

Defect Library of Blow-Fill-Seal Containers

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2 Versions Control

Version Control	Related Documents	Author	Version	Date
Document Released	See Section 7 Bibliography	Editor Dr. Heino Prinz	1.0	2021-05-07

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3 Preface

The 2020 update of the EU-GMP-Annex 1 (European Comission, 2020) recommends the documentation of container defects used for pharmaceutical packaging. For glass packaging this has been accomplished many years ago, under the umbrella of the Parenteral Drug Organization (PDA). A defect library covers glass containers like ampoules, cartridges, and vials. This library contains descriptions and pictures together with a criticality assessment and is organized under the process and handling aspects of the associated risks.

Based thereon a similarly structured document has been created to cover blow-fill-seal (BFS)-containers.

It applies a classification scheme to systemize the defects along with the positions of their occurrence at the wide variety of the container forms and it capture the different types of defects together with their criticality.

The compendium is divided into three parts. The first part gives the definitions of the individual parts of BFS containers used throughout this compendium as well as the general description of the most important process parts and functions.

The second section generally describes the defect in its process environment or its specific occurrence within the BFS process respectively. In this Part also, the impact of the defects with respect to possible patient or product risks, i.e. their criticality is listed. The systematic divides these defect types into BFS Process defects, and there into extrusion related faults, shortcomings within the formation and filling process and secondary handling deficiencies like punch or marking flaws.

The third part, the library section then shows the specifics of those defects with the help of pictures along with a tabular summary of their most prominent parameters like occurrence position and Designation etc. In addition, this part classifies into the two groups of BFS containers the large volume containers, like bottles used for large volume parenterals (LVP), disinfectants or rinsing solutions and small volume containers, like ampoules used for ophthalmics, inhalation drug products or small volume parenterals (SVP).

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4 Part One: Definitions

4.1 Container types and definitions of their parts

Container Type or part	Abbreviation/ Synonyms	Description
Block	Card	A multitude formation of single containers. Usually the BFS creates larger Blocks which are separated into smaller blocks/cards or singles.
Bottle		Container with a total volume of 50 ml or more, e.g. for large volume parenterals (LVPs)
Expiry Date Engraving	Exp	The engraving of a specific alphanumeric string which identifies the production Date of the drug product. Most often on Flags
Flag		Bottom part of the container which is formed like a flag. Often used for Labelling, Printing of Lot/Exp markings
Hanger		Functional Part on the bottom of IV Bottles to fix the bottle on a stand in upside down position for infusions.
Large Volume Parenteral container	LVP	Bottle-like or bag-like container used for large volume parenterals.
Lot Identification engraving	Lot	The engraving of a specific alphanumeric string which identifies the production lot of the drug product. Most often on Flags
Luer		Specifically formed shape of head area to ensure tight connections to ports, syringes or needle ports. See also ISO 80369
Luer Lock		A Luer with additional function to interlock the connection to the port, see also ISO 80369
Neck	Shoulder	The part of the container that describes the transition between head and body. Shoulder is mostly used with bottles
Port	Needle Port, Hub, access port	Describes the connectivity or access function element of the container to infusion sets (ISO 8536) or tubes or needles

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Small Volume Parenteral container	SVP	Ampoule-type container used mainly for injectable drug formulations.
Twist Off tab		Upper part of the head of an ampoule type container formed as a tab. Is used as handle to open the container; in rare cases also found in bottles
Vial Type Design	Vial	An Ampoule Design with a flat and circular Footprint. Similarities to glass vial shapes.
Wall		Side areas of the container body

Table 1 Definitions and Naming conventions of BFS containers

4.2 Process parts and functions

BFS processing covering rotary and shuttle machines is extensively described by Oschmann et al. 1999 and by the BFS International Operators Association 2016 and therefor only will be summarized in this document.

4.3 Typical properties and designations for BFS-Container (non-defects)

BFS container typically extruded from polyolefins like LDPE, HDPE and PP are usually produced in two major forms as ampoules for small volumes (0.5ml to 50ml) and as bottles for larger volumes (from 50ml up to 2000ml).

Ampulle / ampoule

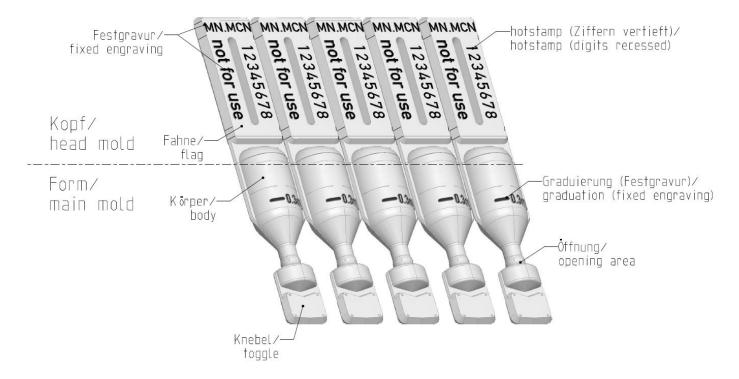


Figure 1 Drawing of a BFS Ampule Card

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Flasche / bottle

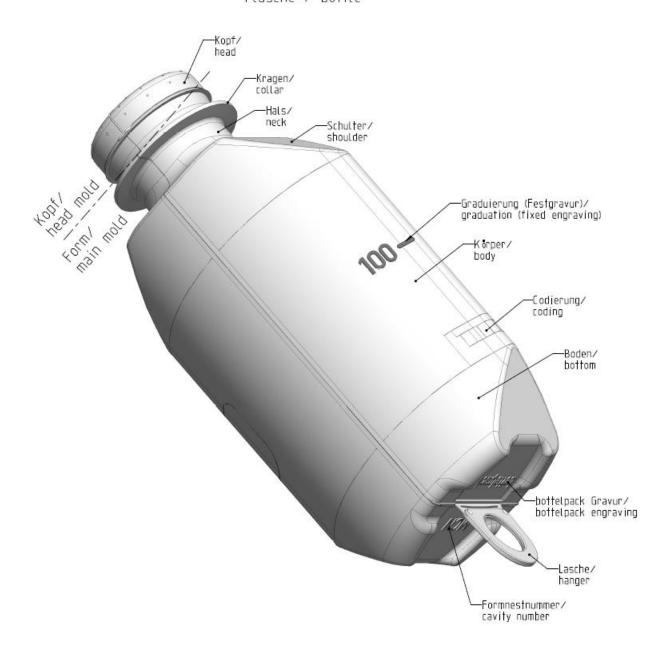
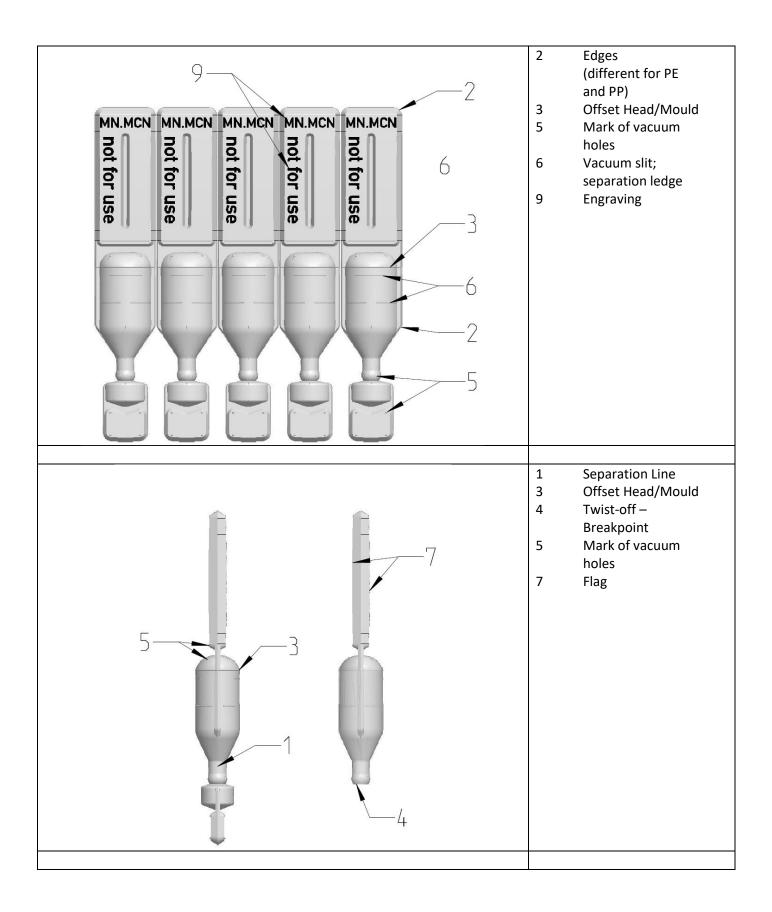


Figure 2 Drawing of a BFS Bottle

The names and definitions of the parts of these containers are given in the tables below.





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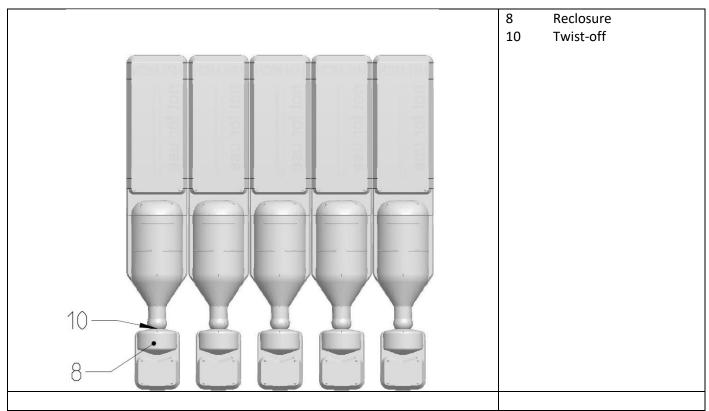
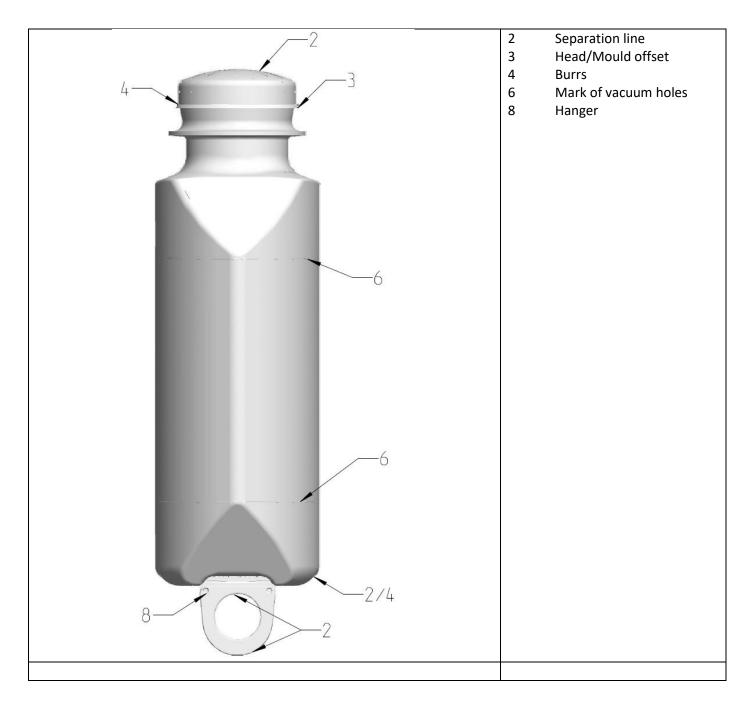


Table 2 Part names and definition of BFS ampoules







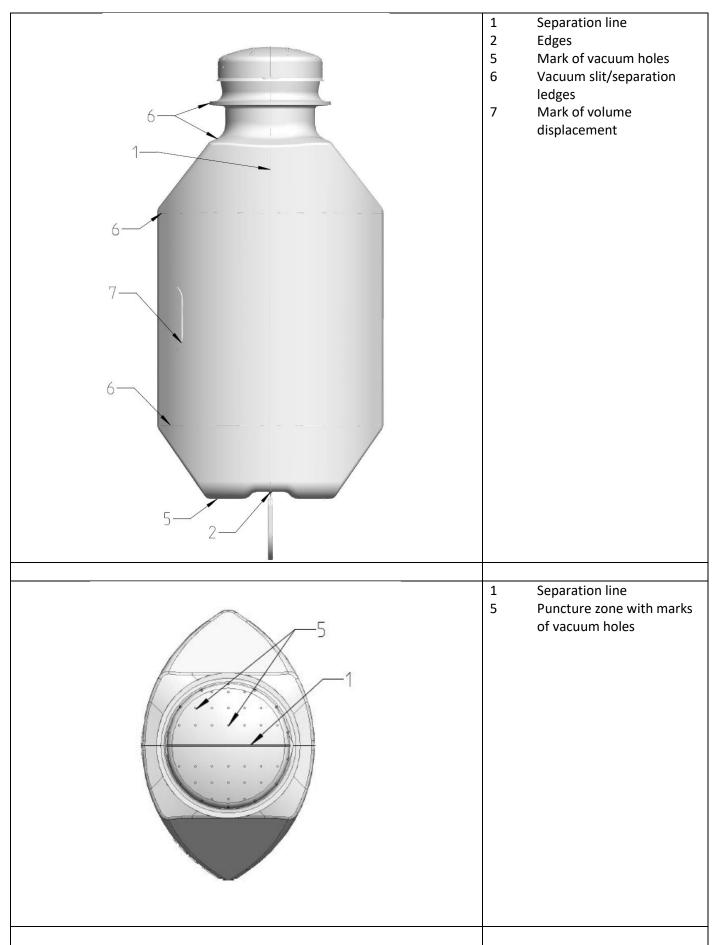


Table 3 Part names and definition of BFS bottles

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5 Part Two Defects in BFS

In the following descriptions we will picture out some of the defects that could arise during BFS-Processing including the separation of single containers from a block, e.g. by punching. It does not claim completeness but gives a good overview of the challenges a production process must cope with.

5.1 Defect types and criticality

The following table summarizes the defect types with their manifestations or designations respectively.

Defect Type	Manifestations
Deformation (handling)	General Deformation
3,	Scratches
Deformation (moulding)	Collapsed Twist off
, o,	Dent
	Form defect
	Function Defect
	General Deformation
	Markings
	Inflated flag/hanger
	Mould offset
Engraving	Illegibility
Excess Material (inside)	Excess Material
, ,	Folding
	Plugged
Excess Material (Outside)	Folding
	Protrusion
Lack of Material	Cut
	Hole external
	Hole internal
	(unwanted connection
	between internal cavities)
	Thinned area
Particles	Embedded particles, e.g. Black Spots
	Crystallization
	Non embedded e.g. free- floating Particles
	White Spots
Functional Defect	Deformation defect after opening
Other	Deflashing
	Thread Position
	Vacuum
	Puncture
	Mechanical Deformation
	Alignment
	Leaking
	Extrusion
	Trapped Air
	Scratches
	Transparency
	Shadows

Table 4 Defect Types and Definitions of their manifestations of BFS containers



For the container manufacturer the criticality denomination of defects goes along with the Defect Listings in

"Quality Assurance of Pharmaceutical and Cosmetic Packaging Materials—Section: Defect Evaluation List for Blow-moulded Plastic Containers" (see 7),

but for the Pharmaceutical Industry another definition is related to the effects on patient safety and functionalities. Therefore, we use the definition of minor, major and critical as follows.

- Minor: More or less a cosmetic defect.
- Major: could become a functional defect.
- Critical: could affect patient health (i.e defect can cause leakers and therefore a sterility issue or external contamination of product i.e. free particles)

5.2 Extrusion process

Starting from melting of plastic granulates, the extrusion process and the formation and handling of the parison is a potential source of defects. A major topic here can be the introduction of foreign matter in or on the granulates and carbonized material within the parison wall that might end up in black spots embedded in the container side walls.

5.3 Parison control

Another source of defects in the extrusion process might result from misalignment and guiding of the parison. This might lead to crinkles and folding of the container wall.

Also, uneven parison thickness might introduce excess or lack of material. It might introduce a closure clogging in the opening or cause a cloudy structure in the container walls. Thin spots on the container edges might arise from lack of material at these positions.

5.4 Moulding Process

Especially defects arising from the moulding process (i.e. by blow and/ or vacuum forming) might lead to functional failures or improper formed containers which may also affect the subsequent processes like punching or causing handling errors within downstream processes.

Also, a moulding defect might cause scratches or folds. Those defects can become severe and therefore critical defects, because they might cause potential leakers also way apart from the production time. A similar type of defect arises from the punch handling (see later in this paragraph). Additionally, the correct alignment of mould and head mould is critical to the process.

A very special defect is based on vacuum inconsistency in the forming process caused either by vacuum control failure or blocked vacuum holes inside the mould.

The mould defects can vary with geometry and form, and therefore a wide variety of defect presentations can occur.

Especially in shuttle machines a leaking cooling system may create improper sealed and leaking ampoules.

Deformation errors are usually incorrectly formed body, head and shoulder areas or dents in the shoulder. The result is an ampoule not correctly formed on the bottom. Additionally, dash shaped marks along the head of an ampoule or bottle presumably caused by droplets from the filling tube might appear.

Also, the thread formed on the neck of the bottle might be insufficiently shaped.

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Some forms like bellow shaped containers may have inclined bellow structures.

5.5 Filling Process

During filing prominent example of defects are caused by mandrel contact with the parison. This leads to two defect types one is causing leaks at the contact position the other creating excess material inside the container around the contact position by relocating warm and soft plastic material along the mandrel movement.

In some cases, also paraffin is accumulating outside the mandrel and finally dropping down into the container causing white spots on the inner surface.

Extensive overfilling of a container might cause subsequent failures causing insufficient sealing, and therefore leakers. Also, non-embedded (free) particles e.g. from tubing or gasket material might be caused by improper filling processes.

Foaming products may cause leakers in the sealing area. Viscous products can create filling volume issues and variances due to inappropriate chosen machine settings.

5.6 Particles

Particles usually manifest as embedded particles within the container walls or as free-floating particles in the liquid. Whereas the embedded type is most likely either contamination of the raw material or carbonized polymer due to overheating. The free-floating particles could arise from metal parts or gasket material from the filling path or from the cutting process in shuttle machines. When using the closed parison BFS-technology free floating polymer particles are very unlikely to occur. Due to the non-brittle nature of the BFS-polymers the occurrence of free polymer-particulate in a container is very low.

5.7 Separation/Punching process

Typical punch defects are scratches of the container due to improper guiding and/or clamping during the separation process. They are mostly cosmetic and rarely functional defects and therefore classified as of minor defect.

Nevertheless, incorrect punch settings can also cause leaking containers which are critical defects.

5.8 Mechanical Handling and other defects

Other defects could result from handling interactions and other contaminants like abrasion particle usually introduced through the machine process. Especially scratches are common when pick and place systems are involved in downstream processes after the BFS process where the outside of the container is still warm and therefore soft.

Furthermore, the encoding defects coming from "Hot Stamping" or "Laser Engraving" might be seen. They are ranging from reduced legibility to missing parts or letters.

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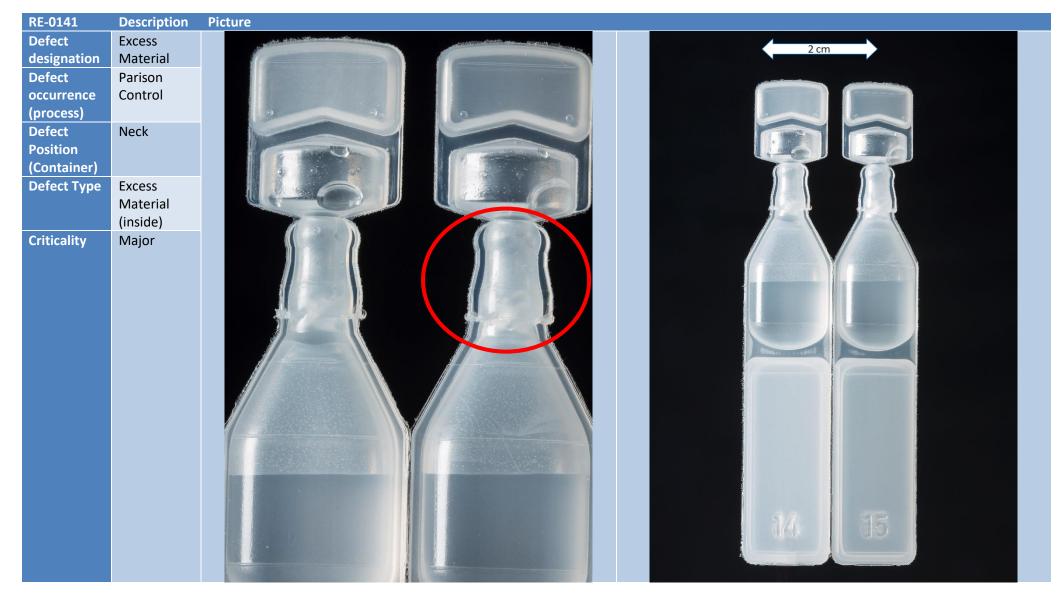
6 Part three: Defect Library (sorted by defect type)

6.1 Excess Material (inside)



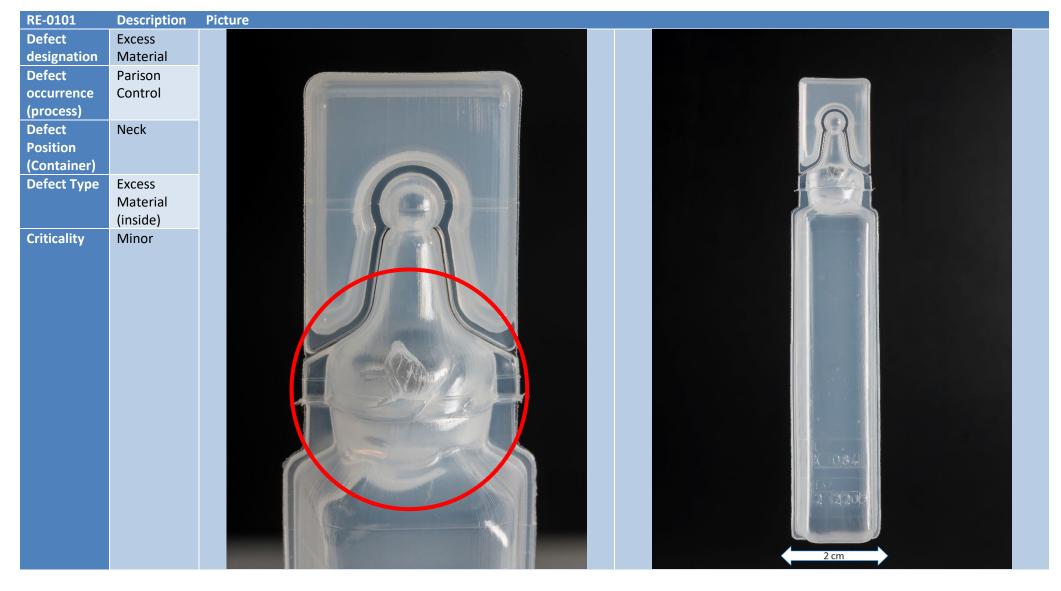
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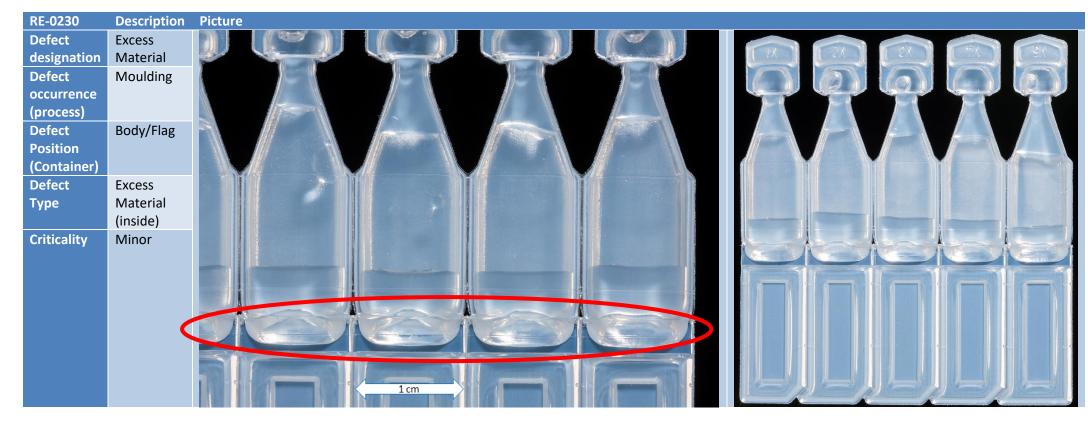
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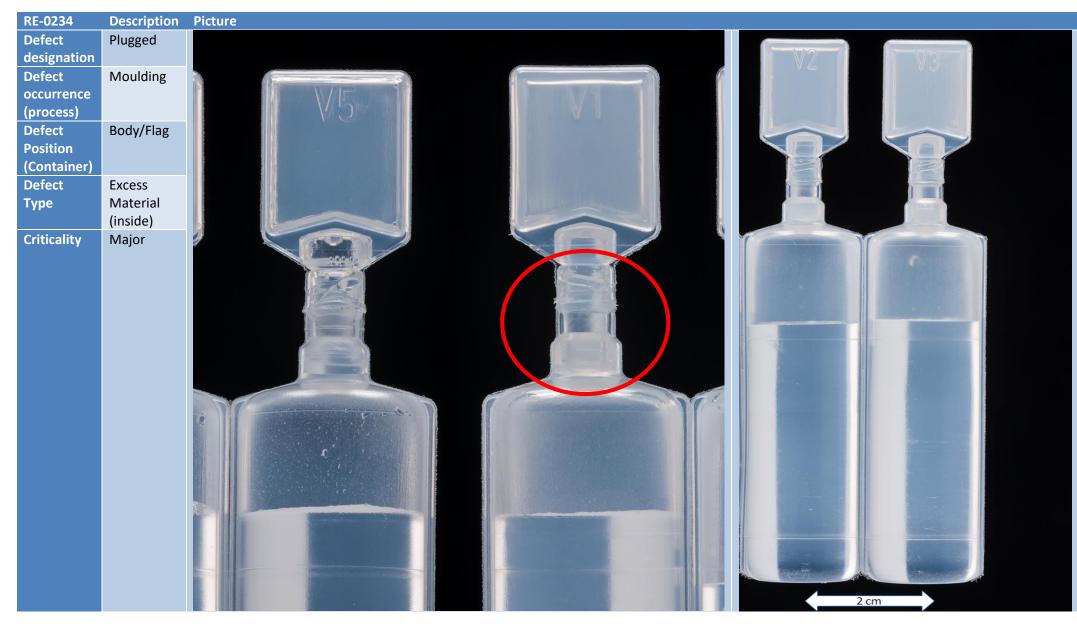
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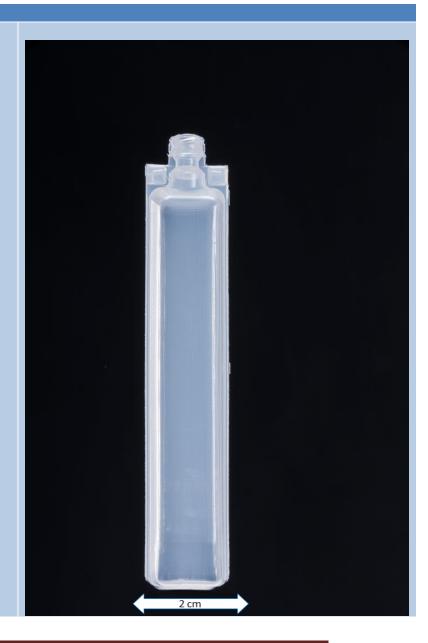


RE-0247 Picture Description Defect Excess designation Material Defect Moulding occurrence (process) Defect Twist Off **Position** (Container) Defect Excess Туре Material (inside) Criticality Minor 2 cm

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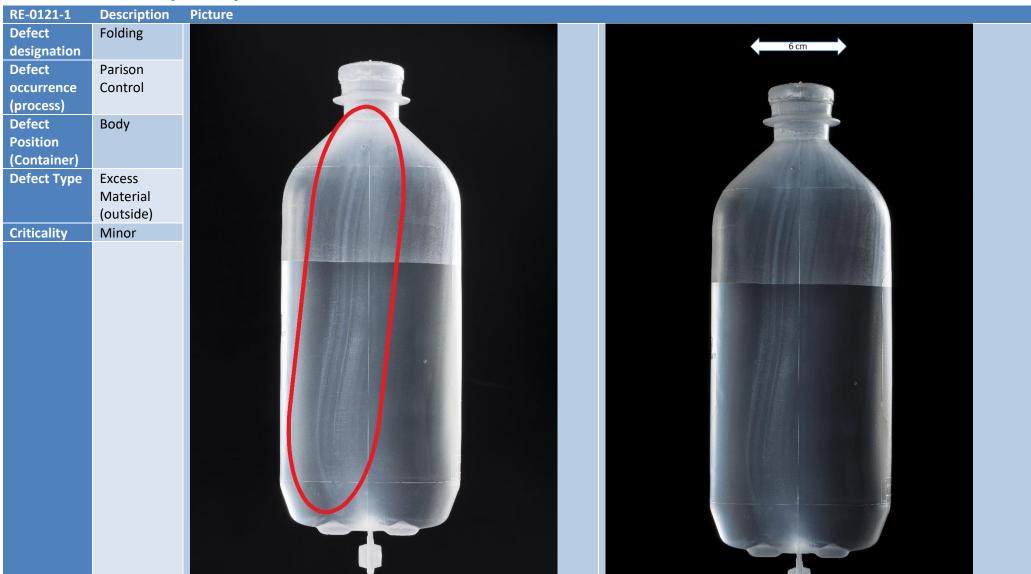
Picture **RE-0278 Description** Defect Excess designation Material Defect Moulding occurrence (process) Defect Twist Off **Position** (Container) Defect Excess Type Material (inside) Criticality Minor/Major (when calibrated Luer)



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6.2 Excess Material (outside)



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RE-0085 **Description** Picture Defect Protrusion designation Defect Punching occurrence (process) Defect Twist Off **Position** (Container) Excess **Defect Type** Material (outside) Criticality Minor 2 cm

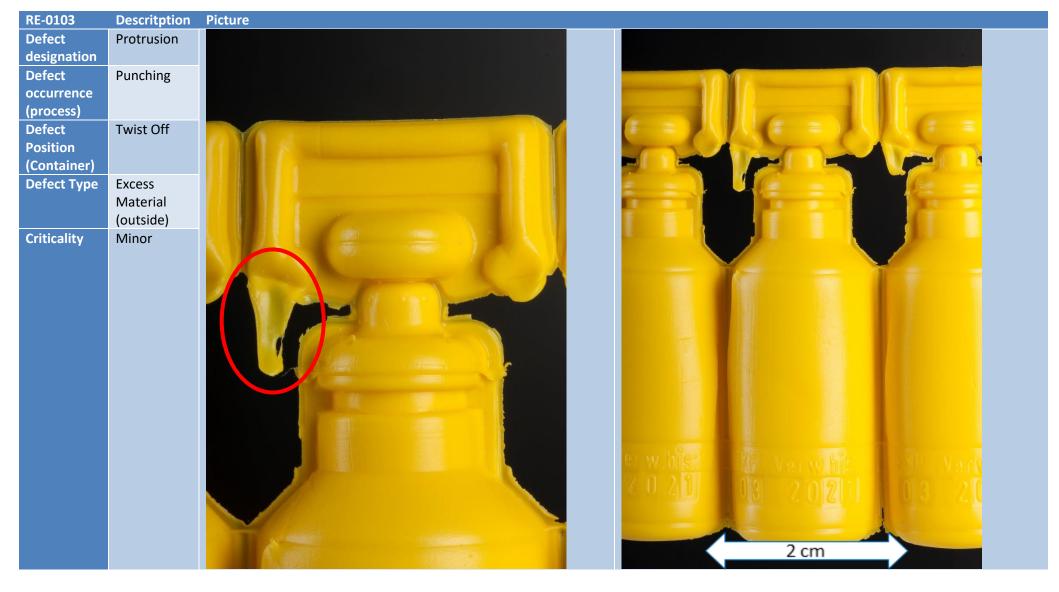
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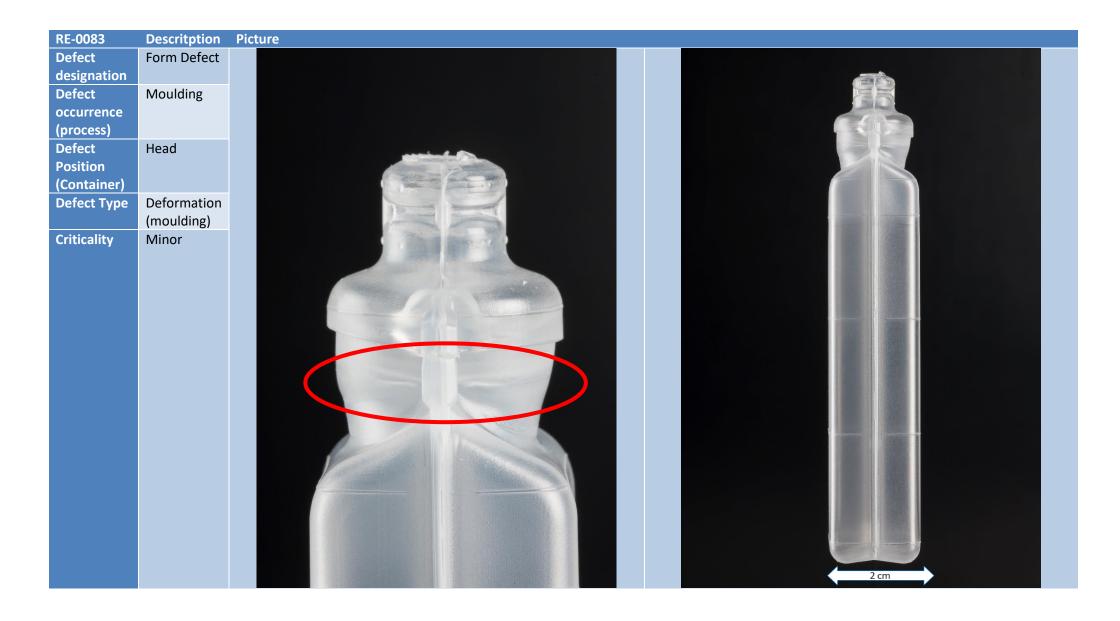


6.3 Deformation (moulding)

RE-0075	Descritption	Picture	
Defect	Function		
designation	defect		
Defect	Moulding		
occurrence			
(process)			
Defect	head		
Position			
Container)	- 6		
Defect Type	Deformation (Manual dispar)		PRODUCTION OF THE PERSON OF TH
Criticality	(Moulding)	A CONTRACTOR OF THE PARTY OF TH	
Criticality	Minor/Major if cap		
	function is		
	affected		
	uncotcu		
		The state of the s	
			2 cm

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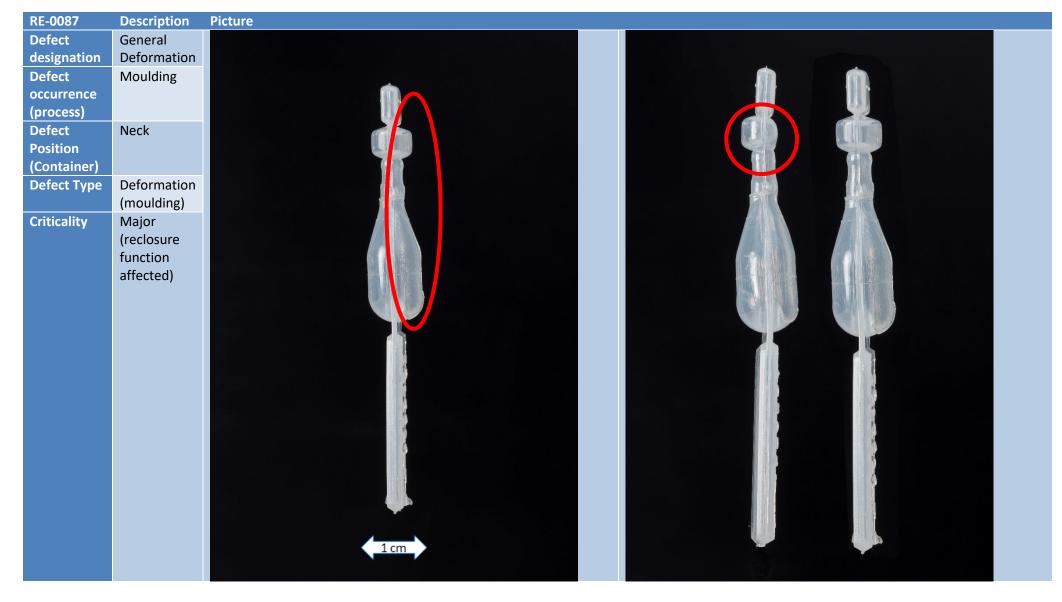
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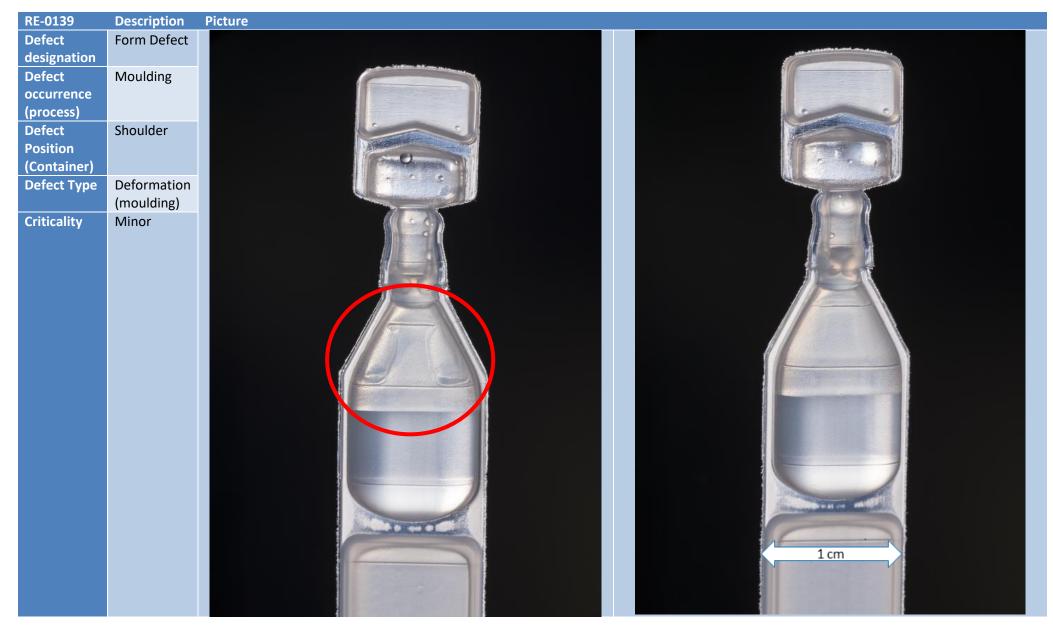
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RE-0124 **Description Picture** Defect Collapsed Twist Off designation Defect Moulding occurrence (process) Defect Head **Position** (Container) Deformation **Defect Type** (moulding) Criticality Minor 2 cm

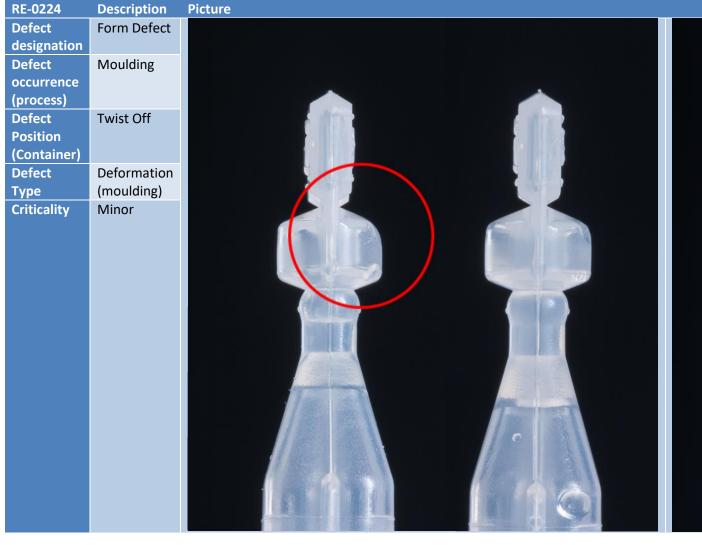
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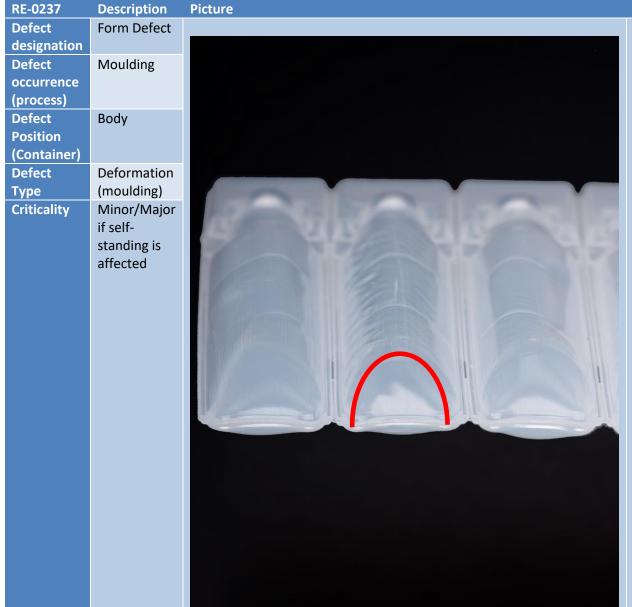






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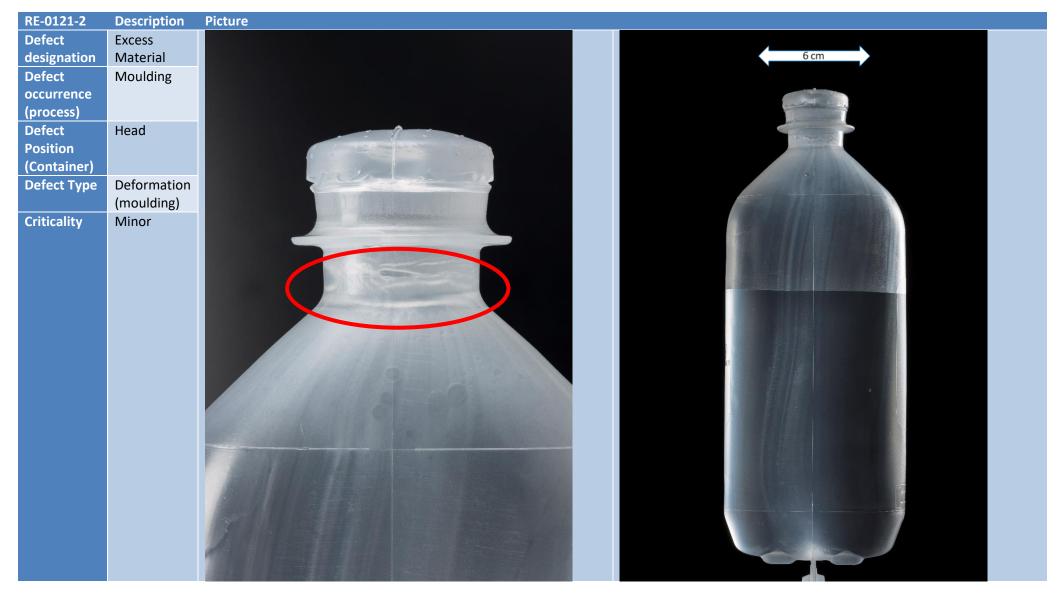
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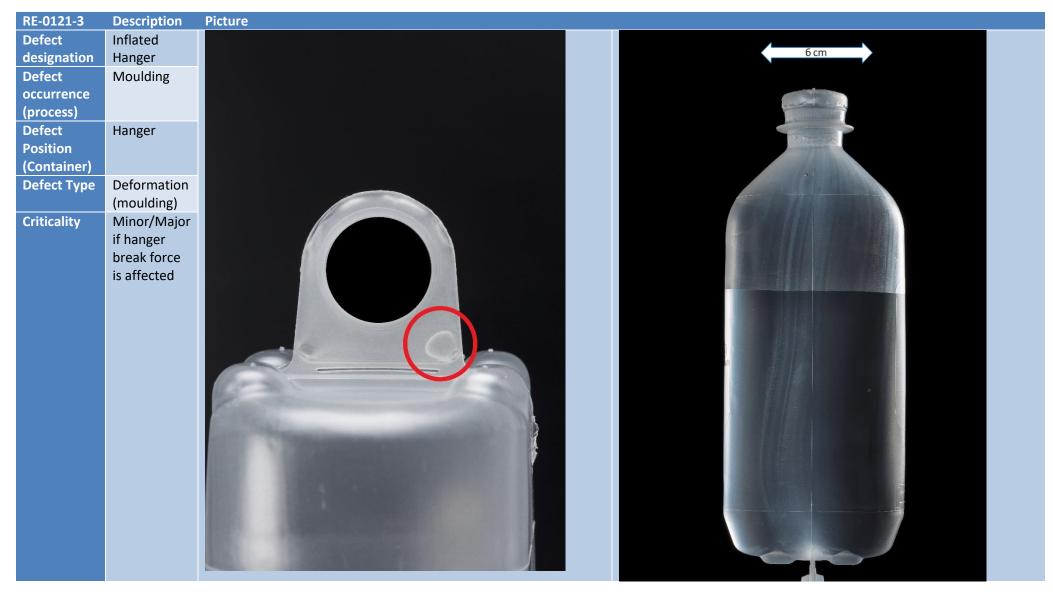
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RE-0133 **Description Picture** Defect Dent designation Defect Moulding occurrence (process) Defect Shoulder **Position** (Container) Deformation **Defect Type** (moulding) Criticality Minor

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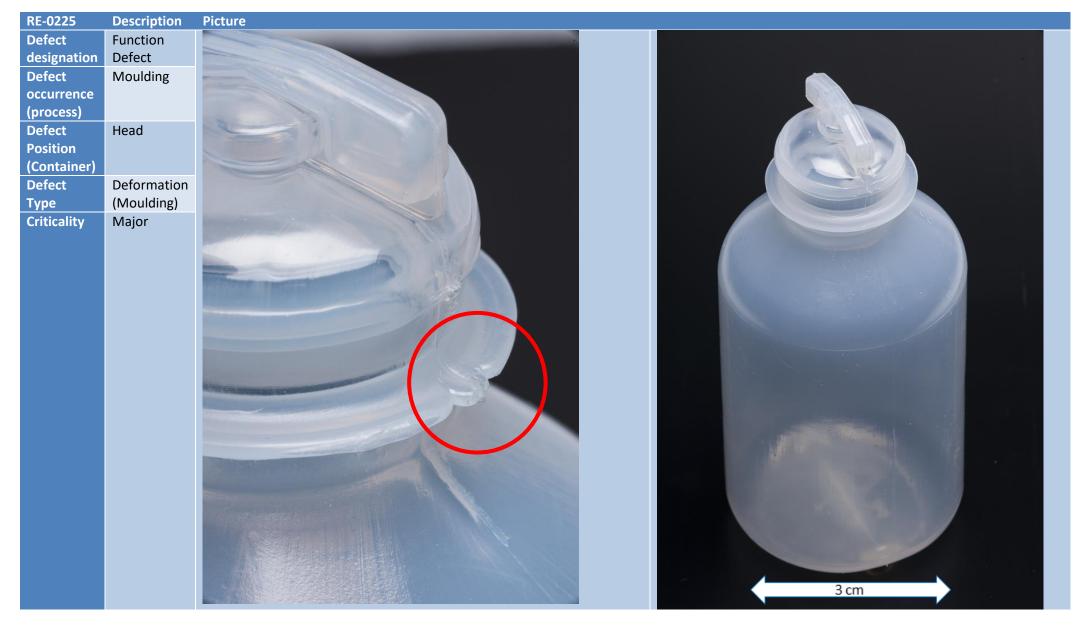
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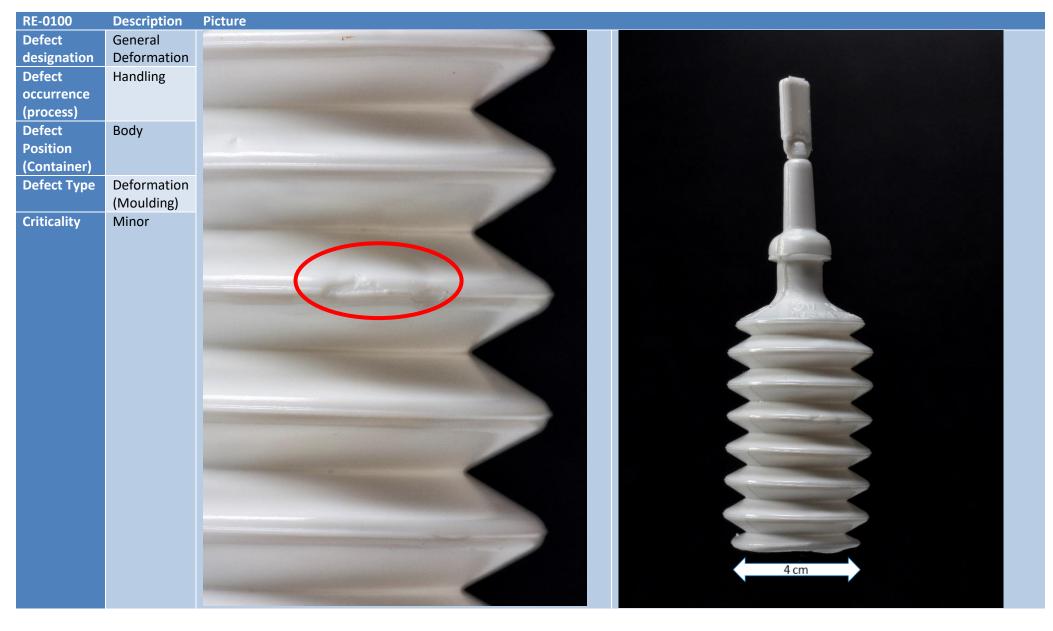


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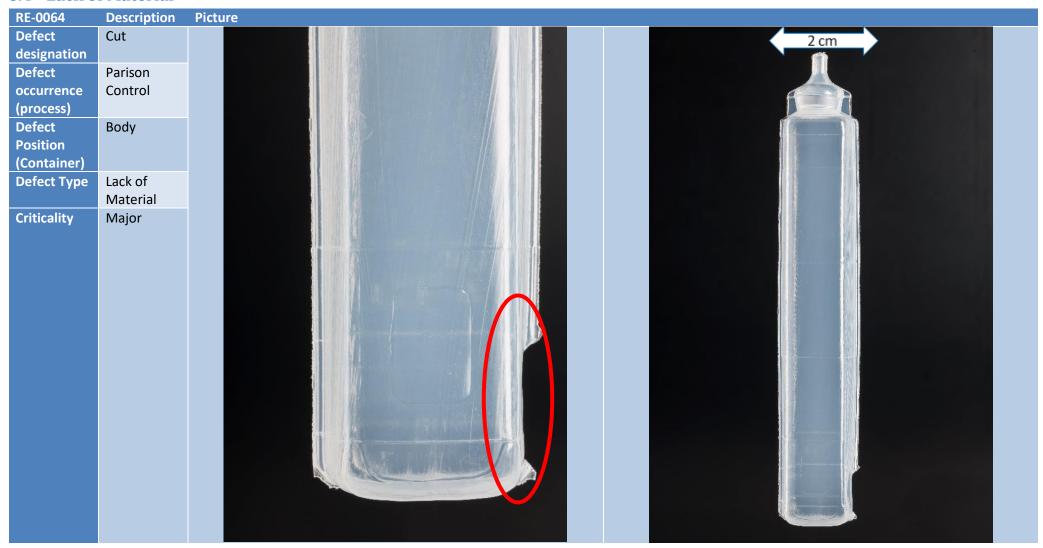




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6.4 Lack of Material



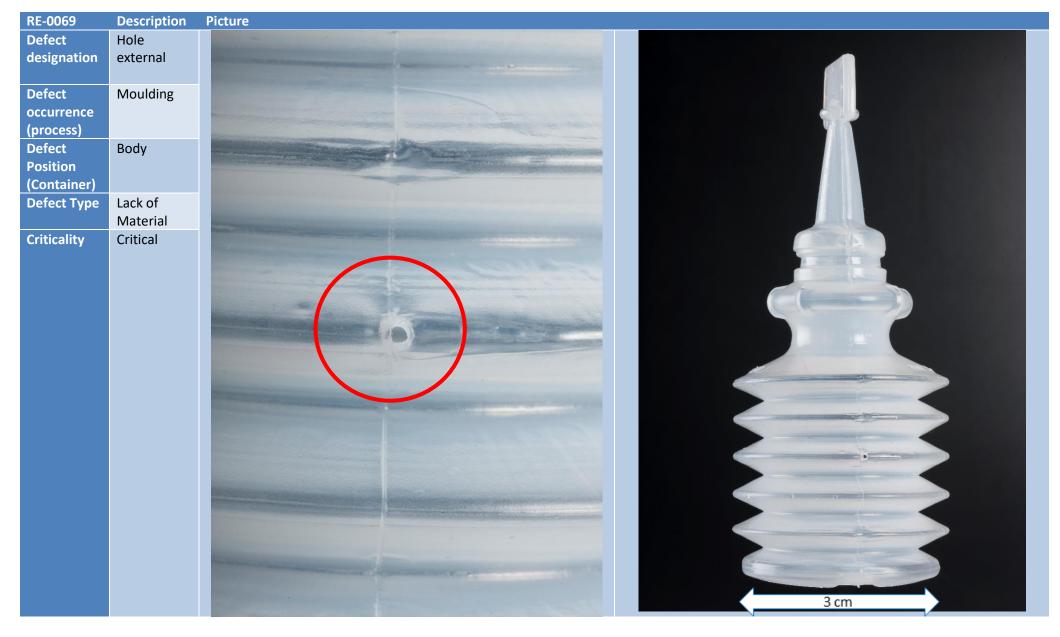
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RE-0093 Description Picture Defect Hole designation external Defect Filling occurrence (process) Defect Shoulder **Position** (Container) Lack of **Defect Type** Material Criticality Critical

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RE-0235	Description	Picture
Defect	Thinned	
designation		
Defect	Moulding	
occurrence		
(process)		
Defect	Bottom	
Position		
(Container)		
Defect	Lack of	
Туре	Material	
Criticality	Minor/Major	
	if wall	
	thickness is	
	out of spec.	
		2 cm

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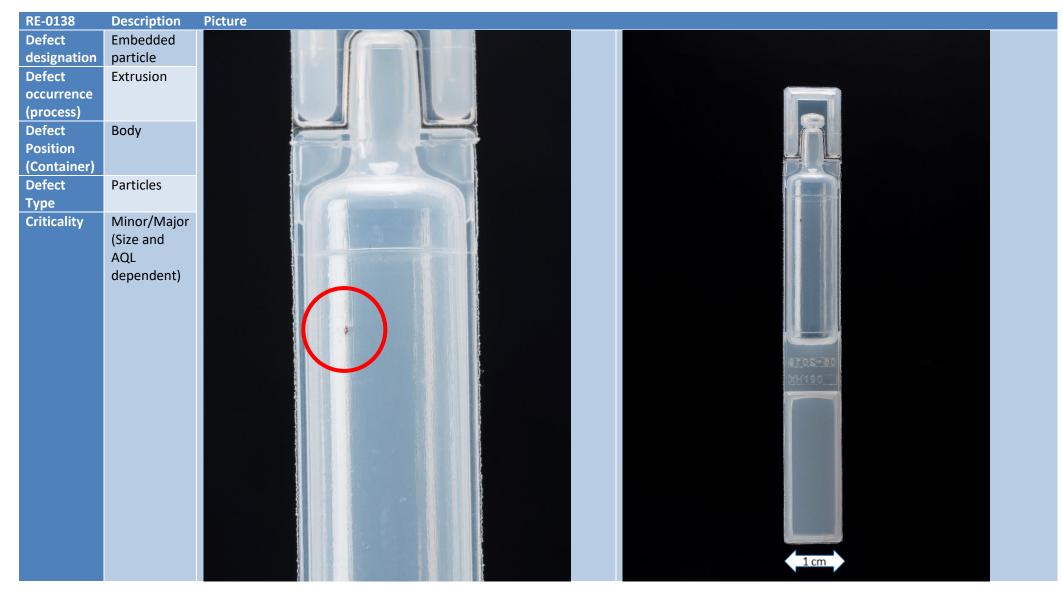


6.5 Particles



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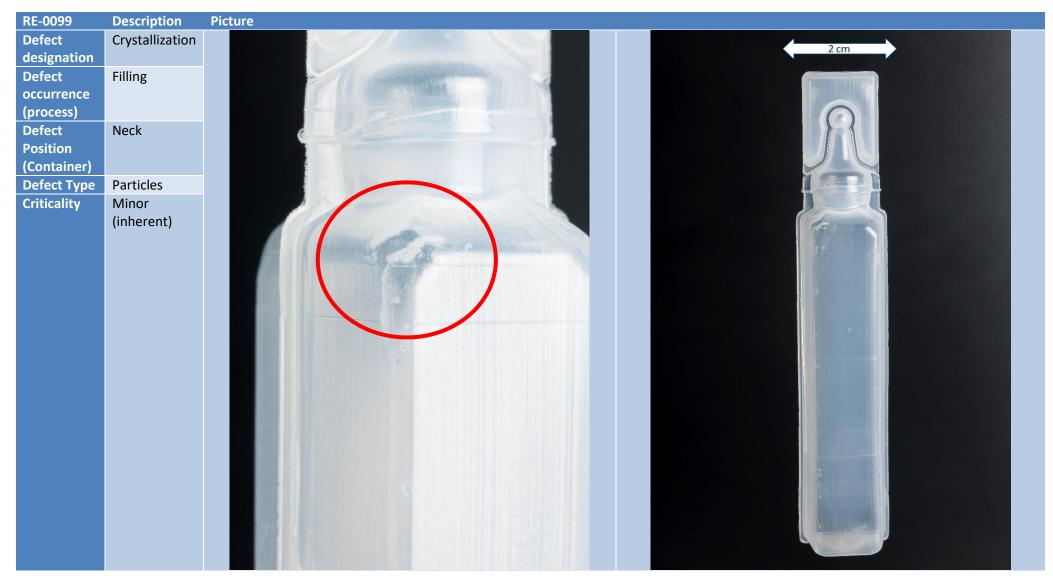
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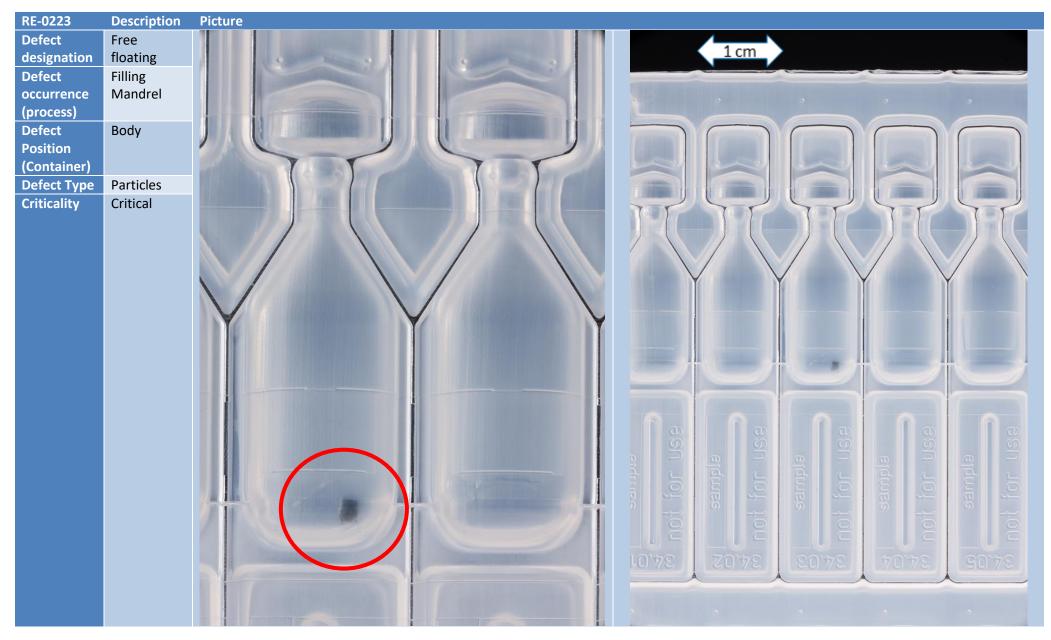
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RE-0210 Description Picture Defect White Spot designation Defect Extrusion occurrence (process) Defect Body **Position** (Container) Defect Type Particles Criticality Minor (Paraffin intrinsic) -20ml -2000 2 cm

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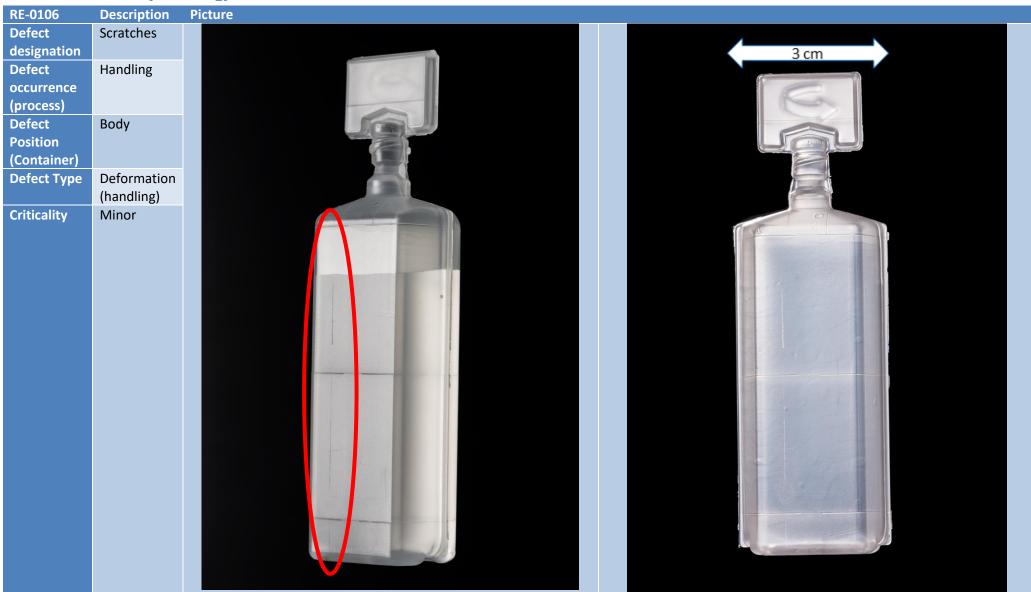




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6.6 Deformation (handling)



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RE-0104 Description Defect Scratches designation Defect Handling occurrence (process) Defect Body **Position** (Container) Deformation **Defect Type** (handling) Criticality Minor





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RE-0277	Description	Picture
Defect	Scratches	
designation		
Defect	Handling	
occurrence	Grippers	
(process)		
Defect	Body	
Position		
(Container)		
Defect	Deformation	
Туре	(handling)	
Criticality	Minor	



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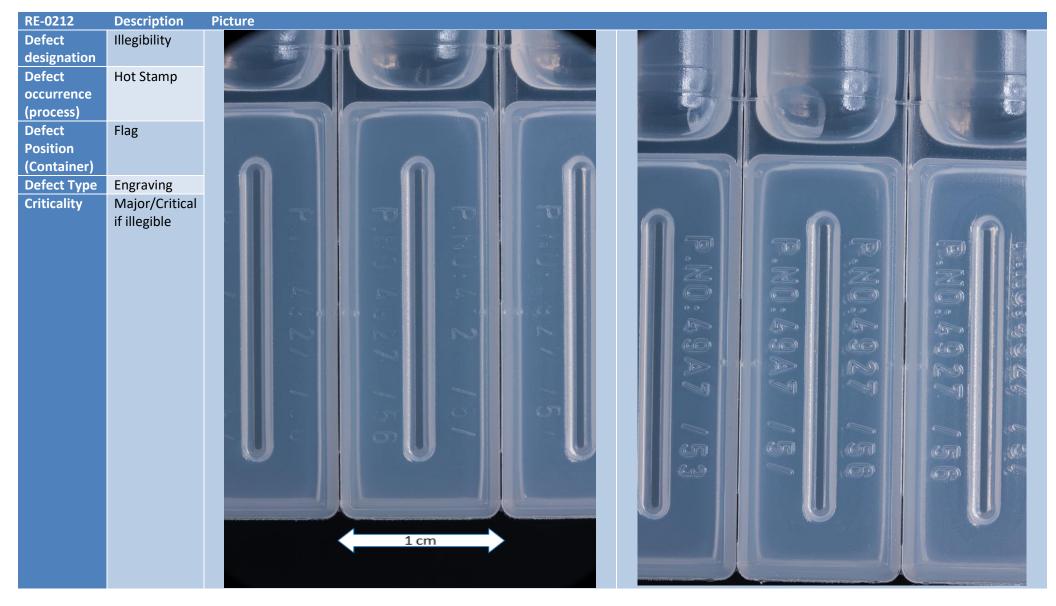


6.7 Engraving



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RE-0217	Description	Picture
RE-0217 Defect designation Defect occurrence (process) Defect Position (Container) Defect Type Criticality	Description Illegibility Hot Stamp Flag Engraving Major/Critical if illegible	Picture Compared to the picture Compare

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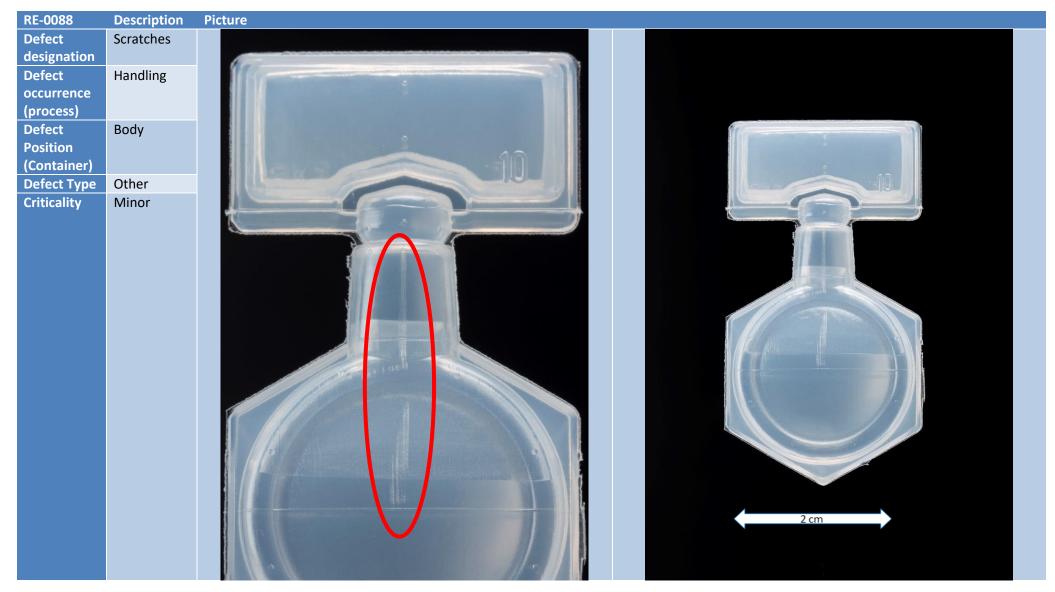


6.8 Other



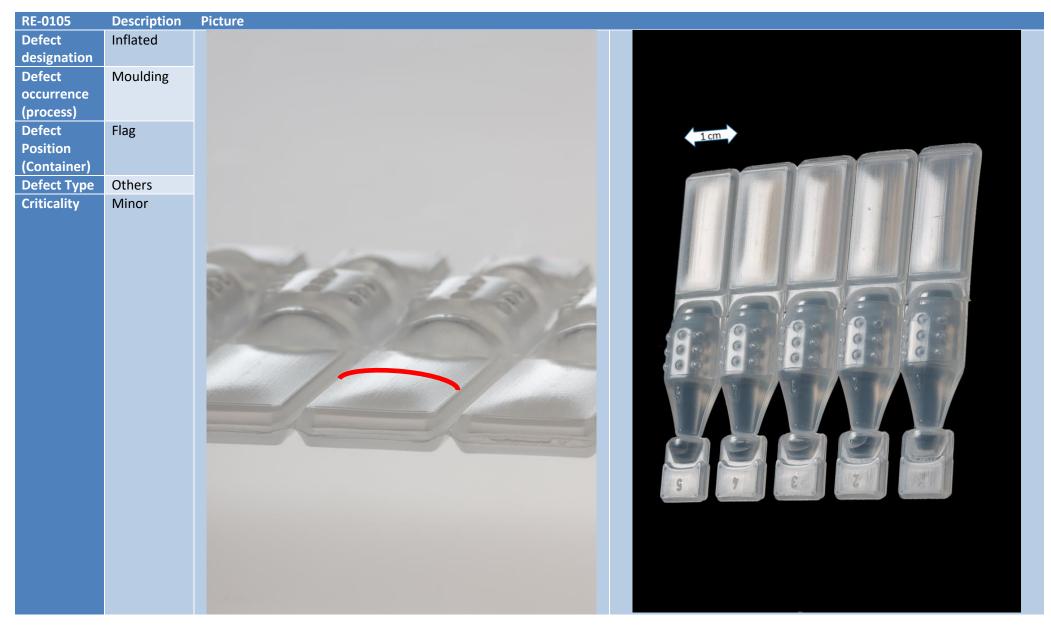
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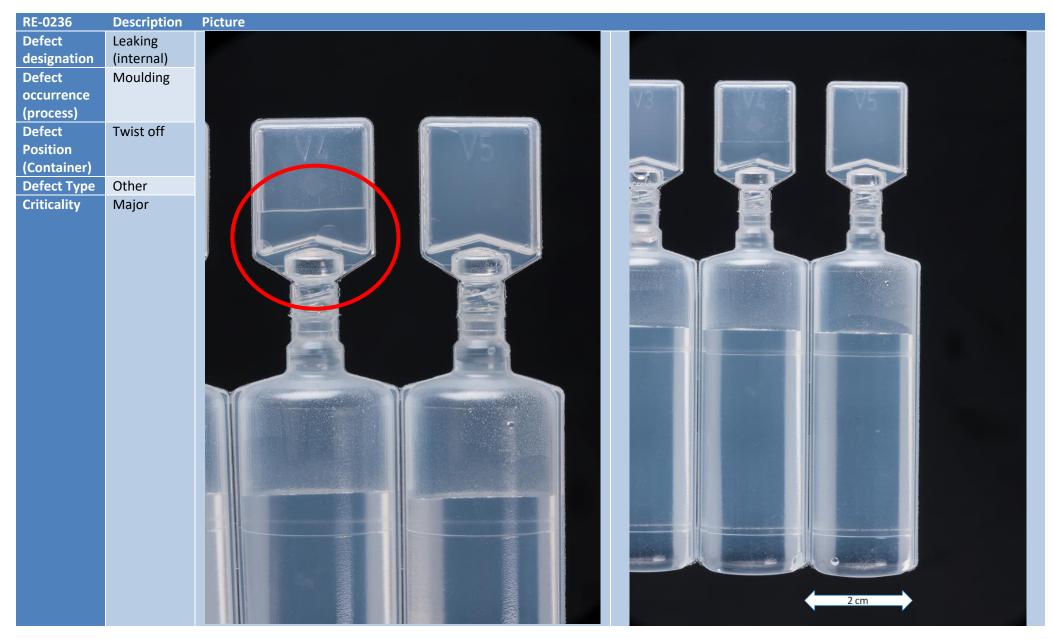
RE-0229	Description
Defect	Vacuum
designation	
Defect	Moulding
occurrence	
(process)	
Defect	Head
Position	
(Container)	
Defect Type	Other
Criticality	Minor





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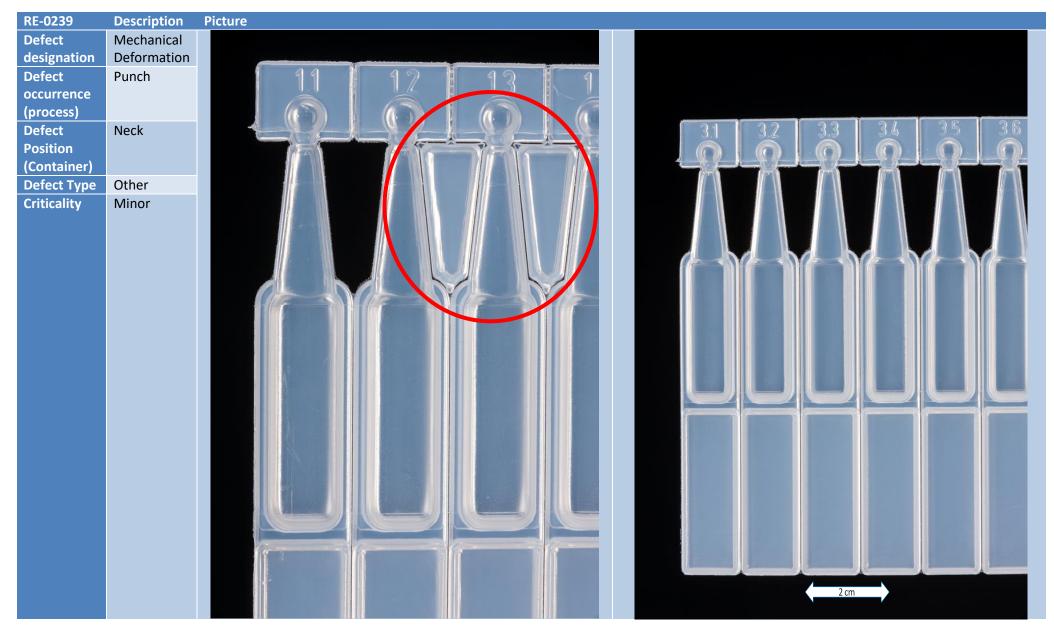
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RE-0239	Description	Picture Picture
Defect	Mechanical	
designation	Deformation	
Defect	Punch	
occurrence		
(process)		
Defect	Twist off	
Position		
(Container)		
Defect	Other	
Туре		
Criticality	Minor/Critical	
	if CCI is	
	affected	
		2 cm

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RE-0262 Description Picture Defect Trapped designation Air/Mechanical Deformation Defect Moulding occurrence (process) Twist Off Defect **Position** (Container) Defect Type Other Criticality Minor (position not critical) Critical if CCI is affected 2 cm

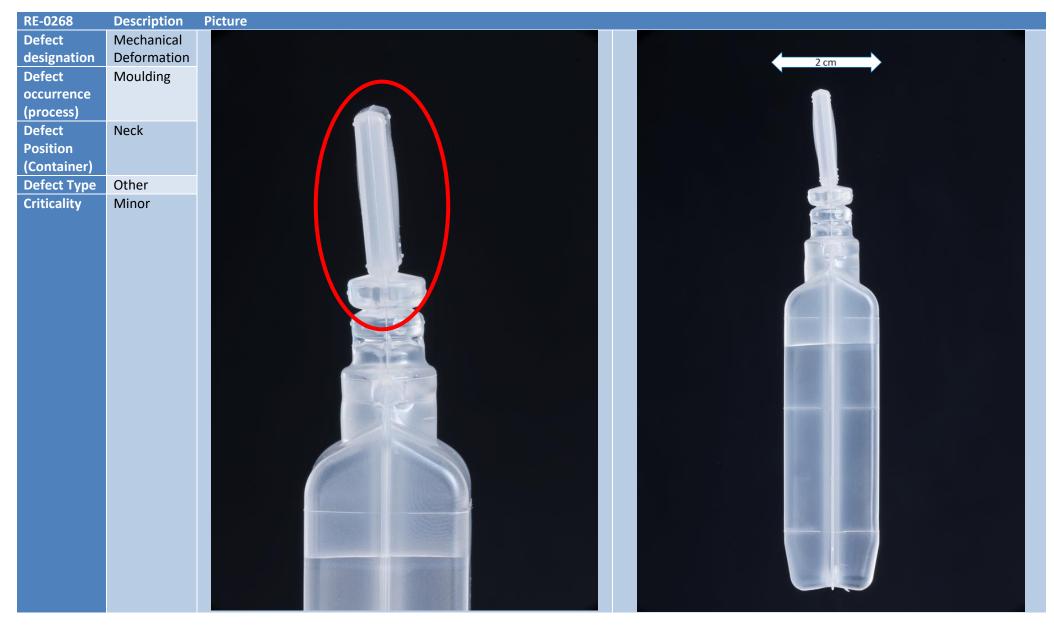
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RE-0266	Description	Picture	
Defect	Mechanical		
designation			,
Defect	Moulding		2 cm
occurrence			
(process)			The second secon
Defect	Neck		
Position			
(Container)			
Defect	Other		
Туре			
Criticality	Minor		
			A THE RESERVE AND THE PARTY OF
			CONTRACTOR OF THE PERSON NAMED IN
		A CONTRACTOR OF THE PROPERTY O	
			The second secon
			Company of the Compan

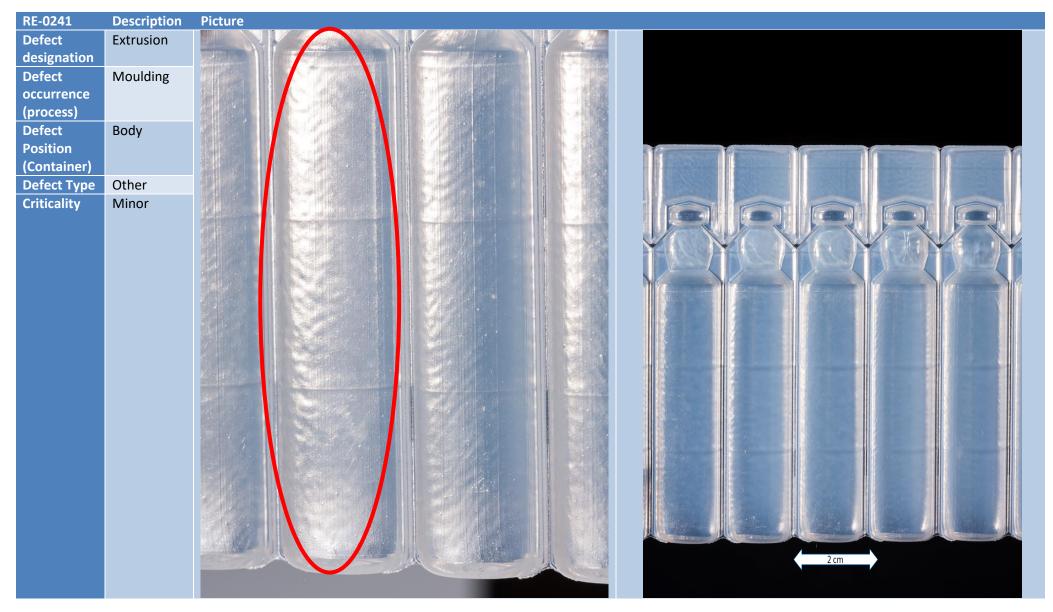
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RE-0075 Descritption Picture Mechanical Defect Deformation designation Defect Moulding occurrence (process) Defect Neck **Position** (Container) Defect Type Other Criticality Minor 2 cm

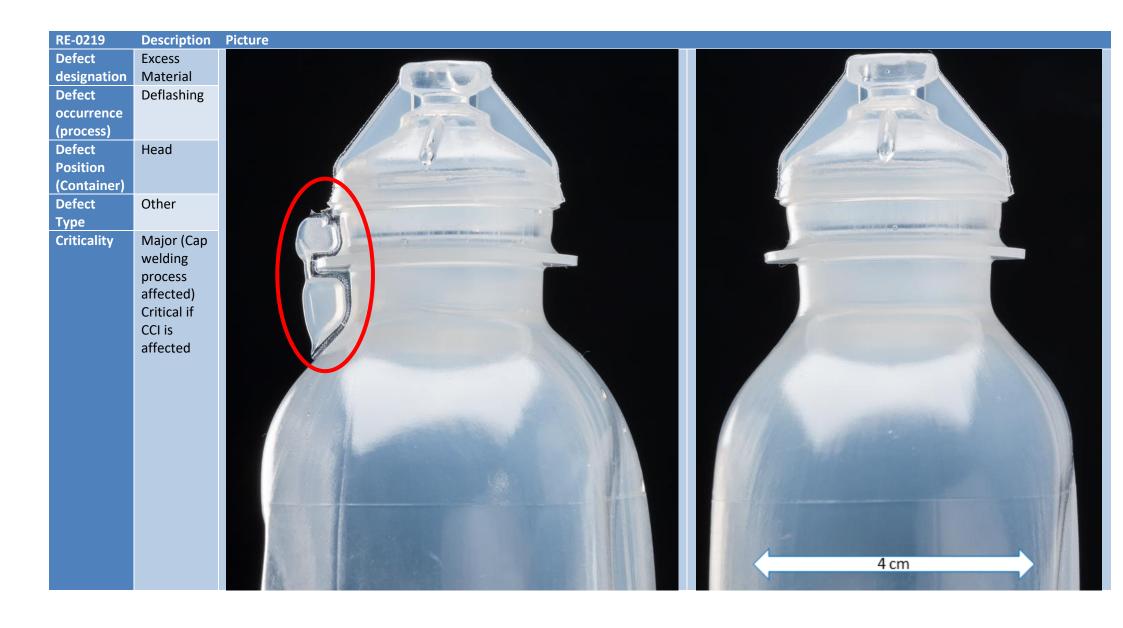
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RE-0200 Description Picture Defect Mechanical designation Deformation Deflashing Defect occurrence (process) Defect Head **Position** (Container) Defect Type Other Criticality Minor 6 cm

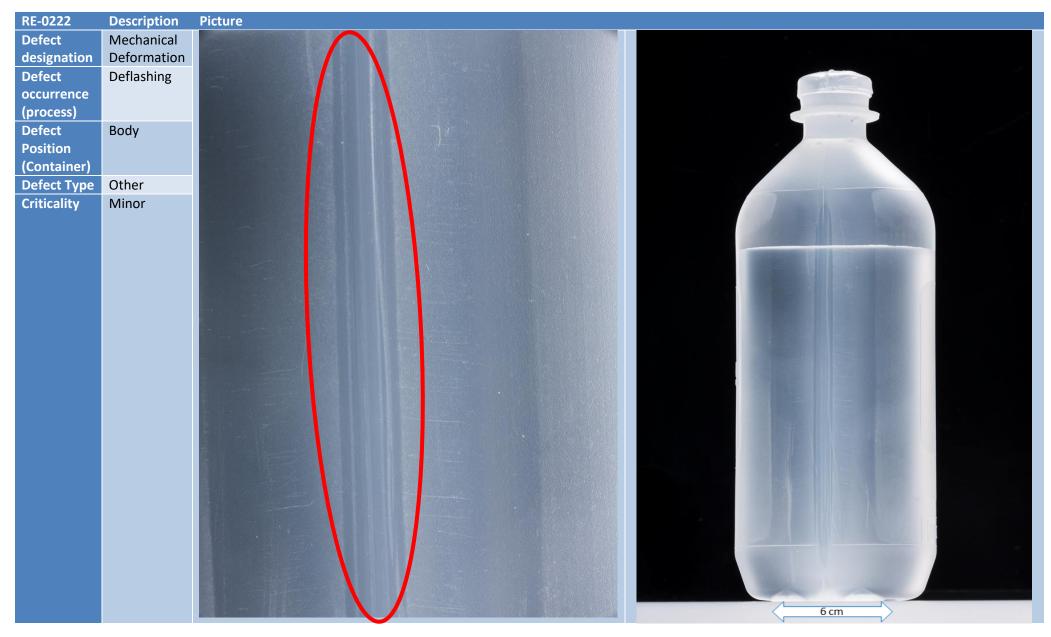
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RE-0205	Description	Picture	
Defect	Mechanical		
designation			
Defect	Filling		
occurrence	_		
(process)			
Defect	Head		
Position			
(Container)			
Defect Type	Other		
Criticality	Minor		6 cm

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RE-0273	Description	Picture	
Defect	Scratches		
designation			
Defect	Deflashing		
occurrence			
(process)	5 1		
Defect	Body		
Position (Container)			
Defect	Other		
Туре	Other		
Criticality	Minor		
			4 cm

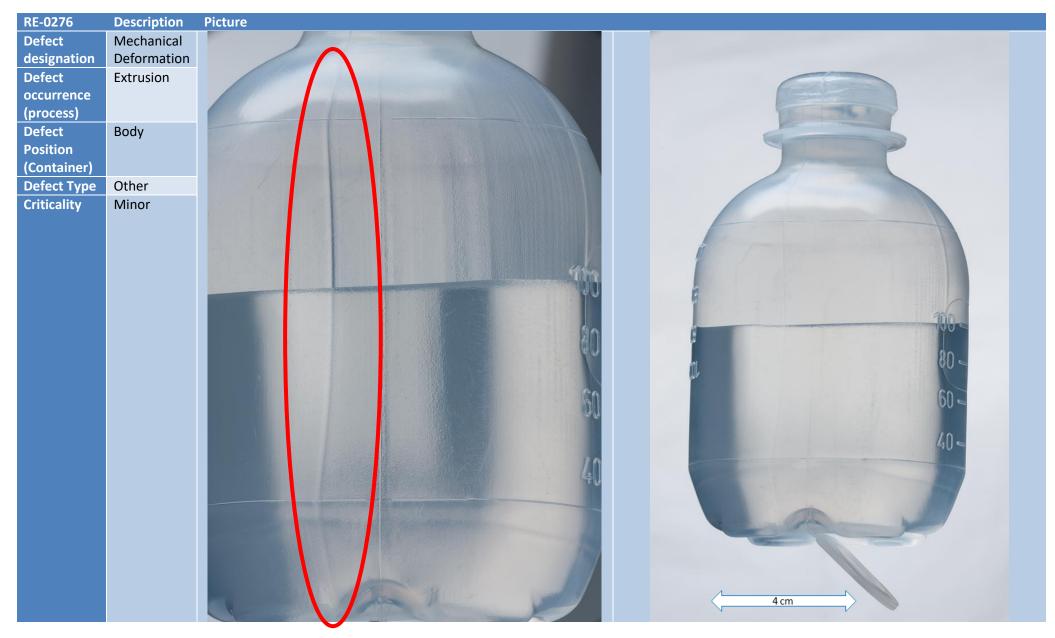
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RE-0274	Description	Picture		
Defect	Mechanical			
designation	Deformation			
Defect	Filling			
occurrence				
(process)				
Defect	Neck			
Position				The second secon
(Container)				
Defect	Other			
Type Criticality	Minor			
Criticality			19 18 101	4 cm

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