



October 11, 2024

MEMO

From: Bennie L. Cockerel, Jr, Manager – Office of Env. Laboratory Certification *BLC*
Through: Micheal Mattocks, Asst. Bureau Chief, Bureau of Regional and Laboratory Services
Re: Updated Allowances for field calibration and/or verification of meters for field use

Historically, this Office has required that laboratories calibrate (or verify) meters at the certified laboratory location prior to using those meters in the field to analyze compliance samples. South Carolina's rapid economic growth has created increased logistical issues causing more restrictive time constraints in the sampling process. Laboratories have also cited ongoing recruitment/retainment issues which has further highlighted the need for flexibility. Based on these concerns and coupled with the increased ruggedness and dependability of today's available field instrumentation, this Office will allow for calibration or verification of field meters in locations outside of the certified laboratory. Specifically, meters used for pH, dissolved oxygen (including LDO), conductivity, temperature, and residual chlorine can now be calibrated or verified in the field prior to the analysis of compliance measurements of these parameters. No other parameter except for those listed above can be calibrated outside the certified laboratory location.

In order to facilitate this change, there are certain criteria that must be met:

1) All laboratories must apply for certification for the requested field parameters in order to calibrate away from the certified laboratory location. Note that laboratories who do not apply for field calibration must still calibrate in the central laboratory daily prior to performing field analyses. On the application, clearly mark "Field Parameter Calibration" on the front cover page of the application to denote the laboratory is seeking to perform field parameter calibrations. Complete the application to circle the applicable field parameters and Acts for which field calibrations are being requested. (For laboratories already certified for the requested field parameters, this application will be used to allow field calibrations associated with those parameters.)

Submit the \$125.00 application fee. Applications will not be accepted until this fee is paid.

Standard application procedures apply – See www.des.sc.gov/labcert under "How to Apply" for more information. For current certified laboratories, this Office will review SOPs and issue any approval for the field parameter calibration request.



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- 2) Field meters and associated calibration / QC standards must be maintained so that all manufacturer's storage requirements and optimum operating conditions are met. The SOP must clearly state how the field meters and associated standards will be stored.
- 3) For a field laboratory that is not part of a certified central laboratory facility, then the physical address provided with the initial application will become the *de facto* certified laboratory address.
- 4) Once certified, the laboratory will be issued a certificate that includes the field laboratory parameters as requested. The laboratory must perform an annual PT study for their field parameters if required. However, if the field laboratory is part of a certified central laboratory, the central laboratory's PT results can satisfy the PT requirements for the field laboratory's parameters provided the field meters have acceptable ongoing demonstration of capability records (DOC) on file. It is strongly recommended that field meters are used to perform the annual PT study, either directly (preferred) or as an ongoing DOC if part of a central laboratory. Note that central laboratories already certified for field parameters will not be issued another certificate, unless certification for an additional field parameter is requested.
- 5) For a field parameter laboratory that is considered a standalone laboratory, upon certification they will have their own certification ID issued [and are not already covered under a central certified laboratory ID], the laboratory's records maintained for the annual PT study must include where the calibration and PT sample analyses were performed, analyst name, as well as traceability of meters, standards, reagents, etc.
- 6) Regardless of whether part of a larger organization/facility that has a certified central laboratory or not, all field parameter laboratories are required to have initial demonstration of capability (IDOC) records for the personnel performing the field parameter analyses. All calibration records, calibration verification records, and quality control records must be maintained for the field equipment and standards in use.
- 7) Evaluation of field laboratories under this allowance can be initially conducted at the central laboratory location, or another location to be determined after the application review has been completed.
- 8) Out-of-state laboratories must have appropriate certification by another certified authority to be considered under this allowance. An onsite evaluation by the certifying authority must have been performed within the last 3 years. Our Office will not travel out of state to certify field laboratories. Only in-state field laboratories will be evaluated in-person by this Office.
- 9) Note that this guidance only allows for calibrations to be performed in the field for the field parameters identified in the initial paragraph above; all other sampling, handling, and analysis and reporting requirements remain in place and have not been modified.

If you have any questions regarding this memo or the requirements listed above, please feel free to reach out to our Office at 803-896-0970 or by email at LabCertHelp@des.sc.gov