

## ***CMT/Geotechnical Assessors Breakout Meeting***

**The Sheraton Columbia Hotel, Columbia, MD  
Sunday, March 13, 2005  
(8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.)**

### **Minutes**

#### **1. Introduction**

N. Zuern opened the meeting by welcoming all attendees. Attendance sheets were passed out and introductions of each attendee were made. Those in attendance were: Kingsley Drake, William Johnson, Steve Kaiser, Joe Kane, Mike Kesselmayr, John Lynch, Charles Mlodzik, Ed Moore, John Murphy, Roxanne Robinson, Phil Smith, Woody Vogt, Donald Waddington, Sara Weitzel, and Niel Zuern.

#### **2. Construction Materials Advisory Committee (CMAC)**

- **Brief summary of last meeting (January 2005)**

N. Zuern reviewed the minutes and status of action items from the last CMAC meeting in January 2005. There was a brief discussion on Item 5 of the minutes in regards to handling complaints between accredited laboratories and the use of the “A2LA Accredited” symbol on test reports.

- **Brief summary of 2004 Conclave Construction Materials Testing/Geotechnical (CMT/GEO) Assessor Breakout Meeting**

J. Kane reported on the status of each action item as follows:

Action Item 1 – J. Lynch to report on the investigation to date of nuclear gage calibration versus verification under Item 3 of the 2005 minutes.

Action Item 2 – Closed; J. Kane to report on the results of the survey under Item 8 of the 2005 minutes.

Action Item 3 – Closed; J. Lynch’s measurement uncertainty document is now available as the *Annex to the A2LA Policy on Measurement Uncertainty For Construction Materials and Geotechnical Testing Laboratories*. The only changes to the document were to its name and format.

Action Item 4 – Closed; A2LA Staff has not been able to put the *Test Method Review Matrix* into an Excel spreadsheet. K. Drake indicated that he is able to manipulate information on the forms provided by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). J. Kane reminded assessors to complete each column of the matrix.

**Action Item 1: P. Smith to further investigate putting the *Test Method Review Matrix* in an Excel spreadsheet. (To be completed by April 30, 2005.)**

Action Item 5 – Closed; however the *Construction Materials Testing Assessor Checklist* needs revision again.

**Action Item 2: J. Lynch and S. Kaiser to complete revisions and review of the *Construction Materials Testing Assessor Checklist*. *CMT Assessor Checklist* to be provided to J. Kane for distribution. (To be completed by April 30, 2005.)**

### **3. Nuclear Gage Calibration – Validator**

J. Lynch gave a status report on his investigation of nuclear gage calibration versus verification. J. Kane indicated that National Calibration Inc., which is currently accredited by A2LA to perform calibrations of nuclear density gages, recently underwent an on-site assessment by A2LA. J. Kane went on to explain that the assessor had issues with the traceability of the lab's equipment used for these calibrations; however, it is not clear how the laboratory had verified traceability. J. Lynch explained that later this year he would be auditing Instrotek, the company that provides the validator, as part of his job with MACTEC. When he performs this audit, he will be able to determine the traceability and accuracy of the validator. A2LA will continue to grant exceptions to the *Traceability Policy* for nuclear gage calibrations until J. Lynch's investigation is complete.

**Action Item 3: J. Lynch to audit Instrotek to determine the traceability and accuracy of the validator. (To be completed by July 31, 2005.)**

### **4. Requirements for Professional Engineers / Technical Managers**

J. Kane reminded the assessors that they need to use their judgment when evaluating the competence of the professional engineers and technical managers at the labs. J. Kane also pointed out that some of the standards are now more specific as to the qualifications for these positions.

### **5. Keeping Current With Revisions to ASTM Test Methods**

J. Lynch indicated that the ASTM test methods have been changing drastically over the past few years and was wondering how those assessors that are not associated with a laboratory keep up with these revisions. K. Drake noted that the web site for the USACE has its checklists updated through 2004. J. Kane also explained that some of the issues that USACE has with A2LA is that our assessors do not actually take the current ASTM methods to the lab or have test procedure checklists when performing an assessment. J. Lynch suggested that A2LA needs to have a mechanism in place to review ASTM methods when they are revised and then to notify the assessors of any significant changes.

**Action Item 4: J. Kane to investigate a mechanism for A2LA to review ASTM methods when they are revised and to notify assessors of any significant changes made to the methods. (To be completed by May 31, 2005.)**

## 6. Review of A2LA Policies

- **Measurement uncertainty**

J. Kane explained that J. Lynch's measurement uncertainty document is now available as the *Annex to the A2LA Policy on Measurement Uncertainty For Construction Materials and Geotechnical Testing Laboratories*.

- **Traceability / In-house calibrations**

J. Kane pointed out that the *Annex to the A2LA Policy on Measurement Uncertainty For Construction Materials and Geotechnical Testing Laboratories* identifies which in-house calibrations require measurement uncertainty.

- **Proficiency testing**

J. Kane explained that currently he includes the *Proficiency Testing Data Submission Form* completed by the lab with assignment packages to the assessors and asks the assessors to review the past two years of proficiency testing results. As the A2LA proficiency testing database becomes more complete, he will include a printout of that information as well.

J. Lynch pointed out that changes have been made to the ACI statistical program for concrete.

**Action Item 5: J. Lynch to notify assessors via e-mail of the changes to the ACI statistical program for concrete. (To be completed by April 30, 2005.)**

D. Waddington raised a concern that the statistics used by the U.S. Golf Association (USGA) Green Section Proficiency Testing Program are not correct. R. Robinson explained that A2LA is developing an assessor checklist to be used when reviewing reports from proficiency testing programs.

**Action Item 6: R. Robinson to contact D. Tholen in regards to statistical data for small round robins. (To be completed by June 30, 2005.)**

W. Johnson pointed out that under the Construction Materials section of the *A2LA Proficiency Testing Requirements for Accredited Testing and Calibration Laboratories*, a test result is considered an outlier when it falls outside of 2.5 standard deviations of the mean, whereas the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Materials Reference Laboratory (AMRL) requires that proficiency testing results fall within 2 standard deviations. This issue will require input from the CMAC.

**Action Item 7: N. Zuern to ask the CMAC whether the Construction Materials section of the *A2LA Proficiency Testing Requirements for Accredited Testing and Calibration Laboratories* needs to be revised to reflect the same requirements as AMRL. (To be completed by July 31, 2005.)**

## 7. Putting Green Advisory Committee (PUG)

- **Brief summary of last meeting (January 2005)**

R. Robinson provided a brief summary of the last PUG meeting in February 2005. She reported on the draft revision to ASTM F1815 and that this is now a more “assessable” method. Also, the revisions to the *PUG Program Requirements* were approved by the PUG committee with an implementation date of June 1, 2005.

## 8. Status report on performing assessments equivalent to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Materials Reference Laboratory (AMRL) / Cement and Concrete Reference Laboratory (CCRL) / United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

J. Kane summarized the results of the survey he conducted to determine the most common tests typically being accredited by A2LA and validated by the USACE. J. Kane also witnessed a CCRL Inspection at J. Lynch’s lab to see which tests were actually observed by the inspector from beginning to end. In reviewing this summary, it appears that A2LA assessors are observing the same tests from beginning to end.

USACE currently has three concerns with A2LA: (1) the lack of checklists for each test; (2) our assessors not taking the current ASTM methods to the labs; and (3) not performing verifications of lab equipment as part of the assessment. It was noted that the checklists are public documents on the web sites for AASHTO and USACE. In regards to the ASTM methods, the lab should have the method available at the time of the assessment. R. Robinson pointed out that if the lab does not have the current method, then the assessor should not assess that method and remove the test from the lab’s Scope. A lengthy discussion then followed on how A2LA could best handle the task of equipment verifications.

S. Kaiser suggested that A2LA subcontract the equipment needed for these verifications from an accredited calibration provider in the region. The laboratory’s assessment would then be a team effort, with the A2LA assessor performing the assessment to ISO/IEC 17025 requirements and the calibration laboratory performing the equipment verifications. The details of this concept will have to be thoroughly investigated, including any potential conflicts of interest and training of the calibration lab’s personnel on how to do these verifications. It was discussed that A2LA should first obtain recognition from USACE, and then approach the Federal Highway Administration.

**Action Item 8: J. Kane and N. Zuern to present a proposal of using accredited calibration laboratories to perform equipment verifications to the Technical Committee of the A2LA Board of Directors to determine if there would be any conflict of interest. (To be completed by March 15, 2005.)**

**Action Item 9: J. Kane to identify potential accredited calibration laboratories to perform equipment verifications, and then to contact these laboratories to discuss details, including costs. (To be completed by June 30, 2005.)**

**Action Item 10: N. Zuern to obtain checklists for test methods, and develop a list of methods and equipment information. (To be completed by May 31, 2005.)**

## 9. Laboratory Assessments

- **Concerns or issues being encountered during on-site assessments**

K. Drake raised a concern with the requirement in ASTM C1077 that, for specific gravity, duplicate tests shall be made at least once every six months. This requirement is not in the actual test methods. The assessors concurred that both coarse and fine need to be done every six months.

- **Assessment time**

The assessors discussed that it typically takes two to three days to conduct an assessment of a lab in the CMT and GEO fields of testing. J. Kane asked the assessors to notify him the same day, if possible, when delays in the assessment occur while on-site.

## 10. Assessment Deliverables

J. Kane reminded assessors that the assessment deliverables are due to A2LA within five business days of the last day of the assessment. These deliverables must include the agenda and document review (if not previously provided), a completed *Test Method Review Matrix*, the estimated cost form with signatures, and the invoice. J. Kane also explained that it is no longer necessary to initial every checklist item, only those in which the assessor changes the lab's original tick mark; however, the assessor must sign and date the "affidavit" on page two of the checklist.

## 11. New / Other Business

- W. Vogt gave a presentation on ASFE. Topics mentioned dealt with the cost and burden of laboratories having to maintain multiple accreditations and dual certifications. He also indicated that a survey was to be distributed by ASFE to laboratories in all regions of the U.S. trying to gain input from laboratories on their current situation having to maintain multiple accreditations and certifications. He noted that the CMT and GEO areas within ACIL may be dwindling and that efforts should be made to have those contacts from ACIL join ASFE.
- W. Vogt noted that an ASTM subcommittee ballot had been sent proposing to delete the names of the inspection and accreditation agencies from ASTM C1077. The proposal was in response to requests from other agencies to be included in the list. The proposal sent indicated that instead of maintaining a list, all names should be deleted and a description of the services provided by these two types of evaluation authorities (inspection and accreditation agencies) should be submitted. It was noted that the ballot did not pass.

## 12. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 1:55 P.M.

*Minutes prepared by Sara Weitzel, A2LA Laboratory Services Officer.*