(e.g., chill to reduce the internal pressure, remove the valve, and pour). Remove any residual contents by rinsing with suitable solvents, then rinse with a few portions of methanol. Retain as a unit the container, the valve, and all associated parts, and heat them at 100° for 5 min. Cool, weigh, record the weight as W_3, and determine the net fill weight ($W_1 - W_3$) for each container tested. [NOTE—If the average net fill weight has been determined previously, that value may be used in place of the value ($W_1 - W_3$) above.] The requirements are met if the average leakage rate per year for the 12 containers is not more than 3.5% of the net fill weight, and none of the containers leaks more than 5.0% of the net fill weight per year. If 1 container leaks more than 5.0% per year, and if none of the containers leaks more than 7.0% per year, determine the leakage rate of an additional 24 containers as directed herein. Not more than 2 of the 36 containers leak more than 5.0% of the net fill weight per year, and none of the 36 containers leaks more than 7.0% of the net fill weight per year. Where the net fill weight is less than 15 g and the label bears an expiration date, the requirements are met if the average leakage rate of the 12 containers is not more than 525 mg per year and none of the containers leaks more than 750 mg per year. If 1 container leaks more than 750 mg per year but not more than 1.1 g per year, determine the leakage rate of an additional 24 containers as directed herein. Not more than 2 of the 36 containers leak more than 750 mg per year, and none of the 36 containers leaks more than 1.1 g per year. This test is in addition to the customary in-line leak testing of each container.

⟨610⟩ ALTERNATIVE MICROBIOLOGICAL SAMPLING METHODS FOR NONSTERILE INHALED AND NASAL PRODUCTS

INTRODUCTION

Proper microbiological sampling of microbiologically susceptible nonsterile products can be difficult because these products are often filled into unique primary containers that are designed to protect the product from inadvertent contamination during storage and use. These unique designs may increase the difficulty of taking an aseptic sample of sufficient size or volume for microbiological testing. Unless special approaches are used, products such as inhaled, nasal liquid, or powder dosage forms can be difficult to sample without potential exposure to extraneous microbial contamination. This general test chapter provides these special approaches for sampling either low- or high-content inhaled or nasal dosage forms. Alternative sampling approaches may provide better ways to sample containers in an aseptic manner. Any alternative methodology should employ aseptic techniques and should be conducted under environmental and other conditions that are appropriate for aseptic sampling.

INHALED OR NASAL DOSAGE FORMS

Low-content inhaled and nasal drug products (low-content INDP) are products that have a target fill of less than 100 mg of powder or 1 mL of liquid formulation per unit (primary container). Examples are pre-metered inhalation powders, more commonly known as dry powder inhalers (DPIs), and single-dose nasal sprays.

High-content INDP are multidose drug products that have a target fill of more than 100 mg of powder or more than 1 mL of liquid formulation per unit. Examples are aerosols for inhalation and nasal delivery, known as metered-dose inhalers (MDIs); device-metered inhalation powders; and multidose nasal sprays.

The appropriate sample quantity or volume should be based on the test methodology, including any relevant general test chapters, such as ⟨61⟩ *Microbiological Examination of Nonsterile Products: Microbial Enumeration Tests* and ⟨62⟩ *Microbiological Examination of Nonsterile Products: Tests for Specified Microorganisms*. Testing may be performed on the unpackaged bulk dry powder or liquid formulation or the finished product. If testing is performed on the bulk material alone, then the process leading from the bulk to the finished product should be validated for its ability to prevent microbial contamination. Testing should be performed on the finished product if this process is not validated.

SAMPLE SIZE DETERMINATION

For each microbiological test, sample 10 drug product containers or units or a number of units that can provide a minimum of 1 gram of product that are representative of the batch. For batch sizes smaller than 200 units (e.g., batches used in clinical trials), sample size may be reduced to 1% of the units or 1 unit, whichever is greater. The contents of individual containers may be pooled for testing.

Bulk Testing for Low-Content INDP

Bulk lot testing may be preferable for low-content INDP in lieu of finished product testing to allow larger sample sizes that are representative of the batch, without unduly increasing the risk of inadvertent microbial contamination. Bulk testing can be