



AASHTO Accreditation Policy and Guidance on PSP Suspension, Revocation, and Using XPS to Resolve PSP Issues

Policy taken from Section 3.3 of the [Procedures Manual for the Accreditation of Construction Materials Testing Laboratories](#).

3.3. Proficiency Testing Criteria

The laboratory shall participate in all AASHTO re:source and CCRL proficiency sample programs required for the test method(s) included in the scope of the laboratory's accreditation (see Table 1). The laboratory shall, within 60 calendar days of the date of issuance of a proficiency sample report, complete the following steps:

1. Investigate to determine the possible reason(s) for results beyond 2 standard deviations of the grand average (i.e. sample ratings of ± 2 , ± 1 , and 0),
2. Take action to correct any issues that are uncovered in the investigation, and
3. Document and maintain records of the investigation and corrective actions taken.

Consecutive occurrences of either nonparticipation or results beyond 2.5 standard deviations of the grand average (i.e. sample ratings of ± 1 and 0) will result in suspension of accreditation for the applicable test method(s). In order for reinstatement of accreditation for the test method(s) to occur, the laboratory must receive ratings within 2 standard deviations of the grand average (i.e. sample ratings of ± 3 , ± 4 , or ± 5) on the next regularly scheduled round of proficiency samples or on an extra proficiency/blind sample. Extra proficiency/blind samples are surplus samples that were produced for a regularly scheduled round of testing and are available for purchase by contacting the AAP.

When available, laboratories that have had their accreditation suspended for proficiency testing issues can have their testing evaluated using extra proficiency/blind sample(s) rather than waiting for the next round of testing. Test results must be accompanied by a completed corrective action report identifying the probable source of previous low ratings and the changes that have been implemented before performing testing on the extra proficiency/blind sample. The laboratory is responsible for the cost of the extra proficiency/blind sample(s). If the laboratory receives ratings beyond 2 standard deviations of the grand average on the extra proficiency/blind sample(s), the suspension will remain in effect. If the laboratory receives ratings within 2 standard deviations of the grand average and the corrective action supplied by the laboratory includes a root cause analysis that has been found to be acceptable, the accreditation for the applicable test method(s) will be reinstated. In either case, laboratories must receive satisfactory ratings (i.e. sample ratings of ± 3 , ± 4 , or ± 5) on the next regularly scheduled round of proficiency samples to avoid future revocation of accreditation for the affected test method(s).

Guidance

The AAP uses AASHTO re:source and CCRL Proficiency Sample Program (PSP) ratings to monitor conformance to AAP requirements. Consecutive low ratings are indicative of ineffective corrective actions. The laboratory must complete a corrective action report and retain it in the laboratory when low ratings are received, but they are not required to submit those reports to the AAP.

A laboratory's accreditation for test method(s) will be suspended if the laboratory receives poor ratings, does not submit data, or there is a combination of poor ratings (0 or ± 1) and no data for both samples on two consecutive rounds of proficiency sample testing. For a suspension to occur, the low ratings must be on the same test property (line item).

In cases where an extra proficiency/blind sample(s) is used to obtain reinstatement for the suspended or revoked test method(s), the laboratory will be required to submit their final results, test record(s), and corrective action report(s) for the proficiency samples that received a low rating in that test method(s).

A laboratory that is newly accredited for a test method will not be suspended for receiving poor ratings if the laboratory submitted data during a time in which they were not accredited. This rule does not apply for a laboratory that had been suspended or revoked for that test method. If a laboratory is not accredited because of a past revocation, the laboratory accreditation will be denied until the laboratory can receive satisfactory ratings on a regular proficiency sample round or an extra proficiency/blind sample(s).

In the case of revocation and in some rare cases of suspension in which the laboratory appears to be showing no signs of improvement or is not acting in good faith to resolve the low ratings after several attempts at reinstatement through XPS, the Quality Analyst can recommend revocation of the accreditation for the test method. The AAP can also require the laboratory to schedule a surveillance assessment in conjunction with the testing of one more XPS sample at no cost to the laboratory. Each situation will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the AAP Manager, the AASHTO re:source Manager, and the ATG Chair.

Table 1 - Fields of Testing and On-Site Assessment, Quality Management System Evaluation, and Proficiency Testing Requirements

| Fields of Construction Materials Testing | On-Site Assessment (Including Quality Management System Evaluation) Requirements | Proficiency Testing Requirements Including |
|---|---|---|
| Soils ¹ (ASTM D3740) | AASHTO re:source Soils Assessment Including Quality Management System Evaluation ⁴ | AASHTO re:source Soils Proficiency Samples ³ |
| Asphalt Cements/Cutback Asphalts ¹ (ASTM D3666) | AASHTO re:source Asphalt Cements Assessment Including Quality Management System Evaluation ⁴ | AASHTO re:source Asphalt Cement Proficiency Samples ³ |
| Emulsified Asphalts ¹ (ASTM D3666) | AASHTO re:source Emulsified Asphalt Assessment Including Quality Management System Evaluation ⁴ | AASHTO re:source Emulsified Asphalt Proficiency Samples ³ |
| Pavement Preservation | AASHTO re:source Pavement Preservation Assessment including Quality Management System Evaluation ⁴ | AASHTO re:source Pavement Preservation Proficiency Samples ³ |
| Asphalt Mixtures ¹ (ASTM D3666) | AASHTO re:source Asphalt Mixture Assessment Including Quality Management System Evaluation ⁴ | AASHTO re:source Asphalt Mixture Proficiency Samples ³ |
| Aggregates ^{1,2} (ASTM C1077, D3666) | AASHTO re:source or CCRL Aggregate Assessment Including Quality Management System Evaluation ⁴ | AASHTO re:source Coarse & Fine Aggregate Proficiency Samples ³ |
| Concrete ² (ASTM C1077) | CCRL Concrete Assessment Including Quality Management System Evaluation ⁴ | CCRL Concrete Proficiency Samples ³ |
| Cement ² (ASTM C1222) | CCRL Cement Assessment Including Quality Management System Evaluation ⁴ | CCRL Cement Proficiency Samples ⁵ |
| Masonry ² (ASTM C1093) | CCRL Masonry Assessment Including Quality Management System Evaluation ⁴ | CCRL Concrete Masonry Unit Proficiency Samples ³ |
| Iron and Steel ^{1,2} | AASHTO re:source or CCRL Iron and Steel Assessment Including Quality Management System Evaluation ⁴ | CCRL Reinforcing Bar Proficiency Samples ³ |
| Sprayed Fire-Resistive Materials (SFRM) ¹ | AASHTO re:source SFRM Assessment Including Quality Management System Evaluation ⁴ | Not Applicable |
| Supplementary Cementitious Materials ² | CCRL Supplementary Cementitious Materials Assessment Including Quality Management System Evaluation ⁴ | CCRL Pozzolan Proficiency Samples ³ |
| Dimension Stone | CCRL Cement Assessment Including Quality Management System Evaluation ⁴ | Not Applicable |
| AAP ISO/IEC 17025 Assessment | Those laboratories seeking recognition for compliance to ISO/IEC 17025 must receive a separate AAP ISO/IEC 17025 Assessment in addition to AASHTO re:source and CCRL on-site assessments. | AAP requirements apply |

- ¹ Accreditation provided for AASHTO and ASTM test methods included in the scope of the AASHTO re:source on-site assessment program and ASTM standards D3666, D3740, and E329.
- ² Accreditation provided for ASTM test methods (and equivalent AASHTO test methods) included in the scope of the CCRL on-site assessment program which cover both the test apparatus and procedures and ASTM standards C1077, C1222, C1093, and E329. Chemical tests for cement are evaluated based on a review of the qualification data test as described in AASHTO T 105 and ASTM C114.
- ³ A laboratory must participate in any proficiency sample program (PSP) that includes a test method(s) for which accreditation is requested.
- ⁴ Provided in conjunction with the on-site visit.
- ⁵ A laboratory must test any CCRL cement proficiency samples applicable to the materials and tests for which accreditation is requested. CCRL distributes proficiency samples for three types of cement: portland cement, masonry cement, and blended cement.