

Plastics/Rubber Testing Assessors Meeting

The Sheraton Columbia Hotel, Columbia, MD
Friday, March 11, 2005
(6:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.)

Minutes

1. Introduction / Review Agenda

S. Weitzel opened the meeting by welcoming all attendees. Attendance sheets were passed out and introductions of each attendee were made. Those in attendance were: Dave Bower, Marlin Bussey, Gary Cornell, Chuck Daniels, Karen Dunning, Bob Foncannon, Nancy Foncannon, Paul Graboff, Bob Holcombe, Jeff Kelly, John Knicely, Bob Lambert, John Lynch, John Pio, Gary Scalise, Jan Schiltz, Ray Schiltz, Dilip Shah, Phil Smith, Steve Steiro, Sara Weitzel, and Gene Zerlaut.

2. Review Status of Action Items from 2004 Plastics/Rubber Meeting – *see Attachment 1A*

S. Weitzel reported on the status of each action item as follows:

Action A – Closed; R. Robinson and P. Unger reviewed the ASQ articles on statistical quality control provided by G. Zerlaut to see if they could be added to the A2LA web site as guidance documents for quality checks. However, R. Robinson and P. Unger indicated that they would prefer to reference ASTM MNL 7, *Manual on Presentation of Data and Control Chart Analysis* rather than these dated ASQ articles from 1994.

Action Item 1: S. Weitzel to get information on any updates to ASTM MNL 7 before posting the document on the A2LA web site as a guidance document for quality checks (to be completed by April 30, 2005).

Action B – Closed; R. Robinson and P. Unger indicated that if the laboratory is not capable of meeting all of ASTM D618, then the assessors need to identify the specific method within D618 on the laboratory's Scope.

Action C – Will discuss capability of currently accredited calibration laboratories to correctly calibrate ovens to ASTM E145 under Item 3 of the 2005 minutes.

Action D – Closed; Per R. Robinson, if a lab cannot maintain the required environmental conditions, then the lab is assessed to the method at ambient conditions. Technical justification (per ISO/IEC 17025, Sections 5.3.1 and 5.4.1) is not required. However, the deviation must be noted on the Scope, and the assessor needs to verify that the lab's clients are aware of the deviation and that this deviation is stated on the lab's test reports.

Action E – Will discuss capability of currently accredited calibration laboratories to correctly calibrate color and gloss instruments under Item 3 of the 2005 minutes.

Action F – Will distribute the plastics/rubber selection lists under Item 4 of the 2005 minutes for the assessors to determine the measurement uncertainty categories of test methods not currently on the

Action G – Closed; Per R. Robinson, the requirement that assessors must provide assessment deliverables within five working days will not change, especially now that we have the “no report option.” Also, S. Weitzel pointed out that A2LA Lab Services staff tries to be lenient, allowing assessors two to three extra days before giving a rating of 1.

3. Specific Test/Calibration Issues

- **Capability of accredited calibration labs to correctly calibrate ovens to ASTM E145 (Standard Specification for Ovens) – see Attachment 1B**

G. Cornell stated that ASTM E145 specifies three criteria for ovens: temperature uniformity, airflow (or rate of ventilation), and time constant. However, most calibration laboratories that are accredited for oven calibrations are only reporting temperature uniformity on their reports. S. Weitzel explained that as part of an action item from the 2004 Plastics/Rubber Meeting, Tim Osborne, former calibration Lab Services Officer with A2LA, sent an e-mail in June 2004 to both calibration and testing assessors requesting their input on this issue (see Attachment 1B). T. Osborne did not receive much feedback from the assessors, and this action item was not pursued after T. Osborne left A2LA. Also included with Attachment 1B are the directory search results from the A2LA web site of accredited calibration providers that reference ASTM E145 on their Scopes of Accreditation, as well as the page from each lab’s Scope on which ASTM E145 is referenced.

It was discussed that it is the lab’s responsibility to indicate in its purchasing documents that its oven be calibrated to ASTM E145 (per Section 4.6.3 of ISO/IEC 17025) and to verify that the calibration certificate includes temperature uniformity, airflow, and time constant (per Section 4.6.2 of ISO/IEC 17025). However, it was also pointed out that most testing labs rely on the calibration provider to be the “expert.” After a lengthy discussion, it was decided that the testing labs, the calibration labs, and the calibration assessors all need to be educated on the requirements of ASTM E145. Also, the calibration Scopes need to be changed to reflect the actual parameters within ASTM E145 that the calibration lab has the capability to perform. Please note that J. Lynch was present at this meeting to represent the calibration assessor’s viewpoint.

Action Item 2: S. Weitzel to investigate a means for A2LA to educate the testing labs, calibration labs, and calibration assessors on the requirements of ASTM E145 (to be completed by September 30, 2005).

- **Capability of accredited calibration labs to correctly calibrate color and gloss instruments – see Attachment 1C**

G. Zerlaut explained that the calibration labs are probably using hand-held instruments to calibrate color and gloss instruments, which are probably not any better than the equipment that the testing lab uses for verifications. If this is the case, then the original equipment manufacturers of these instruments are the most qualified to perform the calibrations. S. Weitzel requested that G. Zerlaut form a task group with some of the calibration assessors that have assessed the labs currently accredited to calibrate color and gloss instruments to further investigate these issues.

Action Item 3: G. Zerlaut to form a task group with calibration assessors to investigate capability of currently accredited calibration laboratories to correctly calibrate color and gloss instruments (to be completed by September 30, 2005).

- **ASTM D2632 (Resilience by Vertical Rebound) – issue with mechanical spring calibration device – see Attachment 1D**

S. Weitzel explained an issue in regards to the force requirement for the mechanical spring calibration device in ASTM D2632 (see Attachment 1D). G. Cornell and J. Knicely indicated that Dana Leaman, A2LA Program Manager, had contacted them about this issue and that they have forwarded the information to ASTM Committee D11 on Rubber for its input.

- **ASTM D1238 (Melt Flow Rates of Thermoplastics) – calibration issue**

J. Lynch raised a concern in regards to the probe used to calibrate the temperature-indicating device of the melt indexer. It was pointed out that ASTM Committee D20 on Plastics is in the process of reviewing the method of measuring the temperature within the barrel for possible revision.

4. Traceability/Measurement Uncertainty Issues

- ***Annex to the A2LA Policy on Measurement Uncertainty re: classifications of plastics and rubber test methods – see Attachment 1E***

S. Weitzel explained that the list of plastics and rubber test methods in the *Annex to the A2LA Policy on Measurement Uncertainty For Automotive and Materials Testing Laboratories* needs to be updated to include Category III and IV methods. As an initial step, S. Weitzel requested that each assessor categorize the methods on A2LA's plastics testing and rubber testing selection lists and forward this information back to A2LA. Any discrepancies among the assessors would require further investigation. N. Foncannon reminded the assessors to review A2LA's definitions of the measurement uncertainty categories in A2LA's *Policy on Estimating Measurement Uncertainty for Testing Laboratories* before categorizing the plastics/rubber methods.

Action Item 4: Assessors to identify the measurement uncertainty categories for the methods listed on the plastics/rubber selection lists and return the completed lists to S. Weitzel (to be completed by April 30, 2005).

5. Assessment Issues

- **Auditing to lab's internal procedure versus actual test method**

G. Cornell reminded assessors to assess laboratories to the actual test method listed on the Scope, and not just to the lab's internal procedure for that test. It was also pointed out that the laboratories need to be notified to have the test methods available when the assessor conducts the on-site assessment.

- **Calibration certificates from unacceptable calibration vendors to be included with assessment deliverables to A2LA – see Attachment 1F**

S. Weitzel reminded assessors that calibration certificates from unacceptable calibration vendors are to be included with the assessment deliverables to A2LA, as explained in R. Robinson's December 2, 2003, e-mail to the assessors in regards to verifying traceability to the SI.

6. Proficiency Testing Issues

- **Citing Section 5.9 of ISO/IEC 17025 versus the A2LA Proficiency Testing Requirements**

B. Lambert raised the question as to when it is appropriate to cite a deficiency against Section 5.9 of ISO/IEC 17025 as opposed to the *A2LA Proficiency Testing Requirements*. After a brief discussion, there was a general consensus among the group that the assessors are not uniform in their assessments of this section and that the proficiency testing requirements need clarification from A2LA.

7. Marketing Ideas/Suggestions

- **A2LA's New Business Development Manager**

S. Weitzel introduced Phil Smith, A2LA's new Business Development Manager. P. Smith explained his role within A2LA and asked the attendees to contact him with any ideas or suggestions for marketing A2LA's accreditation programs, particularly in the plastics/rubber area of testing.

8. New/Other Business

- **Need for additional plastics/rubber assessors and/or Accreditation Council members**

S. Weitzel informed the group that A2LA could use a few more assessors and Accreditation Council members in the plastics/rubber area of testing. Anyone interested in serving in these capacities should contact S. Weitzel or R. Robinson at A2LA.

9. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 P.M.

Minutes prepared by Sara Weitzel, A2LA Laboratory Services Officer.