

7.1.4. Testing of Samples off-site.

Standard

Where samples are tested off site, is this conducted at a reputable external laboratory?

The laboratory should reference a recognised methodology (eg NATA) on the analysis report. Additionally, the laboratory must have a certified practitioner of their science.

Purpose

To ensure a certified NATA laboratory is used for all off-site testing purposes, according to a set reference standard.

Reason

Reputable external laboratories provide confidence in:

- Consistency.
- Repeatable and reproducible.
- Minimising testing variability/human error.
- Produce accurate and precise results.

At external laboratories, equipment used in testing is maintained and calibrated regularly and the quality system is audited by the independent body the National Association of Testing Authorities, Australia (NATA). NATA accredited laboratories demonstrate competence for operating in accordance with ISO/IEC 17025. They have validated analytical methods, protocols for sample preparation, reference standards, trained and competent staff.

What is Acceptable?

Selecting a NATA accredited laboratory

The operator shall determine the laboratory to use for all off-site testing. When identifying a laboratory to use ensure the laboratory has NATA or ISO17025 certification that covers the testing method required.

A comprehensive list of laboratories can be found here: <https://nata.com.au/find-organisation/>.

Determining appropriate testing standard

Operators should discuss with their laboratory representative the sample type, objective of test and range expected. Analytical methods have detection limits that are method specific. The method should be confirmed prior to the preparation and sending of sample.

The reporting type and unit shall also be discussed with the laboratory representative.

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