

# Critical Container Defects

## Critical Can Defects

The defects described below may affect the integrity of a can and allow microorganisms or other foreign material to enter the can. Cans exhibiting any of these defects should be discarded.

- Swollen cans may indicate the presence of microbial spoilage or a reaction product with the metal can material causing hydrogen gas production.
- \*\*Never taste product from a swollen can!! Throw it away!!\*\*
- Sharp dent on the seam or a sharp dent on either the top or side seam can damage the seam and allow microorganisms to enter the can. Discard cans with sharp dents on any seam.
- Holes, fractures, or punctures can permit microorganisms to enter. Discard cans with these defects.
- Rust severe enough to cause pitting means that the tin plate surface of the metal is corroded and that the other layers of metal also may be affected. There may be tiny holes you can't see. Discard cans with pitted rust. Surface rust that you can remove by rubbing is not serious and you can keep these cans.

## Critical Bottle Defects

Bottles with any of the following defects should be discarded:

- Chipped necks and threads of glass could break off into the product.
- Cracks can allow microorganisms to enter.
- Discoloration can indicate that the product is old or contaminated.

## Critical Paperboard Carton Defects

Product in a paperboard carton, like those typically used for cereal or pasta, may be acceptable even if it appears severely damaged providing the inner pouch is intact. Open damaged cartons and check to see if the inner pouch is sealed. If it is, the product is acceptable. If it is not, discard the product.

## Tamper Evident Indicators (freshness seals)

The law requires tamper evident packaging for over the counter drugs. Although this type of packaging is not required on food packages, many food companies have voluntarily used tamper evident indicators or freshness seals for a variety of food packages. Packages with missing or damaged freshness seals should be discarded. The following are some commonly used tamper evident indicators:

- Inner membrane--foil and/or plastic liner on inside of bottle or plastic tub. Products that use inner membranes include dairy products, snack foods, and ketchup bottles.
- Tear away ring--plastic band that must be torn off to open package and the ring does not remain on the package. Products that use tear away rings include cottage cheese and milk.
- Break away ring--attached to base of screw cap lid. When the cap is twisted off, the plastic band will break away from the base of the cap and remain on the neck of the bottle to indicate that the bottle has been opened. Products using break away rings include carbonated beverage bottles and salad dressing bottles.
- Pop up button cap--button pops up when jar is opened and vacuum seal is broken. Products using pop up button caps include baby food and mushroom jars.
- Shrink band--band of plastic around cap and neck of a bottle that must be torn and removed to open the bottle. Products using shrink bands include peanut butter jars and pancake syrup bottles.

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