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Indoor air - Part 36: Standard method for assessing the reduction rate of culturable airborne bacteria by air purifiers using a test chamber

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Air intérieur - Partie 36: Méthode normalisée d'évaluation du taux de réduction des bactéries cultivables en suspension par des purificateurs d'air en utilisant une chambre d'essai

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Indoor air —

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reduction rate of culturable airborne
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Contents

	Page
Foreword	v
Introduction	vi
1 Scope	1
2 Normative references	1
3 Terms and definitions	1
4 Principle	2
5 Apparatus and materials	2
5.1 Apparatus.....	2
5.2 Materials.....	5
5.2.1 Test bacteria	5
5.2.2 Culture media and reagents.....	5
6 Preparation of the stock cultures and working cultures of the test bacteria	6
6.1 Preparation and maintenance of stock culture.....	6
6.2 Preparation and maintenance of working cultures of the test bacteria on agar plates	6
6.3 Preparation of working culture suspensions	6
7 Procedures	6
7.1 General.....	6
7.2 Step 1 — Measurement of the concentration of culturable test bacteria, c_i , without operating the air purifier.....	7
7.2.1 General.....	7
7.2.2 Preparation of the air purifier and the test chamber	7
7.2.3 Measurement of bacterial background concentration in the test chamber.....	7
7.2.4 Nebulizing test bacterial suspension.....	7
7.2.5 Measurement of the initial concentration of culturable bacteria inside the test chamber after nebulizing.....	7
7.2.6 Measurement of the concentration of culturable bacteria inside the test chamber after a defined time.....	8
7.2.7 Post-test actions	8
7.3 Step 2 — Measurement of the concentration of culturable test bacteria, c_t , after operating the air purifier.....	8
8 Calculation and expression of results	8
8.1 Calculation of the concentration of airborne culturable bacteria	8
8.2 Conditions for a valid test	9
8.3 Reduction rate of bacteria.....	9
9 Test report	9
10 Quality assurance	10
Annex A (informative) Test chamber	11
Annex B (informative) Natural decay rate according to the operating mode of air purifier	14
Annex C (informative) Homogeneity of airborne culturable bacteria in the test chamber	16
Bibliography	17

ISO/FDIS 16000-36:2018(E)

Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

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

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

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 146, *Air quality*, Subcommittee SC 6, *Indoor air*.

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

A list of all parts in the ISO 16000 series can be found on the ISO website.

Introduction

An indoor microbial environment is important to the health of occupants, particularly with regard to increased time spent indoors.

Air purifiers are used to reduce the concentration of microorganisms in indoor air.

The efficiency of such air purifiers to reduce airborne microorganisms can be investigated in test chambers at constant temperature and relative air humidity.

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Indoor air —

Part 36:

Standard method for assessing the reduction rate of culturable airborne bacteria by air purifiers using a test chamber

WARNING — The test given in this document shall be performed by expert staff trained and certified to handle microorganism-related techniques. The test bacterium *Staphylococcus aureus* is a facultative pathogen for human and animals. National and international safety procedures for working with infectious biomaterials shall be followed to prevent any contamination of apparatus, working place or environment. The examination and preparation of the cultures should be carried out in a microbiological safety cabinet class II.

1 Scope

This document specifies a method to evaluate the capacity of air purifiers to reduce the concentration of airborne culturable bacteria.

The test is applicable to air purifiers commonly used in single room spaces.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements 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 3696, *Water for analytical laboratory use — Specification and test methods*

ISO 16000-9:2006, *Indoor air — Part 9: Determination of the emission of volatile organic compounds from building products and furnishing — Emission test chamber method*

3 Terms and definitions

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

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>

3.1

air purifier

electrically-powered device that is basically built of a fan and a set of components possessing the ability to capture and/or (partially or totally) destroy air pollutants

3.2

colony forming unit

cfu

unit by which the number of culturable *bacteria* (3.3) is expressed

[SOURCE: EN 13098:2000, modified]

ISO/FDIS 16000-36:2018(E)

3.3

bacteria

prokaryotic, single-celled, microscopic organism with peptidoglycan cell wall

3.4

background concentration

concentration of culturable airborne *bacteria* (3.3) inside the test chamber prior to testing

3.5

natural decay rate

reduction rate of culturable *bacteria* (3.3), which is measured by comparing the concentration of bacteria immediately after nebulizing a bacterial suspension inside the chamber with the concentration counted after a defined time (testing time) without running the *air purifier* (3.1)

Note 1 to entry: Natural decay rate is expressed in per cent.

3.6

bacterial reduction rate

reduction rate of culturable *bacteria* (3.3), which is measured by comparing the concentration of bacteria immediately after nebulizing a bacterial suspension inside the chamber with the concentration counted after a defined running time (testing time) of the *air purifier* (3.1)

Note 1 to entry: Bacterial reduction rate is expressed in per cent.

3.7

impaction

sampling of airborne culturable *bacteria* (3.3) by inertial separation on a solid agar surface

4 Principle

The efficiency of air purifiers is tested using nebulized bacterial suspensions inside a test chamber at constant temperature and relative air humidity. The efficiency is calculated by the reduction rate of culturable airborne bacteria in a defined period of time, considering homogeneity and natural decay rate of the bacteria.

5 Apparatus and materials

5.1 Apparatus

5.1.1 Test chamber.

The chamber shall be made from suitable material, i.e. one that emits minimal pollutant is corrosion proof, such as stainless steel. It shall maintain sufficient airtight capacity.

The volume of the chamber should reflect the later application of the air purifier. The minimum volume shall not be below be 8 m³ and is typically between 15 m³ and 30 m³.

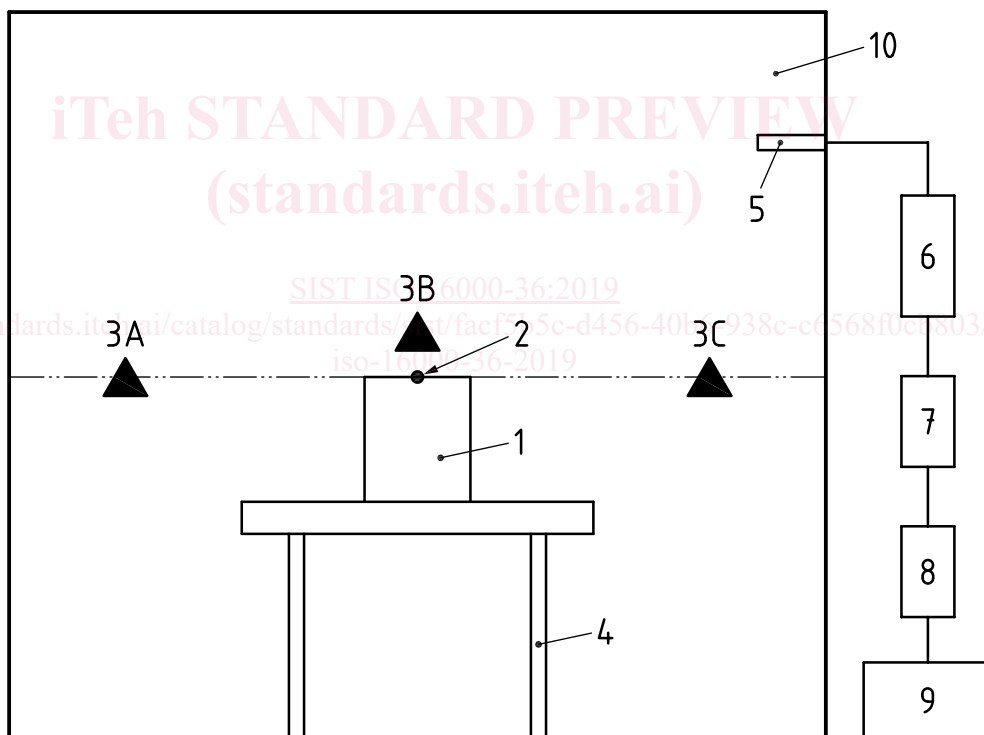
Install a HEPA filter unit for cleaning air by removing particles, an air conditioning unit to control the temperature and humidity, and a system to decontaminate the air inside the test chamber. Particularly for larger test chambers, a fan is needed for homogenous distribution of the bacteria.

The test environment shall be kept clean and free from microbial contamination. It shall have a suitable environmental control system to maintain a constant temperature and humidity. To achieve this, the test chamber should include the following:

- a system capable of removing contamination and maintaining aseptic condition inside the chamber, such as an UV lamp;

- a facility to transfer items into and out of the chamber without cross-contamination (this can include a special system, such as a glove box);
- a facility to control power inside the chamber from outside;
- a facility to generate an aerosol of test bacteria inside the chamber and to ensure its homogeneity (this can be achieved by using a spray inlet through which bacteria are nebulised connected to a spray nozzle in the chamber, with a fan to ensure homogeneous distribution of the bacteria inside the chamber);
- an air conditioning system inside the chamber capable of controlling temperature and relative humidity in a stable and precise manner; the air conditioning system shall be switched off during the test;
- a facility to use negative pressure air flow to flush the chamber post-testing;
- an indicator to display main environmental factors of the test, including flow rate, temperature and relative humidity;
- a filter to prevent contamination from the outside during ventilation.

A test system using a test chamber is shown in [Figure 1](#).



Key

- | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|----|------------------------------|
| 1 | air purifier | 6 | dehumidifier |
| 2 | air intake of air purifier | 7 | nebulizer |
| 3 | 3A, 3B, 3C position of impactors | 8 | filter (to supply clean air) |
| 4 | stand for the air purifier | 9 | pressure pump |
| 5 | the inlet of spray | 10 | test chamber |

Figure 1 — Schematic diagram of test system using a test chamber

Example photos of a test chamber are given in [Annex A](#).