



# ILLINOIS ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

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## IL ELAP Update to Accredited Labs: (March 2 ,2022)

This note is intended to provide an update to all Illinois (Primary) labs accredited by the Illinois Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (IL ELAP).

### 1. Update on the approval of Standard Methods 23<sup>rd</sup> Edition and US EPA 537.1 and US EPA 533:

Our Laboratory Accreditation Unit received word that the Illinois Legislature approved the update, and this allows us to add the Standard Methods 23<sup>rd</sup> edition and PFAS/PFOA (533 and 537.1) methods to our scope of accreditation. Rule changes were approved and published by the Secretary of State 02/09/2022.

#### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE LABS??

- We have a process to provide fair and quick implementation of these methods to laboratories that are eager to add them. We are asking laboratories that would like the new methods/editions etc., to email a written request.
- For your written requests, we will need SOPs, Data Packets, passing PTs, MDLs, IDOCs and bench sheets. Laboratories will need to be assessed on-site for the new PFOS/PFOA methods due to the new technology.
- We will begin scheduling these on-site assessments on a first come first serve basis. If a laboratory submits a complete document packet, it will be put in the queue for review.
- LAU Staff has 30 days once a complete packet is received to review and evaluate if all documentation is acceptable. The on-site visit will be schedule at that time.
- Without a solid number of how many labs plan to apply, we will communicate if we get behind on the reviews and assessments.
- We are accepting these requests until **06/01/2022**, after that date, laboratories will have to wait for their next annual renewal to add the methods.
- Since this is new technology for our unit, it will be a slower process in the beginning.

### 2. On-Site vs. Remote Metrics—

- First as a unit, we prefer to do on-site assessments. This allows the assessors a more thorough assessment, better rapport with the laboratory and staff and it is easier to communicate in person.
- Per US EPA Region 5 and our IL EPA LAU guidelines, if a method is requested and it has new technology for that laboratory, it requires an on-site assessment.
- For the safety of the laboratory staff and the IL EPA LAU Staff, we put metrics in place to determine ASAP if an assessment will need to be changed from on-site to remote.
- Below are the metrics reviewed:

2125 S. First Street, Champaign, IL 61820 (217) 278-5800  
1101 Eastport Plaza Dr., Suite 100, Collinsville, IL 62234 (618) 346-5120  
9511 Harrison Street, Des Plaines, IL 60016 (847) 294-4000  
595 S. State Street, Elgin, IL 60123 (847) 608-3131

2309 W. Main Street, Suite 116, Marion, IL 62959 (618) 993-7200  
412 SW Washington Street, Suite D, Peoria, IL 61602 (309) 671-3022  
4302 N. Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103 (815) 987-7760

- Illinois Department of Public Health's data for Covid-19 positivity rate in the region where the laboratory is located. This positivity rate needs to be  $\leq 8\%$ .
- The LAU and Laboratory need to inform each other if there has been a positive Covid-19 case within their staff in the past 30 days.
- The LAU Supervisor graphs every 5 days the positivity rate for 45 days prior to the assessment.
- LAU Staff talk to the laboratory's Point of Contact regarding any special requirements for our staff to come on-site. Any concerns, PPE requirements and rules for on-site are discussed during this call/email.
- The LAU Supervisor reviews the population of the laboratory and the city/area where the laboratory is located.
- Once the Assessment is within two weeks, a decision is made to "go or no go" and this will be when the LAU will start setting up for a remote assessment and possibly asking for extra documents or information, they would have looked at on-site.
- If it is determined at this two week point to switch to a remote assessment, a call is made to the lab to determine the best technology to use to perform a remote assessment (i.e., Microsoft Teams, WebEx, Zoom)
- We do appreciate all the extra documents that laboratories are supplying for the assessments. This is helping do early document reviews and prepare for a remote audit, if necessary.
- One practice other state's AB's are using is labeled "reduced exposure" assessments. This involves less time on-site; assessors make a plan while reviewing documentation on the most important areas to look at in person. This is a document heavy review and then less time face to face in the laboratory.

**3. Why do the renewal letters and emails stress submitting the complete application packet at least 30 days before expiration?**

- The renewal cover letter and usually the renewal email state that the complete application packet needs to be returned 30 days prior to expiration.
- An assessor has 30 days to review, update and issue a new certificate of accreditation.
- The complete packet (digital application, signed invoice, signed statement of compliance, payment, and if applicable primary scope of accreditation) is necessary to start the 30-day review time. i.e., an application comes in 1/1/2022 but no payment and other required documents until 1/20/2022, the assessor has 30 days from the 1/20/2022 time to process.
- IL EPA LAU Staff have worked hard to keep laboratories from having their accreditation expire before a renewed certificate is issued. LAU Staff continually work diligently to get these out before the lab's certificates expiration.

- If a complete application packet is not received before the expiration of their scope, the laboratory will be required to re-apply like a new laboratory, including the initial application fee of \$3900.00.

#### 4. Most Common Nonconformities seen in assessments

- Number of Standards for the type of Calibration curve (2016 TNI Standards V1M4 1.7.1.1)
- IDOCs and DOCs not being documented, updated or sometimes done at all (2016 TNI Standards V1M4 1.6.2 and 1.6.3)
- Use of wide-range pH paper to measure pH <2; must use narrow range pH paper >12
- RE and %RE documenting, confusion on what is needed. (2016 TNI Standards V1M4 1.7.3.3)

#### IL ELAP Staff:

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Please contact any of the IL ELAP team if you have questions and/or concerns.

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Also feel free to recommend any topics for our Laboratory Communication Newsletter. Chances are if you have a question about something, someone else does, too.

