Particle Identification

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PDA
Parenteral Drug Association

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483 Observations

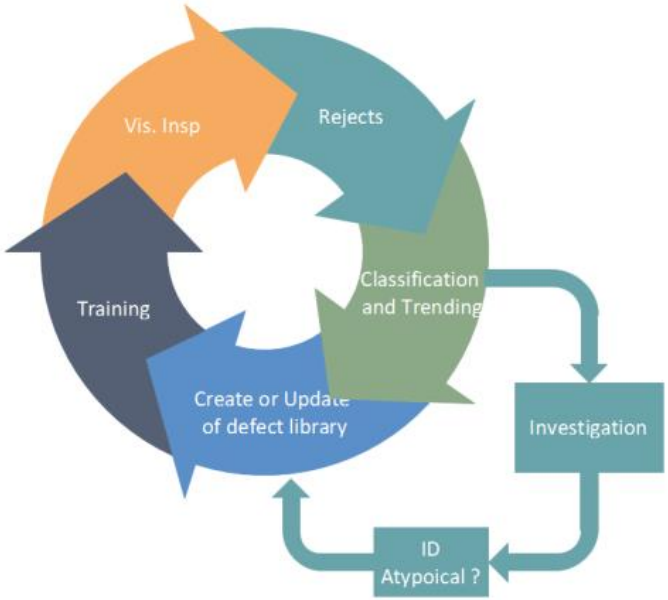
Root cause, particle characterization

Investigation ….. regarding the metal particulate contamination in lots ….. was inadequate …..The atypical contamination found in these lots was metal, however, the batches were not rejected. Additionally, there was no investigation conducted to determine the cause of the black metal particulates found in these lots

"reported a particle identified in a vial during an AQL inspection. There was no documentation on the identity of the particle and whether it was inherent or foreign (black debris, fiber, glass fragments, etc.)."
2015

Visual Inspection Lifecycle

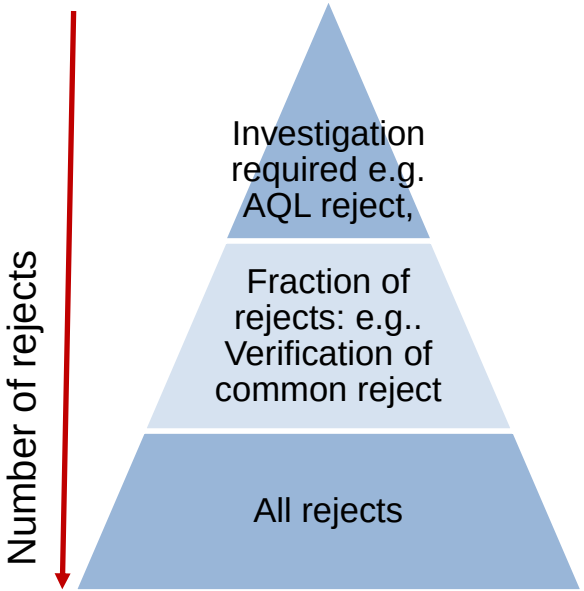
- Use the Trending Data from Reject Characterization and Monitoring
- Review the various particulate sources for Process Improvement opportunities
- Focus on the most predominant particle types
- Repeat the Cycle of Monitoring, Trending, Corrective actions and follow-up Monitoring

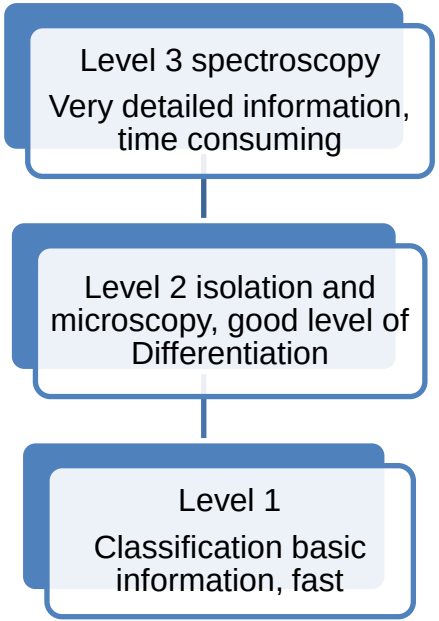


Classification and Trending

When do I need which kind of information ?

5





Particulate Characterization/ID Levels

Level One: Visual classification (in-Situ)
- Nondestructive, as seen during manual inspection
- Light, dark, sinking, floating, color, shape, etc.

Level Two: Macroscopic and Microscopic
- Rapid characterization to specific material categories
- Metallic, glass, rubber, plastic, fiber (natural or synthetic), silicone lubricant, inherent particles, etc.

Level Three: Spectroscopic or other fingerprint ID
- FTIR, Raman, Elemental, Mass Spec, etc.

Roy Cherris Visual Inspection Forum 2013, Bethesda

Comparison of Characterization Level

Level		Cost	time/particle
1	light microscopy	Invest: 2T€ €	15 min
2	Isolation, Polarized Light microscopy	Invest: 60 T€	30 min
3	SEM / Raman/ IR	Invest: 70 T€ (IR), 150 T€ (Raman), 180 T€ (SEM)	30 min

Classification Level 1

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1. Classification is based on basic observations
   Defined by trajectory, shape, density

2. Classification could be done by a experienced operator probably trained for special tools

3. Reason to go on with level 2 characterization could be statistics, uncertainty about nature of the particle

Categories / Attributes

Categories

Category		Category	
Glass-Like	[ ]	Polymeric-like	[ ]
Metallic-like	[ ]	Dark Particle	[ ]
Fiber-like	[ ]	Light Particle	[ ]

Attributes for further description

Shape	Colour	Location	Density	Size
Spherical	Light	Body	Floater	
Irregular	Dark	Bottom	Fixed	
Elongated	Transparent	Shoulder		

Microscopic investigation – Level 2

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Level 1 characterization groups e.g. dark particle, light particles, fiber-like might be sampled by a basic universal sampling plan like $\sqrt{N+1}$

Isolation is required for further investigation
Clean area mandatory:

- clean room, clean bench, ultra cleaned glassware, requires trained personnel

Various tools for isolation:

- Capillary, tungsten needles, filtration

Microscope helps to give further details:

- Rubber, metal, synthetic vs natural fiber, crystal shape, color

After isolation particle can be easily transferred to level three

Microscopic information – Level 2

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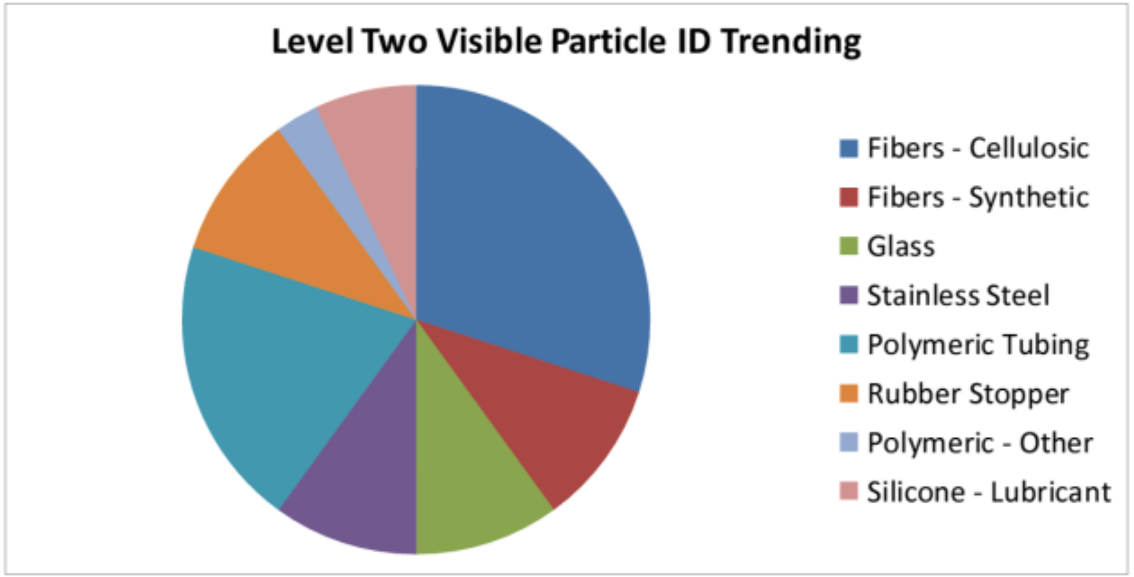
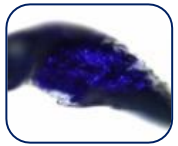
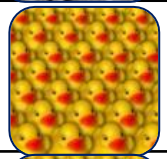
Incident Light	Select	Transmitted Light	Select
Clear	[ ]	Transparent	[ ]
Opaque	[ ]	Opaque	[ ]
Reflective	[ ]	Crystalline	[ ]
Physical	**Select**	**Crossed Polars**	**Select**
Crystalline	[ ]	Isotropic	[ ]
Shaving	[ ]	Anisotropic	[ ]
Resilient	[ ]	Pseudo-Birefringence	[ ]
Shard	[ ]	Isotropic Rod	[ ]
Size Length (um)		Uniform fiber	[ ]
Size Width (um)		Irregular frayed fiber	[ ]

Level II Category	Select	Level II Category	Select
Glass	[ ]	**Polymeric**	[ ]
Metallic	[ ]	**Rubber Stopper**	[ ]
Fiber	[ ]	**Semi-Solid - Silicone**	[ ]
Fiber - Natural	[ ]	**Possible Inherent API**	[ ]
Fiber - Synthetic	[ ]	**Possible Extrinsic**	[ ]

Trending after Level 1/2



Spectroscopy Level 3

method	meaning	time/particle
PLM (polarized light microscopy)	color + shape e.g.: black fibres 	1-5 min
SEM/EDS analysis	> 5µm Elements  	20-180 min
IR – microscopy	> 50 µm Structure  	20-180 min
RAMAN - microscopy	> 0.5 µm Structure  	20-180 min

Fiber – Level 1

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Category	*Select*
Glass-Like	[ ]
Metallic-like	[ ]
Fiber-like	[x]

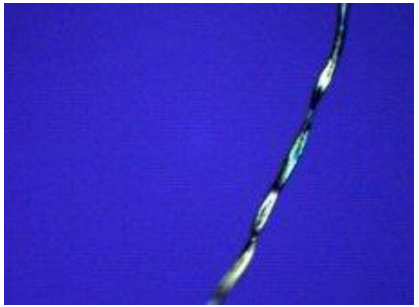
Category	*Select*
Polymeric-like	[ ]
Dark Particle	[ ]
Light Particle	[x]

- Fibers can be easily classified. Might be sufficient for trending
- Further classification of fibers can be preformed in situ with an inverted microscope due to morphology and texture

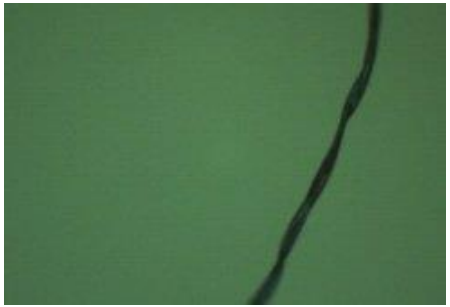
Fiber – Level 2

- Microscopy of isolated fiber gives further information (cotton, protein based fiber, synthetic)
- Spectroscopy can give a very specific fingerprint for root cause or kind if synthetic fiber

Level 2



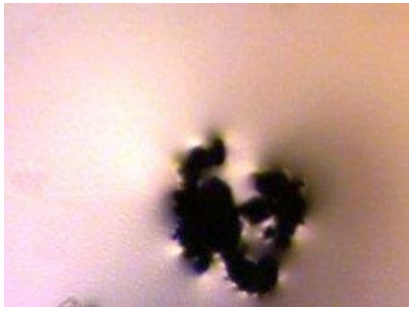
Level 2



Level 1

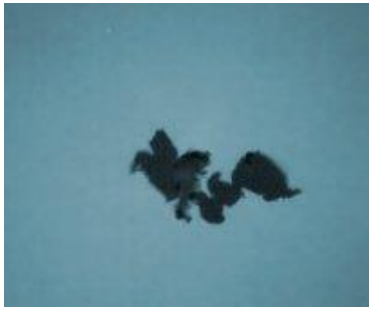
Metal particle Level 1 and Level 2

- Characterized density and reflectivity
- Sufficient for trending
- Hard to observe while swirling
- Usually easy to find at the bottom



Level 1

Level 2

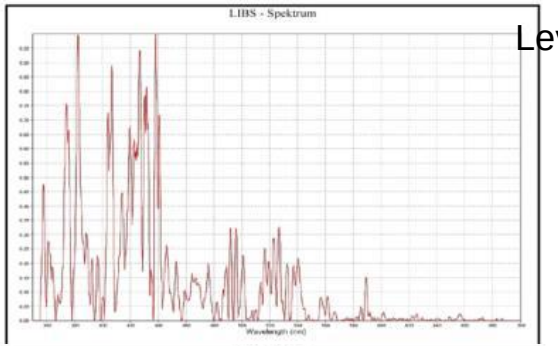


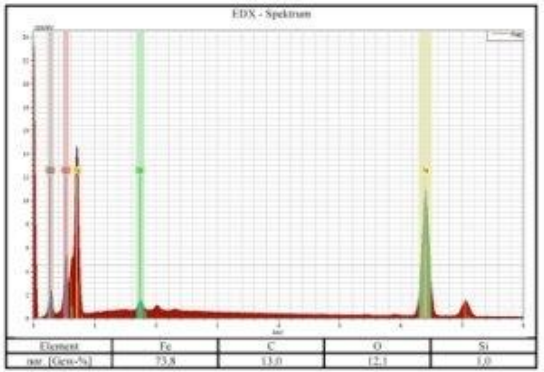
Level 2

Spectroscopy on metals – Level 3

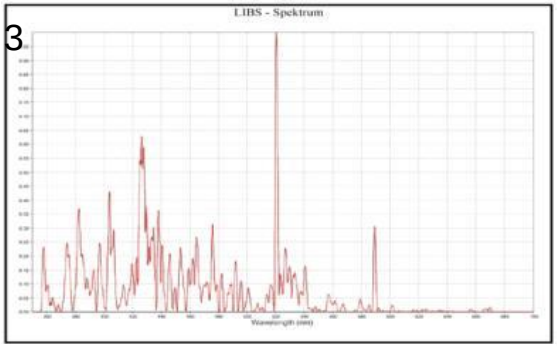
Spectroscopy gives more detailed information on the kind of steel e.g. low alloyed vs high alloyed steel which might be needed for root cause investigation

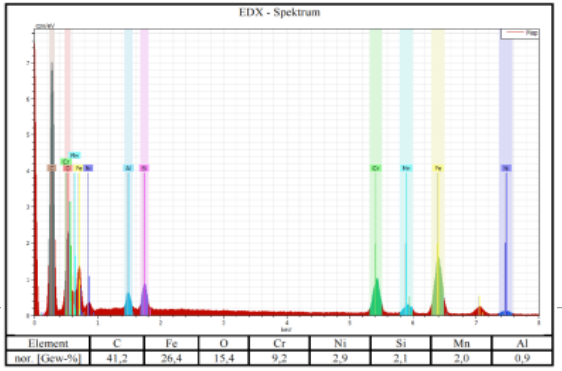
Level 3





Element	Fe	C	O	Si
nor. [Gew-%]	73,8	13,0	12,1	1,0

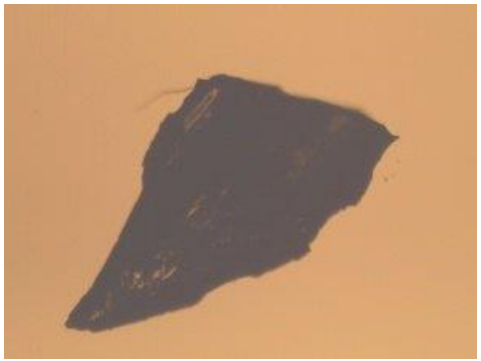




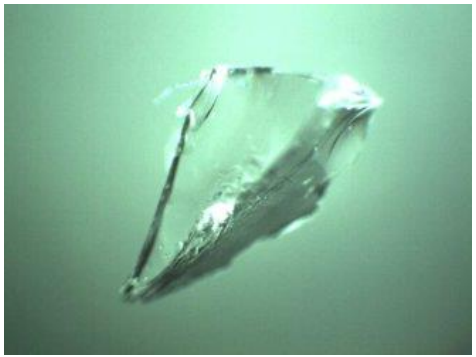
Element	C	Fe	O	Cr	Ni	Si	Mn	Al
nor. [Gew-%]	41,2	26,4	15,4	9,2	2,9	2,1	2,0	0,9

Glass particle Level 1 and Level 2

- Glass has a very characteristic shape which is sufficient for classification
- Further characterization for root cause investigation: element specific methods e.g. SEM or LIBS favorable



Level 1



Level 2

Glass particle Level 3

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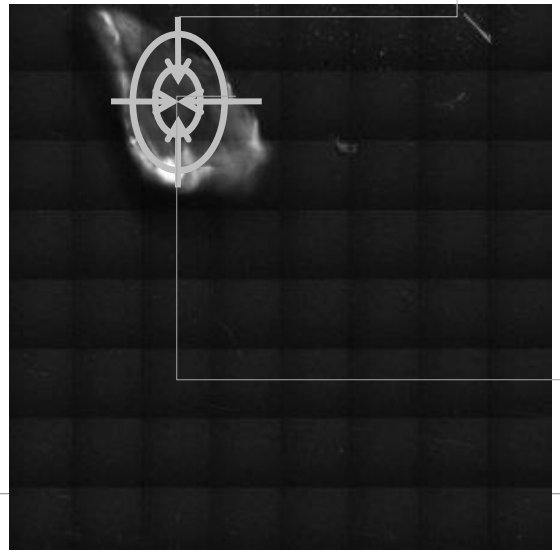
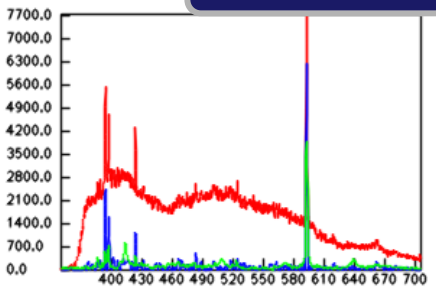
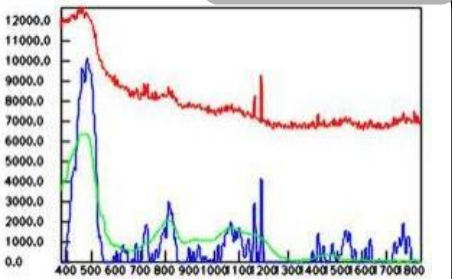


LIBS



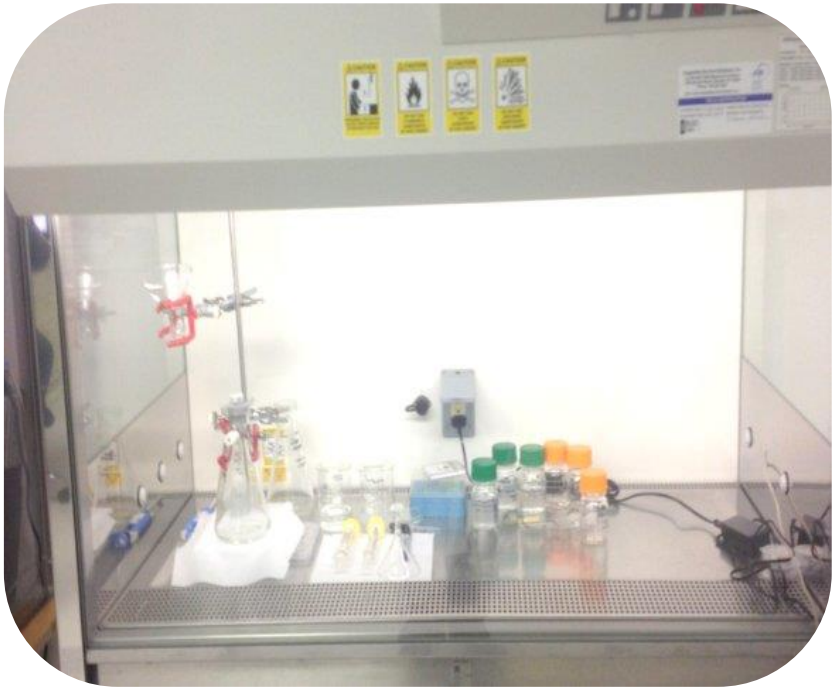
Si, Na, Al (Fiolax)

Raman



Glass

Particle Isolation



Isolation

Environmental Considerations

- Class 100 clean bench is essential
- „Ball-park“ clean rooms would be beneficial
- Cleaning is essential and system suitability tests (blanks) have to be taken
- Training and control is essential
- Benches, coats, sleeves, microscopes, equipment and water should be clean and non-shedding

Isolation and transportation

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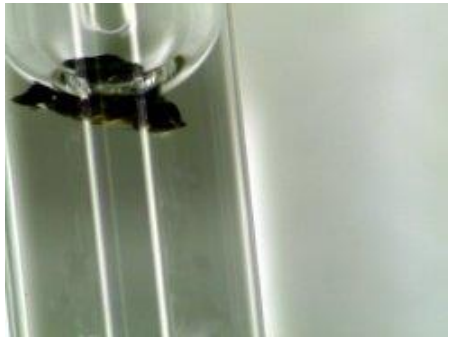
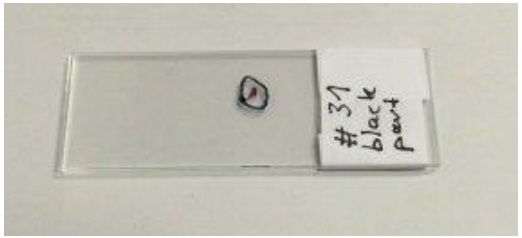
Tungsten needles for particle picking

Capillary trapping



Sending particles to a lab between 2 slides



Particle Sources

Origin makes the difference

Inherent

Particulate made entirely of components of the formulated product, arising from the product itself. These particulates are related to the product formulation: API

Intrinsic

Particulate related to the production process of components of the formulated product, arising from the product itself. Processing Equipment, Primary Package, Active and other ingredients

Extrinsic (Foreign)

Environmental Contaminants
insect parts, hair, fibers, paint, rust

Sources for particulate matter ?

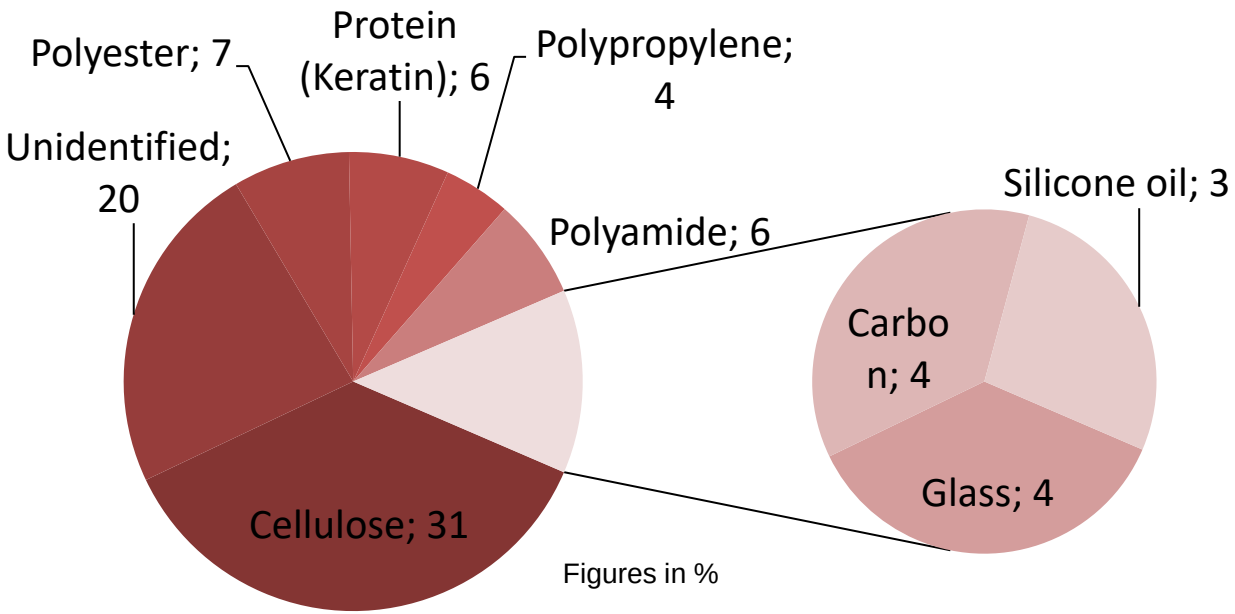
- personnel

- Garnement
- Water
- container

- Process / Production Equipment e.g.: rubber
- Cleaning process

	2023	2014	2008
Lint/Fiber	1	1	1
Product Related	2	3	3
Glass	3	2	2
Rubber/Elastomer	4	4	4
Metal	5	5	5

Visible



Cellulose, Polyester and Protein/Polyamide particles

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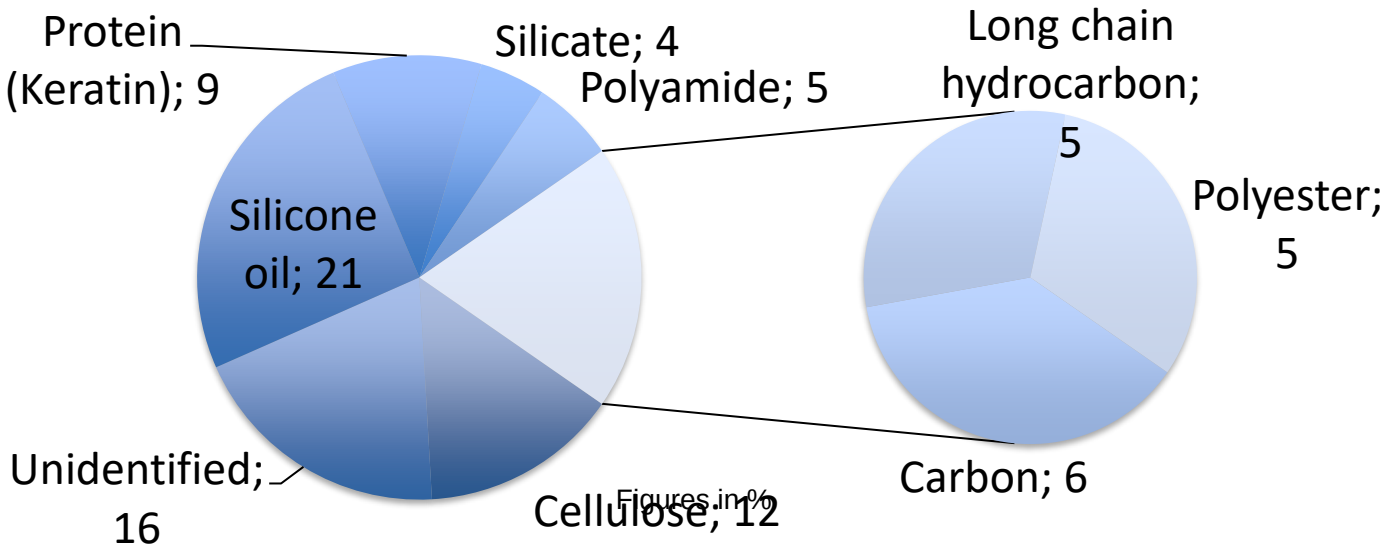
Sub-visible



Silicone oil, Protein, Cellulose particles are the most often found contaminants

Top Ten in more detail

- Cellulose: mostly fibres
  - source: clothes, **towels**, wipers, autoclave paper

- Longchain hydrocarbon
  - source: rubber (stopper), PE (bottles)

Top Ten in more detail

- Glass: fibres and particles
  - Source: Primary packaging
  - But also glassfibers and hollow glass fibres (filter material)

- Carbon: particles
  - Usally black particles contain high content of carbon:
  - Sealings rubber material filled with carbon
  - Burned material

Top Ten in more detail

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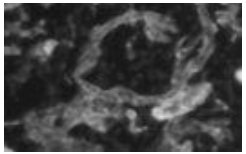
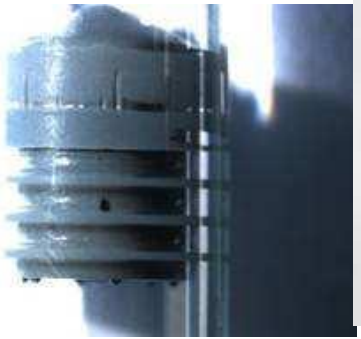
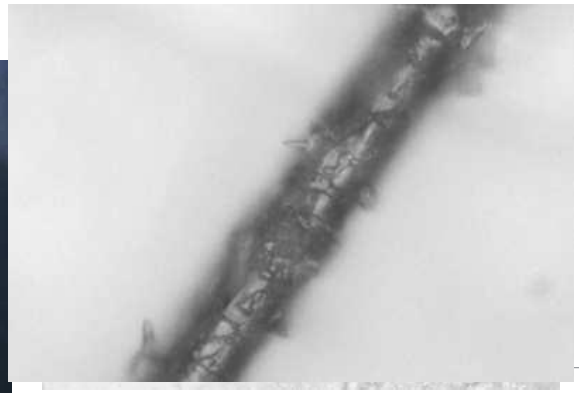
- Polyester: fibres and particles
  - Source: Cleanroom clothes and defect filter
- Protein: mostly flakes
  - Source human dust, protein particles from protein solution
- Silicone oil: compact particles
  - Source: sealings, siliconisation



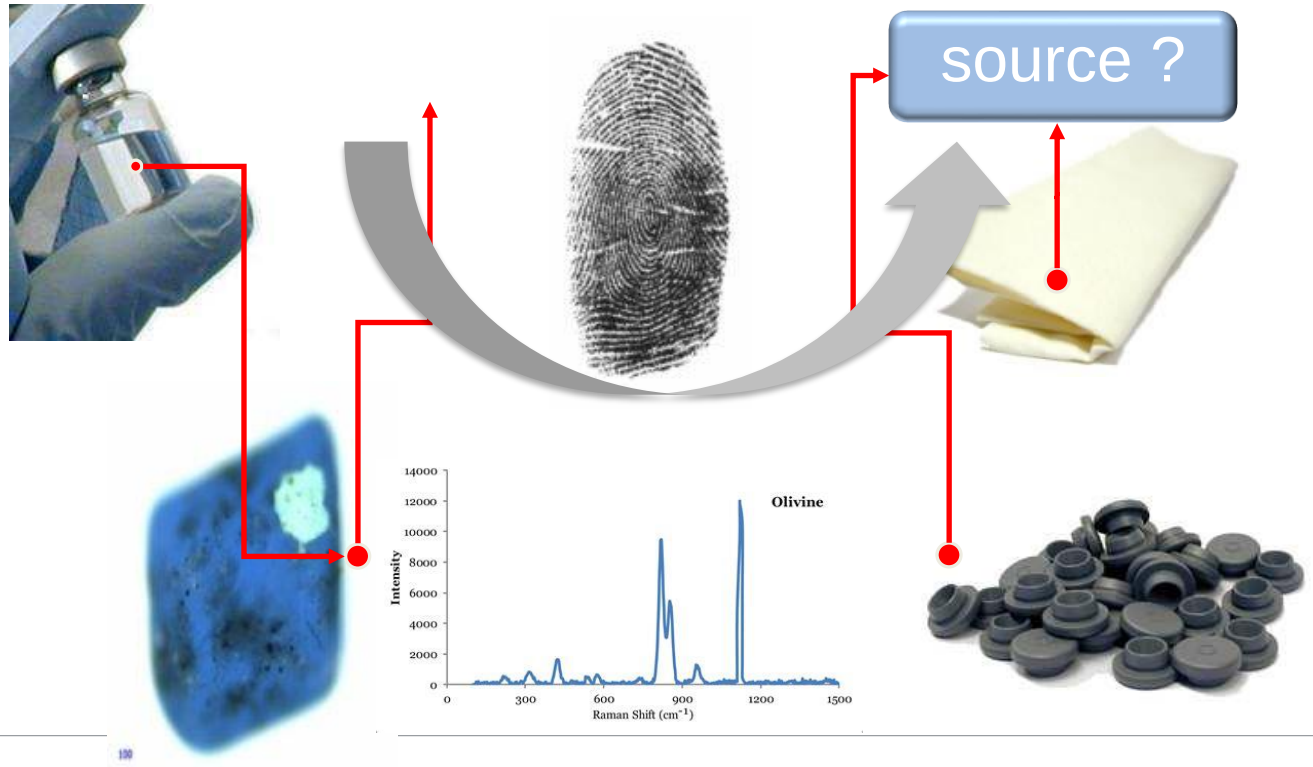
Rubber related defects

- White or black spots on/between lips
- Foreign material trapped between plunger and glass wall Glass bits
- Rubber chunks
- Fibres
- Hair





Root cause

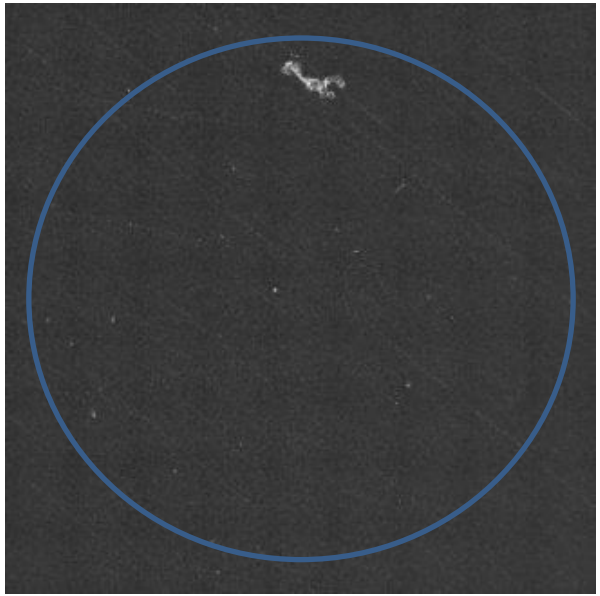

source ?
Olivine
Intensity
14000
12000
10000
8000
6000
4000
2000
0
0
300
600
900
1200
1500
Raman Shift (cm⁻¹)

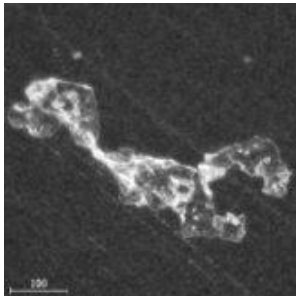
Root cause

1. Documentation of the defect →in-situ (in the closed container)
2. Filtration and documentation of the sample on the membrane filter
3. Documentation of the analysis and the identification of the reject by Raman spectroscopy
4. Identification of sub-visible to gather further information
5. Verification of the findings (particle observed by visible inspection) with FT-IR or LIBS, EDX

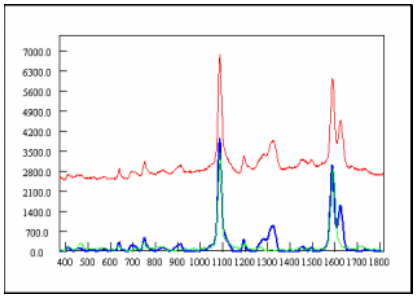
Particle in a vial

Particle Imaging + raman.ID



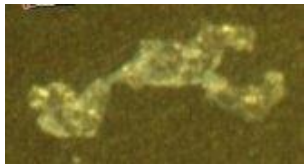


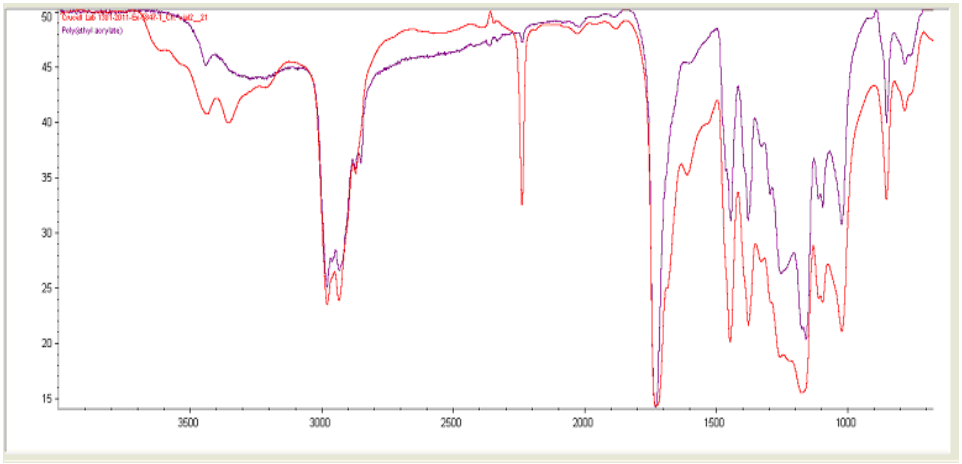
L=505.0 µm
w=202.6 µm
E=2.49
R=0.3071



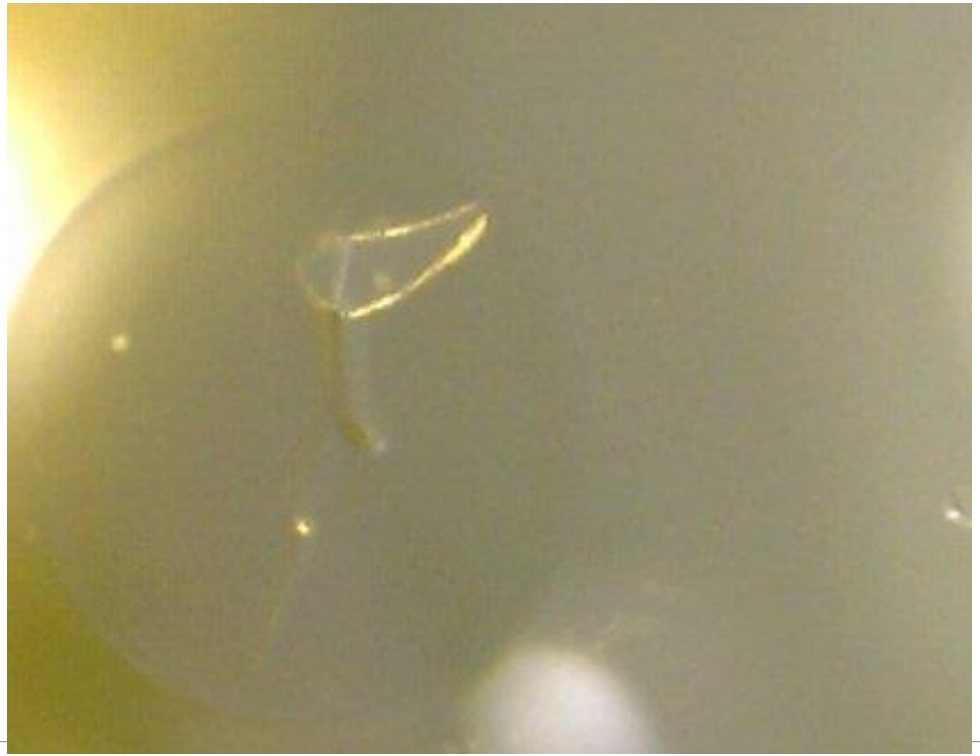
Raman.ID: Polyethylene-terephtalate, PET
Rank: 887

Verification by FTIR

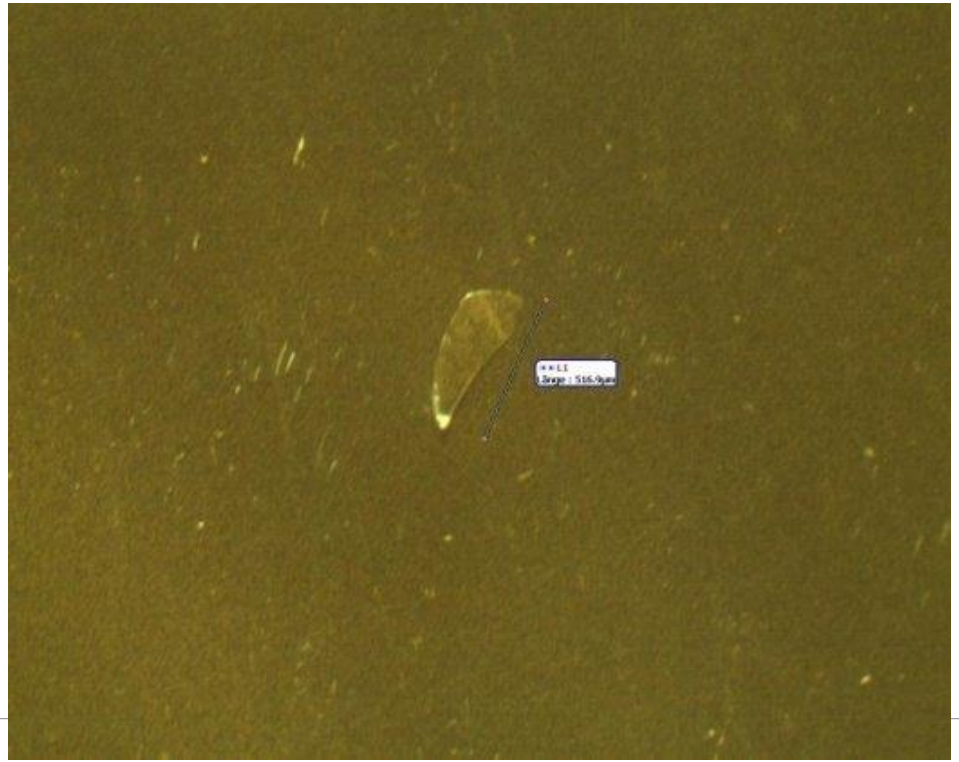




Visible Inspection: Particle Reject II



Sample prep. + Documentation



Level 3 ID

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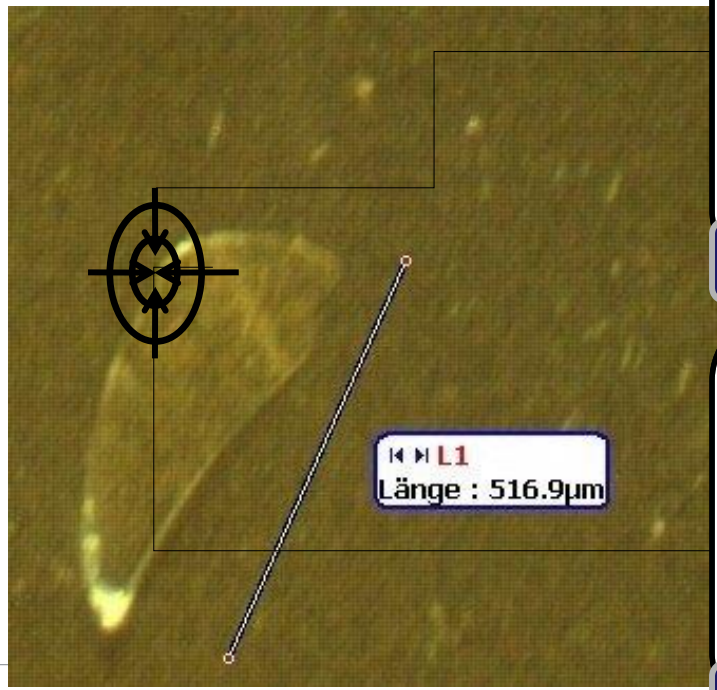
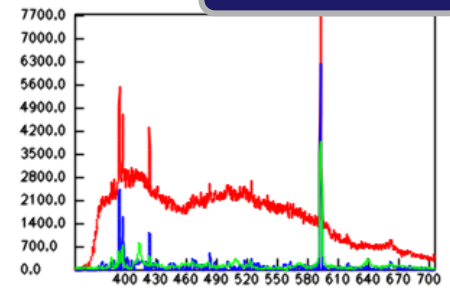
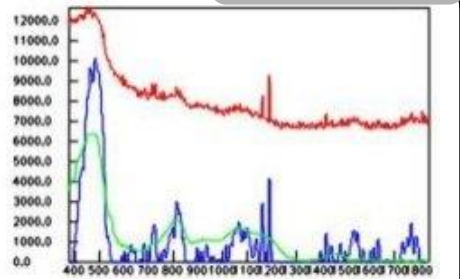


LIBS



Si, Na, Al (Fiolax)

Raman



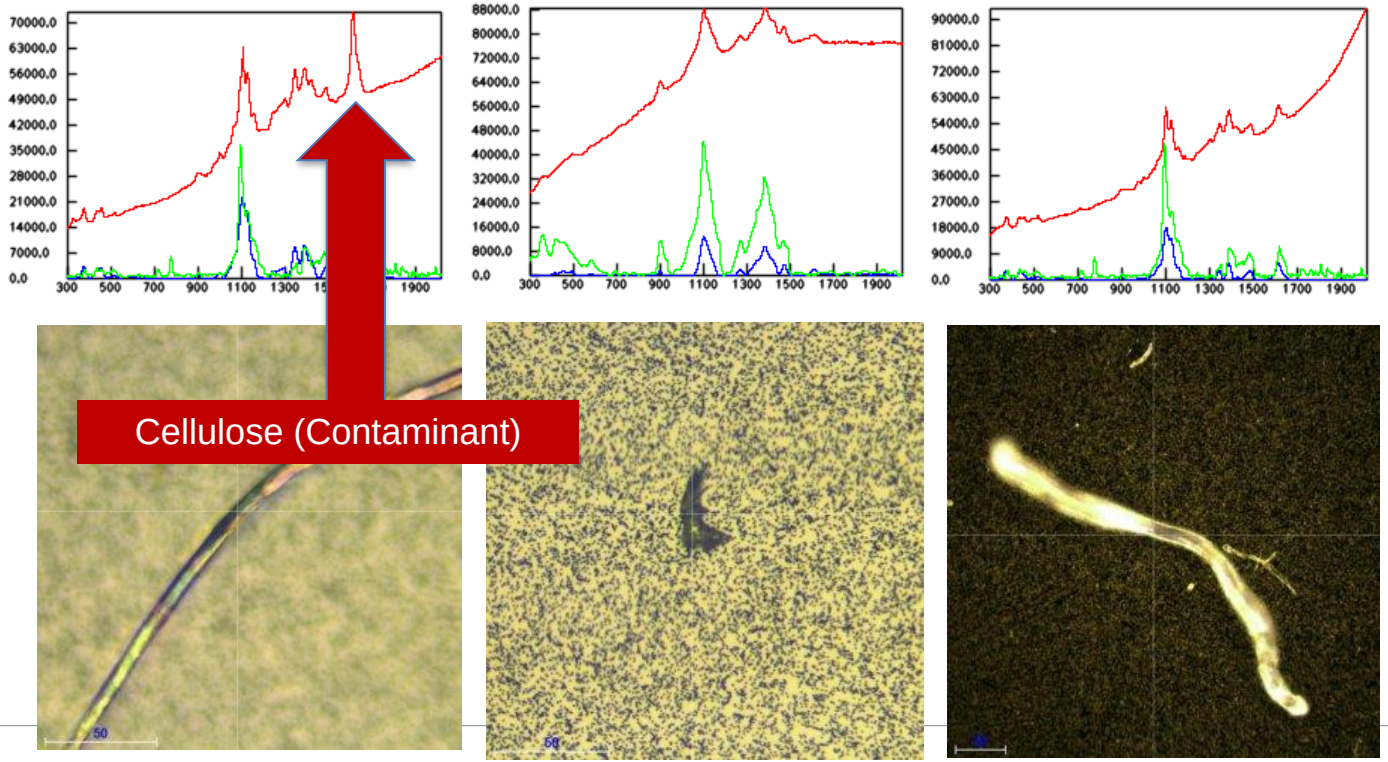
Glass

CELLULOSE SOURCE

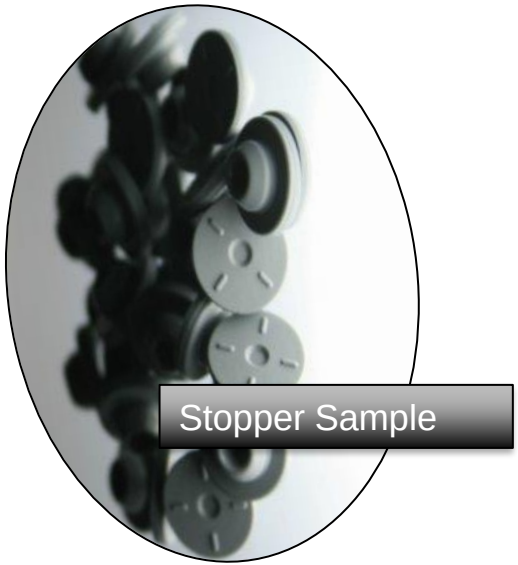
Example Cellulose Source

- 4 batches failed in a row
- 3 samples of each of the failed batches and one of the good batches were investigated
- Soon it became clear that the problem was cellulose related….

Several cellulose fibers were found



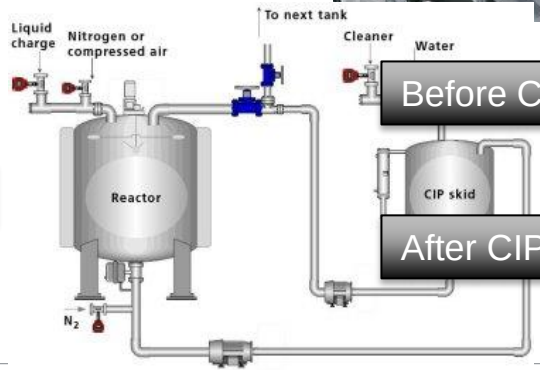
Samples from the filling were taken



Stopper Sample

Before Tubing Rinse Sample

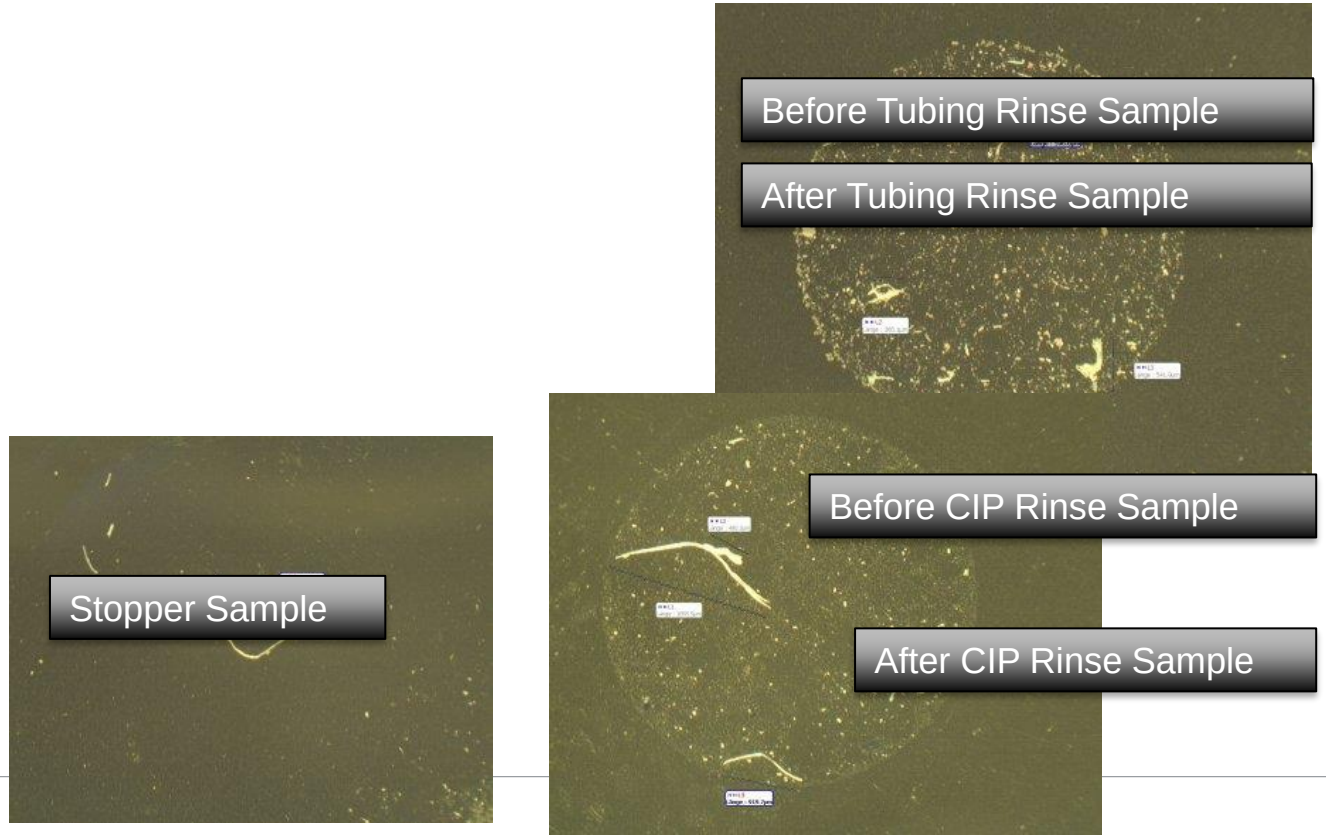
After Tubing Rinse Sample



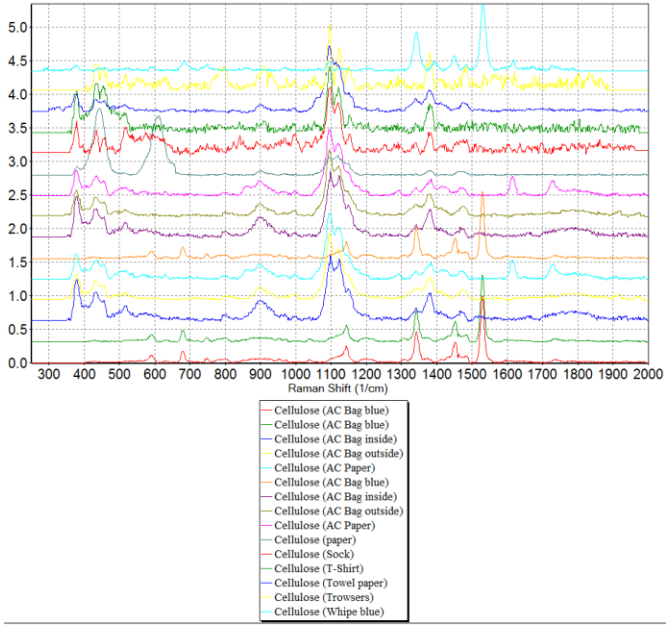
Before CIP Rinse Sample

After CIP Rinse Sample

Samples from the process were taken



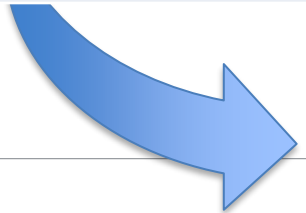
Database with filling line related materials was built



No Cellulose (Contaminant) !

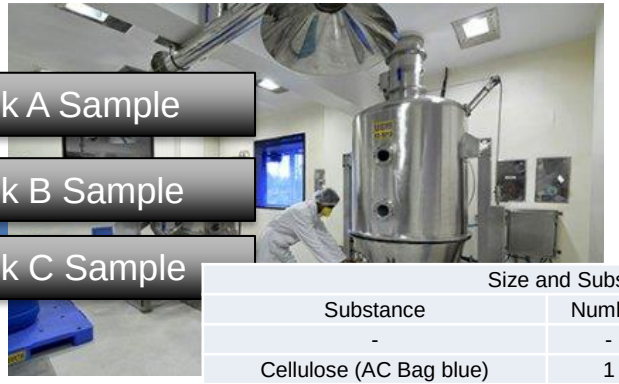
Tube rinse result

Size and Substance Distribution of Measured Particles						
Substance	Number	Size Distribution [µm]				
-	-	>=5	>=10	>=25	>=50	>=100
Cellulose (AC Bag blue)	5	0	0	0	1	4
Cellulose w. Polyester (Papertowel II)	1	0	0	0	1	0
Ethyl Cellulose	1	0	0	0	0	1
Cellulose (AC Bag inside)	19	0	0	0	6	13
Pigment, Indian Yellow	1	0	0	0	0	1
Other Particles	143	0	0	5	38	100
beta-Carotene	50	0	0	3	19	28
Skipped particles	2283	889	808	432	137	17
All particles	2503	889	808	440	202	164



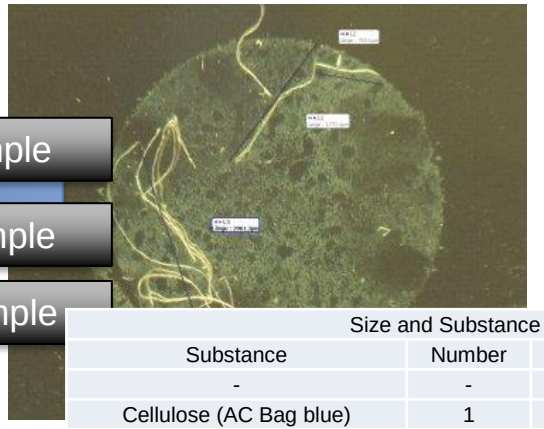
No Cellulose (Contaminant) !

Closer look into the API production (site in Italy)



Size and Substance Distribution of Measured Particles						
Substance	Number	Size Distribution [µm]				
-	-	>=5	>=10	>=25	>=50	>=100
Cellulose (AC Bag blue)	1	0	0	0	1	0
Labcoat	1	0	0	1	0	0
Fluorescence	1	0	0	1	0	0
Carbon	4	0	0	3	1	0
Cellulose	1	0	0	0	1	0
Indanthrene Blue	1	0	0	1	0	0
Cellulose (Contaminant)	31	0	0	8	18	5
Pigment, Indian Yellow	3	0	0	3	0	0
Polysulfone	5	0	0	1	2	2
Cellulose (Towel paper)	5	0	0	5	0	0
Other Particles	28	0	0	22	1	5
Skipped particles	1716	1353	362	1	0	0
All particles	1797	1353	362	46	24	12

Samples from API tanks and tubings showed this type of fiber.



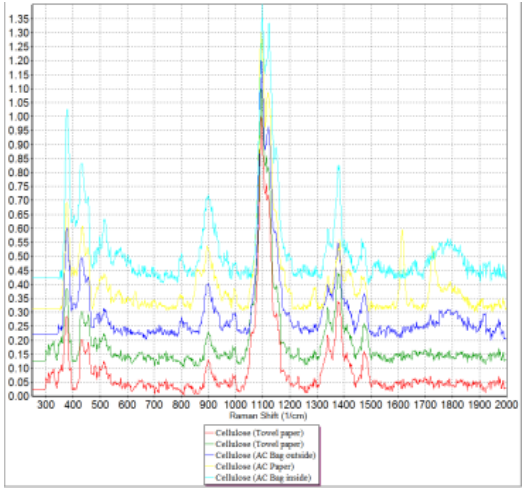
Tank A Sample

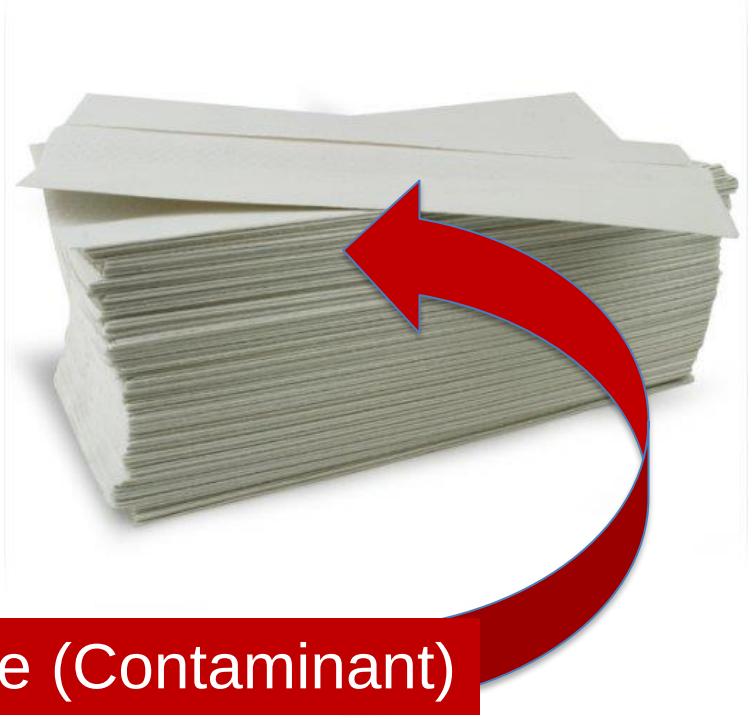
Tank B Sample

Tank C Sample

Size and Substance Distribution of Measured Particles						
Substance	Number	Size Distribution [µm]				
-	-	>=5	>=10	>=25	>=50	>=100
Cellulose (AC Bag blue)	1	0	0	0	1	0
Labcoat	1	0	0	1	0	0
Fluorescence	1	0	0	1	0	0
Carbon	4	0	0	3	1	0
Cellulose	1	0	0	0	1	0
Indanthrene Blue	1	0	0	1	0	0
Cellulose (Contaminant)	31	0	0	8	18	5
Pigment, Indian Yellow	3	0	0	3	0	0
Polysulfone	5	0	0	1	2	2
Cellulose (Towel paper)	5	0	0	5	0	0
Other Particles	28	0	0	22	1	5
Skipped particles	1716	1353	362	1	0	0
All particles	1797	1353	362	46	24	12

Update of the library with towels used in API production





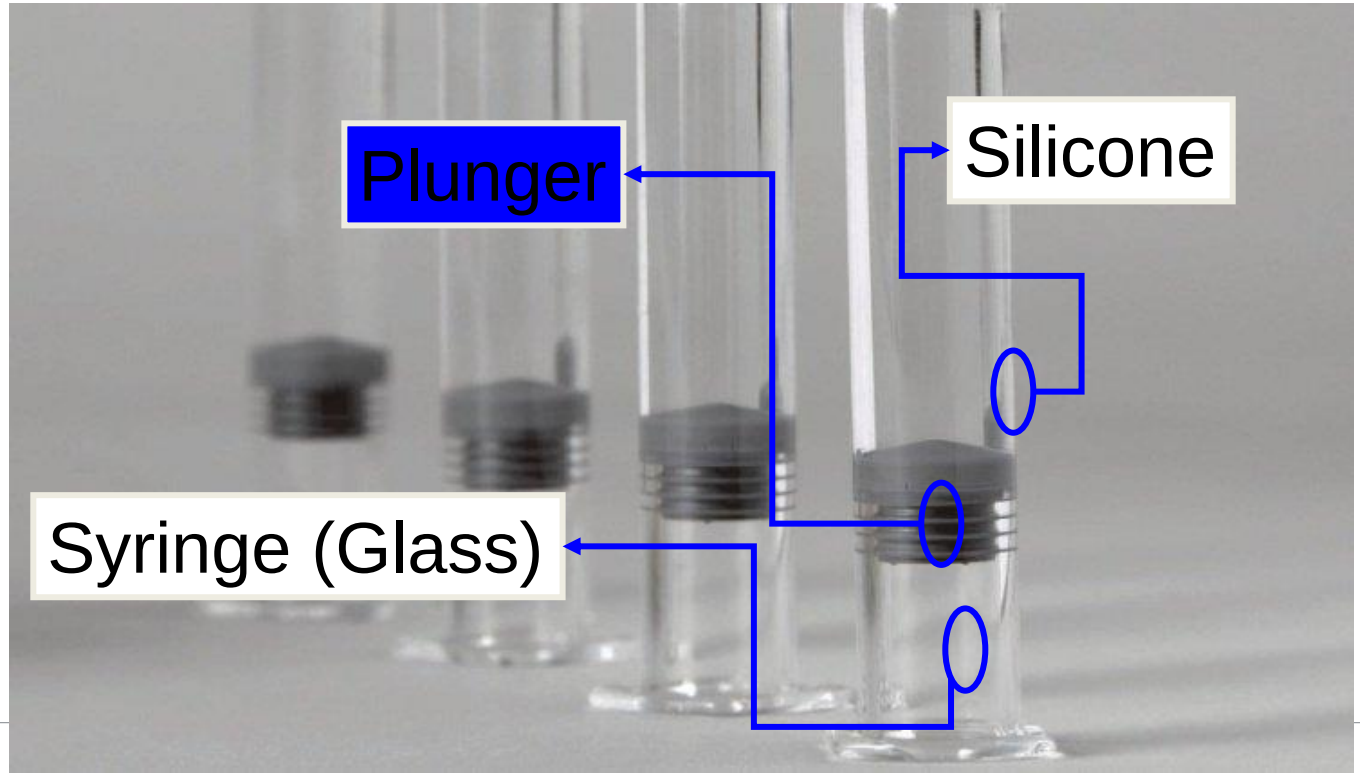
Cellulose (Contaminant)

Conclusion Cellulose Example

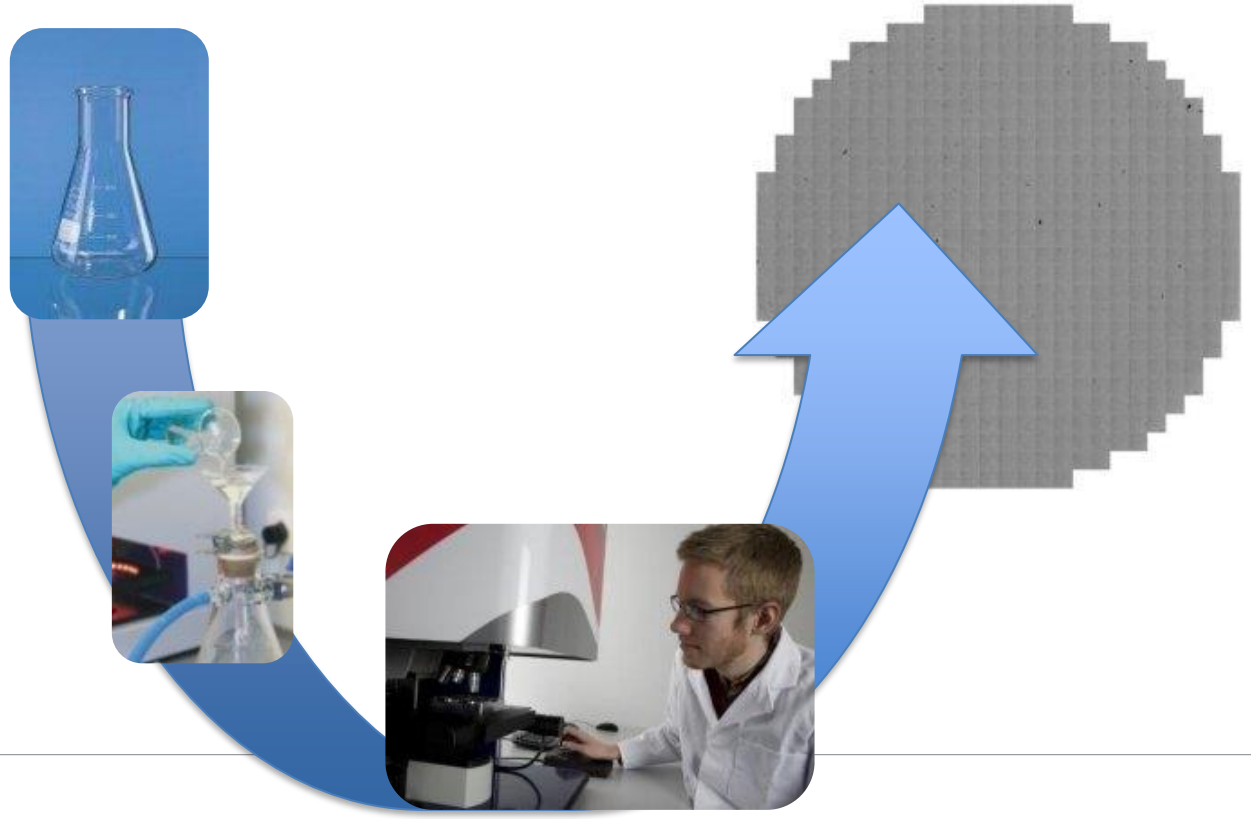
- One special type of cellulose could be identified by the typical peak @ 1600
- Database was built with suspect cellulose samples used in production
- These Cellulose (contamination) fibers were found in smaller concentration in CIP rinses no fibers …were found in the process prior to filling!
- Samples from API tanks and tubings showed this type of fiber.

→ API manufacturer used paper towels and introduced cellulose into the process

Control Your Packaging Material



ISO 8871-3



Technical Report No. 85

Enhanced Test Methods for Visible Particle Detection and Enumeration on Elastomeric Closures and Glass Containers

A thorough discussion of the sample preparation process and the counting methodology used to evaluate within and between operator replicate samples can also be found in **8.2 Appendix B**.

Table 4.1.1-1 Threshold Value to Use when Classifying Particles as Visible or Subvisible (by methods more sensitive as compared to the unaided eye)

Category	Aspect Ratio (length:width)	Visible Threshold	Subvisible
Particle	<5	100 µm	<100 µm
Fiber	≥5	300 µm	<300 µm

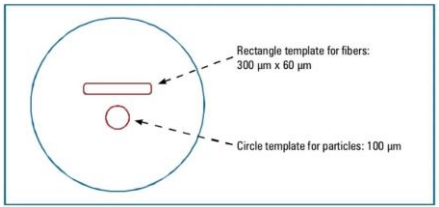
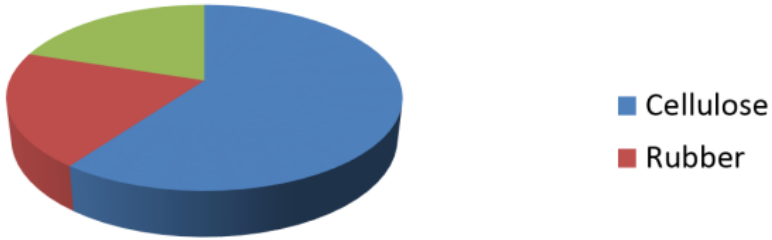


Figure 4.1.2-1 Microscope Reticle Design For Elastomer Component Particle Analysis

- A number of parts (normalized for surface area) are placed in an Erlenmeyer Flask,
- Add 50 ml of surfactant solution is dispensed and added to the flask.
- Agitate on an orbital shaker for 20 sto remove visible particles from the surface.
- Filter immediately through a membrane filter (a gray filter was used to enhance contrast for both light and dark colored particles and fibers)
- The rinsing process is repeated
- Once the filter is dry, any visible particles present are counted by using a specialized reticle and an optical stereomicroscope
- **Appendix B. Method: Determination of Visible Partides and Fibers on Elastomeric Components by Membrane Filtration and Microscopic Examination**

Fibers and particles on rubber

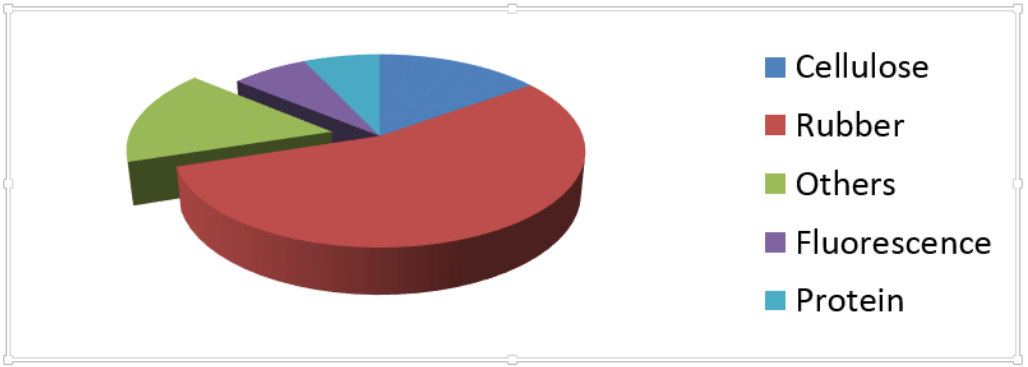
- 10 stoppers contaminated with fiber
  Cleaning following ISO 8871
- 43 particles > 100 µm found



Large scattering in particle number and composition can be observed in one batch and different bags

Fibers and particles on rubber

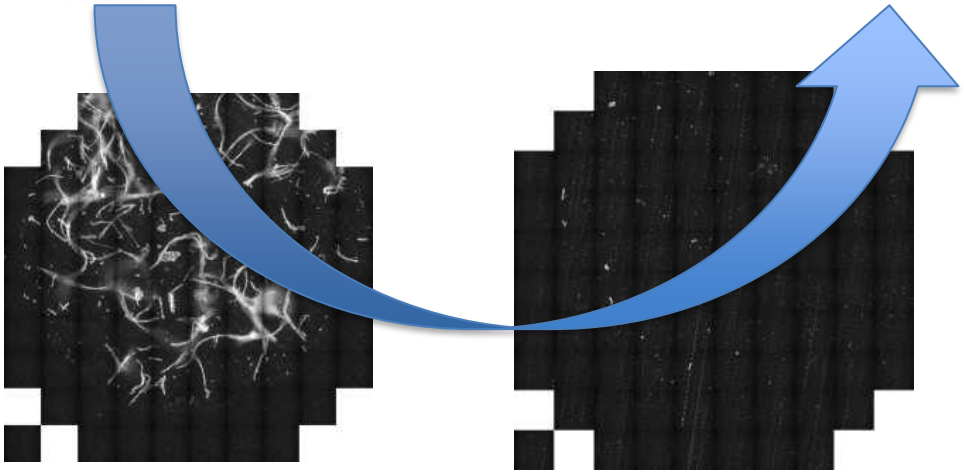
- 10 stoppers contaminated with particles Cleaning following ISO 8871
- 122 particles found > 100 µm



7

Rubber related particles

Stopper Bags have an impact or reflect stopper quality

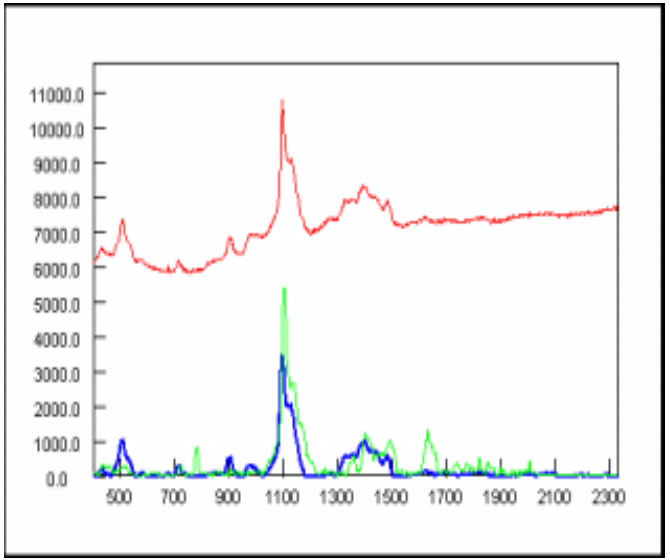


Test Procedure: Bag rinsed with 250 ml water / SDS, filtration, counting

Fibres collected from one bag; 375 particles > 25 µm

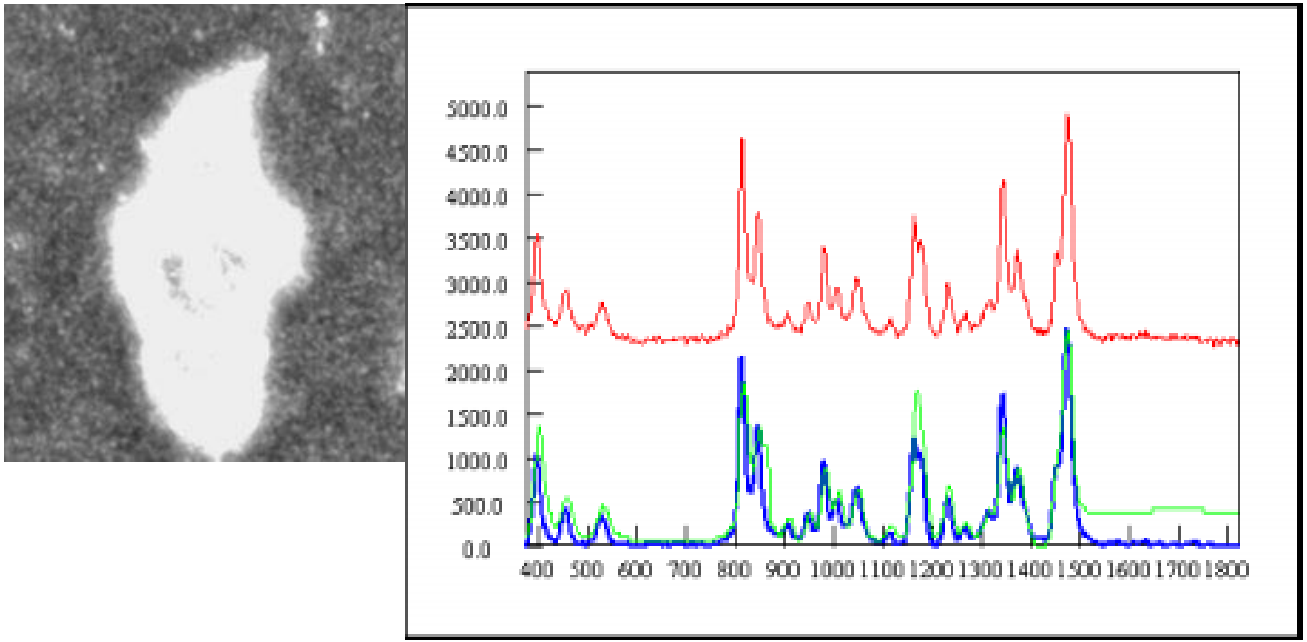
Fibres collected from one bag; 45 particles > 25 µm

Rubber related particles



RESULT: Cellulose [Paper]
RANK: 882, S/N: 39.2

Rubber related particles



Rubber material and filler

Time bombs

- Increase of rejects with time
- Chemical reactions taking some time
  - Silicone oil on stoppers: Agglomeration of Proteins
  - Coatings
  - Glass delamination

Turbidity / Haziness

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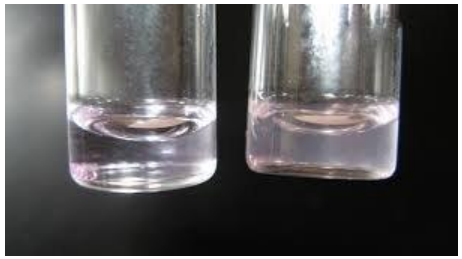
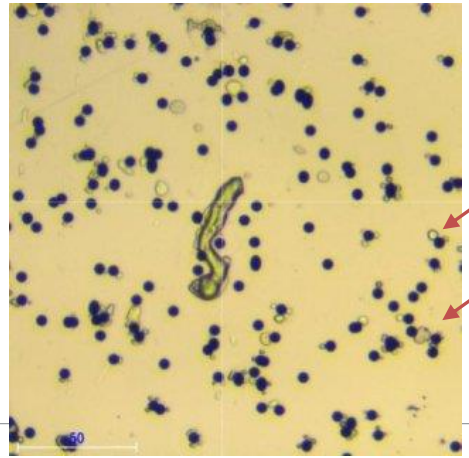
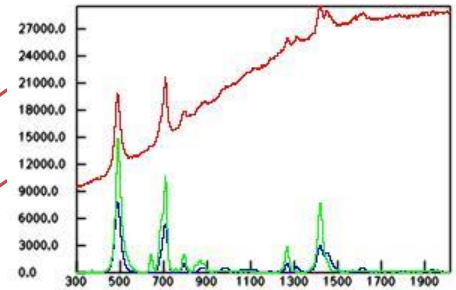
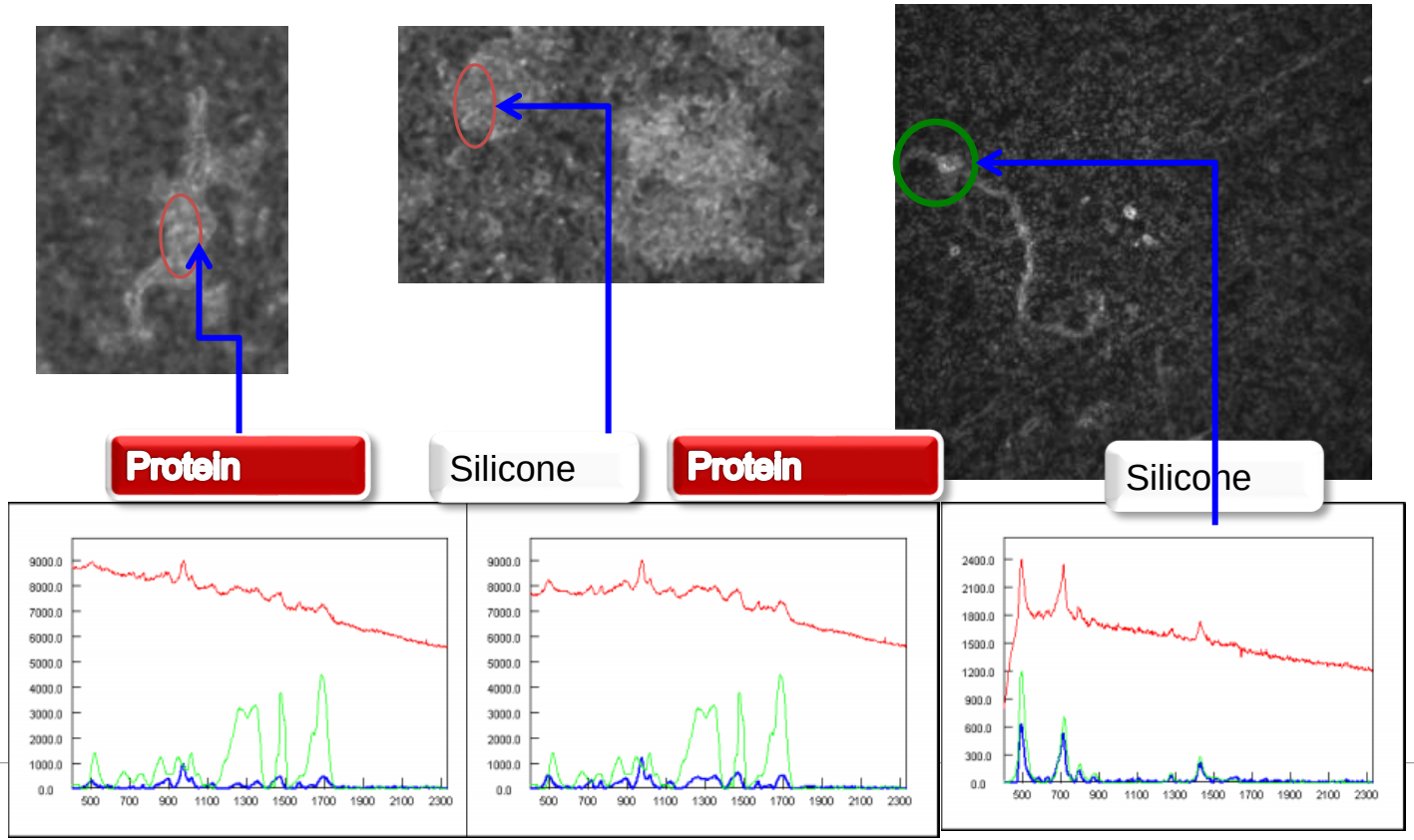


Observation of haziness and aggregates in a new a new batch after slight process change

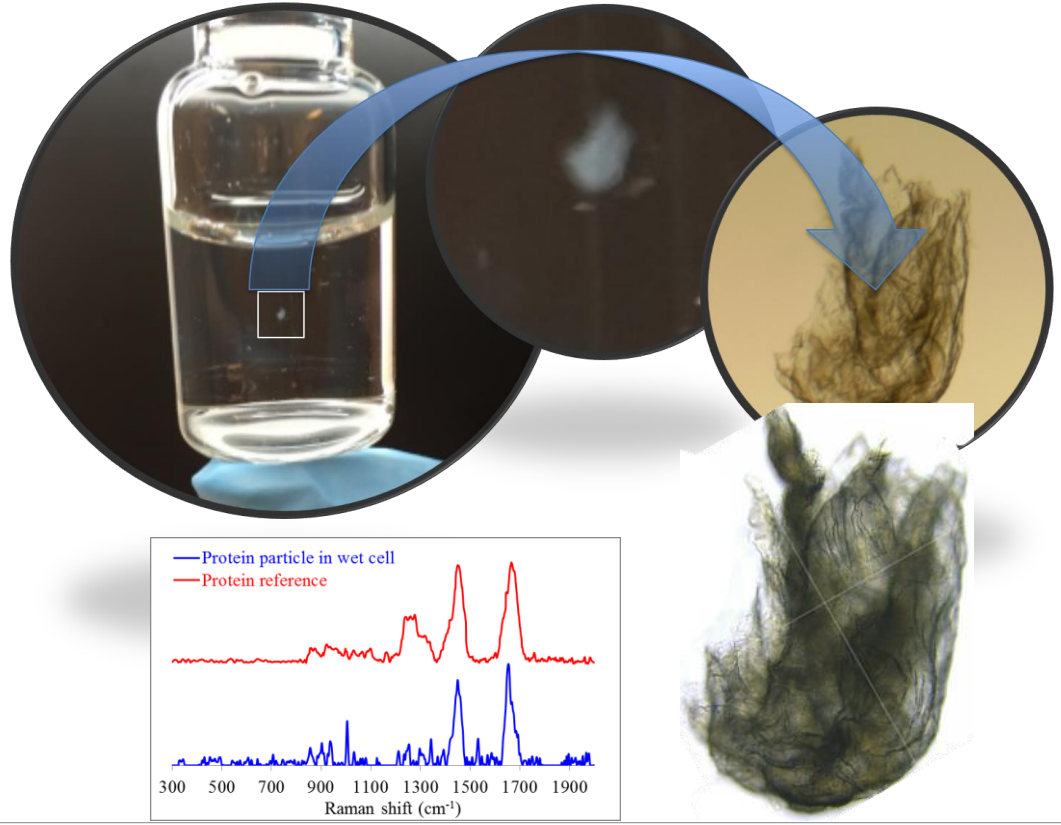




Silicone Protein Aggregation

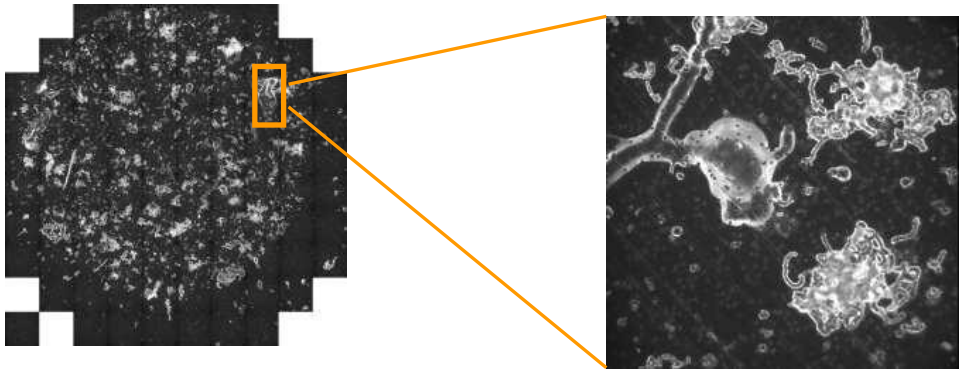


Visible Inherent Particle



Coating

Increasing number of rejects in visual inspection with time



Size and Substance Distribution of Measured Particles					
Substance	**Number**	**Size Distribution [µm]**			
-	**-**	**>=10**	**>=25**	**>=50**	**>=100**
Proteine	6	0	0	1	5
Fluorescence	18	0	0	1	17
Coating	185	23	44	32	86
Skipped particles	3058	2142	657	232	27
All particles	3267	**2165**	**701**	**266**	**135**

Supplemental Testing or Inspection

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Destructive reconstitution, dilution, transfer, clearing, solubilizing, filtration, screening, or sieving that mallows a product to be visually examined or evaluated microscopically to determine the presence, type,and size of foreign particulate contamination present within the product, container, or device.

Destructive Inspection and Test Methods

- Reconstitution
- Filtration
- Clarification
- Transfer Dilution
- Sieve/Mesh
- Panning
- Rinse/Flush and Filtration

PDA Parenteral Drug Association

PDA

Technical Report No. 79

Particulate Matter Control in Difficult to Inspect Parenterals

5.3 DIP Product Formulations

Common inspection or testing approaches for DIP product formulations are listed in **Table 5.3-1.**

Table 5.3-1 Common Inspection or Testing Approaches for DIP Product Formulations

DIP Formulation Type	Common Destructive Methods Applied	Method #
Deeply colored solutions (opaque)	Filtration and microscopic exam in sub-visible and/or visible ranges	2
	Transfer and dilution (if required) in a verified clean transparent container followed by visual inspection	4
Emulsions	Clarification and visual Inspection	3
	Clarification → Filtration and microscopic exam in sub-visible and/or visible ranges	3
	Sieving	5
	Additional considerations: – Inspection of settled product with observation of bottom layer for dispersion of dense (sinking) metallic or glass particles	
Gels	Direct visual inspection (USP <790> with modifications, if needed, for increased illumination and dwell time)	USP790
	Dilution → Filtration and microscopic exam in sub-visible and/or visible ranges	4
Lyophilized (freeze-dried product)	Reconstitution and visual inspection	1
	Reconstitution → Filtration and microscopic exam in sub-visible and/or visible ranges	2
	<1 ml Small volumes reconstitution and pooling	4
Powders, API	Reconstitution and visual inspection	1