

Asbestos Identification

Aim of the Program

The Asbestos Identification program aims to evaluate the “accuracy” and reliability of results produced by identifiers in the area of bulk asbestos analysis (relevant standard AS 4964 and AS 5370; and to provide participants with external quality assurance to enhance accuracy and reliability.

Application of the Program to Accreditation

Participation in this proficiency testing program satisfies the requirements of ISO/IEC 17025:2017 – *General Requirements for the Competence of Testing and Calibration Laboratories* for monitoring performance by comparing results with other laboratories.

Program Details

The Asbestos Identification Program is a biennial program consisting of two rounds per cycle. Each round is conducted from October through to May. Participants are scheduled to a month in each round, during which they will receive eight bulk samples to be analysed independently. Based on the analytical methodology used (i.e. AS 4964 or AS 5370), participants are requested to record and report the presence (including trace asbestos if detected) of chrysotile, amosite and crocidolite asbestos AND the presence of synthetic mineral fibres (SMF)/man-made vitreous fibres (MMVF) AND organic fibres, according to their laboratory’s documented method.

Participants are requested to record all relevant observations, comments and conclusions on worksheets in accordance with the requirements detailed in AS 4964 or AS 5370 as relevant, and the latest version of the NATA Specific Accreditation Criteria: ISO/IEC 17025 Application Document, Life Sciences - Annex, Asbestos sampling and testing. These documents should be retained by the analyst. Results are to be submitted to PTA on the supplied “Results Sheet” only.

The results obtained by each identifier are compared with the reference results. The identifier is then assigned a score for each sample. The weighting for asbestos fibres is greater than for SMF/MMVF and organic fibres.

In general, scores are allocated as follows: -

Condition	Score Asbestos Fibres, (including UMF/Inconclusive)	Score SMF/MMVF & Organic Fibres
when an “easy” fibre category is not found	2.0	1.0
when a “medium” fibre category is not found	1.5	1.0
when a “difficult” fibre category is not found	1.0	0.5

If a fibre type is found by the identifier when it is not actually present in the sample, then the appropriate score in the above table is given for each incorrect fibre type found. Note, reporting errors relating to Unknown Mineral Fibres/Inconclusive fall into the asbestos penalty score category.

A total score (for the eight samples) of < 4 is considered satisfactory, while a score of 4 or more is considered ‘unsatisfactory’. For each sample for which the identifier received a score other than zero, an “error code” is also provided.

A set of eight follow-up samples are issued to identifiers who obtain a score of 4 or more for the initial round.

Confidentiality

Each participant is assigned a unique code number, keeping all results anonymous in all PTA reports and publications.

Fees and Further Information

For information on program fees or other enquiries, please contact PTA directly:

Email: ptaenquiry@pta.asn.au