

**MINUTES OF
THE NELAC INSTITUTE'S
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE
CONFERENCE CALL**

April 28, 2009

Agenda Item 1: Standing Committee Operations

The Proficiency Testing (PT) Committee of The NELAC Institute (TNI) met by conference call on April 28, 2009 at 1:05 PM Eastern Time (ET). The call ended at 1:48 PM ET. Committee Chairperson Kirstin McCracken led the call.

Call to Order: The teleconference was called to order at 1:05 PM ET.

The following committee members were present for this call:

Kirstin McCracken (KM)
Steve Arpie (SA)
Lisa Touet (LT)
Stacie Metzler (SM)
Dan Tholen (DT)

5 out of 9 committee members were present and this number does comprise a majority sufficient to conduct committee business. A complete list of committee members is provided in Attachment A.

The following associate members were present for this call:

Rachel Ellis (RE)
Jill Henes (JH)
Mike Miller (MM)
Gary Dechant (GD)

Agenda Item 1: Hold for Next Revision Comment Discussion

This teleconference was a supplemental call held in addition to the routine conference call schedule. The purpose of this call was to discuss and debate voting comments submitted by TNI members that were previously placed on hold for next revision by the PT Committee.

Comments #122, 203, 225 and 312 were similar in that each of the commenters proposed that the PT Committee change the definition of FoPT matrices for non-potable water and potable water to *aqueous*. Along with this change, the commenters suggest that the aqueous PT be used to fulfill both potable water and non-potable water PT requirements. In this scenario, under the existing PT frequency requirements, the aqueous PT would be analyzed 2 times per year, once per year for each potable water method (as per the USEPA requirements for drinking water) and once per year for non-potable water. For non-potable water, analysis of the PT for an FoPT by one method is sufficient to satisfy the PT requirements for other FoPT by other methods that use the same technology.

The rationale for change proposed by the commenters is that under the current NELAC PT requirements, laboratories that maintain accreditation for similar technology by both matrices must run 4 PT samples per year, 2 PT sample per each for each PT matrix. A change to the definition would reduce the frequency of PT using similar methodology to 2 PT samples per year.

Kirstin opened the call for discussion. Below is a summary of the discussion- not necessarily in chronological order.

Kirstin mentioned she had heard that several ABs and the USEPA would not support a combined PT matrix. Two of the ABs on the call indicated that their programs currently require separate PT samples for potable and non-potable water – they could not specifically comment on how a change would impact their program but both agree that their program is based on USEPA requirements.

Steve raised the point that the burden of 4 PT per year for similar methodology / technology applies only to those laboratories that are certified for similar methods / technology in both potable and non-potable water.

Mike Miller raised the point that the methods for potable and non-potable water are not equivalent for some FoPT such as metals where digestion of samples is not required for potable water but is required for non-potable water. He also noted that the concentration ranges of the PT samples for each matrix are noticeably different due to differences in purpose of the data. The concentration ranges for drinking water are designed to test proficiency at low levels – these levels are needed to support decisions regarding human health. For WP, laboratories are not required to test to the levels needed for drinking water. It would be difficult to create a combined PT that met the concentration ranges needed for each program.

Stacie raised the question of whether multi-level PTs that were not associated with matrix would be a possible solution. This comment led to PBMS and that perhaps the method / technology or matrix combination were not critical so long as the laboratory reported the proper value for the PT. Gary then reminded the group that we are constrained by regulations that mandate methods for specific use.

Lisa says MA requires 1 PT per year for each method for both potable and non-potable water. Rachel says NJ's non-NELAC program requires 1 PT per year per method for potable water, and 1 PT per analyte for non-potable water. It was noted that many non-NELAC state PT programs require 1 PT per year, per method, per program for both potable & non-potable water.

After discussion, the call participants all generally agree that the non-potable and potable PT matrices should not be combined into a single aqueous matrix due to regulatory constraints, differences in application of methodology between programs for certain parameters that may impact the sensitivity and performance of the method and because the concentration ranges currently established for the separate matrices is appropriate to test proficiency for the intended purpose of the data. The call participants did agree that a reduction in PT frequency from 2 PT per year per matrix to 1 PT per year per matrix is a reasonable compromise but were uncertain if this exception should only be applied to those labs that are accredited for similar technology/methodology for both matrices or to all laboratories all programs. Further discussion on the topic was tabled but will be reinitiated with the discussions for PT Frequency.

Attachment A

TNI PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Name	Affiliation	Address
Kirstin McCracken, Chair	TestAmerica Burlington	T: (802) 923-1019 F: (802) 660-1919 E: KirstinL.McCracken@testamericainc.com
Stephen Arpie	Absolute Standards, Inc.	T: (800) 368-1131 F: (800) 410-2577 E: StephenArpie@absolutestandards.com
Amy Doupe	Lancaster Laboratories	T: (717) 656-2300, ext. 1812 F: (717) 656-2681 E: adoupe@lancasterlabs.com
Shawn Kassner	Environmental Resource Associates	T: 303-463-3531 F: 720-898-6382 E: skassner@eraqc.com
Roger Kenton	Eastman Chemical Company	T: 903-237-6882 F: E: rogerk@eastman.com
Stacie Metzler	Hampton Roads Sanitation District	T: (757) 460-4217 F: (757) 460-6586 E: smetzler@hrsd.com
Dan Tholen	A2LA	T: (231) 929-1721 F: (610) 374-7234 E: dantholen@charter.net
Lisa Touet	Massachusetts DEP	T: (978) 682-5237 x364 F: (978) 688-0352 E: : lisa.touet@state.ma.us
James Webber, Ph.D.	New York State DOH	T: (518) 474-0009 F: (518) 473-2895 E: webber@wadsworth.org