



Practical Health and Safety Solutions

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Compressed Air Quality Testing in Food Industry

Compressed air is used in a broad range of applications in the food processing industry, such as mixing of ingredients, cutting, sparging, drying of product or containers, transporting/propelling product through processing systems and packaging of final product. In many of these applications, compressed air is in direct contact or indirect contact with food product. The impurities in the compressed air may contaminate the food product which can result in change of color and taste, reduced shelf life, in addition to exposure to bacteria and other micro-organisms, can result in product recalls.

Standard Baseline Test

There are two common tests available for food grade compressed air:

1. ISO 8573:2010; and
2. Microbial testing

ISO 8573

This test is the standard test for food grade compressed air. The process samples for total material, oil and water. The report will identify which of class of the ISO 8573 each of those contaminants falls under.

Microbial Testing

The piping of a compressed air system can have growth of mould, yeast or bacteria. A sample by blowing the compressed air into a sterile sponge. The sponge is then used to spike an agar plate and allowed to culture.

Cultured Mould / Yeast Testing

Tests for moulds and yeasts can also be performed. The compressed air is blown onto a sterile sponge. The sponge is later transferred to an agar plate and cultured for analysis. Both yeast and mould are counted but not identified.