

Accurate News

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

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Thanks to Our Customers

Accurate experienced record sales during the second and third quarters of this year and we would like to thank all our customers who made this possible. Even though we always look to the future and try to plan for growth, the magnitude of our growth during the last few quarters caught us a little off guard. Most projects were completed within our standard turn around even though we were extremely busy. We appreciate the patience of those few customers who might have been inconvenienced during this time.

Nationally, the number of environmental labs has been falling steadily for the past few years. This trend is expected to continue until the final number is about half of what it was in the early 90s. The rising cost of doing business combined with constantly falling prices has been the biggest factor driving this reduction. The increasing complexity and cost of certification is also making it more and more difficult. The small labs, particularly, are going to find it tougher to remain certified and offer the quality assurance most customers now expect. Also, the continuing fall of prices in the face of ever increasing expenses will make it difficult for labs of any size to stay in business.

Accurate has been fortunate to buck the national trend, maintaining a steady growth for the last ten years. Of course, we like to think we have made our own luck by constantly improving and preparing for growth. This preparation continues to this day. Just recently we have added new staff, new instruments, and new methods to better serve our current customers as well as those we hope to serve in the future. We intend to be one of the

"survivors" and to continue to serve our customers with the highest level of quality and service possible.

George Drye
Laboratory Manager

THMs Need to Be Scheduled

Accurate has been running Trihalomethanes (THMs) for many of our water plant customers during the past few years. Recently, we have run into a situation where some of these water plants have received a notice of violation from the ODEQ for not running their quarterly THMs. I believe this happened because the ODEQ assumed the water plant was having Accurate run their THMs, while Accurate was unaware that the ODEQ had not provided vials to these plants.

Accurate will be more than happy to run all THMs, HAAs, VOCs, etc. for any of our water plant customers. However, we need to know that the plant intends to use our data for their compliance monitoring so that we can make sure we provide the proper sample containers on a routine basis. This may require some communication between Accurate and our customer as well as between our customer and ODEQ. Please do not hesitate to call if there is any confusion about this topic. We do not want any of our customers to have problems over this matter.

John Russell
Field Services Manager

Sample Temperature is Critical

Most samples taken for environmental purposes are required by EPA to be transported and stored at less than four degrees C. In the past, this requirement was often loosely interpreted and enforced. However, it is becoming a critical issue to more regulators and auditors. Accurate recently acquired an infra red thermometer so that we can take the actual temperature reading of a sample. While there is still much debate about how to interpret the temperature requirement, i.e. does being on ice count or does the sample itself have to be at or below four degrees, more and more emphasis is being placed on temperature as a critical documentation component.

Please make sure any environmental samples you ship to the laboratory are in an insulated container with sufficient wet ice or blue ice to maintain temperature of less than four degrees C for the time you expect them to be in transport.

Kenneth Crawford
QA/QC Manager

Operators Succeed at Accurate Training Center

A high percentage of students who attend Accurate Training Center are very successful at passing their ODEQ Certification Examinations.

We believe the success of the students who attend Accurate Training Center's classes is related to having a qualified training staff, the high efforts of the staff in teaching and preparing for the classes, and the seriousness the students have for learning when they come to Accurate Training Center.

Accurate Training Center would like to *Thank* all the operators, supervisors, and other related personnel for using Accurate Training Center for their training needs. We strive to provide a learning environment and training center to promote successful learning for all of our students.

Clarke Hodson

New Software to Improve Quality and Service

After a long and sometimes grueling selection process, Accurate has chosen a new software package called a Laboratory Information Management System, or LIMS. This software is a very powerful tool for managing all lab activities and data. It will allow us to be more efficient, keep better track of QA/QC, report data, and create invoices. It will also enable us to find information at the touch of a button (or should I say mouse?) instead of having to run all over the lab looking for paperwork.

Essentially, the LIMS is just a large database program with software to make it easy to get data in and out of the database as well as manipulate data in a variety of ways. Many users can access the database at the same time from various points in the lab or data processing offices. Although the details have not been worked out at this time, we anticipate it will also make communication and data transfer between our Tulsa and Stillwater locations more routine.

The LIMS software is called Aspen, and it is produced by a company called Telecation, which is a leading supplier of LIMS to the environmental laboratory market. The package is quite expensive...we estimate it will cost about \$75,000 for software, hardware, and training...but we felt it was the best one available and offered the most sophisticated and well developed tools to help the environmental lab. Although some customization will be required for our laboratory, many features we were looking for were already in the package!

Some of the features of this LIMS are as follows- Log in and assignment capability, report generation, invoicing, quotations, query mode (for such things as holding times, turnaround times, and report status), data storage and archiving, barcode scanning and identification, container tracking and inventory, and...well, you name it. This is an exciting and powerful new tool for Accurate and we expect to see a lot of improvement to most parts of our operation from the implementation of this software. We think our customers will notice, too. Look for full implementation to occur by late fall of 2000.

George Drye
Laboratory Manager

Accurate to Distribute Lab Supplies

Accurate has long specialized in testing and training for cities, towns, and rural water systems. Our close association with these customers, and our desire to serve them, has often involved us in an effort to help them procure supplies for their own laboratories. Although we have always done this only when requested, it has happened often enough to indicate a need these labs have for someone that can help them with supplies.

In response to this need, Accurate has begun a new enterprise called Accurate Laboratory Supplies (ALS). It is our intention to supply the basic laboratory supplies that are needed in most water and wastewater treatment plant labs. Items such as pH buffer, meters, and probes as well as filter paper, beakers, test kits for chlorine, COD vials, etc. will be made available. Also, equipment such as balances, water baths, ovens, and other lab instruments may be ordered from ALS. In fact, we will be glad to help customers with any supply needs they may have.

While we hope our pricing will be competitive, we think the real value of ALS will be the service and convenience we provide. Particularly for those smaller labs that never see a representative from the major scientific supply warehouses, we can provide not only supplies but suggestions on alternate ways to do a test, or expertise in interpreting lab data, or solving lab problems. In fact, ALS will be prepared to help our customers set up and design a lab from scratch, if needed.

One of the services we intend to provide is free delivery of supplies along our routine weekly routes. Of course, not everyone is located along one of our routes, and for those people we will use a carrier for delivery and charge a small fee. However, for those who are on our routes now, the same convenience you experience now with our sample pickup service will be available with lab supply delivery.

If you would like to have another source for the supplies you need in your laboratory call 1-800-516-5227 and ask to be connected to Accurate Laboratory supplies. Also, in the near future you should be able to order through our website at www.Accuratesupply.com Please feel free to call us if you have any questions about this new service.

Ron Fazel
ALS Manager

Accurate Training Center Staff Receives Certifications

Accurate Training Center (ATC) is proud to announce two of their employees, Sean Swafford and Clarke Hodson, recently became Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) Certified Instructors to teach the ODEQ Certification classes at Accurate Training Center. They took the required course work at Accurate Training Center in Stillwater and Tulsa and passed the required ODEQ examinations.

Sean Swafford is employed as a chemist at Accurate Labs. With the ODEQ Instructor Certification, Sean assists Dr. Fazel in the classroom at Accurate Training Center as an instructor in the following certification classes: Class "B" and "C" Water Laboratory, Class "B" and "C" Wastewater Laboratory, Class "C" and "D" Water Operator.

Clarke Hodson is employed as the Training Administrator for Accurate Training Center. Clarke passed the Class "C" Water Operator examination and can now assist as an Instructor for the Class "C" and "D" Water Operator classes.

Congratulations Sean and Clarke!

Are You Keeping Your Knowledge Updated?

When was the last time you took a training class at the level of your current certification? Has it been more than three to five years? Well, that's too long.

The ODEQ rules and regulations require operators and lab technicians to take a minimum of a four-hour renewal class every year to maintain their certification. That is a good idea. But, what happens if you go three, five or ten years on nothing than these four-hour renewals. Knowledge is like everything else - if you don't use it - you lose it.

So, when you consider enrolling in a class, consider enrolling in a class that will update and refresh your knowledge to the level, or exceeds the level, of your current certification. Make the most of your training time and dollars.

Clarke Hodson



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Accurate Training Center's Enrollment and Tuition Policies

Accurate Training Center has a tuition and enrollment policy for their classes. We will be enforcing this policy in a stricter manner. The policy is:

"Full payment of tuition must be received no later than five business days prior to the class date,"
and

"No refunds for cancellations within five business days of class dates."

This policy helps us plan, prepare, and guarantee our classes. We understand there are times when things

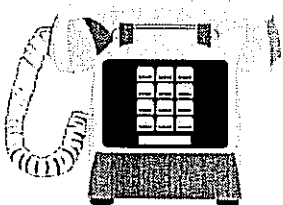
cannot be helped and enrollment is made at the last minute or an emergency came up the morning of class.

So, please, help us keep the standard of our classes high by enrolling, paying the tuition, and if you need to, make cancellations in a timely matter.

Remember if you do not cancel within five business days from the first day of class, you will still be charged for the class.

Clarke Hodson

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



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