

Ask AASHTO re:source!

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If there is something that you've been dying to ask us, please let us know! We welcome any questions related to AASHTO re:source's programs and services, and I will answer questions here in future newsletters. We may even use your questions as topics for future newsletter articles or webinars!

For the inaugural column, here are some questions that we commonly receive about the AASHTO re:source Proficiency Sample Program:

Why do my proficiency sample boxes sometimes arrive at my laboratory several days apart?

Some sample types (such as fine aggregate) that have a large number of participants are shipped separately from our facility because all of the boxes will not fit on one truck. We also have limited storage space in our industrial area, which may require us to ship samples on separate days. When samples are shipped separately, we try to include that information in the posted sample announcement. Rest assured, we strive to ship the samples on or before the posted shipping date to allow customers ample time to complete the testing.

Why aren't the testing instructions included in the sample boxes?

We discontinued placing instructions in the sample boxes in early 2008. Since then, we have uploaded the instructions to our website, in order to have a single source of information should anything change with the instructions or data sheets. By keeping the instructions and data sheets online, we can immediately post the latest information and any revisions on our website for access by our customers.

Why are the samples labeled "A" and "B" inside the shipping boxes, while a numeric identification system is used on the instructions, data sheets, and everywhere else?

"A" corresponds to the odd-numbered samples, and "B" corresponds to the even-numbered samples. Many of our samples are used for other purposes that require "blind" samples, such as in cases where accreditation suspensions are being resolved. We maintain an extensive inventory of packaged samples for those purposes. The A/B labeling system is more efficient than other methods that could be used, such as maintaining separate inventories of blind samples or repackaging sealed samples. The A/B system also helps maintain the integrity of the packaged samples since repackaging isn't necessary.

Why does AASHTO re:source require that testing results be reported to more decimal places than what is required by the AASHTO and ASTM test methods?

The difference is intentional. Reporting the results to an extra decimal place beyond what is required by the test method is requested for statistical reasons. The extra decimal place is helpful when the data analysis is performed. Less rounding equates to more precise data that is available to analyze. It prevents rounding up or down that may make a laboratory's results appear closer or farther from the average result.

[Send us your questions.](#) Or check out the FAQ pages to see if it has already been answered.