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Providing Quality, Time Sensitive Microbiological Testing

IMPORTANT! Roesink Microbiology Laboratories does not accept Category A Infectious Substances (Biosafety Level 3 or 4 materials or any pathogen that causes highly contagious or otherwise serious disease).

Recommended Guidelines for taking Environmental and Contact *Listeria* Swabs:

Ensure all samples are properly collected, labeled, stored and transported and employ good record-keeping.

1. Thoroughly wash hands before sampling. Put on gloves.
2. Label outside of bag with sample description, sample I.D., sample number, and date and time of sampling.
3. Open the bag containing the sponge swab and place on a sanitized surface, upright in a sanitized caddy, or have a co-worker hold it. (Note: Make sure the co-worker has cleaned and sanitized their hands and is wearing gloves.) Remove a sterile glove from its package and place on hand. Using aseptic technique, grab the sponge and squeeze it thoroughly inside the bag so that any excess buffer will collect in the lower portion of the bag. Being careful not to touch the outside of the bag or any surrounding objects, remove the swab or sponge from the bag.
4. **Sponge Swab** – Place the sponge on the surface to be swabbed and apply pressure in a uniform manner to the sponge. Flip the sponge over and repeat. Each side of the sponge is equal to 5 square inches. When both sides of the sponge are used, a total of 10 square inches has been swabbed. Return sponge to bag and roll top over multiple times. Close by bending wire tabs inward. Place the bag containing the swab in a secondary bag (zip-lock bag) and place in cooler.
5. After sampling, swabs must be shipped CHILLED to the laboratory. For valid results, the following points must be ensured:
 - a. Testing should begin within 48 hours of sampling, so swabs should be shipped the day of sampling.
 - b. Ship for priority overnight delivery.
 - c. Maintain temperature at 0 to 10°C (32 to 50°F) during transit.
 - d. Completely fill out a Roesink Laboratories Sample Submittal Form and place in a zip lock-bag in the shipping cooler. Make a copy of the form to keep on file for your records.

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Laboratory Notes for Swabbing Miscellaneous Sites:

1. It is appropriate to swab the entire surface of equipment with sponges if performing investigative sampling.
2. State the length that a floor crack was swabbed.
3. Use pictures to help define the area.
4. Describe the size of the surface area sampled and what piece of equipment or surface area was tested on sample submittal form.
5. Clearly state if the sample was taken during production or after cleaning and sanitizing.

Swab sponges vs. Q-tip swabs.

- Sponges are optimal because they can be used on large areas.
- Swabs are best for areas that cannot be reached by a sponge (ie: small crevices, cracks, small or tight areas on manufacturing equipment, etc).

