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Standard Practice for Certificates of Reference Materials for Water Analysis[1]

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1. Scope

1.1 This practice covers the information that must be provided on certificates of analysis of reference materials designated to support ASTM methods. It provides end users of these materials with a defined set of data that is required to be on a certificate of analysis and provides information to assist the end user in evaluating the independence of the material. Similarly, it provides the suppliers of reference materials with a consistent format for the presentation of certification data.

1.2 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as standard. No other units of measurement are included in this standard.

1.3 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards:*[2]

D1129 Terminology Relating to Water

E826 Practice for Testing Homogeneity of a Metal Lot or Batch in Solid Form by Spark Atomic Emission Spectrometry

2.2 *ISO Standards*[3]

ISO Guide 30 Terms and definitions used in connection with reference materials

ISO Guide 31 Contents of certificates of reference materials

ISO Guide 35 Certification of reference materials—General and statistical principles

ISO/REMCO N280

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions*—For definitions of terms used in this practice, refer to Terminology D1129 and ISO Guide 30

3.2 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.2.1 *prepared value, n*—the best estimate of the concentration of a given analyte based upon the purity of raw materials and the method of preparation of the material.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 This practice is designed to assist suppliers and users of reference materials by identifying the information necessary on the certificate of analysis of materials designated for use in ASTM test methods. This practice is specifically designed to ensure that materials suitable for use as either calibration or quality control standards are available. This practice does not define a specific certification protocol, but rather provides guidance in the development of adequate data to support the use of the material as either a calibration or quality control standard. Suppliers are referred to ISO Guide 35 for guidelines on acceptable certification protocols. End users are referred to ISO Guide 31 for a more complete description of the elements of typical certificates of analysis.

5. Certificate of Analysis

5.1 The certificate of analysis is a summary of the analysis performed to support the designated use of the material. As a summary, the certificate must be brief, but it must provide sufficient information to allow the potential user of the material to assess the suitability of the material for his intended use. Therefore, reference material suppliers are encouraged to supply method information and analytical data in a summary that clearly and unambiguously allows the user to make an informed decision about the suitability of the material. The use of terms as defined by ISO or ASTM is required.

5.2 The certificate of analysis must be supported by a certification report for the material. The certification report must contain the details of the analyses performed to develop the certified values reported on the certificate of analysis. It must contain the method(s) used for analysis, details of the method of preparation, if appropriate, including gravimetric

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[2] For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

[3] Available from American National Standards Institute (ANSI), 25 W. 43rd St., 4th Floor, New York, NY 10036, http://www.ansi.org.

data, supporting instrumental data, and the results of supporting statistical analysis reported on the certificate of analysis. The certification report must be provided to the end user of the material if requested.

6. Certificate Headings

6.1 The following sections detail the headings to be used on the certificate of analysis. ASTM methods require the use of a diverse set of reference materials. Therefore, it is expected that all headings will not be appropriate for all materials. However, exceptions should be avoided in order to insure sufficient information for evaluation of materials. Therefore, each of the following sections is designated as either mandatory or optional based upon ensuring a minimum data set. Appendix X1 contains examples of typical certificates of analysis designed to meet these requirements.

6.1.1 *Name and Address of Certifying Organization (Mandatory)*—This is the name and address of the organization that accepts responsibility for the information on the certificate. Organizations that provided analytical data or prepared the material may be provided elsewhere on the certificate.

6.1.2 *Material Identification (Mandatory)*—This section must identify the material by name, as labeled, and must include a lot or batch number that can be used to uniquely identify the material.

6.1.3 *Supplier of the Reference Material (Optional)*—If the supplier of the reference material is different from the certifying organization then this section should contain the name and address of the supplier of the material.

6.1.4 *Preparer of the Material (Optional)*—If the material was not prepared by the supplier or the certifying organization, then this section should include the name and address of the preparer of the material.

6.1.5 *Source of the Material (Mandatory)*—For a solution standard, or a matrix material, this section must identify the source of the raw materials or the source of the matrix material, used in the preparation of the material. The supplier may identify the source of the material as proprietary. If the source of the material is declared to be proprietary then the supplier must provide contact information on the certificate in order to assist end users.

6.1.6 *Description and Intended Use of the Material (Optional)*—Most reference materials are designed to be used for a specific purpose. This section should designate the intended use of the material. It should also contain a sufficiently detailed description of the material to allow the user to estimate its usability in their application.

> This material is designed to be used in D XXXX as a calibration standard. The material was prepared in Type I water to contain 1 mg/ml of the certified components.

6.1.7 *Stability, Transportation, and Storage Conditions (Mandatory)*—Any known temperature, storage, or transportation factors that could influence the stability of the material must be identified. It is required that the supplier identify proper storage and handling conditions that are necessary to insure usability for the expected life of the material. Similarly, the supplier should identify the period of time for which they will assume responsibility for the validity of the certified values.

6.1.8 *Instructions for Use (Mandatory)*—If the material requires special handling, dilution, drying, or any other specific manipulation in order to achieve the certified values, these procedures must be clearly identified in this section.

6.1.9 *Method of Preparation (Optional)*—If the method of preparation gives the user an idea of the care taken by the supplier, significant details of the preparation procedure may be included in this section.

6.1.10 *State of Homogeneity (Mandatory)*—As it relates to the certification of reference materials, homogeneity refers to the analysis and demonstration of uniformity of final packaged units. Every certificate must contain a homogeneity statement. This section must include the sampling, analytical method(s), and procedure used to evaluate the homogeneity of the material. Appendix X2 provides a suggested procedure for homogeneity testing and references to alternative internationally accepted homogeneity testing procedures. If the homogeneity of the material has not been determined, then this must be stated on the certificate.

6.1.11 *Certified Property Values and Their Associated Uncertainties (Mandatory)*—The information in this section should be given in tabular form with appropriate subsection headings. The minimum information to be provided includes the property, the certified value of the property, the associated uncertainty, and the method of analysis. Since the certificate is a synopsis of the certification report, suppliers are encouraged to identify the method of analysis by appropriate standard method number. Modifications or exceptions to the given method may be annotated in another section of the certificate. Likewise, if the values certified are dependent upon certain conditions, for example temperature, these can be identified in footnotes to the table. Values for properties that are not certified should be included in a separate table.

NOTE 1—Several different procedures can be used to certify reference materials. These depend upon the nature of the material to be certified and the technical capability of the supplier and certifying body. The three most common procedures for certification are detailed in Section 7. The procedure used to certify property values must be provided under the heading of statistical estimators and uncertainty referenced below.

6.1.12 *Uncertified Properties (Optional)*—Many times properties of the material are known but without sufficient accuracy or precision to support certification. These values may be reported by the supplier in this section to assist the user in the selection of appropriate materials.

6.1.13 *Values Obtained by Individual Laboratories or Methods (Optional)*—Many times materials are certified based upon interlaboratory studies or by using several different methods of analysis. In these cases, this section can be used to report individual data by laboratory or method where appropriate. If the supporting data are too voluminous to report in this section, a reference to the certification report may be made here to identify the source and availability of supporting data.

6.1.14 *Statistical Estimator and Uncertainty (Mandatory)*—The meaning and nature of the certified values must be given, that is, the statistical estimator must be named. Where the estimator cannot be named then the mathematical expression used in calculation must be presented.

The certified values are based upon the unweighted mean of nine independent measurements by each method reported.

The certified values are based upon a biweight estimate of the mean of the center 50 % of the reported data using the Tukey Bisquare Procedure with a tuning constant of 3.97. Details of the procedure may be obtained from the certifier.

NOTE 2—The method used to estimate the uncertainty associated with the certified value of the property is important. Therefore, the supplier must identify the factors considered in estimation of uncertainty and the method used for calculation. If the uncertainty is estimated by a coverage factor, such as $2s/\sqrt{n}$, then the formula and the values for each variable in the formula must be provided on the certificate.

6.1.15 *Measurement Methods Used for Certification (Optional)*—This section should provide the exceptions to, or modifications of, the standard or reported method(s) used for certification. Sufficient details of the analysis must be provided in the certification report to allow independent verification of the analytical values. However, only those details which are essential to reproducibility need to be reported.

6.1.16 *Identification of Analysts or Laboratories (Optional)*—This section may be used to identify the contribution of individual analysts or laboratories to the certification effort. The identification of analysts or laboratories may assist the user in establishing the quality of the certification data.

6.1.17 *Legal Notice (Optional)*—Disclaimers or legal limitations of liability for the information on the certificate should appear in this section.

6.1.18 *Reference to Certification Report (Mandatory)*—The certification report supporting the summary provided on the certificate must be unambiguously identified in this section. Instructions for obtaining the full certification report must be provided in this section.

6.1.19 *Signature of Certifying Officer (Mandatory)*—It is required that the officer of the certifying body who accepts responsibility for the information on the certificate sign the certificate.

6.1.20 *Annex (Optional)*—The annex may be used by the supplier to supply additional information about the material or its certification. It may contain graphical presentations or other information not appropriate in the body of the certificate.

7. Certification Procedures

7.1 The certification procedure is the protocol used to develop certification data. It is independent of the method(s) used for certification and is usually dependent upon the nature of the material to be certified. The procedure used to certify the reference material is usually dependent upon the nature of the material and the property to be certified. In the case of a pure or neat compound to be used for preparation of calibration materials, the properties of interest are confirmation of identity and an accurate assay of the material. In the case of a prepared calibration solution, the property of interest is the best estimate of the concentration of the analyte in the solvent. In the case of a quality control material, the property of interest is the performance of the material in a particular method.

7.1.1 Most reference materials, and properties of interest, are certified by one of the following three procedures: (*1*) direct comparison method, most frequently used for assay work, or analysis of calibration materials where a suitable NIST standard reference material (SRM) exists; (*2*) verification of the prepared value, used to certify the prepared value of a material if an SRM is not available for direct comparison; and, (*3*) interlaboratory certification procedure, used to establish typical method performance values or an assigned value for matrix materials.

7.1.2 In the case of the direct comparison method, the certified value is based upon analysis to a known calibrant prepared from an SRM or other national standard. In the second case, where an SRM calibrant does not exist, the value certified is the prepared value. In the case of interlaboratory studies, the certified value is a best estimate of typical performance.

7.2 *Direct Comparison Method*—In cases where an SRM or other national standard exists and well defined methods are available, a material should be certified by direct comparison to the SRM or other national standard. If the reference material is used as the calibrant in the analytical system, then the certified values are linked to the SRM or other national standard. The value certified in this procedure is usually the mean of replicate analyses. The appropriate number of samples to be analyzed is dependent upon the material, the precision of the method, and the desired level of uncertainty.

7.2.1 In cases where multiple methods are used in the certification procedure, it is important to identify the analytical results from each method, and to explain how results were combined to establish the values certified. This information must be reported under 6.1.15.

7.2.2 Suitable procedures for the certification of reference materials using a direct comparison method may be found in ISO Guide 35.

7.3 *Verification of the Prepared Value*—Where a suitable SRM or other national standard does not exist for direct comparison, it is often the prepared value of the material that best estimates the property value of interest. In this case, the prepared value may be certified by comparison of the prepared value to the mean of replicate analyses based upon an independently prepared calibration material. If the prepared value falls within the 95 % confidence interval of the mean of the analytical values, then the prepared value is consistent with the analytical data and may be certified. However, since an SRM was not used for comparison, it is important that the supplier provide the user with sufficient data to estimate the quality of the analyses. Therefore, the supplier must provide the mean, confidence limits, and number of independent samples analyzed to support the certification of the property value. These must be reported in 6.1.11. since they are essential for evaluation of the material.

7.4 *Interlaboratory Certification Procedure*—Interlaboratory certification procedures are most commonly used to develop data on naturally occurring materials that allow them to be used for quality control or instrument calibration. Often, interlaboratory studies involve multiple methods as well as multiple laboratories in order to establish the best available estimate for the property to be certified.

7.4.1 In most cases, the most suitable estimate for the property of interest is the grand mean of the interlaboratory