

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

July 24, 2007

Question: What is LELAP?

Answer: LELAP is the Louisiana Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program.

Question: What does LELAP do?

Answer: LELAP is the program responsible for assessing and accrediting environmental laboratories that generate data that is submitted directly or indirectly to the Department of Environmental Quality. LELAP also assesses and accredits laboratories that generate data for the Department of Natural Resources with regards to 29B. LELAP 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. LELAP is one of 12 National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP) recognized Accrediting Bodies.

Question: How long has LELAP been in existence?

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 Statute 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.

Question: Are all laboratories required to be accredited by LELAP?

Answer: No. In-house laboratories and government laboratories are exempt from accreditation requirements. Also exempt are personnel monitoring services in accordance with LAC 33:XV.430.C and to those activities specifically licensed in accordance with LAC 33:XV.Chapter 3.Subchapter B, equivalent agreement state regulations, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission regulations.

Question: What kind of laboratories need to be accredited by LELAP?

Answer: Accreditation is required for commercial laboratories that perform environmental analyses or tests for third parties for a fee or other compensation 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.

Question: What methods or analytes require accreditation?

Answer: Laboratories must be accredited for all test methods and analytes for which the test data will be reported directly or indirectly 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: Where is LELAP located?

Answer: LELAP is physically located at the LDEQ Environmental Laboratory at 1209 Leesville Ave., Baton Rouge, LA 70802. Organizationally, LELAP is a Section of the Laboratory Services Division within LDEQ's Office of Environmental Assessment.

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 The NELAC Institute?

Answer: The NELAC Institute (TNI) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to foster the generation of environmental data of known and documented quality through an open, inclusive, and transparent process that is responsive to the needs of the community. The organization is managed by a Board of Directors and is governed by organizational bylaws. More information on TNI is available at the TNI web site at: <http://www.nelac-institute.org/>

Question: How was TNI formed?

Answer: The NELAC Institute was created on November 6, 2006, when the respective Boards of Directors of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) and the Institute for National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation (INELA) agreed to combine the two organizations into a single national accreditation program, The NELAC Institute (TNI). As reflected in the new name, The NELAC Institute (TNI) has combined the heritage of NELAC with the consensus standards development process of INELA into one organization.

Question: Can I Join TNI?

Answer: Membership in TNI is open to any individual interested in laboratory accreditation in the private, public or academic sectors. The NELAC Institute has both individual members and organizational members. However, only individual members may vote. Membership fees for individuals are \$50; organizations pay a sliding scale based on the level of commitment of the organization. Membership is open to all individuals or organizations interested in environmental laboratory accreditation. All members in INELA have the opportunity to fully participate in all activities of the organization and are able to vote on the laboratory accreditation standards.

Question: What is NELAC?

Answer: NELAC is an acronym for the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference. NELAC was established as a cooperative association of States and Federal Agencies to develop and promote mutually acceptable performance standards for the operation of environmental laboratories. NELAC was merged into The NELAC Institute (TNI) on November 6, 2006.

Question: What is NELAP?

Answer: NELAP is an acronym for the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program, which was established to implement the NELAC standards. NELAP has recognized 12 State programs as Accrediting Bodies. The functions of NELAP have also been incorporated into TNI.

Question: Now that NELAP has been incorporated into TNI, are the NELAC Standards still used?

Answer: Yes. The 2003 NELAC Standards will continue to be used until the TNI Standards have been fully developed and adopted.

Question: What is covered by the NELAC Standards?

Answer: The standards cover both analytical testing of environmental samples, administrative requirements, and the laboratory accreditation process. The purpose of the NELAC Standards 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: How do I obtain copies of 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 of NEMI 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: If an out-of-state lab has been granted NELAP accreditation by another accrediting body, do they still need to be accredited by LELAP to do testing for Louisiana?

Answer: Yes. Even though the laboratory has been granted accreditation by another accrediting body, the laboratory still must apply for and receive accreditation from LELAP in order to do testing for Louisiana.

Question: What is Secondary Accreditation?

Answer: Secondary Accreditation, also known as accreditation by recognition, is when accreditation by one NELAP Accrediting Body is mutually recognized by other State and Federal Accrediting Bodies approved under NELAP.

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: My stack testing firm does not have a “laboratory.” Is my firm exempt from the accreditation requirements that are established in LAC for laboratories?

Answer: No. LAC 33:I.4503 defines a “laboratory” as “any facility, whether fixed-based, mobile, or field, that analyzes environmental samples and that seeks accreditation by the department.” In accordance with that definition, stack testers are included in the definition of word “laboratory” for the purpose of accreditation.

Question: Due to the high cost in Proficiency samples for air analyses, are stack testing organizations exempt from the requirement to perform PTs on a semiannual basis?

Answer: No. In accordance with LAC 33:I.4711, all laboratories must satisfactorily complete two proficiency test studies per year for each field of testing. If proficiency test samples are not available for particular test categories, the laboratory may 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: *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 Bodies](#). You may apply to any one of them. Some of the Accrediting Body programs are limited, and you may need to apply to more than one Accrediting Body 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: *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.

Question: *What is the Method Update Rule (MUR)?*

Answer: The Method Update Rule refers to recent changes in the list of EPA-approved tests and sampling procedures under the Clean Water Act and National Drinking Water regulations. Two separate revisions to 40 CFR 136 have been published in the Federal Register, and are referred to collectively as the Methods Update Rule (MUR). The MUR grants approval for a number of new and revised methods, and withdraws approval for a substantial number of methods that had previously been approved.

Question: *Where can I get copies of the Method Update Rule?*

Answer: The full text of the two Final Rules that implement the MUR can be downloaded in PDF format from the following links:

- Federal Register / Vol. 72, No. 47 / Monday, March 12, 2007 / Rules and Regulations <http://www.epa.gov/fedrgstr/EPA-WATER/2007/March/Day-12/w1073.pdf>
- Federal Register / Vol. 72, No. 57 / Monday, March 26, 2007 / Rules and Regulations <http://www.epa.gov/fedrgstr/EPA-WATER/2007/March/Day-26/w1455.pdf>

Question: *Where can I find more information on the Method Update Rule?*

Answer: Information on how the Method Update Rule has been implemented in Louisiana can be found at the following links:

[http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/Portals/0/laboratory/Method%20Update%20Rule%20\(MUR\)%20letter.pdf](http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/Portals/0/laboratory/Method%20Update%20Rule%20(MUR)%20letter.pdf)

<http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/Portals/0/laboratory/MUR%20Guidance%20for%20Water%20Permits%20Division.pdf>