

Louisiana Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (LELAP)
Proficiency Test (PT) Requirements
(Last Updated 08/01/2008)

All accredited environmental laboratories or laboratories seeking accreditation must participate in department-approved proficiency testing programs relevant to their scope of accreditation, except when determined by the department that an appropriate proficiency test is not accessible or readily available. Laboratories are required to perform two sets of PTs annually for each requested field of proficiency testing, at intervals of approximately six months. A "field of proficiency testing" is defined by the: a) matrix, b) technology/method, and c) analyte/analyte group. Failure to perform a required PT study within the required semiannual schedule shall be regarded as a failed PT study. PT sample analysis should be conducted during the first and third quarter of each year.

A provider of PT sampling must be accredited by a Proficiency Testing Provider Accreditor (PTPA) that meets the TNI requirements (currently A2LA). Stack, Fugitive, and Ambient Air Emission testers must obtain PT samples from LELAP-approved PT Providers.

Links to the lists of LELAP-approved and A2LA-approved PT providers can be found at the bottom of this notice. Your laboratory must make arrangements with the chosen PT provider to ensure that provider sends a copy of your PT test scores (final report) to LELAP at the same time it sends the final report to your laboratory. The final report has to come directly from the PT provider.

In accordance with LAC 33:I.4711.F, every laboratory that receives test results that are "unacceptable" for a specific analyte must investigate and identify likely causes for these results and resolve any problems. Additionally, the laboratory must successfully analyze a Corrective Action PT sample, for which the laboratory shall report only the analytes for which corrective action was required. The laboratory must submit documentation of the corrective action to LELAP, including a copy of the corrective action PT scores.

Initial Accreditation and PT Samples

If a laboratory wishes to add an analyte/method to its scope of accreditation, the laboratory must submit two acceptable PT sample results from distinct PT studies (or one acceptable PT sample result if the laboratory seeks state accreditation). PT studies for initial accreditation must be performed at least 15 calendar days apart from the closing date of the earlier study to the shipment date of the later study.

Suspension and Remedial PT Samples

If a laboratory's accreditation is suspended due to unacceptable PT sample results, the laboratory may perform remedial PTs to satisfy the requirements for reinstatement of accredited status. Remedial PT studies must be performed at least 15 calendar days apart from the closing date of the earlier study to the shipment date of the later study.

The requirements for participation in Proficiency Test studies are described in Chapter 2 of the NELAC Standards. A copy of the 2003 NELAC Standards in PDF format is available on-line at: <http://www.nelac-institute.org/docs/2003nelacstandard.pdf>

Please note that all laboratories are subject to the following requirements:

- A laboratory seeking to obtain or maintain accreditation shall successfully complete two initial or continuing PT studies for each requested field of proficiency testing within the most recent three rounds attempted (NELAC 2.7.2).
- Water Supply (WS) PT results and DMRQA studies will no longer be accepted to satisfy PT requirements. WS PTs are for drinking water, a matrix for which LELAP does not offer accreditation. DMRQA studies do not meet the timeline requirements of NELAC 2.5, which specifies that all samples must be analyzed and the results returned to the PT Provider no later than 45 calendar days from the opening of the study (i.e., first day that samples are shipped or available to laboratories).
- It has been observed that some Proficiency Test Providers offer to sell matrix-matched QC samples to accompany their PT Samples. Please be aware that the use of matrix-matched QC samples for PTs is a violation of NELAC 2.5, which requires that PT samples be handled and analyzed in the same manner as routine samples. Routine samples do not come with a matrix-matched QC sample.
- For continuing accreditation, completion dates of successive proficiency rounds for a given field of proficiency testing shall be approximately six months apart. Failure to meet the semiannual schedule shall be regarded as a failed study for all analytes.
- In accordance with NELAC Chapter 2, Appendix C.5.3, a laboratory that receives a "Not Acceptable" result for more than 20% of the analytes in an analyte group PT study shall be considered to have failed the entire group of analytes. If a laboratory fails two of three successive PT rounds for a group of analytes, accreditation shall be suspended for the entire analyte group. PCBs are exempt from this requirement.
- NELAC 2.4.3 requires each laboratory to authorize the PT provider to release all proficiency test results directly to the Primary Accrediting Authority and the PTOB/PTAA in addition to the laboratory.
- The NELAP PT Board has adopted and posted a list of "Experimental" Fields of Proficiency Testing for the purpose of gathering data to develop acceptance criteria for these Fields of Proficiency Testing. All laboratories that are accredited or seeking accreditation in the corresponding Fields of Accreditation must participate in "Experimental" PT rounds at the NELAC-required frequency. However, accreditation status for "Experimental" analytes will not be affected by whether the laboratory receives an "Acceptable" or "Not Acceptable" test score for those analytes. A list of Experimental Fields of Proficiency Testing is available on the NELAC web page at: [The NELAC Institute](#)

If you have any questions, please contact LELAP at (225) 219-9800.

List of Proficiency Test Providers For Stack, Fugitive and/or Ambient Air Testers:

Air Liquide America Corporation
2700 Post Oak Blvd.
Houston, TX 77056
Contact: Mr. Chris Loreda
Phone: (713) 624-8000

Related Links:

[TNI Proficiency Testing Providers](#)