



Standard Operating Procedure

Colichrome™ MF ECC-A

**Membrane Filter Method for E. coli, Total Coliforms, and
Aeromonas spp.**

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1.0 Scope and Application

- 1.1 The Colichrome™ MF ECC-A method consists of a medium which detects the presence or absence of *E. coli*, total coliforms, *Aeromonas species*, as well as enumeration.
- 1.2 The method allows the detection and enumeration in 24 to 48 hours, or less and does not require a confirmation step.
- 1.3 The detection limit is one target CFU/sample.

2.0 Summary of the Method

- 2.1 The Colichrome™ MF ECC-A medium determines the presence or absence (and enumeration) of *E. coli*, total coliforms, and *Aeromonas spp.* in any size water sample (100 mL is required for drinking water). The sample (diluted or not) is passed through a 0.45µm pore size, 47 mm diameter membrane filter using standard equipment and methodology. The filter is then placed into a 50 mm plate containing a pad saturated with the medium (if in broth form) or a layer of the medium which has been solidified with an added gelling agent, and incubated for 24 to 48 hours at 35°C±0.5°C. *E. coli* will appear as dark blue CFUs. Coliforms will appear as pink/red, and *Aeromonas* will appear as very pale yellow CFUs. The presence of *E. coli*, depending on conditions, can start to appear in as little as 14 hours.
- 2.2 Colichrome™ MF ECC-A medium contains nutrients to assure the growth of the target organisms, buffers to maintain appropriate pH, and inhibitors to reduce the growth of non-target organisms.

3.0 Definitions

- 3.1 *E. coli* grow as dark blue colonies as a result of producing the enzyme B-glucuronidase. Other Coliforms grow as pink/red colonies, and *Aeromonas* is colorless or pale yellow due to the mixture of various ingredients in the medium.
- 3.2 Bacteria that form colonies of other appearances are other than the above described bacteria.

4.0 Interferences

- 4.1 No known chemical substances normally encountered in drinking water or source waters have been observed to affect the color of the target bacteria on the Colichrome™ MF ECC-A medium. If particulate or colloidal materials are suspended in water samples, they may interfere with filtering efficiency by clogging filter pores and they may cause some spreading of bacterial colonies as they grow on the filter surface during incubation. However these materials would very rarely prevent the accurate determination of the bacterial population.
- 4.2 Colonies exhibiting the color of the target organisms should not be included in the total coliform count if they are less than 0.5 mm diameter (except when the entire colony population is very large due to excessive crowding on the plate. In such a case the sample should be rerun at a higher dilution.). Small colored colonies of this nature should not be counted unless they are isolated into pure culture and then verified by approved procedures.
- 4.3 It cannot be safely assumed that colonies can be picked directly from the surface of the filter and used to inoculate confirmatory media directly, as they may be contaminated by cells from adjoining colonies that have traveled on the filter surface. Therefore, questionable colonies should be picked and streaked onto the surface of a differential medium to ensure their purity before further testing.

5.0 Safety

- 5.1 Standard safety practices should be observed by persons using these materials in the laboratory.
- 5.2 Any materials containing living or viable microbes should be disinfected or sterilized by accepted standard methods before being discarded.
- 5.3 Refer to the MSDS for specific product information.

6.0 Equipment and supplies

- 6.1 Incubator set at $35^{\circ}\text{C}\pm 0.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ with provision for maintaining materials at above 80% humidity.
- 6.2 Filter funnel apparatus for 47 mm membrane filters, with a vacuum source.
- 6.3 Dissecting microscope (10-15X) with built-in light sources.
- 6.4 Sterile disposable or properly cleaned (by well-known standard methods) glass or plastic ware including 1 and 10 mL pipettes, sample collection containers, flasks, graduated cylinders, and diluent containers.
- 6.5 Sterile forceps
- 6.6 Sterile 50 mm diameter petri dishes with absorbent pads
- 6.7 Sterile 0.45 μm pore size, 47 mm diameter micropore filters for sample filtering
- 6.8 Sterile Dilution and Rinse water prepared in accordance with standard methods.
- 6.9 Biohazard bag

7.0 Reagents and Standards

- 7.1 Colichrome™ MF ECC-A medium of Roth Bioscience LLC is provided in a broth for using 1.8-2 mL/dish. The medium should be kept frozen (0°C or below) and has an expiration time of 12 months. (It may be kept at ambient temperature of less than 35°C for 2-3 weeks, or refrigerated for 2 months.)
- 7.2 Preparation of the Medium for use: The broth medium should be thawed before use. The thawed medium can be kept refrigerated for up to 2 weeks. The broth medium may be refrozen if not all used in one procedure.
- 7.3 Make a 10% solution of sodium thiosulfate using reagent-grade water.

8.0 Sample collection, De-chlorination, Preservation, Shipment and Storage

- 8.1 Collect samples in a sterile, clean wide mouth glass or heat resistant plastic bottle with a leak proof closure, all of which is non-toxic in use. A pre-sterilized, sealable, non-toxic plastic bag may also be used for sample collection.
- 8.2 For potable water, open the tap and allow the water to run for 2-3 minutes and then collect the sample using aseptic technique to avoid contamination. For other sample types, aseptically collect water that is representative of the source.
- 8.3 Samples with residual chlorine should be neutralized at the time of collection by adding 1 mL of a 10% solution of sodium thiosulfate (or the equivalent) per liter of sample.
- 8.4 Samples should be tested as soon as possible after collection. If processing is not done

within 1 hour, the sample should be held on ice or refrigerated at 2-8°C. Potable water samples should be tested or processed within a maximum holding time of 30 hours of collection and non-potable samples should be tested or processed within a maximum holding time of 8 hours of collection.

9.0 Quality Control

9.1 Colichrome™ MF ECC-A is tested for quality control at the time of manufacture and is certified to meet specifications. Each lot should be tested by the using laboratory by preparing a plate of the medium to serve as a positive control, negative control, and uninoculated control by spotting the filter with pure broth cultures.

Prepare pure broth cultures of *E. coli*, a typical coliform (ie. *Enterobacter*), and *Aeromonas hydrophila* as positive controls, and non-coliforms (ie. *Pseudomonas*) as negative controls.

Place a filter on the pad of one of the plates containing Colichrome™ MF ECC-A medium. Spot the filter in five locations: one with *E. coli*, one with *Enterobacter*, one with *Aeromonas* positive controls, a fourth with a non-coliform for the negative control, and a fifth with sterile diluent for the uninoculated control.

Incubate the plate 24 to 48 hours at 35°C±0.5°C. The *positive* controls should have typical colors (dark blue, dark pink/red, pale yellow), the non-coliforms (negative) control growth should be colorless, and the diluent control should have no colony growth.

Colonies from the controls may be picked and tested further with various diagnostic media if desired.

10.0 Calibration and Standardization

10.1 Colichrome™ MF ECC-A calibration or standardization is not required.

10.2 Incubators should be tested daily to ensure maintenance of proper temperature. Thermometers used should be tested at least annually against an NIST certified thermometer.

11.0 Procedure

11.1 Test Procedure

11.1.1 Using proper technique, filter the sample through a 47 mm, 0.45µm pore size membrane filter. Rinse the filter funnel twice with at least 20 mL of sterile diluent/rinse to complete the filtration. Transfer the filter to a petri dish containing a pad saturated with 1.8- 2 mL of the Colichrome™ MF ECC-A broth, invert the dish and incubate at 35°C±0.5°C for 24 to 48 hours. (The pad should only be saturated and should not have pooled broth when tilted. Depending on the brand of dishes/pads, the proper amount of broth may vary. Too much broth results in possible spreaders on the membrane surface.)

11.2 Interpretation

11.2.1 Check the filter surface for colony forming units. Generally, colonies are obvious and can be observed with the unaided eye in a normal room or daylight. However, the use of a 10-15X magnifying device is recommended for critical analysis.

11.2.2 The sum of dark blue colonies is the *E. coli* positive count. Pink/red colonies are coliforms, and pale yellow are *Aeromonas*.

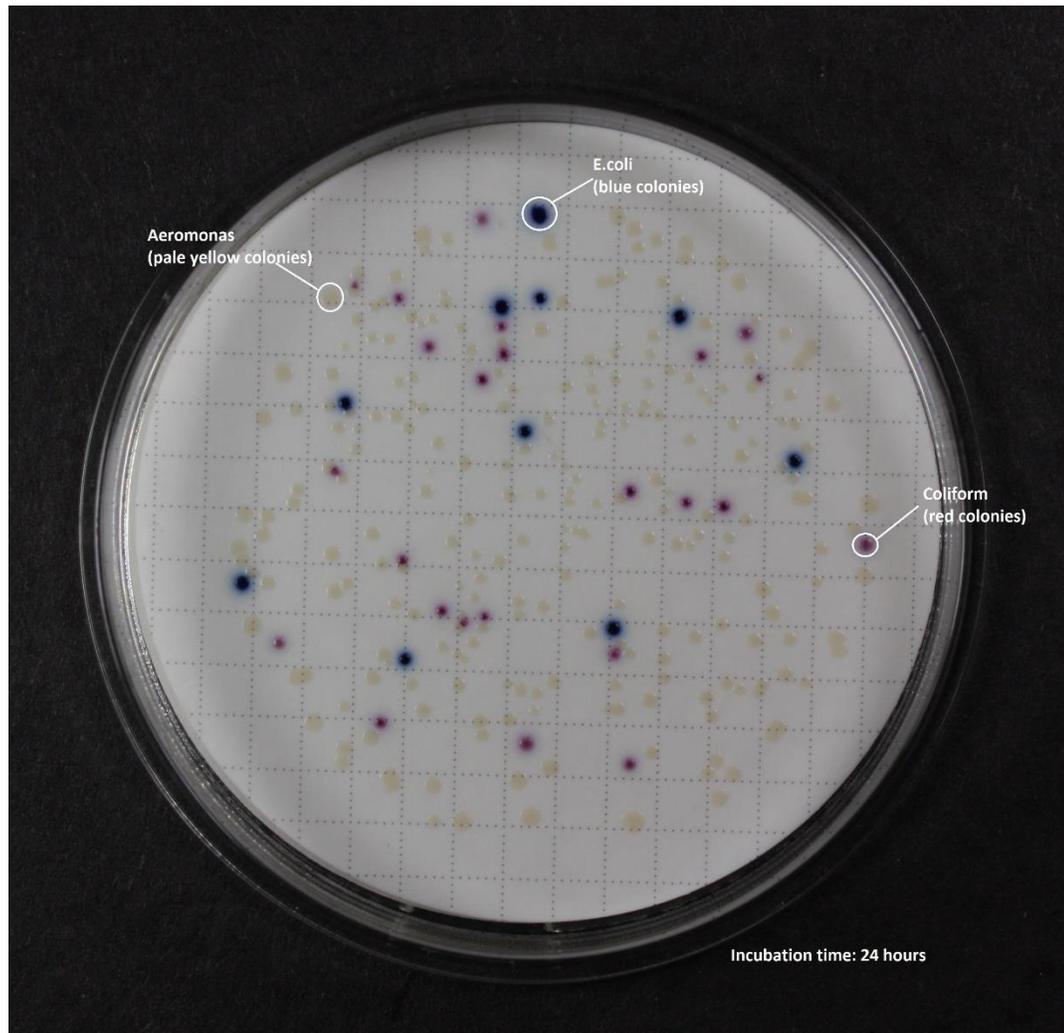
12.0 Data Analysis, Calculation, Interpretation and Reporting Results

12.1 Presence/Absence Test

12.1.1 The presence of at least one typical colony at least 0.5 mm in diameter indicates the sample is positive for that organism.

12.2 Quantitative Test

1.1.1 Count the number of typical CFUs for each organism type present on the membrane filter and record as the number for each / amount of sample used for that test. Then translate to the number of each type as CFUs/100 mL of sample (see 12.1.1). Colonies should be at least 0.5 mm diameter to be counted.



13.0 Method Performance Characteristics

13.1 Specificity - In a study done to compare Colichrome™ MF ECC to the m-TEC Method for the detection and enumeration of *coliforms* from disinfected wastewater effluent, the false positive error was 3.8% and the false negative error was less than 1.0%. That is, of 105 CFUs judged to be *coliforms* (green/teal) which were picked and subjected to Enterotube® analysis, only 4 were identified as other than *coliforms*. And of 131 CFUs judged to be *coliforms* other than *coliforms* (pink/magenta) which were picked and subjected to Enterotube analysis, only 1 was identified as other than a true coliform.

13.2 Comparability - The Pearson Coefficient for the parallel analyses on the Colichrome™ MF and the m-TEC methods within the same laboratory was 0.928. T- test analyses indicated no significant differences between the methods at the 95% confidence level.

14.0 Pollution Prevention

14.1 Laboratory personnel should use pollution control techniques to minimize waste generation wherever possible. Where this is not possible at the source, recycling should be practiced.

15.0 Waste Management

15.1 Each laboratory is responsible to comply with all federal, state and local regulations governing waste management. Special emphasis should be placed on hazardous waste identification rules and land disposal restrictions and on protecting the air, water, and land by minimizing and controlling all release from fume hoods and bench operations. Compliance is also required with any sewerage discharge permits and regulations. Federal, state or local authorities should be contacted for further specific information.

16.0 Troubleshooting

16.1 Count the number of colonies detected by dark blue to purple, light to dark/red and pale yellow colonies present on the plate between 15-24 hr incubation and record as the number of number of E. coli/coliform/Aeromonads volume of sample for that test.

Dark blue to purple colonies for E. coli, light to dark pink/red colonies for other coliforms and pale yellow for Aeromonas