

8.1 Only the minimum number of personnel required should be present in clean areas; this is particularly important during aseptic processes. Inspections and controls should be conducted from outside such areas as far as possible.

8.2 All personnel (including those concerned with cleaning and maintenance) employed in such areas should receive initial and regular training in disciplines relevant to the correct manufacture of sterile products, including hygiene and the basic elements of microbiology. When outside staff who have not received such training (e.g. building or maintenance contractors) need to be brought in, particular care should be taken over their instruction and supervision.

8.3 Staff who have been engaged in the processing of animal-tissue materials or of cultures of microorganisms other than those used in the current manufacturing process should not enter sterile-product areas unless rigorous and clearly defined decontamination procedures have been followed.

8.4 High standards of personal hygiene and cleanliness are essential, and personnel involved in the manufacture of sterile preparations should be instructed to report any conditions that may cause the shedding of abnormal numbers or types of contaminants; periodic health checks for such conditions are desirable. The action to be taken in respect of personnel who might be introducing undue microbiological hazards should be decided by a designated competent person.

8.5 Outdoor clothing should not be brought into clean areas, and personnel entering changing rooms should already be clad in standard factory protective garments. Changing and washing should follow a written procedure designed to minimize the contamination of clean area clothing or the carry-through of contaminants to clean areas.

8.6 Wrist-watches and jewellery should not be worn in clean areas, and cosmetics that can shed particles should not be used.

8.7 The clothing worn and its quality should be appropriate for the process and the grade of the working area (workplace). It should be worn in such a way as to protect the product from contamination. The clothing required for each grade is as follows:

- *Grade D.* The hair and, where relevant, beard and moustache should be covered. Protective clothing and appropriate shoes or overshoes should be worn. Appropriate measures should be taken to avoid any contamination from outside the clean area.
- *Grade C.* The hair and, where relevant, beard and moustache should be covered. A single or two-piece trouser suit, gathered at the wrists and with a high neck, and appropriate shoes or overshoes should be worn. The clothing should shed virtually no fibres or particulate matter.
- *Grades A/B.* Headgear should totally enclose the hair and, where relevant, beard and moustache. A single or two-piece trouser suit, gathered at the wrists and with a high neck, should be worn. The headgear should be tucked into the neck of the suit. A face mask should be worn to prevent the shedding of droplets. Appropriate, sterilized, non-powdered rubber or plastic gloves and sterilized or disinfected footwear should be worn. Trouser-bottoms should be tucked inside the footwear and garment sleeves into the gloves. The protective clothing should shed virtually no fibres or particulate matter and should retain particles shed by the body.

8.8 Outdoor clothing should not be brought into changing rooms leading to grade B and C rooms. For every worker in a grade A/B room, clean sterilized or adequately sanitized protective garments should be provided at each work session, or at least once a day if monitoring results justify this. Gloves should be regularly disinfected during operations. Masks and gloves should be changed at least at every working session. The use of disposable clothing may be necessary.

8.9 Clothing used in clean areas should be laundered or cleaned in such a way that it does not gather additional particulate contaminants that can later be shed. Separate laundry facilities for such clothing are desirable. If fibres are damaged by inappropriate cleaning or sterilization, there may be an increased risk of shedding particles. Washing and sterilization operations should follow standard operating procedures.

9. Premises

9.1 All premises should, as far as possible, be designed to avoid the unnecessary entry of supervisory or control personnel. Grade B areas

should be designed so that all operations can be observed from outside.

9.2 In clean areas, all exposed surfaces should be smooth, impervious and unbroken in order to minimize the shedding or accumulation of particles or microorganisms and to permit the repeated application of cleaning agents and disinfectants, where used.

9.3 To reduce the accumulation of dust and to facilitate cleaning, there should be no uncleanable recesses and a minimum of projecting ledges, shelves, cupboards and equipment. Doors should be carefully designed to avoid uncleanable recesses; sliding doors are undesirable for this reason.

9.4 False ceilings should be sealed to prevent contamination from the space above them.

9.5 Pipes and ducts and other utilities should be installed so that they do not create recesses, unsealed openings and surfaces that are difficult to clean.

9.6 Sinks and drains should be avoided wherever possible and should be excluded from grade A/B areas where aseptic operations are carried out. Where installed, they should be designed, located and maintained so as to minimize the risks of microbiological contamination; they should be fitted with effective, easily cleanable traps and with air breaks to prevent back-flow. Any floor channels should be open and easily cleanable and be connected to drains outside the area in a manner that prevents the ingress of microbiological contaminants.

9.7 Changing rooms should be designed as airlocks and used to separate the different stages of changing, thus minimizing particulate and microbiological contamination of protective clothing. They should be effectively flushed with filtered air. The use of separate changing rooms for entering and leaving clean areas is sometimes necessary. Hand-washing facilities should be provided only in the changing rooms, not in areas where aseptic work is done.

9.8 Airlock doors should not be opened simultaneously. An interlocking system and a visual and/or audible warning system can be installed to prevent the opening of more than one door at a time.

9.9 A filtered air supply should be used to maintain a positive pressure and an airflow relative to surrounding areas of a lower grade under all operational conditions; it should flush the area effectively. Adjacent rooms of different grades should have a pressure differential of approximately 10–15 pascals (guidance value). Particular attention should be paid to the protection of the zone of greatest risk,

i.e. the immediate environment to which the product and the cleaned components in contact with it are exposed. The various recommendations regarding air supplies and pressure differentials may need to be modified where it becomes necessary to contain certain materials, e.g. pathogenic, highly toxic, radioactive or live viral or bacterial materials or products. The decontamination of the facilities and the treatment of air leaving a clean area may be necessary for some operations.

9.10 It should be demonstrated that airflow patterns do not present a contamination risk; for example, care should be taken to ensure that particles from a particle-generating person, operation or machine are not conveyed to a zone of higher product risk.

9.11 A warning system should be included to indicate failure in the air supply. An indicator of pressure difference should be fitted between areas where this difference is important, and the pressure difference should be regularly recorded.

9.12 Consideration should be given to restricting unnecessary access to critical filling areas, e.g. grade A filling zones, by means of a physical barrier.

10. **Equipment**

10.1 A conveyor belt should not pass through a partition between a grade A or B clean area and a processing area of lower air cleanliness, unless the belt itself is continuously sterilized (e.g. in a sterilizing tunnel).

10.2 Whenever possible, equipment used for processing sterile products should be chosen so that it can be effectively sterilized by steam or dry heat or other methods.

10.3 As far as possible, equipment fittings and services should be designed and installed so that operations, maintenance and repairs can be carried out outside the clean area. Equipment that has to be taken apart for maintenance should be resterilized after complete reassembly, wherever possible.

10.4 When equipment maintenance is carried out within a clean area, clean instruments and tools should be used, and the area should be cleaned and disinfected again, where appropriate, before processing recommences if the required standards of cleanliness and/or asepsis have not been maintained during the maintenance work.

10.5 All equipment, including sterilizers, air-filtration systems, and water-treatment systems, including stills, should be subject to planned

maintenance, validation and monitoring; its approved use following maintenance work should be documented.

10.6 Water-treatment plants and distribution systems should be designed, constructed and maintained so as to ensure a reliable source of water of an appropriate quality. They should not be operated beyond their designed capacity. Consideration should be given to including a testing programme in the maintenance of a water system. Water for injection should be produced, stored and distributed in a manner which prevents the growth of microorganisms, e.g. by constant circulation at a temperature above 70°C or not more than 4°C.

11. Finishing of sterile products

11.1 Containers should be closed by appropriately validated methods. Samples should be checked for integrity according to appropriate procedures.

11.2 Containers sealed under vacuum should be sampled and the samples tested, after an appropriate predetermined period, to ensure that the vacuum has been maintained.

11.3 Filled containers of parenteral products should be inspected individually. When inspection is done visually, it should be done under suitable and controlled conditions of illumination and background. Operators doing the inspection should pass regular eyesight checks, with spectacles if worn, and be allowed frequent breaks from inspection. Where other methods of inspection are used, the process should be validated and the performance of the equipment checked at intervals. The results should be recorded.

References

1. Good manufacturing practices for pharmaceutical products. In: *WHO Expert Committee on Specifications for Pharmaceutical Preparations. Thirty-second report*. Geneva, World Health Organization, 1992, Annex 1 (WHO Technical Report Series, No. 823).
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