



## Official Methods of Analysis of AOAC INTERNATIONAL (22nd Edition)

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<https://doi.org/10.1093/9780197610145.001.0001>

Published: 04 January 2023

Online ISBN: 9780197610145

Print ISBN: 9780197610138

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### CHAPTER

## 17.4.11 AOAC Official Method 2018.13

### Enumeration of *Escherichia coli* and Coliform in a Broad Range of Foods, Animal Feed, and Select Environmental Surfaces: Neogen® Petrifilm® Rapid *E. coli*/Coliform Count Plate

<https://doi.org/10.1093/9780197610145.003.2217> Pages C17-104–C17-112

Published: January 2023

Collection: [Official Methods of Analysis of AOAC INTERNATIONAL](#)



First Action 2018

Final Action 2021

[Applicable to the enumeration of *E. coli* and coliform from pasteurized whole milk, butter, nonfat dry milk, raw ground pork, raw lamb chop, raw ground chicken, chicken carcass rinsate, shell eggs, liquid egg whites, powdered egg whites, fresh raw bean sprouts, frozen cranberries, infant formula with probiotics, infant formula without probiotics, infant rice cereal without probiotics, dry dog kibble, dry cat food, all-purpose flour, chocolate chip cookie dough, raw ground beef (73% lean), raw frozen chicken wings, raw milk, whole liquid egg, tuna sushi, smoked salmon, bunched raw spinach, pasteurized carrot juice, ready-made sandwiches (bread, deli meat, and cheese), raw vegetable salad with mayonnaise-based dressing, soybean meal, stainless steel environmental sponges, and sealed concrete environmental sponges.]

See Tables 2018.13A and B for summary of results of the collaborative study. See additional tables in *J. AOAC Int.* for detailed results of the collaborative study.

**Caution:** Do not use this plate for the specific detection of *E. coli* O:157 because most *E. coli* O:157 strains are atypical, for example, they are glucuronidase negative, will not produce a blue color, and therefore will be detected as coliforms on Petrifilm Rapid *E. coli*/Coliform Count Plates. After use, Petrifilm Rapid *E. coli*/Coliform Count Plates may contain microorganisms that may be a potential biohazard. Follow current industry standards and local regulations for disposal of biohazardous waste.

To reduce the risks associated with release of contaminated product: (1) Follow all product storage instructions contained in the instructions for use. (2) Do not use beyond the use by date. (3) Do not use Petrifilm Rapid *E. coli*/Coliform Count Plates that show discoloration. (4) Do not use diluents containing citrate, bisulfate or thiosulfate; they can inhibit growth.

p. C17-11 To reduce the risks associated with bacterial infection and workplace contamination: (1) Perform testing in a properly equipped laboratory under the control of a skilled microbiologist. (2) The user must train their personnel in current proper testing techniques.

To reduce the risk associated with misinterpretation of results: (1) Neogen has not documented Petrifilm Rapid *E. coli*/Coliform Count Plates for use in industries other than food and beverage. Neogen has not documented Petrifilm Rapid *E. coli*/Coliform Count Plates for testing water, pharmaceuticals, or cosmetics. (2) Do not use Petrifilm Rapid *E. coli*/Coliform Count Plates in the diagnosis of conditions in humans or animals. (3) Petrifilm Rapid *E. coli*/Coliform Count Plates do not differentiate any one *E. coli* or coliform strain from another. (4) A few strains of bacteria can produce  $\beta$ -glucuronidase, such as *Shigella*, *Salmonella*, *Enterobacter*, *Citrobacter*, and *Klebsiella* and will produce blue to blue-green colonies on the Petrifilm Rapid *E. coli*/Coliform Count Plate. (5) Foods with high sugar content may increase the potential for gas production from noncoliform *Enterobacteriaceae*.

## A Principle

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The Petrifilm Rapid *E. coli*/Coliform Count Plate is a self-contained, sample-ready-culture-medium system which contains a cold-water-soluble gelling agent and two different indicators: 5-bromo-4-chloro-3-indolyl-D-glucuronide that indicates glucuronidase activity and tetrazolium that facilitates colony enumeration. The Petrifilm Rapid *E. coli*/Coliform Count



**Table 2018.13A** Interlaboratory study results of Neogen Petrifilm Rapid *E. coli*/Coliform Count Plate vs. FDA BAM Chapter 4

Matrix	Neogen Petrifilm Rapid <i>E. coli</i> / Coliform Count Plate —Coliform (35°C)					FDA-BAM Chapter 4—Coliform					Difference of	
	Lot	<i>N</i> <sup>a</sup>	Mean log <sub>10</sub> CFU/g	<i>s</i> <sub>r</sub> <sup>b</sup>	<i>s</i> <sub>R</sub> <sup>c</sup>	Lot	<i>N</i>	Mean log <sub>10</sub> CFU/g	<i>s</i> <sub>r</sub>	<i>s</i> <sub>R</sub>	Difference of means <sup>d</sup>	means <sup>e</sup> 95% LCL, UCL
Dry pet kibble	Uninoculated	9	0.000	0.00	0.00	Uninoculated	9	0.000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00, 0.00
	Low	9	1.645	0.22	0.25	Low	9	1.617	0.18	0.31	-0.30	-0.20, 0.14
	Medium	9	2.687	0.12	0.16	Medium	9	2.660	0.10	0.12	-0.30	-0.09, 0.03
	High	9	3.458	0.10	0.17	High	9	3.474	0.12	0.17	0.02	-0.06, 0.10
	Petrifilm Rapid <i>E. coli</i> Coliform Count Plate— <i>E. coli</i> /(35°C)					FDA BAM Chapter 4— <i>E. coli</i>						
	Uninoculated	9	0.000	0.00	0.00	Uninoculated	9	0.000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00, 0.00
	Low	9	1.422	0.22	0.31	Low	9	1.448	0.20	0.32	0.02	-0.17, 0.22
	Medium	9	2.298	0.12	0.26	Medium	9	2.292	0.11	0.22	-0.01	-0.12, 0.11
High	9	3.236	0.14	0.22	High	9	3.220	0.15	0.17	-0.02	-0.14, 0.10	

a *N* = Number of collaborators that reported complete results.

b *s*<sub>r</sub> = Repeatability.

c *s*<sub>R</sub> = Reproducibility.

d A difference of means <0.5 indicates no statistically significant difference between methods.

e 95% Lower and upper confidence limits.

**Table 2018.13B** Interlaboratory study results of Neogen Petrifilm Rapid *E. coli*/Coliform Count Plate vs. ISO 4832 and 16649-2

Neogen Petrifilm Rapid <i>E. coli</i> / Coliform Count Plate— Coliform (37°C)						ISO 4832							
Mean						Mean							
Matrix	Lot	<i>N</i> <sup>a</sup>	log <sub>10</sub> CFU/g	<i>s</i> <sub>r</sub> <sup>b</sup>	<i>s</i> <sub>R</sub> <sup>c</sup>	Lot	<i>N</i>	log <sub>10</sub> CFU/g	<i>s</i> <sub>r</sub>	<i>s</i> <sub>R</sub>	Difference of means <sup>d</sup>	Difference of means <sup>e</sup> 95% LCL, UCL	
Dry pet kibble	Uninoculated	9	0.000	0.00	0.00	Uninoculated	9	0.000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00, 0.00	
	Low	9	1.616	0.28	0.34	Low	9	1.692	0.22	0.24	0.08	-0.09, 0.25	
	Medium	9	2.583	0.09	0.19	Medium	9	2.557	0.09	0.23	-0.03	-0.12, 0.07	
	High	9	3.359	0.09	0.16	High	9	3.352	0.09	0.12	-0.01	-0.10, 0.08	
	Petrifilm Rapid <i>E. coli</i> / Coliform Count Plate— <i>E. coli</i> (37°C)								ISO 16649-2				
	Uninoculated	9	0.000	0.00	0.00	Uninoculated	9	0.000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00, 0.00	
	Low	9	1.419	0.28	0.28	Low	9	1.542	0.22	0.22	0.12	-0.04, 0.29	
	Medium	9	2.291	0.12	0.19	Medium	9	2.296	0.11	0.17	0.01	-0.11, 0.12	
	High	9	3.140	0.11	0.14	High	9	3.202	0.16	0.21	0.04	-0.07, 0.16	
	Petrifilm Rapid <i>E. coli</i> / Coliform Count Plate— <i>E. coli</i> (37°C)												

Coliform Count Plate— <i>E. coli</i> (42°C)					ISO 16649-2						
Uninoculated	9	0.000	0.00	0.00	Uninoculated	9	0.000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00, 0.00
Low	9	1.400	0.27	0.27	Low	9	1.542	0.22	0.22	0.14	0.02, 0.27
Medium	9	2.342	0.13	0.15	Medium	9	2.296	0.11	0.17	-0.05	-0.15, 0.06
High	9	3.133	0.14	0.14	High	9	3.202	0.16	0.21	0.05	-0.09, 0.19

- a  $N$  = Number of collaborators that reported complete results.
- b  $s_r$  = Repeatability.
- c  $s_R$  = Reproducibility.
- d A difference of means  $<0.5$  indicates no statistically significant difference between methods.
- e 95% Lower and upper confidence limits.

Plate is intended for the enumeration of both *E. coli* and coliforms in various food and beverage products and from environmental surfaces. Petrifilm Rapid *E. coli*/Coliform Count Plates can be incubated for 18–24h at 30 ± 1 or 32 ± 1°C for *E. coli* and coliforms, and 42 ± 1°C for *E. coli* for dairy products; for all other foods; 35 ± 1 or 37 ± 1°C for *E. coli* and coliforms, and 42 ± 1°C for *E. coli*. The typical colony morphology for *E. coli* is blue to blue-green colonies with or without gas production, regardless of size or color intensity. Other coliform colonies will appear as red colonies with entrapped gas (within approximately one colony diameter) for enumeration when comparing to U.S. Food and Drug Administration's *Bacteriological Analytical Manual*, or red colonies with and without gas production when comparing to ISO 4832:2006. Plates containing more than 100 CFU for the total coliform count or more than 100 CFU for the *E. coli* count can either be estimated or recorded as 'too numerous to count' (TNTC).

## B Apparatus and Reagents

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- (a) *Petrifilm Rapid E. coli/Coliform Count Plates*.—Cat. No. 6436/6437; Product SKUs 700002281/700002280 (Neogen Corp., Lansing, MI, USA, [www.neogen.com](http://www.neogen.com)).
- (b) *Petrifilm flat Spreader*.—Cat. No. 6425; Product SKU 700002099 (Neogen Corp.).
- (c) *Sterile diluent*.—Peptone salt solution (PSS) and Butterfield's phosphate buffered diluent (BPBD).
- (d) *Pipets*.—Capable of 1000 µL or a serological pipet.
- (e) *Sterile pipet tips*.—Capable of 1000 µL.
- (f) *Laboratory paddle-blender*.—Seward 400 or equivalent.
- (g) *Filter Stomacher bags*.—Seward or equivalent.
- (h) *Incubators*.—Capable of maintaining 30 ± 1, 32 ± 1, 35 ± 1, 37 ± 1, or 42 ± 1°C.
- (i) *Refrigerator*.—Capable of maintaining 2–8°C, for storing plates.
- (j) *Freezer*.—Capable of maintaining –20–0°C for storing plates.
- (k) *Standard colony counter or illuminated magnifier*.
- (l) *Top-loading balance*.—Capable of weighing 1–2000 g.

## C General Instructions

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- (1) Read instruction manual carefully before use.
- (2) *Storage conditions*.—Store plates at –20 to 8°C. Allow plates to warm to ambient temperature (20–25°C/<60% relative humidity) prior to use. After opening the pouch, unused plates should be placed back in the pouch, sealed, and stored at ambient temperature for no longer than 4 weeks. If the temperature of the site is >25°C with a relative humidity greater than 50%, it is recommended to place the plates in a sealed container and store in a freezer for no more than 4 weeks.
- (3) Plates containing more than 100 CFU for the total coliform count or more than 100 CFU for the *E. coli* count can either be estimated or recorded as TNTC. *Note:* Enumeration for *E. coli* or total coliforms may occur on separate dilutions.

## D Sample Preparation

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- (1) Use appropriate sterile diluents (BPBD or PSS). Do not use diluents containing citrate, bisulfate, or thiosulfate with the Petrifilm Rapid *E. coli*/Coliform Count Plates, as they can inhibit growth.
- (2) For food samples, prepare test portion (10, 11, or 50 g) or equivalent ratio of sample to diluent to create a 1:10 dilution as appropriate to the sample being tested.
- (3) For environmental surface samples, add 25 mL of the appropriate diluent to each sponge sample.
- (4) Blend or homogenize sample as appropriate.
- (5) For optimal growth and recovery of microorganisms in acidic products (<pH 5), adjust the pH of the sample suspension to greater than pH 5. For acidic products, adjust with pH 1 N NaOH.
- (6) Remove all required plates and allow to come to ambient temperature (20–25°C).
- (7) Retract the top film to fully expose the culture medium and dispense 1.0 mL of sample onto the center of the plate.
- (8) Reapply the cover by rolling down the film. Place the Petrifilm flat spreader on the center of the plate and press gently to allow sample to spread evenly over the medium causing gel to form. Let the plate sit undisturbed for at least 1 min.
- (9) Incubate the plates.
  - (a) For dairy products.—30 ± 1 or 32 ± 1°C for coliforms and *E. coli* or 42 ± 1°C for *E. coli* for 18–24 h.
  - (b) For all other foods.—35 ± 1 or 37 ± 1°C for coliforms and *E. coli* or 42 ± 1°C for *E. coli* for 18–24 h.
- (10) Enumerate all blue to blue-green colonies with or without gas regardless of size or intensity of color as *E. coli*.
- (11) Interpretation of non-*E. coli* coliform colonies varies by reference method.
  - (a) BAM Chapter 4 defines coliforms as Gram-negative rods, which produce acid and gas from lactose during metabolic fermentation. Enumerate red colonies, which are closely associated with entrapped gas, within one colony diameter of the colony. Colonies not associated with gas (a distance greater than one colony diameter between colony and gas bubble) are not counted as coliforms. Total coliform count consists of both red colonies with gas and blue colonies with and without gas; estimates can be made on plates containing >100 colonies.
  - (b) ISO defines coliforms by their ability to grow in method-specific, selective media. ISO 4832 enumerates typical coliform colonies on violet red bile agar with lactose (VRBL) with confirmation of atypical colonies. Enumerate red colonies with and without gas production. Total coliform count is indicated by red colonies with or without gas production and blue colonies with and without gas production; estimates can be made on plates containing >100 colonies.
- (12) Multiply the count by the dilution factor to get final coliform and *E. coli* count.

## Reference:

*J. AOAC Int.* 103, 513(2020) (First Action) DOI: [10.1093/jaoacint/qs2013Crossref](https://doi.org/10.1093/jaoacint/qs2013Crossref)

*Revised: November 2023 (brand update and minor editorial corrections)*

