

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

May 11, 2007

Question: What is LELAP?

Answer: The Louisiana Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program regulations were adopted May 1998. The Department of Environmental Quality was mandated by House Bill Number 1726 in 1988 and amended by Statue in 1995 by House Bill Number 1517 to adopt and promulgate rules and regulations providing for accreditation of commercial laboratories providing chemical analysis, analytical results or other appropriate test data to the Department. Private sector input was obtained in drafting the regulations as promulgated in 1998 and amended in 2000. LELAP is the program within the Office of Environmental Assessment, Laboratory Services Division responsible for accrediting environmental laboratories that submit data to the Department of Environmental Quality on behalf of any facility as defined in R.S. 30:2004, required by permit, required by order of the Department, included in a monitoring report, submitted by contract or required by Department regulation. LELAP is one of 12 National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP) recognized Accrediting Authority.

Question: Where is LELAP located?

Answer: LELAP is a program located in the Office of Environmental Assessment, Laboratory Services Division. LELAP is physically located at 1209 Leesville Ave., Baton Rouge, LA 70802.

Question: What does LELAP do?

Answer: LELAP assesses and accredits commercial environmental laboratories that submit data to the Department of Environmental Quality and the Department of Natural Resources with regards to 29B. The program monitors laboratories to ensure compliance with state regulation and national standards. LELAP maintains a database that includes contact information, physical location, and matrix/method/analytes for each accredited laboratory.

Question: How do I contact LELAP?

Answer: LELAP may be contacted by:

Phone: (225) 219-9800 or (225) 219-9805

Fax: (225) 219-9898

E-mail: DEQ-WWW Laboratory Services

Physical Location: 1209 Leesville, Ave., Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 4314, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-4314

Question: What is NELAC?

Answer: The National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) is a cooperative association of States and Federal Agencies, formed to establish and promote mutually acceptable performance standards for the operation of environmental laboratories. The standards cover both analytical testing of environmental samples and

the laboratory accreditation process. Private sector input to the process is obtained through a variety of mechanisms including open semiannual meetings, participation on NELAC committees, and through the Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board (ELAB), a federally chartered advisory committee with a balanced representation of the private sector that provides advice to EPA and NELAC. The goal of NELAC is to foster the generation of environmental laboratory data of known and acceptable quality on which to base public health and environmental management decisions.

Question: What is NELAP?

Answer: The National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP) is the program that implements the NELAC standards. States and Federal agencies serve as Accrediting Authorities with coordination facilitated by EPA to assure uniformity. Accreditation by one NELAP Accrediting Authority is mutually recognized by the other State and Federal Accrediting Authorities approved under NELAP. NELAP has recognized 12 State programs as Accrediting Authorities.

Question: How does NELAC work?

Answer: States and federal agencies serve as the accrediting authorities. NELAP assessment teams composed of qualified USEPA, federal, and state personnel evaluate current and prospective accrediting authority programs for compliance with NELAC standards. Recognition among NELAP-approved accrediting authorities is mandatory.

Question: How do I obtain copies of the analytical methods?

ANSWER: The internet has become an excellent resource for official methods, including the US EPA web pages. The most usable and complete example is probably the National Environmental Methods Index (NEMI), a joint effort of EPA and USGS.

(<http://www.nemi.gov/>) This index is free and searchable by source [for example Hach, or Standard Methods], instrumentation, keyword such as analyte name or CAS number or method number, and so forth. It includes regulatory and non-regulatory analyses. Searches typically yield lists, and then single-page method summaries with hot links to sources.

EPA water methods required by the CWA and SDWA, as well as information on those regulations: <http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/methods/>

SW846 methods: <http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/hazwaste/test/sw846.htm>

For a full set of Standard Methods, purchase the latest edition of the book and/or CD ROM: <http://www.standardmethods.org/>

Hach methods beyond the single page summaries in NEMI:
<http://www.hach.com/hc/browse.product.category>

Pesticide information and methods: <http://www.epa.gov/oppbead1/methods/>

Frequently a method is available as a .pdf file, which can be downloaded or printed. Government sources tend to be free, whereas there are generally fees at some commercial sites. You must check the Federal Register to determine which methods and revisions have been approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for regulatory testing.

Question: Is there a reduced fee for secondary NELAC accreditation?

Answer: There is no reduced fee for secondary NELAC accreditation.

Question: How often do I have to perform Proficiency Test (PT) Studies?

Answer: All laboratories that have been accredited or are seeking accreditation must perform a minimum of two PT studies per year for each Field of Accreditation, approximately six months apart.

Question: Do I have to do a PT for every analyte?

Answer: Yes, all laboratories that have been accredited or are seeking accreditation must complete Proficiency Tests for all analytes. And your laboratory must receive an “acceptable” score for each analyte for two out of three consecutive PT studies.

Question: Due to the high cost in Proficiency samples for Air analyses, can stack testing organizations perform PTs on an annual basis?

Answer: No, In accordance with LAC 33:I.4711, laboratories shall satisfactorily complete two proficiency test studies for each field of testing. If proficiency test samples are not available for particular test categories, the laboratory will submit an “analytical data package.”

Question: Which PT providers can I use?

Answer: Laboratories may select any PT provider from the list of NELAC Proficiency Test Providers at: <http://a2la.org/dirsearchnew/nelacptproviders.cfm>

Stack/Emission Testers must use an approved PT Provider from the list below:

Air Liquide America Corporation

2700 Post Oak Blvd.

Houston, TX 77056

Contact: Mr. Chris Loreda

Phone: (713) 624-8000

Question: My laboratory uses methods that are different from the EPA methods. Do I need to be accredited?

Answer: Yes, if the laboratory results are being provided to the department. LELAP will consider and accredit “non-standard methods” if all accreditation requirements are met. Accreditation will be granted for the laboratory’s Standard Operating Procedure.

Question: I am an out-of state laboratory but I do not have NELAP accreditation. What do I need to do?

Answer: There are 12 [NELAP-recognized accrediting authorities](#). You may apply to any one of them. Some of the accrediting authority programs are limited, and you may need to apply to more than one accrediting authority to obtain accreditation for the methods and analytes that you will use to support LDEQ programs. If you apply to a program other than Louisiana, you will need to apply for secondary accreditation from LELAP.

Question: What do I need to be accredited for?

Answer: You must be accredited for all test methods and analytes that will be used to report data to LDEQ. In addition, if the LELAP program identifies performance test samples in different matrices, you must also make sure that you obtain, analyze, and successfully pass performance test samples for all matrices that you will be testing.

Question: If the quality control specifications of a mandated method (required by EPA or State Authority) are different from the essential quality control requirements specified by the NELAC standards, what are my options? Answer: In cases where there are different sets of applicable requirements, you must meet or exceed the most stringent/demanding requirements.