



# Fact Sheet

## Method Naming Convention

### *Fact Sheet for Laboratories*

#### Method Names and Nomenclature

To maintain consistency across the Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (ELAP) Field of Accreditation (FOA) Tables, ELAP is standardizing the naming convention for all methods offered for accreditation. Method naming schema reflects the reference analytical method used for analysis, and California State Regulatory Agencies and ELAP are working together to create consistency across programs, however, this is an iterative process that will take time. It is important that the laboratory's method, either on results or Proficiency Testing reports, clearly identify the method used for analysis so ELAP and the State Regulatory Agency can evaluate the method the laboratory used.

#### Standard Methods

Methods published in the *Standard Methods of Water and Wastewater* collections, either in print editions or online, will maintain the format identified below.

*SM 3120 B-2011*

The first numerical number (e.g. SM **3120**) is the Section in which the method can be located. The letter following the number (e.g. SM 3120 **B**) points to the specific analytical technique utilized, and references the final analytical step used to provide the result. The final number (e.g. SM 3120 B-**2011**) points to the year the method or editorial revision was approved by the Standard Methods committee. References to the specific analytical year can be viewed in the method introductory **A** subsection (e.g. SM 3120 A). The method approval year is different and separate from the specific print edition of *Standard Methods of Water and Wastewater*; **different print editions may contain the same analytical method.**

#### Notable Exceptions:

For molecular based methods in Section 3500 or 4500, the section number is followed by the molecular or atomic shorthand (e.g. SM 4500-**Cl** D-2011) The molecular shorthand may additionally include the charge of the ion (e.g. SM 4500-NO<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup> B-2011). For enzyme substrate methods with distinct media, the media will be listed following the revision year (e.g. SM 9223 B-2016 **Colilert**).



## US EPA Methods

Methods published by the US EPA maintain the specific format identified below.

EPA 625.1 or EPA 8260 B

The US EPA changes the methods to reflect alternative procedures or conditions through an “update” where the method procedure, allowances, or quality control criteria change. “Updates” are distinct FOAs and are noted by the US EPA either by the creation of a new method number (e.g. EPA 537 and EPA 537.1) or the addition or incrementation of the letter to the end of the method name (e.g. EPA 1624 A and EPA 1624 B). This is the most common change to US EPA methods.

### Notable Exceptions:

The EPA may publish a “revision” where editorial clarifications are made, but the method parameters remain unchanged. This is becoming a more infrequent occurrence and mainly applies to inorganic methods. For example, EPA 200.7 implements updates through revisions (e.g. EPA 200.7 rev 4.4), however, the US EPA has not provided a revision in over a decade. Unless identified in the FOA, Laboratories are expected to use the revision approved for use by the State or Federal Agency (ex. 40 CFR 136 for wastewater). ELAP will identify the revision in the FOA tables if a new revision is published, or when a California State Agency requests multiple revisions.

Some EPA methods do not follow the standard format and instead reference the EPA’s publication number (EPA 600/R-95/136). Environmental Toxicity methods may additionally have method-specific qualifiers like “static” or “continuous flow” to further identify the method specific procedure used by the laboratory.

## ASTM Methods

Methods published by ASTM International maintain the format identified below.

*ASTM D1252-06 (12)(B)*

The letter and number before the dash [e.g. ASTM **D1252**] indicate the specific analytical standard that is searchable in ASTM’s online repository. The number after the dash [e.g. ASTM D1252-**06**] references the year the method was initially published, in the above example, 2006. A number in parentheses [e.g. ASTM D1252-06 (**12**)] indicates the year the method was re-approved by the ASTM subcommittee, which may include editorial changes. The letter in parentheses [e.g. ASTM D1252-06 (12)(**B**)] indicates the specific analytical technique utilized, and references the final analytical step used to provide the result. Not all ASTM methods contain additional parentheses for re-approval or specific analytical technique.

## **Other Methods**

ELAP strives to list other published methods consistent with the US EPA and other state accreditation bodies. California State Regulatory Agencies may dictate how exactly to identify a method and may direct ELAP to list methods with a specific name or format. When adding existing methodologies, ELAP reviews the TNI Laboratory Accreditation Management System and the National Environmental Methods Index to utilize the existing listing, if possible.

## **Additional Resources**

National Environmental Methods Index. <https://www.nemi.gov/home/>

US EPA Clean Water Act Methods <https://www.epa.gov/cwa-methods>

US EPA Safe Drinking Water Act Methods

<https://www.epa.gov/dwanalyticalmethods/approved-drinking-water-analytical-methods>

TNI Laboratory Accreditation Management System. <https://lams.nelac-institute.org/>