



February 15, 2012

### Memorandum

To: Forensic Inspection (Crime Scene) Organizations

From: Karin Athanas, Forensic Examination Accreditation Program Contact

Regarding: Participation in a Crime Scene Analysis Pilot Program

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In early 2009, a report was published in the United States by the Committee on Identifying the Needs of the Forensic Sciences Community, National Research Council, entitled “Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Path Forward.” In the report, a detailed description of the status of forensic science in the United States was given and key recommendations were made to help improve the quality and reliability of forensic science in America. Included in the list of recommendations was the accreditation of crime scene units.

While the accreditation of crime scene units to ISO/IEC 17020 has become common in many countries, including the United Kingdom, the United States has just begun developing accreditation programs to meet this growing need.

The American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA), one of the premier accreditation bodies recognized by the Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC) to offer ISO/IEC 17020 accreditation to applicant inspection body organizations, has worked diligently to develop a robust ISO/IEC 17020 accreditation program to meet the unique needs of the crime scene investigation and analysis community.

The A2LA Pilot Program for the crime scene analysis discipline will assist in further strengthening the program and will offer applicant organizations a unique opportunity not only for waived assessment fees, but also to contribute to the development and improvement of the A2LA Forensic Accreditation program. Applicants will be offered voting member status on the A2LA Forensic Examination Advisory Committee (FEAC) and provided with opportunities to provide feedback to A2LA regarding the assessment process through completion of a *F231 – Pilot Program Post Assessment Questionnaire*.

### Program Highlights

1. A2LA will begin accepting Pilot Program applications on May 1, 2012.
2. Applicant organizations wishing to be considered for the Pilot Program must submit:
  - a. A completed copy of *F301 – Application for Accreditation: ISO/IEC 17020 Inspection Bodies*
  - b. A completed copy of *F230 – Application to Participate in an A2LA Pilot Program*
3. All applications received between May 1, 2012 and May 15, 2012 will be reviewed and the first three applicants to meet all of the program application requirements shall be selected.
  - a. Accepted applicants will be assessed an application and annual fee as outlined in A2LA document *F301 - Application for Accreditation: ISO/IEC 17020 Inspection Bodies*
  - b. All initial assessment expenses (including assessor time and travel expenses) will be waived for Pilot Program participants<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Waived fees will only be provided for the initial assessment and accreditation of the applicant organization. All subsequent assessments performed after initial accreditation will be billable to the accredited organization.

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4. Those applicants not chosen for the A2LA Crime Scene Analysis Pilot Program will be provided an opportunity to withdraw their application. Those wishing to continue through the assessment and accreditation process will be assessed an application fee, annual fee and assessor deposit as outlined in A2LA document *F301 – Application for Accreditation: ISO/IEC 17020 Inspection Bodies* and will be responsible for all assessment expenses (including assessor time and travel expenses) incurred during the performance of the assessment.

**Mailing/Emailing Instructions:**

If mailing, please return the above listed applications along with the supporting documentation requested within them to:

American Association for Laboratory Accreditation  
5301 Buckeystown Pike, Suite 350, Frederick, MD 21704

If emailing, please submit to: [applications@A2LA.org](mailto:applications@A2LA.org)

Please direct all questions regarding this application to our office at 301 644 3248.