



## **Accreditation by Method – Guidance for AIHA Accredited Laboratories**

In response to inquiries from its customers, AIHA's Analytical Accreditation Board (AAB) developed the following guidance for selecting methods for accreditation from the AIHA Laboratory Quality Assurance Programs.

AIHA's quality management system (ISO/IEC 17011:2004) requires it to accredit laboratories by method. A listing of methods on a laboratory's scope of accreditation allows the consumer of laboratory services to determine if the laboratory has the desired capability and is accredited to provide a specific analysis. AIHA recognizes that many laboratories provide tests and services that may be outside the scope of AIHA accreditation, and AIHA must determine which methods fall within the scope of AIHA accreditation.

Consumers of laboratory services are often looking for a laboratory that can analyze a chemical by standard reference methods. Reference methods are developed and/or validated by recognized agencies (NIOSH, OSHA, EPA, ASTM), and much of the industrial hygiene community will search capabilities for OSHA and NIOSH methods as the first choice.

The methods evaluated for AIHA accreditation **are primarily air methods** but also include **wipe and bulk surface sample methods**, with a **primary focus** on evaluating **the potential for employee or personnel exposures**.

### **Listing EPA Drinking and Waste Water Methods**

Most EPA drinking water and waste water methods, while similar to many OSHA and NIOSH methods, are compliance methods, to be performed under an environmental accreditation having legal or regulatory responsibility (including local, state or national environmental certification.) Since AIHA does not have reciprocity or the same regulatory status as these environmental certification programs, AIHA is concerned that a laboratory customer could misinterpret that AIHA accreditation of EPA drinking and waste water methods is equivalent to local, state or national certification .

For laboratories that wish to use elements of EPA drinking and waste water methods, AIHA suggests that the laboratory reference their in-house method, and not the respective EPA method, on their report and AIHA scope page. Exceptions to this suggestion include appropriate EPA methods for environmental lead analysis in soil and paint. In this way, it will be clear to customers that AIHA is only accrediting analysis of matrices that are applicable to the AIHA programs. Similarly, AIHA does not accredit bodily fluid methods (blood, urine, etc.), since other accrediting authorities regulate these methods.



## **Listing an EPA Method as the Laboratory's Method for Scope Page and Reports for Environmental Testing**

Preparation and analytical aspects of the EPA or other organizations' methods can be listed, as long as the laboratory has adequately documented and validated the procedure for the appropriate matrix (filters, sorbent tubes, wipes, etc.) if the methods were not already so intended (e.g., EPA bulk asbestos methods or passivated canister methods such as TO-15 for organic solvents in air). The laboratory must also add to its test method the appropriate calculations for reporting results to the industrial hygiene customer, and list the method as modified when necessary. However, as mentioned above, many clients are consulting the AIHA scopes list for methods widely accepted in the industrial hygiene community, so laboratories should be prepared to demonstrate (to both the client and the AIHA site assessor) how the method has been modified.

## **Listing a NIOSH and/or an OSHA Method as the Laboratory's Method for Scope Page**

AIHA has preferred to categorize NIOSH and/or OSHA reference methods under Industrial Hygiene Laboratory Accreditation Program (IHLAP), with the exception of proprietary methods, such as pharmaceuticals. Listing both the internal Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and the reference method on the final test report would alleviate any confusion and would be acceptable to AIHA. Alternatively, as indicated above for EPA methods, NIOSH and OSHA methods can be listed as "modified" when appropriate.

## **Reporting AIHA Accreditation to Clients**

It is important to note that if a laboratory indicates it is AIHA accredited on the customer's report by using the AIHA logo or making reference to AIHA accreditation, the method ID must be listed on the laboratory's scope page along with the test result reported. The laboratory must also clearly identify any results not covered under its AIHA accreditation.

## **Using Older Editions of Methods**

The use of prior editions of methods is dependent upon specific requirements of the laboratory's client and circumstance. AIHA intends that a laboratory use the most recent version of a method, especially if prior versions have been found to have operational problems and for comparison of results with those of other laboratories using the most recent version of the same method.

As mentioned above, if significant changes have been made to a method, then the laboratory must either list the reference method as "modified" or list its in-house method on its scope page and reports. Minor changes to methods (e.g., a change in column type)



that have been documented to not affect sample recoveries would not normally be considered significant. Listed methods shall be consistent with what the laboratory is actually performing.

### **Method Validation**

Laboratories are responsible for validating all in-house and reference methods in accordance with applicable AIHA policy requirements.