

**NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (NYS DOH)
WADSWORTH CENTER
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY APPROVAL PROGRAM (ELAP)**

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What carbon range are laboratories to report for NY samples analyzed for Gasoline Range Organics (GRO) and Diesel Range Organics (DRO)?

Laboratories are to report a carbon range appropriate for the project's data quality objectives. The ranges listed in TNI's Fields of Proficiency Testing for Solid and Chemical Materials are C5 through C10 for GRO and C10 through C28 for DRO. (<http://www.nelac institute.org/fopt.php>) SW846 Method 8015 B/C lists a GRO range of C6 through C10. All results must clearly indicate the range and identity of the reference standard.

2. How and where does a laboratory submit PT results for NYS DOH PTs?

Laboratories were notified in a blanket letter (dated April 6, 2007) that "web based PT submission is required effective July 16, 2007. After July 16, 2007, paper/fax data will no longer be accepted." Laboratories must have an active Health Provider Network (HPN) account for web based data submission. The form for registering for an HPN account was included with the blanket letter. The HPN account is accessed through the secure NYS DOH Health Commerce System. (<https://commerce.health.state.ny.us/>)

3. Why hasn't my laboratory received paper based PT results for a recently, completed study?

Starting with NYS DOH PT Study 318, ELAP no longer provides paper based reports. PT results are available on the web based Health Provider Network (HPN), accessed via the secure NYS DOH Health Commerce System. (<https://commerce.health.state.ny.us/>)

4. Why hasn't my laboratory received blanket emails from ELAP notifying them of significant changes?

Most likely, ELAP's database contains an obsolete or inaccurate email address for your laboratory. The laboratory should provide ELAP with a current and appropriate email address by contacting ELAP through an email (ELAP@health.ny.gov) or a phone call (518-485-5570).

5. Can my laboratory use the NELAP /TNI logo?

A laboratory can use the NELAP / TNI logo provided the conditions listed in ELAP Certification Manual Item 132 are met.

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6. How can my laboratory meet Data Integrity training requirement?

The laboratory has options to meet the NELAC (2003) [2009] Standard 5.5.2.7 [M2, 5.2.7], which requires that the training be performed on an annual basis and cover the topics listed in the Standard. Furthermore, the training must have a signature attendance sheet or some other form of documentation. The options are as follows:

- a) Completing an online training course that fully addresses the Standard*
 - i) Although ELAP does not endorse this online training course, New York Association of Approved Environmental Laboratories (NYAAEL) does offer an “Online Ethics Training Refresher Course” at a reasonable rate whether your laboratory is a member or non-member of the association. (<http://www.nyaael.org/wordpress>).*
 - b) Conducting an in-house training course by the laboratory’s upper management*
 - i) The laboratory must be able to provide the agenda, presentation, or handouts as proof.*
 - ii) The laboratory can incorporate information taken from online resources. Although ELAP does not endorse US EPA’s website, the US EPA has information available on “Detecting Improper Laboratory Practices” (<http://www.epa.gov/quality/bestlabs.html>).*
 - iii) The laboratory can incorporate information taken from the ELAP guidance document – Guidance for Annual Requirement in Data Integrity and Ethics Training, which is available as a PDF document on the ELAP website.*

7. When are the Proficiency Test (PT) samples being shipped? When do my PT results need to be submitted by? When are the PT reports issued? When do I need to test the bacteriology samples?

The laboratory can obtain the latest PT schedule from the ELAP website. The “Proficiency Testing Current Schedule” is posted as Certification Manual Item 310. This schedule lists the following dates:

- *“Study Open Date”, which corresponds to the shipment date,*
- *“Website Submission” date, which corresponds to the last date labs are able to submit their results,*
- *“Report Date”, which corresponds to the date PT reports are uploaded to the website, and*
- *“TEST DATE”, which corresponds to the dates the non-potable and potable water bacteriology PTs are to be tested.*

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8. What form does my laboratory need to complete in order to add or withdraw an analyte from its scope of accreditation?

The laboratory will need to fill out one of the following forms which are specific to a matrix: Form 108 (Drinking Water), Form 109 (Non-potable Water), Form 1977 (Solid & Hazardous Waste), Form 1977CA (Critical Agents), and Form 1978 (Air & Emissions). The forms are available on the “Application Forms and Related Information” web page (<http://www.wadsworth.org/labcert/elapcert/appforms.htm>).

9. Which Proficiency Test (PT) providers can my lab use to meet the PT requirements?

ELAP will only accept PT results from American Association for Laboratory Accreditation’s (A2LA) accredited NELAC PT providers (<http://www.a2la.org/dirsearchnew/nelacptproviders.cfm>).

10. What is meant by a Master List of Documents? What is meant by a Signature Log?

A Master List of Documents includes all pertinent controlled documents and their associated revision date, document number, and distribution. A Signature Log is a list of names, signatures, and initials for all individuals who are responsible for signing or initially any laboratory record.

11. What does my lab need to do in order to have the PT reports from a particular study sent to an Accreditation Body or Organization?

In the past, the lab provided a formal request to ELAP through an email (ELAP@health.ny.gov), letter (Empire State Plaza, P.O. Box 509, Albany, NY 12201-0509), or fax (518-485-5568). The preferred method to submit a request was by email.

*Now, in order to designate the report for the current study to be distributed to another State or Organization, you are to use **Option 9 Distribution to Other Accrediting Bodies** on the ‘Proficiency Test Data Management’ menu item.*

*Furthermore, the request must be submitted **PRIOR** to the close date (i.e., “website submission” date) of the study.*

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12. Where can I find a list of NYS certified laboratories?

The ELAP website contains links to our certified laboratories for these fields of analysis: radiochemistry, radon, TCLP, lead testing, and asbestos and fibers (<http://www.wadsworth.org/labcert/elap/elap.html>). The website also contains links to ELAP's certified commercial and non-commercial laboratories. Laboratories are listed alphabetically by NY county, and then alphabetically by out-of-state and foreign laboratories. The scopes posted are partial.

If you are looking for laboratories certified for a specific matrix-analyte-method/technology (e.g., non-potable water-E. coli (enumeration)-Colilert (ELAP method code 1020), or want the laboratories' full scope of accreditation, you will need to either call or email ELAP to run the query from our database.

13. How can my laboratory become ELAP certified?

Please go to the following ELAP website (<http://www.wadsworth.org/labcert/elapcert/appforms.htm>). You will need to read and complete the following forms:

- *General Instructions*
- *Form 107*
- *Category Application Form (108, 109, 1977, 1977CA, and 1978)*

14. Is a \$500 fee still needed at the time of application?

No. ELAP will no longer be requesting a \$500 fee at the time of application. Instead, a \$500 fee will be requested after the application has been reviewed and approved and the laboratory has been issued a certificate.

15. Who does my laboratory contact when I am unable to access the State of New York Department of Health, Health Provider Network's (HPN) website, which is a secure site?

If your laboratory is having difficulty accessing the site because of an expired password or you forgot your password, please contact Commerce Accounts Management Unit (CAMU) at the toll free number (866)-529-1890.

If your laboratory can access the HPN main webpage, but not the webpage for the "Environmental Laboratory Proficiency Reports (ELAP)" link, please contact ELAP by email (ELAP@health.ny.gov) or phone (518)-485-5570. You will need to provide ELAP with your HPN userid (e.g., gs23786) and your laboratory's ELAP ID and name so access can be granted.

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16. Does my lab have to hydrolyze samples to be tested for regulated herbicides prior to extraction for potable, non-potable and RCRA samples?

Yes. The purpose of the hydrolysis step is to convert all the ester herbicides into the water soluble acids. The hydrolysis step must be performed for all samples unless specifically excluded in an US EPA or NYS DEC approved quality assurance project plan. For example, US EPA has reinforced the necessity of hydrolysis with a footnote in the tables of approved methods at 40 CFR 141.24(e) for potable water testing. Footnote #4 states, “Accurate determination of the chlorinated esters requires hydrolysis of the sample as described in EPA Methods 515.1, 515.2, 515.3, 515.4 and 555 and ASTM Method D5317–93.” In addition, the US EPA Methods Information Communication Exchange (MICE) service had this response in regards to hydrolysis step in association with SW-846 methods:

“Most chlorinated herbicides in the 8151A list come in numerous formulations including acids, esters, and salts. The purpose of the hydrolysis step in method 8151A is to convert all of the ester herbicides into acid form. While the esters have a half-life of about a week in soil matrices, they are stable enough to be detected by the method when the hydrolysis step is performed. Therefore, not performing the hydrolysis step would not detect fresh applications of ester formulations. Given that it seems to be a relatively rare situation when esters are not required analytes, it seems most practical to always perform the hydrolysis step.”

17. At which temperature, does my lab need to perform the test for odor?

When testing for odor in drinking water samples, the lab must perform the test at 60°C. The approved method as listed in 40 CFR 143.4 is SM 18-20 2150B (97). As stated in the method, “for most tap waters and raw water sources, a sample temperature of 60°C will permit detection of odors that otherwise might be missed; 60°C is the standard temperature for hot threshold odor tests...”

18. Does my lab need to meet the required detection limits listed in Certification Manual Item 280?

Yes, the lab must meet the limits for all public drinking water supply samples. These reporting limits may be met by demonstration of a limit of detection (LOD) or limit of quantitation (LOQ). In cases where the required detection limit is less than the lab’s LOQ, but greater than the lab’s LOD, the lab must provide both the LOD and LOQ values to their clients. Any sample result reported greater than the LOD, but less than the LOQ, must be qualified as estimated.

Note: Most drinking water methods require a MDL study. The verified MDL concentration may be used as the LOD.

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- 19. My lab performs PCB analysis on waste products, solvents and other non oil-based wastes. What certification does my lab need to hold? Also, is there a PT requirement? Is my lab allowed to report total PCBs and individual Aroclor results?**

This accreditation is covered under the Solid and Hazardous Waste analyte, PCBs in Oil. Your lab is required to hold certification for at least one of the following: EPA 8082A (and 3580A), ASTM D4059, ASTM D6160, or EPA 600/4-81-045.

The lab is required to perform the PCBs in Oil PT.

As for reporting results to clients, the lab may report the result as ‘Total Aroclor’ or ‘Total PCBs’, and it may report individual Aroclor results up to and including 1262 and 1268.

- 20. My client requested that their SPDES / Clean Water Act samples be analyzed by a specific method. ELAP offers the permitted analyte for certification, but it does not offer the method for certification. What should we do?**

Check to see if the method is promulgated under regulation (40 CFR 136) or has been approved for use by EPA region 2 under the Alternate Testing Procedure (ATP).

If the method has been promulgated, send an email to ELAP (ELAP@health.ny.gov) with this specific information, and we will evaluate the request.