

**Microbiology Expert Committee (MEC)
Meeting Summary**

July 10, 2018

1. Roll Call and Minutes:

Robin Cook, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:35pm Eastern on July 10, 2018 by teleconference. Attendance is recorded in Attachment A – there were 8 members present. Associate Members: Carl Kircher, Allysa Snyder and Mary Robinson.

More time for review of the minutes was needed and they will be approved by email or at the next meeting.

2. Method Codes

Robin pulled up the table she shared last month and wanted to remind people about the discussion on technology. We will table further discussion until we meet with the NELAP AC in New Orleans.

3. Technical Director Requirements

Deb worked on DRAFT language for Technical Director.

DRAFT Sent by Deb (7/10/18):

I did not attempt to reduce the requirements for a college degree/two years of college and especially the 4 hour college course in micro. I know that NJ is not the only state that has these requirements for the technical manager (or parallel category supervisor from our state regulations).

As an example here is what we require for any lab that wants to report data for any NJ sample testing for micro (DW02 is specific to parasitology and molecular testing).

For Microbiological and Parasitology and Molecular Microbiology Testing in Categories DW01-DW02, NPW01-NPW02, or SCM01, the supervisor shall meet the requirements of at least one of the qualification levels listed below (DW – Drinking Water, NPW – Non-Potable Water, SCM (Bio-solids):

QUALIFICATION LEVEL	DEGREE	MICROBIOLOGY CREDITS	YEARS OF EXPERIENCE MICROBIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS ⁽³⁾
A	≥BA/BS (1)	4 (2)	1
B	AA (1)	4 (2)	3
C	None	0 (2)	5

¹Degree in a chemical, physical, biological, or environmental science from an accredited institution.

²Course from accredited college, or equivalent course from a training institute if supervisor has less than four semester hours credit in bacteriology.

³Unless the requirements of footnotes 1 and 2 are more stringent, personnel requirements for Parasitology and Molecular Microbiology shall be in accordance with all associated method requirements.

So I focused on either adding new parameters to the existing section or to redo based on technologies.

Robin noted that the reality is that you are not going to put someone in here that is fresh out of school. Technique is more important in some methods. Confirmations can be more technique dependent.

Patsy noted that if an analyst or supervisor is going to do bench work ... they still have to pass a PT or Demonstration of Capability (DoC). Deb reminded everyone that the Technical Manager does not have a requirement to do a DoC if they don't run the method and report data. Lew commented that in his lab he does have DoCs for him in case he needs to step in.

Robin commented that one of the big issues is that you are seeing enterococci being written into more permits and so more people are going to be running this. There are labs that have an issue where the current Technical Manager can't be the Technical Manager for enterococci.

Robin noted that the group will need to decide how the language needs to change – it's currently written as a combination of technology and analyte.

Robin brought up the 2016 Standard Language on Webex.

Any technical manager of an accredited environmental laboratory engaged in microbiological or biological analysis shall be a person with a bachelor's degree in

microbiology, biology, chemistry, environmental sciences, physical sciences or engineering with a minimum of sixteen (16) college semester credit hours in general microbiology and biology and at least two (2) years of experience in the environmental analysis of representative analytes for which the laboratory seeks or maintains accreditation. A master's or doctoral degree in one of the above disciplines may be substituted for one (1) year of experience.

A person with an associate's degree in an appropriate field of the sciences or applied sciences, with a minimum of four (4) college semester credit hours in general microbiology may be the technical manager(s) of a laboratory engaged in microbiological analysis limited to fecal coliform, total coliform, E. coli, and standard plate count. Two (2) years of equivalent and successful college education, including the microbiology requirement, may be substituted for the associate's degree. In addition, each person shall have one (1) year of experience in microbiological analyses.

Patsy asked why specific methods are listed in the text. Ilona reminded everyone of the discussion last month about whether methods should be listed, or more methods should be listed or change it to technology. If methods are listed, they should be listed in such a way that the Standard does not need to be updated to include new methods. Patsy questioned why anything needs to be listed – no methods or technologies.

Deb asked if some of the first paragraph should be rewritten to relax the first paragraph and not worry about methods and technologies. Do away with the second paragraph.

The second paragraph version goes back to before the 2003 version. There was thought that there were higher level micro tests and then the wastewater plant labs. There was also material about a captive lab.

Do you have to have a bachelor's degree? Many on the call feel the experience is more important. Can experience substitute for a four-year degree? In NJ the experience needs to be at least 5 years to replace some of the educational requirements.

Enoma raised the concern that there should be some educational requirement to cover things that are beyond what a bench level analyst might know. Robin noted that she does get questions in her lab that have required her to have her degree, but she did not run into this in a commercial lab.

Robin commented that the new ISO/IEC 17025:2017 gives the labs the ability to decide on some of their risks. Assessors need something to know what to assess and there has been some pushback on how much risk based decisions will be added to the new Standard. The Quality Systems Expert Committee is working on this in Module 2.

Carl asked what DW requires of "Technical Manager"? It can be found on page 81 (edition 2005). Supervisor or Consultant. Bachelors Degree in Microbiology, Biology or equivalent. Supervisors with a different degree should have at least one college level microbiology course in which environmental microbiology was covered. There is a waiver of academic training by EPA, but States have not been willing to waive this. EPA allows a waiver on a case-by-case basis for DW systems associated with a captured lab.

We are already less stringent than the DW course. Must be Bachelor's course. The example above from Deb does not meet the DW requirements.

The DW Manual has never been promulgated. The requirements in the Table above are currently applicable in NJ only. Patsy thinks footnote 3 also requires the independent micro class. The zero needs to be 4 in the third line.

Deb will continue to work on this and provide an update for a future meeting.

4. Method Codes

There will be a lunch with the NELAP AC and as many EPA people that can be there. Robin is hoping to show them examples of streamlined method codes. Kasey, Dwayne and Robin have started work on this. Robin wants to ask some questions. She wants to know why the NELAP AC needs it a certain way verses another way. Why do some absolutely need version number?

Robin needs to know what questions need to be asked of the NELAP AC so the committee can move forward efficiently.

Why do we need to separate by media? (If the method allows media a, b or c ... why do you need to know in the method code what you used. The assessor will look at this, but it is not necessary in the method code.) Deb said there might be an issue with 9223 B. Colisure may be an exception where media is needed.

Carl noted that 9222 G might also need media info in order to track PTs properly.

What are the different ABs using the methods code for? Is it for PT tracking?

Carl thinks method codes are only used for LAMs. They don't use them in Florida.

Robin said Jennifer mentioned that she needs edition in the method codes because there was an error in a Standard Method. Couldn't you just make a statement there is an error instead of having editions in the method code?

NJ is going to rewrite their Standard to require labs to use only the newest method version. They are going to take the years off. They will be enforcing most current.

There is more of a burden on the assessor when the method codes are less specific.

When secondary is granted, they are trusting the primary state is doing what they are supposed to be doing. You need to know what the State requirements are for the states you are accredited in.

Robin asked that everyone be thinking about questions and send them to her. She will send out the questions to spark people's thoughts.

(Addition: Robin sent the following email on 7/13/18:

Here are the questions I have for the AC so far. Please add whatever you think will be relevant for our discussion regarding method codes and how we use them.

Why do we separate media in the method codes? Is this needed for reciprocity? Why? Is this separation of codes for media program driven?

What are you really using the codes for? How are you applying the information? Just tracking PTs or for other uses as well?

How much more work for assessors and ABs if we streamline? Is this a large burden? How will this affect secondary accreditation?

This is for only the TNI method codes and nothing more at this point.

SO depending upon the answers we may have follow up questions or you all may have some more now.)

Lunch logistics -

- Robin does not think a phone will be needed.
- Invites: Meeting packets to every AB, and Dan Hickman. NELAP AC and Micro Committee, EPA, Dan Hickman. Jennifer or someone from Office of Water. Ilona will work with Jerry on this.
- Is an overhead needed? Or will documents be passed out at the lunch?

4. Action Items

A summary of action items can be found in Attachment B. The action items were reviewed and updated in the table.

5. New Business

None.

6. Next Meeting and Close

The next meeting will be held face-to-face in New Orleans on Thursday, August 9, 2018.

A summary of action items and backburner/reminder items can be found in Attachment B and C.

Robin adjourned the meeting at 2:57 pm Eastern.

**Attachment A
Participants
Microbiology Expert Committee (MEC)**

Members	Affiliation	Balance	Contact Information
Robin Cook (Chair) (2019) Present	City of Daytona Beach EML	Lab	cookr@codb.us
Patsy Root (2019) Present (until 2:45pm)	IDEXX Laboratories, Inc	Other	patsy-root@idexx.com
Lew Denny (2021*) Present (1:45pm)	Flowers Chemical Laboratories – North	Lab	lewdenny@comcast.net
Jessica Hoch (2019*) Present	TCEQ	AB	Jessica.Hoch@Tceq.Texas.Gov
Deb Waller (2019) Present	NJ DEP	AB	debra.waller@dep.nj.gov
Dwayne Burkholder (2019) Absent	Pennsylvania DEP	AB	dburkholde@pa.gov
Michael Blades (2021*) Absent	ERA	Other	mblades@eraqc.com
Brad Stawick (2019*) Absent		Lab	Brad.stawick@stawicklabbmgmt.com
Kasey Raley (Vice-chair) (2020*) Present	Eurofins Eaton Analytical, Inc.	Lab	KaseyRaley@eurofinsUS.com
Vanessa Soto Contreras (2020*) Absent	Florida DOH	AB	Vanessa.SotoContreras@flhealth.gov
Gary Yakub (2020) Absent	Environmental Standards, Inc.	Other	gyakub@envstd.com
Enoma Omoregie (2021*) Present	NYCDEP	Other	eomoregie@health.nyc.gov
Christabel Monteiro (2021*) Present	ESC	Lab	cmonteiro@esclabsciences.com
Ilona Taunton (Program Administrator) Present	The NELAC Institute	n/a	Ilona.taunton@nelac-institute.org

Attachment B

Action Items – MEC

	Action Item	Who	Expected Completion	Actual Completion
1	Review Method codes and send comments to Robin for Dan Hickman.	Deb	TBD	
19	Provide EPA interpretation on temperature readings to Ilona. She will have it posted on the website.	Robin	1/31/14	
74	Send questions for ABs regarding method codes to Robin.	ALL	3/15/18	
76	Provide an update on what has been done with the databases after Jennifer's review and internal EPA meetings.	Jennifer	4/10/18	
77	TNI send LAMS information and list of NELAP ABs to Deric.	Ilona	3/31/18	Complete. Jerry sent.
78	Forward link to PDFs on DW website with rule, method and analyte information.	Jennifer	3/31/18	
79	Work on method code list for 9222B and D, 9215 and 9223 and send to committee before next meeting.	Robin, Kasey and Dwayne	6/12/18	Complete
80	Prepare DRAFT language for Micro Technical Manager Requirements for discussion at next meeting.	Deb	7/10/18	

