



The NELAC Institute

Laboratory Accreditation System
Committee (LASC)

June Flowers, Chair



Committee Members

- June Flowers, Flowers Chemical Laboratories
- Anne Marie Allen, State of MA
- Jo Ann Boyd, Southwest Research Institute
- Lance Boynton, Absolute Standards, Inc.
- Brooke Connor, USGS / BQS
- Lew Denny, FL DoH
- George Detsis, DoE
- Dan Dickinson, NY DoH
- Terry Grimes, Pinellas County Utilities
- Dan Hickman, OR DEQ
- Marvelyn Humphrey, USEPA Region 6
- Roger Kenton, Eastman Chemical
- Judy Morgan, Environmental Science Corporation
- Jack McKenzie, Kansas DHE
- Leyla Perez, Babcock Laboratories
- Dale Piechocki, Underwriters Laboratories
- Ilona Taunton, TestAmerica, Inc.





Mission

- To develop a system for the accreditation of environmental laboratories that consists of:
 - The policies and procedures, interpretations, and guidance documents used by accreditation bodies to implement a national environmental laboratory accreditation program, and
 - A national database, a forum for small labs, and a forum for non-NELAP states.



Strategies - LASC

- Assist TNI NELAP board as needed with review and acceptance of existing NELAC policies
- Make recommendation to TNI NELAP Board on acceptance of new TNI standards
- Develop policies and procedures to assist ABs in implementing new standards





Accomplishment

- Standards Interpretation SOP
 - Purpose
 - ✦ This SOP describes the process to follow for interpretations of the 2003 NELAC Standards and Approved TNI Standards.



Applicability

- a. This SOP describes an interpretation process and explanation of what the intent of the NELAC Standards is. This SOP describes an interpretation process only, for the 2003 NELAC Standard and the approved TNI Standards, hereafter known as “The Standard”. Any disputes between a laboratory and their Accreditation Body (AB) regarding accreditation are to be handled through the appropriate appeals process established by applicable state laws and regulations.





Applicability (cont.)

- b. The interpretation process is not intended to interfere with a NELAP AB's legal authority to grant, deny, suspend, or revoke accreditation, nor is this SOP designed or intended to deal with such issues.



Applicability (cont.)

- c. The NELAP Board Chair, the LASC Chair, and/or the TNI Program Administrator will direct questions concerning methods or technical issues to either the Technical Assistance Committee (TAC), or an expert committee, as appropriate, not the LASC.





SOP Summary

- This SOP provides an avenue for resolution of questions submitted electronically by TNI members on interpretation of The Standard. The method for submittal is to complete the designated form on the TNI website. This allows any member to view previously submitted questions and their resolutions, and enables the ability for the NELAP Board Chair, the LASC Chair, and/or the TNI Program Administrator to respond to these questions in an efficient and transparent manner.



Summary (cont.)

- Use of this entry form ensures that a question is automatically accepted and cataloged for review. A consensus of the NELAP Board Chair, the LASC Chair, and the TNI Program Administrator shall determine who oversees the final disposition of the question. Timelines are defined for the NELAP Board Chair and LASC Chair to ensure a timely response of the question. Publication of the consensus resolution is then made to the affected parties via email and on the TNI web site.





Procedure

- A TNI member requesting an interpretation of the Standard must:
 - ✦ a. Submit a request for interpretation electronically by filling out the “Request for Standards Interpretation Form” located on the TNI website www.nelac-institute.org. This request shall include:



Procedure (cont.)

- i. The name of the party(ies)
- ii. The name of the organization(s)
- iii. A contact name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address
- iv. The reference for the Standard in question, i.e., Volume, Module, Section, or NELAC Section No.
- An explanation of the need for the interpretation.





Procedure (cont.)

- b. The NELAP Board Chair, the LASC Chair, and/or the TNI Program Administrator will determine by consensus how to respond to the inquiry:
 - i. If the consensus determines that the NELAP Board should consider the question, the NELAP Board Chair will respond to the concerned parties by email response within 14 days of receiving the request for an interpretation.



Procedure (cont.)

- ii. If the consensus determines that the question is not an issue of interpretation of the Standard, the NELAP Board Chair or TNI Program Administrator may direct the question to the TAC, an AB or other appropriate groups for resolution.





Procedure (cont.)

- iii. If the consensus determines the question can be resolved by the LASC through the process described in this SOP, the NELAP Board Chair will request the LASC Chair to proceed within 14 days of receipt of the request for interpretation.



Procedure (cont.)

- c. The LASC Chair will respond to the request for interpretation by the following means:
 - i. If the LASC Chair determines that the LASC should consider the question, the LASC Chair shall reply to the NELAP Board Chair by email within 14 days of receiving the request from the NELAP Board Chair, or





Procedure (cont.)

ii. If the LASC Chair determines the need for consensus, the question will be emailed to the members of the LASC and discussed on a conference call, or/and



Procedure (cont.)

- iii. The LASC Chair may appoint a sub committee to further discuss the issue and give recommendations to the full LASC, or/and
- iv. The LASC Chair may contact a TNI expert committee or any other committee with the needed information and expertise to help the LASC with the interpretation.





Procedure (cont.)

- d. The LASC will have 45 days to reach consensus on interpretation of the Standard and provide its interpretation to the NELAP Board Chair via email.



Procedure (cont.)

- e. Before finalizing any interpretation, the NELAP Board will evaluate the interpretation to determine if the following conditions are met:





Procedure (cont.)

- i. The interpretation must answer the question posed by the concerned parties;
- ii. The interpretation must not go beyond the parameters of the original question; and
- iii. The interpretation must be within the boundaries and scope of the standard, that is, an interpretation is neither a new standard nor an addition to the current standard.



Procedure (cont.)

- f. If the interpretation does not meet these requirements the NELAP Board will send the interpretation back to the LASC with an explanation and the interpretation process will resume. The chair of the NELAP Board will notify the party who submitted the request of the status of the interpretation.





Procedure (cont.)

- g. Once the NELAP Board agrees that the interpretation is finalized, the chair of the NELAP Board or designee will have 10 days to inform the parties of the final decision on the interpretation. The interpretation must be implemented by the NELAP assessors, the recognized AB's, and the NELAP accredited laboratories. The interpretation is in effect until such a time as The Standard is changed or another interpretation has been issued.



Break - 30 min

- Thank you,
- please come back





Subcommittees

- Small Laboratories Subcommittee
 - Brooke Connor
- Non-NELAP AA Subcommittee
 - Ann Marie Allen
- National Database Subcommittee
 - Dan Hickman



Small Labs Subcommittee

- Provide help and guidance for small labs who are trying to become accredited (in coordination with the TAC-technical assistance committee).
- Work with the expert committees to assure that small lab concerns are considered when developing standards.
- Be the voice for small laboratories that cannot attend meetings, but want to be a part of TNI.





Non-NELAP AA Committee

- Update from Cambridge meeting on Monday - Ann Marie Allen



National Database Subcommittee

- Developed IT QA Plan for national accreditation database
- Completed final draft for the Development Plan
- RFI for DP will be prepared by NFSTC





Future Plans?

- Monthly conference calls, 2nd Friday, 11 AM EST
- Work with PT and NELAP Boards
- Work with TAC, AB and On-Site committees

