



BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINE: FOREIGN BODY CONTROL



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Introduction

The food industry is becoming more complex, with longer supply chains and a greater variety of food types combined with more intricate packaging materials to accommodate consumers' changing tastes. These factors, coupled with pressure to improve facility performance with faster manufacturing lines, are resulting in an increased risk of physical contamination in products. This risk can be reduced using effective controls, processes and detection systems.

The risks of physical contamination during production are reduced through control measures and a robust hazard analysis. However, contamination can occur and could become a serious risk to consumer health and potentially impact a brand's reputation. Ideally, manufacturers work on the basis of removal and prevention rather than detection and use systems that ensure they meet regulatory, customer and consumer requirements.

Modern product inspection systems can spot a wider range of foreign bodies in smaller sizes and in sharper resolution. The correct specification, installation, and operation of technology is considered as the most effective means of preventing physically contaminated product from reaching the consumer.

Any manufacturing or storage and transport business must have an effective control system to prevent product contamination by foreign bodies. The first place to start is to consider raw materials and the products the site produces. The method of removal, prevention and detection of foreign bodies will be different for flour, liquid, particulate products, bulk or packaged materials. Control may include the use of equipment such as filters, magnets, metal detectors, X-ray equipment and optical sorting and removal technology.

This guideline will be of interest to anyone responsible for product safety, purchasing equipment and product recalls. It will help to:

- identify the requirements for inspection equipment
- select the design and position of equipment
- monitor and validate equipment
- undertake testing of equipment.

The contamination of a product means the physical presence of something not intended to be there. If a contaminant makes it to the final product it can result in:

- considerable risk to consumer health
- detrimental impact on a brand's reputation
- the cost of a product recall, both direct and indirect
- damage to machinery and equipment.

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