Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services (DCLS)
Virginia Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (VELAP)

Program and Application Process
Frequently Asked Questions
Revised March 24, 2025

Is my laboratory required to become certified under Virginia's Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (VELAP)?
Yes, if your laboratory is providing air, waste, or water data to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), or your laboratory does analysis for a client that provides data to DEQ.

There are exceptions. If your laboratory only does field testing, certification is not required. If your laboratory only does analysis for citizen monitoring groups, your laboratory must meet DEQ's requirements but not those of the VELAP. If your laboratory is owned by an institution of higher education and does research for DEQ, call your contact at DEQ to determine if your laboratory will be required to be certified. Please see the regulations at 1 VAC 30-45-30, 1 VAC 30-46-30, and the definition of "environmental analysis" in either chapter.

My laboratory needs to become certified. Which regulation applies to my laboratory?
Non-commercial environmental laboratories apply for environmental laboratory certification under 1 VAC 30-45. Commercial environmental laboratories apply for environmental laboratory certification under 1 VAC 30-46. Refer to definitions of "non-commercial laboratory" and "commercial laboratory" in either regulation to determine the appropriate regulation for your laboratory.

Where can I find 1 VAC 30-45 and 1 VAC 30-46?
Copies of both regulations are available on the VELAP web page, www.dgs.virginia.gov/dcls, and are also accessible by chapter at http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/.

What standards must my laboratory meet to be certified?
Commercial environmental laboratories must meet the requirements of the 2016 TNI Standards. Noncommercial environmental laboratories must meet a limited version of these standards. The 2016 TNI Standards are incorporated by reference into 1 VAC 30-46. 1 VAC 30-45 specifically sets out the standards laboratories must meet.

Where can I purchase a copy of the TNI Standards?
The TNI Standards can be found at the NELAC Institute website (www.nelac-institute.org). Volume 1 contains information pertinent to accredited laboratories.

Why am I being asked to get an EPA ID Number for my laboratory?
Your EPA Lab ID is a unique identifier for your laboratory, and you will be asked for that number when you report the results of your analysis of Proficiency Test (PT) samples to your PT provider. This number will be required to assure that your PT results can be submitted electronically to DCLS by your PT provider.   To obtain an EPA ID number, contact the Laboratory Certification office (Lab_Cert@dgs.virginia.gov) for assistance.

What is the timeline for processing an initial application?
The regulations describe the application process and associated timelines at 1VAC30-45-70 and 1VAC30-46-70. The process can take up to 12 months from the initial submission of an application until certification or accreditation is achieved. *Much of the timeline for achieving certification or accreditation is dependent on the laboratory's knowledge and implementation of the requirements and preparation in advance of submitting an application.*

The to avoid delays in the application process the following steps must be taken prior to submitting the application:

- Download and review the Chapter 45 or Chapter 46 Regulations, provided on the VELAP web page at www.dgs.virginia.gov/dcls [see TOOLBOX PAGE / REGULATIONS]. Purchase and review the TNI Standard from the TNI website if you seek Chapter 46 Accreditation.
- Review the quality manual against the Chapter 45 or Chapter 46 Quality Manual Checklist [see FORMS]. The laboratory's Quality Manual must meet the requirements of the appropriate regulation or standard as referenced on the Checklist.
- Update the Quality Manual, if needed, to comply with each requirement listed on Form 6985, Chapter 45 Quality Manual Checklist for New Applicants, or Form 6969, Chapter 46 Quality Manual Checklist for New Applicants. Complete the Quality Manual Checklist form by citing the exact location, by page or section number, of each Quality Manual checklist requirement.
- Take note of the checklist items that require the submission of supporting documentation. Gather and supply clearly labeled supporting documentation as requested.

An application will not be determined to be COMPLETE unless the Quality Manual is fully compliant with the regulation. A site visit cannot be scheduled until the application is determined to be COMPLETE. Any non-

compliance in the quality manual or failure to submit supporting documentation as requested will cause the application to be determined to be incomplete. This causes lengthy delays in the laboratory's achievement of certification or accreditation.

Determine the list of matrix / method / analyte combinations for which your laboratory will seek certification. *Note that DCLS certifies or accredits only for those parameters required for compliance with Virginia's air, water, and waste regulations.* Communicate these selections in the Excel database provided with the application.

For secondary applications under 1VAC30-46, apply ONLY for those Fields of Accreditation held by the laboratory in its primary accreditation. The application can be expedited by creating a cross-walk to show the verification of each requested FOA. For example, a printed list of selected FOAs noting the page number and line number of the requested FOA on the primary scope of accreditation will greatly expedite the validation of the application's requests.

Is additional information available?

Information to support laboratories in the implementation of the regulations and other guidance can be found on the VELAP web page at www.dgs.virginia.gov/dcls. Forms, checklists, technical assistance documents, and other resources are also available on the web page.

How do I contact the DCLS Laboratory Certification Office?

E-mail Lab_Cert@dgs.virginia.gov or call (804)648-4480 and ask for "Laboratory Certification".