



**Bureau of Laboratories (BOL)**

**Jacksonville - Lantana - Miami - Pensacola - Tampa**

# **Environmental Laboratory Certification**

The laboratory certification program was established in 1979 to ensure laboratory quality and capacity to perform testing of drinking water regulated under the Florida Safe Drinking Water Act. The legislature expanded the scope of the program in 1986 to cover domestic wastewater testing conducted under the Clean Water Act as well as certification for other types of environmental testing. Under the leadership and fundamental groundwork of then Bureau Chief Dr. Charles Hartwig, the Florida program took an active role in establishing the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) and Program (NELAP), becoming one of the first of 13 Accreditation Bodies in the U.S. recognized under the program in 1999. Today the Environmental Laboratory Certification Program (ELCP) continues to be active in the development and adoption of national consensus accreditation standards through the work of The NELAC Institute. Applying these quality standards, the ELCP certifies laboratories to use chemical and biological techniques in testing a wide variety of matrices, including drinking water, non-potable water, solid and chemical materials, biological tissue, and air. Through periodic proficiency testing and on-site assessments by ELCP assessors, certified laboratories must demonstrate that they have the capability to produce high quality testing results in the interests of protecting the health and environment of Florida's citizens.



## **Highlights**

- National recognition as a National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program Accreditation Body.
- Electronic tracking of proficiency testing results for certification compliance.
- Self-supporting through fees – collected \$1.09M in certification renewal fees for 2008.
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection-hosted public web-based database to which the BOL uploads environmental laboratory certification data on a weekly basis.

## **Workload**

- 451 laboratories certified as of 7/30/08
  - 402 by Florida as primary NELAP Accreditation Body
  - 49 by full reciprocity with another NELAP Accreditation Body
- 220 on-site laboratory assessments conducted in 2007 and 117 in the first half of 2008
- 210 laboratory certification applications completed in 2007.
- 656 proficiency testing reports for multiple laboratories comprised of 183,937 test results reviewed in 2007.
- 95 enforcement actions taken in 2007.

## **Challenges**

- Assessor shortages have compromised the program's ability to maintain regulatory compliance with the requirement for laboratories to be assessed on site every two years. This has also hindered our ability to respond to complaints in a timely manner.
- Due to the complexity and volume of data, enforcement for laboratory non-compliance with the rules for proficiency testing continues to lag behind the non-compliant occurrences.
- It is difficult to provide on-going training in current technologies in order to maintain a highly qualified and technically expert workforce of laboratory assessors.

**BOL — Your Laboratory Partner**

**Jacksonville - Lantana - Miami - Pensacola - Tampa**