State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
Department of Health Services

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ANNOUNCEMENT

Guidance for Certified Laboratories performing Total PCB Analysis under SDWA.

Please refer to the CDHS – Drinking Water Program (DDWEM) website also for this announcement. ELAP provides this information to Laboratories based on the requirements of DDWEM for reporting PCB's in Drinking Water.**

Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) are monitored as a Primary Standard in drinking water for compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act. For laboratories currently certified by ELAP to perform the analysis for PCBs in drinking water, this announcement is intended to provide additional information concerning the testing for these contaminants, validation of method competency and specific requirements as they pertain to reporting of results to the Drinking Water Program.

Please review the following information carefully and make sure that your laboratory is in full compliance.

1. Laboratories shall use one of the following EPA test methods to screen for PCBs (as Aroclors).
    a. 505 (this method may lack the sensitivity required to detect total PCBs as described in this document)
    b. 508
    c. 508.1
    d. 525.2

2. The Aroclors to be tested include 1016, 1221, 1232, 1242, 1248, 1254 and 1260.

3. Laboratories shall demonstrate and document that the test method used to screen for PCBs has sufficient sensitivity to identify and quantify each Aroclor at the concentration level listed in the table below. The State DLR for total PCBs is 0.5 µg/L as decachlorobiphenyl (DCB). The MCL for total PCBs is also 0.5 µg/L as DCB.

Aroclor	Aroclor Conc. (µg/L)	DCB Equivalence Factor[1,2]	DCB Equivalent (µg/L)
1016	0.26	1.92	0.5
1221	0.19	2.63	0.5
1232	0.23	2.17	0.5
1242	0.26	1.92	0.5
1248	0.30	1.67	0.5
1254	0.33	1.52	0.5
1260	0.36	1.39	0.5

[1] Table 1, EPA method 508A, Revision 1.0 (1989)
[2] Example: (0.26 µg/L of Aroclor 1016) x 1.92 = 0.5 µg/L of DCB

Note: For all laboratories reporting Aroclor results by method 505, it has been noted by the USEPA that there may be difficulty in achieving the desired sensitivity because of the microextraction procedure. The requirement to demonstrate and document adequate sensitivity is critical to laboratories that employ this method and will be evaluated at the next site visit. ELAP reserves the right to request this documentation at our discretion.

4. If Aroclors are not detected or detected at a concentration level equivalent to less than 0.5 µg/L as DCB, the laboratory shall report < 0.5 µg/L as DCB.

5. If one or more Aroclors are detected at a concentration level equivalent to the DLR or higher, the laboratory shall identify the Aroclor(s) detected and employ EPA method 508A to quantify and report total PCBs as DCB. If the laboratory is not certified to perform 508A, the laboratory must immediately contact ELAP for a list of laboratories currently approved for EPA method 508A. Should your laboratory wish to be certified or accredited for this method by ELAP, please submit an amendment application.

Should you have any questions, please contact your current ELAP auditor or email us at elapca@dhs.ca.gov.

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** DDWEM Website address: www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/ddwem/default.htm

DDWEM Announcement link:
www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/ddwem/chemicals/monitoring/PCBsanalysis-09-01-2006.pdf