

Decontamination of Equipment Prior to Servicing

Introduction

Contamination may be encountered in the form of living material, chemical or radiological substances. It is the equipment owner's (customer) responsibility to ensure that any equipment that the service engineer may encounter is free of substances hazardous to health. The service engineer must always confirm this has been done, MSE (UK) Ltd provide a Clearance Certificate to help document this and also emphasise to the customer, his/her primary responsibility. If a hazard cannot be totally removed, then the customer and the service engineer must formulate a plan of action to minimise the hazard to an acceptable degree, however the responsibility and risk assessment remains with the customer.

Decontamination

Usually, a request to ensure decontamination is straight forward as the customer will most likely be highly familiar with any hazards associated with his/her work procedure and as a formality decontaminate prior to work by outside contractors. The only time there might be a problem is either that the customer has lax work protocols or they are unaware of the hazard themselves. The use of our Decontamination Certificate (which is an industry standard) usually solves the former problem, the latter is more complex.

Biological Hazards

It is unlikely that the service engineer will encounter chemical or radiological hazards that the customer is unaware of. Nonetheless, it is advisable always to be "on the lookout" for these. The most likely unknown hazard with our products is biological. These can take the form of bacteria, viruses and fungi or to a lesser degree the waste products and spores from any of these. Generally speaking, the body's immune system will provide protection at concentrations of micro-organisms that are normally encountered. Most problems only occur when the immune system is overwhelmed by high concentrations. Therefore, anywhere that micro-organisms may multiply is a potential hazard. To multiply, micro-organisms need food, correct humidity, and correct temperature.

Disinfection Methods

There are a bewildering number of disinfectants available; they are however based on a very small number of chemicals, whose actions can have unacceptable consequences.

The one that does seem to be most suitable is Virkon [1] - The reasons for saying this are:

- Wide disinfection spectrum
- Presents negligible hazards to users
- Materials damage is limited or known

There may well be others that match these criteria, but the manufactures of Virkon are approved by MSE (UK) Ltd. This can be of importance to the customer, when completing a credible risk assessment report and the resulting safe system of work.

Virkon which is sold in powder form (pink crystals) is safe to use, however as in any infection control situation it is important to wear gloves and these should be worn when handling either in powder or liquid form. It has low toxicity and is non-irritant; so does not cause a hazard in solution nor does it have a vapour phase. Obviously one should avoid getting it into the eyes, but this should be highly unlikely. It is available in a number of packages, to eliminate inconvenience.

[1] Virkon is made by Antec International and marketed in the UK by:

Day-Impex Ltd
Station Works
Earls Colne
Colchester, CO6 2ER
T - 01787 223232
F - 01787 224171

Declaration of Decontamination Status

This form **MUST** be completed by equipment user prior to the inspection and service or repair of laboratory equipment by MSE (UK) Ltd. Please attach a signed and completed copy of this form to the outside of the box in which the equipment has been shipped.

Make	Model
Serial Number	

You **MUST** complete either **Declaration A** or **Declaration B** providing further information as requested.

Declaration A
I declare that no part of the equipment listed above has been in contact with blood, other body fluids, pathological sample or any substance that is deemed Hazardous to Human Health. It has been cleaned by us in preparation for inspection and service or repair by MSE (UK) Ltd.
Signed Name
Capacity.....Date
Company/Hospital

Declaration B
The equipment listed above has been exposed, internally and/or externally, to hazardous material as indicated below:
<u>Tick and provide details here</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Blood, Body fluids, Pathological Samples.....
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Biohazards.....
<input type="checkbox"/> Chemicals or substances hazardous to health.....
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Hazard.....
Has the equipment, listed above, been fully cleaned and decontaminated?
<input type="checkbox"/> YES Provide details
<input type="checkbox"/> NO Please state why.....
Signed Name
Capacity.....Date
Company/Hospital.....