

Accurate News

"Accurate News" is a publication of Accurate Labs & Training Center
Stillwater, OK 74074

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Labs & Training Center

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Different is Good

I am often asked a question by potential students who call about scheduling a training class. It usually starts "Why don't you do it like...?" and continues with a comparison to another training institution. For instance the question might be "Why aren't your classes free like my local rural water district?" Or "Why don't you offer four hour renewal classes?" Or "Why do you emphasize tough subjects like math and chemistry?"

Well, the answers to these questions are really simple. Accurate Training Center was started in response to the poor level of training that exists in Oklahoma today. Many operators told us they were not receiving adequate training, either at the state schools or their local meetings. If we are going to do things the same as they have been done for years there is no need for us to offer these classes. We are trying very hard to offer a superior level of training. (Our post-training evaluation surveys indicate we are succeeding at this. Also, the higher passing rate of our students when they take their certification exams shows they are learning more.)

As for the cost of our training classes, there is no way we can offer them for free. After all, we receive no state funds and depend solely on tuition to be able to continue our classes. We also keep our

size small so each student can get more attention. You'll never see a class with more than about a dozen students at ATC. If you've ever been to one of the local meetings that are often used for renewal credits you know that having 100 people in a class is not conducive to learning. As for our classes being 8 hours instead of 4...we do not believe that 4 hours is sufficient for the quantity and difficulty of the information we are trying to teach. Also, if an operator is going to be gone from work for a day we might as well maximize the training he receives that day!

Yes, it's true that our classes are rigorous. We don't waste our student's time talking about trivial subjects. Math, Chemistry, flow rates, etc. are what our students will encounter on their exams so that is what we teach. Too many of the classes our students have attended at other facilities have glossed over these subjects because they are "too difficult." If the students don't learn these things in class it is a cinch they probably won't learn them on the job.

Clarke Hodson
ATC Administrator



Better Late Than Never?

At long last Method 1664 for Oil and Grease and TPH is approved. The method was published in the Federal Register May 14, 1999, giving it the status of a law. The method was originally expected to be promulgated several years ago, but due to technical and legal delays it is just now "official." In the meantime we have been using the method under an interim approval status granted by the EPA.

Since it has been awhile since we published an article on this subject let me remind you of what method 1664 is and how it compares to previous methods. First, methods prior to 1664 used Freon as the solvent. 1664 uses n-Hexane. Older methods had virtually no QC requirements written into the method where 1664 has extensive QC within the method. Also, method 1664 allows for use of Solid Phase Extraction (SPE) as well as the more traditional liquid-liquid extraction. Previous methods did not allow SPE to be used.

Method 1664 is a method to be used for both oil and grease as well as total petroleum hydrocarbons. The extractable materials that can be detected using this method include vegetable oils, animal fats, waxes, soaps, greases, and related non-volatile hydrocarbons. Although the actual name of the Oil and Grease method and most of us will probably call it that. The method does however, have a TPH capability...technically it is called Silica Gel Treated n-Hexane Extractable Material.

What will change now that 1664 is official? If you have been using Accurate Labs you will see no change since we have been using this method for several years now. However, if you have been using a laboratory that still uses an older Freon method, you may see some shift in your data. Also, TPH by IR will no longer be available since this method will not work using n-Hexane. If you have any questions about 1664 or oil and grease testing please feel free to call and discuss it with us.

George Drye
Laboratory Manager

Bac-T Resampling Causing Confusion?

When we find a positive on one of the required monthly public water supply samples a resampling is required. Here are the rules for resampling a positive monthly Total Coliform drinking water sample.

Within 24 hours of notification you must take a new set of samples. This set consists of the following: a sample from the original site, one taken upstream (within 5 connections) and one taken downstream (within 5 connections). Systems that take one or fewer samples per month must also take a fourth sample from another site. These systems must also take at least five samples (rather than one) the next month. If samples continue to be positive resampling must continue until samples are negative.

Occasionally a sample may be positive for not only Total but also for Fecal Coliform. In this case you will be required to resample as above. If the sample is again Fecal positive we inform the ODEQ and a "boil order" is served. Again, testing must resume until the sample comes back negative. When we find the first Fecal positive sample, we attempt to call the customer immediately to give as much warning as possible. However, we also call the ODEQ immediately whether the customer has been contacted or not.

Ken Crawford
QA/QC Coordinator

Cheaters Never Prosper

A worker in a California wastewater treatment plant was to be sentenced in June for tampering with a sample of the plant's effluent prior to testing. He admitted adding chlorine to the sample to lower the E. Coli results, disguising the fact that the plant was discharging harmful levels. This tampering can result in a maximum penalty of two years in prison and/or a \$10,000 fine.

Source: The Environmental Laboratory Washington Report



Expanded Route Coverage!!

Accurate Labs Field Services Department would like to take this opportunity to officially announce "another" new pick up route!! The addition and success of our Tulsa lab, and the number of requests from the Oklahoma City area, have allowed us to expand our Oklahoma City coverage. Starting in July 1999 we will offer personalized pick up and delivery services in the Oklahoma City area on Wednesday, Thursday, and now Tuesday!

Our new Tuesday OKC-Ardmore Route will allow us to provide better coverage for the OKC and Ardmore areas. Covering the Ardmore area on Tuesday will allow us to provide better coverage on our already established Thursday route in the OKC, Shawnee, Tecumseh, Seminole, Wewoka, Holdenville and Ada areas.

This additional third day Oklahoma City coverage will complement our already established routes throughout Oklahoma and into Kansas. Please contact us if you have any questions about any of our route services.

John Russell
Field Services Manager

Y2K OK

With the new millennium less than six months away, Accurate Labs, Inc. is Y2K ready. Many different aspects of the laboratory needed to be addressed and updated to become year 2000 compliant. All office and management computers have either been upgraded or replaced. Our data processing programs have gone through an extensive physical and have been given a clean bill of health to start the New Year. The Organics Department has been diagnosed with the most millennium illnesses. Data handling software as well as instrumentation have undergone severe upgrades. With an expense of over 10K we are ready for Y2K.

Dan Labus
Marketing Manager

Happiness Is a Clean Manhole

One of the things an industry can do to assure itself a better lab report on an NPDES sample is to maintain a clean manhole. It is very difficult for the lab to end up with a good sample if the manhole where the sample was taken is full of sludge or oil and grease. A quick visual inspection of the manhole is usually enough to determine the necessity of this service.

If the manhole is found to be dirty, a local service is often available to powerwash the system. If not, just flushing the manhole with a garden hose or turning on several taps upstream can be helpful. Almost anything that increases the flow of water through the manhole can help. This preventative action, taken just before the lab's routine sampling can be worth the effort, often preventing costly resampling and retesting.

John Russell
Field Services Manager

Accurate Employees Update Training

Accurate believes in continuing the education and training of its staff, particularly in the area of instrumental analysis. The following employees have recently attended seminars in an effort to keep up with the everchanging technology in our field.

HP Environmental Solutions-

David Kidd, Jesse Leonard

Varian GC and GC/MS-

David Kidd, Dan Labus, George Drye

Dionex Chromatography-

Ricky McIntyre, David Kidd

TJA Metals Spectroscopy-

Jason Hardaway, George Drye

Perkin Elmer AA/ICP-

Jason Hardaway

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Thank you Tulsa!

We have been pleasantly surprised at the warm reception our Tulsa lab has received from many potential customers in the northeastern Oklahoma area. Many have already taken advantage of our location at 12121 E. 51st to pick up containers or drop off samples. Quite a few have already brought us rush projects because their current laboratory was not able to complete the work in the required time.

The laboratory received certification from the ODEQ May 14, 1999, enabling us to perform analyses in both Tulsa and Stillwater. Tests that cannot be performed in Tulsa

are routed to Stillwater on a daily basis. This allows us to complete rush projects in a very short time. In fact, where methods allow, we have been able to complete many such projects in 24-48 hours. Of course, for non rush work our standard turn time is well less than ten working days, with the average report going out at about five or six days.

Accurate Labs opened the laboratory in Tulsa because so many people had complained about the lack of a high quality/high service option in the area. We are committed to being the laboratory that meets this need. We look forward to working with all customers in the Tulsa area who need a laboratory with service that exceeds expectations.

Accurate Labs will pick up your samples along seven statewide routes. Please call.



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