THE HANDLING AND CLEANING OF TEST SIEVES

It should always be remembered that a test sieve is a precision measuring instrument and should be used with care, cleaned regularly and stored in a safe dry place. The Endecotts carton has been designed to act as a storage container.

Particles should not be forced through a test sieve. Even the gentle brushing of material through the finer meshes is generally undesirable but this is occasionally unavoidable for certain materials that are otherwise difficult to sieve. If brushing is found necessary, care should be taken to avoid damage to the sieve and particle breakage. Sieves which are in constant use should be inspected regularly for mesh defects.

Sieves should be cleaned after each analysis and replaced in their storage container. Most of the near-mesh particles, which block the sieve apertures can usually be removed by inverting the sieve and gently tapping the frame. Failing this, the underside of the gauze may be stroked gently with a soft brush.

Sieves may also be cleaned by washing in warm water containing a liquid synthetic detergent. The sieve should afterwards be rinsed thoroughly in clean water and dried quickly in a warm atmosphere. To avoid mesh distortion, the sieve should not be heated to a temperature in excess of 80°C. Sieves that have been used for wet sieving should not be allowed to dry-out before attempting to clean them because material caught in the mesh may become permanently trapped. Acid or alkaline solutions and the use of organic chemicals for cleaning are not generally recommended.

The above methods are usually quite suitable for keeping test sieves in good order without affecting their accuracy. The brass sieve is most widely used, but care may have to be taken when sieving certain chemicals, especially hygroscopic salts, that the sieves are always washed and dried after each test. For the sizing of substances which are liable to corrode brass we recommend the use of stainless steel sieves.

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