

COMMERCIAL LABORATORY ACCREDITATION



Your quick guide to updates, reminders, and resources to support your laboratory operations provided by the Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services (DCLS) Virginia Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (VELAP).

Common Findings & How to Avoid Them

COMPLIANCE TIP #1:

SOP requirements are presented in a list format in the TNI 2016 Standard. (V1M2 4.2.8.5.f). Use this list to create a template for new SOPs and as a checklist for review of existing SOPs. TNI language specifies that all elements are included “where applicable”. Having a template and a format that prompts either a response for each TNI requirement or a notation that the requirement is not applicable promotes attention to each required component. Noting within the SOP that a required section is “not applicable”, as appropriate, helps speed up the laboratory’s next internal audit and any future reviews by VELAP.

COMPLIANCE TIP #2:

Self-audit regularly to avoid method findings (V1M2 5.4.1) by scheduling re-reads of the published method and comparing the method to the laboratory’s processes and written procedures. In addition to helping in the internal audit of procedures and practices, this periodic review of the published method is a valuable tool for the education of staff members who perform the test.

Proficiency Testing (PT) Reminder

The “7-day rule” found in V1M1 5.1.1.c and in V1M1 5.2.1.2.b of the 2016 TNI Standard directs a 7-day waiting period between the close date of one study and the open date of the next study. Review V1M1 3.10 and 3.11 to see how PT opening and closing dates are defined. Understanding these requirements will help prevent ordering supplemental studies too soon when planning a change-in-scope or addressing a PT failure. Overlooking the “7-day rule” may cause a PT study to be invalidated. Review these rules carefully and reach out to your VELAP team for help if you have questions.

Notification Reminder

Don’t forget that the regulation requires laboratories to notify VELAP of any changes to key staff ~ Responsible Official, Owner, Technical Manager(s), and/or Quality Assurance Manager(s) ~ within 30 days of the change. (IVAC30-46-90)



Spotlight on Preparation Methods

Information to Support Your Accreditation Processes

VELAP has recently learned that some laboratories are unclear about whether sample preparation (prep) methods can or should be added to a laboratory's scope, and we want to clear that up by saying, "Yes, please!"

It may be helpful to understand that if your laboratory performs testing using SW-846 Methods (<https://www.epa.gov/hw-sw846>), there are several different regulatory programs and offices within the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) that may use the data produced.

The DEQ Office of Remediation Programs (ORP) has oversight over:

- Hazardous Waste Clean Up Program (formerly known as RCRA Corrective Action),
- Voluntary Remediation Program (VRP) and Brownfields, and
- Superfund and Federal Facilities.

The DEQ Office of Financial Responsibility and Waste Programs has oversight over:

- Solid and Hazardous Waste Compliance Programs

Having all preparation methods associated with accredited testing represented on the laboratory's VELAP certificate helps the laboratory communicate its capabilities to the various data users associated with SW-846 analyses. Data users' preferences for this information may vary based on the specific program or project needs.

If your laboratory performs accredited testing using SW-846 methods, you may be accredited to methods that refer to associated prep methods. Your laboratory is encouraged to add those prep methods to your laboratory's scope of accreditation.

Adding Prep Methods

In many cases, VELAP has previously assessed prep methods used by laboratories during previous on-site assessments of associated SW-846 methods.

To add prep methods, you'll be asked to provide:

- **For Primary Labs: the prep method's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)**
- **For Secondary Labs: the most current scope of accreditation from the primary AB (if not already supplied to VELAP)**

Fees will apply per method-based fee calculations and change in scope processes [1VAC30-46-150]. Contact the VELAP office if you have questions about adding prep methods to your scope of accreditation.

A form for adding prep methods is available:

<https://dgs.virginia.gov/division-of-consolidated-laboratory-services/certification-accreditation/certificationaccreditation-toolbox> (Look under Change In Scope.)



Spotlight on Resources

Tools and links to support your laboratory operations

Virginia Town Hall Registration

Sign up to get notifications about updates to 1VAC30-46

<https://townhall.virginia.gov/>

[Choose Public Sign Up, then look under Administration / Dept of General Services for regulations of interest.]

VELAP Payment Portal

Invoices from VELAP now provide a link for electronic payments. Bookmark the link today for easy access. VELAP-issued invoices also include the link: <https://cert.dgs.virginia.gov>

TNI Training Resources

TNI has revised its training webpage to improve the delivery of training resources to laboratories. Check out what's available ~ some are free, some must be purchased.

<https://eds.nelac-institute.org/>

TNI PT Table Notifications

Subscribe to receive email notifications when updates are made to the TNI Proficiency Testing Tables

<https://nelac-institute.org/content/NEPTP/fopt.php>

Certification Period Adjustment

All VELAP certificates issued under 1VAC30-46 to Commercial Laboratories are in the final stage of updates to a new universal accreditation cycle running from **October 1 to September 30** each year. To accomplish this adjustment, most laboratories have had (or will soon have) a partial-year invoice and a partial-year certificate. The first **invoices** for the new one year accreditation cycle will be issued to all Chapter 46 laboratories in **July 2026**, and **annual certificates** will be sent by e-mail in late **September**. *The schedule will remain the same moving forward.*



Questions? Suggestions? Ideas?

If you have recommendations on educational information for future newsletters, please let us know at Lab_cert@dgs.virginia.gov.

Contact Us

Email: Lab_cert@dgs.virginia.gov

Phone: (804)648-4480 & request to speak to a member of the laboratory certification team