

US EPA METHODS UPDATE RULE (MUR)

The US EPA issued Guidelines for Establishing Test Procedures for the Analysis of Pollutants under the Clean Water Act; National Primary Drinking Water Regulations; Analysis and Sampling Procedures; Final Rule (3-12-2007). This rule became effective April 11, 2007. The rule may have an impact on your certification and may require changes to your laboratory procedures.

Summary

This rule makes significant changes in test procedures for analysis and sampling under both the Clean Water Act (CWA) and Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). More specifically, this rule amends 40 CFR part 136 to approve new methods submitted by stakeholders, correct errors to tables, clarify method requirements and withdraw a large number of methods for use in regulatory compliance testing; replacing them with alternate more up-to-date versions. In addition, the procedures for the preservation of samples and holding times for a number of analytes have been changed or clarified.

It is your responsibility to read, understand and comply with the provisions of the MUR.

NOTE: Changes as described in this notice and in the tables listed below describe most of the information but it is not inclusive of all changes as listed in the MUR.

Information Resources

Please refer to the North Carolina Laboratory Certification (NCLC) website (www.dwqlab.org) under *Certification Branch* for the following important information:

- The Federal Register Notice (3-12-2007)
- The Federal Register Notice (3-26-2007)
- Amendment to Laboratory Certification Application
- Deleted and Equivalent Methods for Clean Water Act (CWA) Table
- New Test Methods for Clean Water Act (CWA) Table
- Holding Time and Preservation Changes Summary Table

If you are unable to access the NCLC website please contact us for additional information.

Procedures for Amending Your Certificate

I. Equivalent Methods

If your laboratory is currently approved for one of the test methods that has been removed (refer to the Federal Register notices and the Deleted and Equivalent Methods for CWA Table) and would like to switch to an equivalent method, you are required to notify NCLC of the effective implementation of the changes by submitting an *Amendment to Laboratory Certification Application*. **(Note: Oil and Grease methods utilizing freon should have been changed by April 11, 2007).**

In addition, the following records are to be maintained at your facility and be readily available to NCLC upon request:

- Copy of Approved Reference Method
- Method Standard Operating Procedure
- Initial Demonstration of Capability
- Method Detection Limit Study (where applicable)
- Benchsheets must be updated to reference the approved method
- The approved test method must be referenced in the final report
- PT sample analyses should reference the approved method

Performance Testing

You must pass a PT sample using the new approved method prior to **October 31, 2007**. If you plan to retain any of the old methods (see below) you are still required to pass a PT sample annually for those methods in addition to the new methods.

Exceptions based on NPDES Permits (or other regulatory mandates)

The EPA Office of Water has allowed the continued use of the removed methods if they are specified in a permit, for the life of the permit under the following conditions.

- If your laboratory is performing analyses for an existing NPDES permit that specifies the analytical method or are under other regulatory requirements to use one of the removed methods, you may continue to use these methods **ONLY** for those specific situations.
- The laboratory should obtain copies of the permits/regulatory mandate and maintain on file.
- Any other use of the removed methods is prohibited.

II. New Test Methods

For new test methods as listed in the MUR, an *Amendment to Laboratory Certification Application* and PT sample analysis will be required. If you are requesting to add a method to your certificate that is not an equivalent technology to a deleted method for which you are currently certified, you must file an *Amendment to Laboratory Certification Application* and pay the appropriate fees. If you are not sure whether a method is equivalent, refer to the *Deleted and Equivalent Methods for Clean Water Act* tables on the NCLC website and/or contact your NCLC auditor.

Microbiological Test Methods

The USEPA has also just released the Monday, March 26, 2007 Federal Register Notice, Guidelines, Establishing Test Procedures for the Analysis of Pollutant; Analytical Methods for Biological Pollutants; Final Rule. This rule modifies the EPA's Guidelines that establish approved bacterial testing procedures for analysis and sampling under the Clean Water Act. These changes include approval for new methods for monitoring microbial pollutants in wastewater and sewage sludge, including EPA methods, vendor-developed methods submitted by IDEXX and Hach and methods developed by voluntary consensus bodies (VCSB) as well as updated versions of currently approved methods. This rule also updates Table II at 136.3 (e) to more clearly define the holding time for bacterial testing as 6 hours holding time with 2 hours to process samples. The 3/26/2007 regulation becomes effective April 25, 2007.

You can view or download the complete text of the Federal Register notice from the internet at www.epa.gov/waterscience/methods. You can learn more about the methods for wastewater by contacting Meghan Hessenauer, Engineering and Analysis Division, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Water, Office of Science and Technology, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20460 (email: hessenauer.meghan@epa.gov).

If you have additional questions, please contact your current auditor.

Sincerely,

Pat Donnelly
Branch Manager
North Carolina Laboratory Certification