

Maintaining AASHTO Accreditation, Maintaining Quality

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Posted October 2013

Being AASHTO accredited shows that your laboratory is serious about quality. However, the process isn't over after AASHTO accreditation is initially granted. By maintaining accreditation, you are showing your continued commitment to excellence.



Accreditation Maintenance

In my previous article, [A Beginner's Guide to AASHTO Accreditation](#), I discussed how to obtain accreditation. To review, AASHTO accreditation remains active as long as your laboratory is effectively participating in the programs and continues to comply with the [Procedures Manual for the Accreditation of Construction Materials Testing Laboratories](#) requirements. You will want to make sure you do the following:

- Submit your Annual Review Form and documentation.
- Participate in the current AASHTO re:source and/or CCRL on-site assessment tour and every tour thereafter. A "tour" is one full sweep across the country by AASHTO re:source and CCRL laboratory assessment staff. An AASHTO re:source tour occur about every 24 months; a CCRL tour occur about every 36 months. An email announcement will be sent prior to when AASHTO re:source is scheduled to be assessing in your area. Check out the current AASHTO re:source [assessment schedule](#) to see where we are on the tour right now. Contact [CCRL](#) for more information on their tour schedule.
- Resolve the nonconformities noted in your on-site assessment report within 60 days of the issuance of the final report.
- Test proficiency samples. Throughout the year, AASHTO re:source and CCRL will send you material for the samples in which you are enrolled. Accredited laboratories must perform all tests within the scope of their accreditation (i.e. every accredited test) on all applicable samples. Once testing is complete, you will need to enter your data online for analysis. Your laboratory will be issued ratings based on the data entered. If your laboratory received low ratings, further action may be needed. See [Proficiency Sample Ratings: Being Average Has Never Been So Good](#) for more information on sample ratings.

Changes In Your Accreditation

Your current accreditation status is available to the public through our [accreditation directory](#). When a standard is added or removed from your accreditation, those changes are visible here, as well as your specific laboratory home page (only accessible to you when logged into your account). If a temporary suspension is issued, a notice in red will appear on the directory listing and your home page.

A laboratory's accreditation can be suspended or revoked if they fail to comply with the [Procedures Manual for the Accreditation of Construction Materials Testing Laboratories](#) requirements. Some common reasons your

accreditation may be suspended include: failure to pay invoices, low proficiency sample ratings, insufficient responses to nonconformities, or failure to complete your Annual Review documentation.

When there is a change in your lab's accreditation status, you will receive an email notification. This email will contain basic information as well as an attachment further explaining the accreditation decision. The attachment and email will provide you the following information regarding your suspension:

- **Decision:** *States the changes that have occurred to your accreditation status.*
- **Affected Scope:** *Lists the standards that have been affected by this change.*
- **Reason:** *Explains why this change was made.*
- **Required Action:** *Indicates what needs to be done to be reinstated or to have the suspension lifted.*
- **Deadline:** *Designates when the issue should be resolved by.*
- **Consequence:** *Describes what will happen if no action is taken or the issue is not resolved satisfactorily.*

Once the required actions have been completed, another email is sent notifying you that your laboratory's accreditation has been reinstated. This email will also have an attachment further explaining the decision.

The emails and attachments can also be accessed from your Accreditation Events page on our website. You can view the communication history and attachments by clicking the envelope to the left of the Decision.

Changes in Personnel

Let your [Quality Analyst](#) know anytime you have a change in personnel. This is especially important for management and technical staff members. If the people that are used as the accreditation and laboratory contacts on our website change, and the information is not updated, your laboratory will not receive any important accreditation notices. Also, if there is a change in one of those positions, we need to know if you have replaced those individuals with people who hold similar certifications if your laboratory is accredited for any ASTM standards requiring personnel certifications (such as *ASTM C1077* and *E329*).

Other Articles Focusing on Quality:

- [Quality Corner: What is Quality, Anyway?](#)
- [Quality Corner: ISO/IEC 17025 Accreditation](#)
- [The Road to Developing an Effective Quality Management System \(QMS\): Part 1 - Why Bother?](#)
- [The Road to Developing an Effective Quality Management System – Part 2, Getting Started](#)
- [The Road to Developing an Effective Quality Management System \(QMS\): Part 3 – Finish What You Started](#)

Other Articles Focusing on the AASHTO Accreditation Program:

- [The History of the AASHTO Accreditation Program](#)
- [Get to the Root of the Problem: Root Cause Analysis \(RCA\) Explained](#)
- [How to Publicize Your AASHTO Accreditation](#)
- [Technician Certification Requirements in ASTM Standards](#)
- [A Beginner's Guide to AASHTO Accreditation](#)
- [How to Resolve AASHTO re:source and CCRL Report Findings](#)



Maintaining AASHTO Accreditation

Congratulations, your laboratory is AASHTO accredited! Now you need to maintain it. Maintaining your accreditation shows your continued commitment to excellence.

So, Now What?

The following will help keep your accreditation in good standing:

- Undergo an Annual Review
- Be assessed every tour
- Resolve nonconformities
- Test proficiency samples

Follow Up!

Changes In Your Accreditation

Your current accreditation status is available to the public through our online directory.

If a temporary suspension is issued, a notice in red will appear on the directory listing and your home page.

A laboratory's accreditation can be suspended or revoked if they fail to prove the highest standard of quality. Some of the reasons your accreditation may be suspended include: failure to pay invoices, low proficiency sample ratings, insufficient responses to nonconformities, or failure to complete your Annual Review documentation.

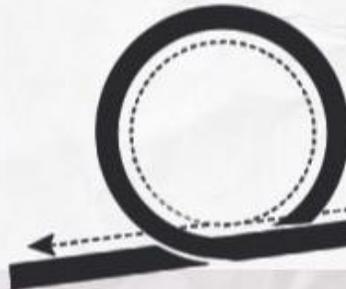
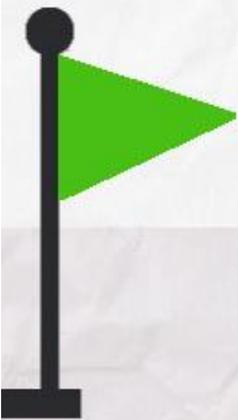
When a change occurs in your status, an email will be sent. It will contain basic information, and an attachment, further explaining the accreditation decision. They provide you the following information regarding your suspension:

- **Decision:** States the changes that have occurred to your accreditation status.
- **Affected Scope:** Lists the standards that have been affected by this change.
- **Reason:** Explains why this change was made.
- **Required Action:** Indicates what needs to be done to be reinstated or to have the suspension lifted.
- **Deadline:** Designates when the issue should be resolved by.
- **Consequence:** Describes what will happen if no action is taken or the issue is not resolved satisfactorily.



Problem Solved!

Once the required actions have been completed, another email is sent notifying you that your laboratory's accreditation has been reinstated. This email will also have an attachment further explaining the decision.



Tools To Help



AASHTOresource.org

A laboratory's AASHTO accreditation is ever-changing, but we will work with you every step of the way. AASHTO re:source provides tools that help you maintain your accreditation. We provide accreditation program information and other necessary documents that include corrective action reports, summary of changes for AASHTO R 18, and much more. Visit the AASHTO re:University on AASHTOresource.org to these online tools and resources.