



**A2LA News:**  
**The Newsletter of the American Association for  
Laboratory Accreditation**  
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## **Searchable Accredited Calibration Scopes Now on A2LA Web Site**

A new searchable database of A2LA-accredited calibration laboratories is now available on the A2LA website, [www.a2la.org](http://www.a2la.org). Searches can be made both by specific text and by free-form text. Specific text searches allow an individual to specify the desired calibration parameter, lab name, or location and to obtain results sorted by lab name, state or zip code. More latitude is allowed in free-form text searches; they yield listings of all laboratories that include the searched text in their scope.

Once a search has been completed, a listing is compiled of the lab name, contact information, and link to the lab's Scope of Accreditation. By clicking on the scope link, the individual is able to view that particular laboratory's current Scope of Accreditation. This makes it easy to locate laboratories accredited for specific calibrations and measurement uncertainties.

A2LA hopes the new searchable database will provide a valuable service to persons looking for specific accredited calibration providers while, at the same time, helping A2LA-accredited laboratories.

Staff is now working to expand the search capabilities to the A2LA-accredited testing laboratories. Once the data entry for these laboratories is complete, a new testing lab search capability will be added to the website.

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## E-mail News Service Now Available

A2LA has inaugurated an e-mail news service and invites readers to visit the A2LA web site, [www.a2la.org](http://www.a2la.org), and subscribe to the new service. Subscribers will receive both news releases and notices of updates to the A2LA web site. It is recommended that A2LA-authorized representatives of accredited and enrolled laboratories, proficiency testing providers, reference material producers and inspection bodies subscribe now.

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## 2000 Annual Report

A2LA's 2000 annual report is now available for viewing and printing at A2LA's web site, [www.a2la.org](http://www.a2la.org). To obtain a hard copy of the Adobe PDF version directly from A2LA, please send an e-mail request containing your complete mailing address to Ms. Karen Rudd at [krudd@a2la.org](mailto:krudd@a2la.org).

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## A2LA Technical Program Requirements Update to ISO/IEC 17025

The following A2LA documents have recently been revised and re-issued. For many of the documents, the revisions are limited to renumbering of the requirements to match the numbering of ISO/IEC 17025. Any additional revisions are described in the Revision History Section at the end of each document. The documents and the associated Assessor Checklists are now available at the A2LA web site, [www.a2la.org](http://www.a2la.org).

Document Title	Issue Date
Automotive Electromagnetic Compatibility (EMC) Laboratory Accreditation Program Requirements (2nd Edition - Revised)	06/29/01
Animal Drug Testing Program Requirements	06/29/01
Calibration Program Requirements*	08/21/01
Construction Materials Testing Program Requirements	06/29/01
Environmental Program Requirements	06/29/01
Environmental Lead (Pb) Program Requirements	06/29/01
Food Chemistry Program Requirements	06/29/01
Food Microbiology Program Requirements	06/29/01
Geo-technical Engineering Testing Program Requirements	06/29/01

Kentucky Underground Storage Tank (UST) Program Requirements	07/01/01
Specific Criteria for the Accreditation of Site Testing and Site Calibration Laboratories	07/01/01
Wyoming Remediation of Leaking Aboveground and Underground Storage Tank (LAUST) Program Requirements	07/01/01

\* New Version - Refer to the associated article in this edition of *A2LA News*.

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## Summary of the April Board of Directors Meeting

At its spring meeting, the A2LA Board of Directors approved the development of a Code of Ethics for staff, assessors, and members of the Board, Criteria Council and Accreditation Council. The meeting was held on April 23 - 24, in Columbia, MD.

In other actions, the Board:

- Assigned a task group to develop an assessor travel-delay policy whereby A2LA and the affected assessor(s) will share the risk without affecting the cost of accreditation to the laboratories.
- Requested staff to propose revisions to the A2LA Advertising Policy because of an increase in cases of misleading advertising and misuse of the A2LA logo.
- Approved a new Accreditation Council member, Douglas Cowles, and a new Criteria Council member, Tom Gagen.
- Authorized staff, with guidance from legal counsel, to copyright appropriate A2LA documents.
- Requested the Board of Directors Nominating Committee to recruit individuals to serve as liaisons to related organizations, with an aim of improving communications between A2LA and these groups.

The Board of Directors will meet next on October 18 - 19, in Frederick, MD.

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## Summary of the 2001 Assessor Conclave

The annual A2LA Assessor Conclave was held from April 17 through 23, 2001, in Columbia, MD. Assessor Committee members and Association members met with A2LA staff to discuss issues affecting accreditation and to develop policies to further consistency and uniformity in assessments. Measurement uncertainty, traceability, and ISO/IEC 17025 interpretations were common topics of discussion.

The week started on Tuesday with a four-day Assessor Orientation Course for all new assessors and some experienced assessors who needed a refresher. At course end, 20 attendees took the assessor exam and 16 passed, qualifying as new A2LA assessors.

On Thursday, Rick James of ANSI conducted a training course for those A2LA assessors chosen to provide technical support to ANSI's ISO Guide 65 assessments. Additional assessor training sessions took place on Friday in the electromagnetic compatibility and environmental lead disciplines.

Technical Advisory Committee meetings took place on Saturday morning. Because the experience of assessors is an invaluable resource when seeking ways and means to foster uniform interpretation of technical requirements, this year's committee meetings were combined with assessor group meetings. The thorny issue of measurement uncertainty dominated the afternoon session. Assessors and committee members debated policy issues and clarified measurement uncertainty issues related to ISO/IEC 17025.

The Accreditation Council and Criteria Council meetings on Sunday morning were followed by a plenary session on interpreting ISO/IEC 17025. A2LA staff provided additional training on writing deficiencies and assessor reports, and completing checklists. A2LA President Peter Unger and Vice President Roxanne Robinson finished the session by dialoguing with members of the Councils about interpretations of the new standard.

On Monday morning, the Annual Membership Meeting opened with a presentation about the National Cooperation for Laboratory Accreditation (NACLA) by Joe O'Neil, the organization's Executive Administrator. Then came the Assessor Committee meeting. A2LA staff and assessors reviewed administrative details involved in the conduct of an assessment. This session concluded the 2001 A2LA Assessor Conclave.

A2LA Board and staff members congratulate and welcome the 16 new assessors and thank all those who attended this year's Conclave. They look forward to another productive Conclave next year. The 2002 Conclave will be held from March 9 to 11 in Columbia, MD. It will be preceded by the four-day assessor orientation course, from March 5 to 8.

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## **Notification of Changes to a Laboratory's Status**

All applicant and accredited laboratories are required to sign the *A2LA Conditions for Accreditation*. The language contained in this document can be found in Section B of the A2LA Green Booklet, *General Requirements for Accreditation of Laboratories*. Condition #12 states:

An applicant must agree to...inform A2LA Headquarters *without delay* and in writing of changes in any aspect of the laboratory's status or operation that affect the laboratory's legal, commercial or organizational status; organization or management

(e.g., managerial staff); policies or procedures, where appropriate, premises; personnel, equipment, facilities, working environment or other resources, where significant; authorized signatories; or such other matters that may affect the laboratory's capability, or scope of accredited activities, or compliance with the criteria, requirements and conditions for accreditation.

The most common occurrences that are encompassed by this Condition include a laboratory's move to another location, a laboratory's acquisition by another organization, its downsizing or reorganization, replacement of current personnel, and departure of an authorized representative or point of contact. Accreditation, which attests to a laboratory's technical competence, is highly dependent on such things as the state of the laboratory's physical facility and equipment, its personnel, and the support of management, so it is essential that A2LA be immediately informed of any changes in these relevant conditions that were in place when the laboratory was last observed or assessed by A2LA representatives.

Although Condition 12 is vague about what constitutes notification "without delay," A2LA staff has typically taken this to mean "within 30 days." In the near future, the *Conditions for Accreditation* will be revised to specify this exact timeframe.

Please be aware that when you are next asked to sign this document as a laboratory contact or corporate representative, you will be committing yourself to provide notification of this type of change within 30 days of its occurrence. Failure to do so may be grounds for an adverse accreditation action as described in Part C, Section XII of the Green Booklet.

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## **The Mitzi Miller Story**

### **Assessor Profiles:**

Readers of all ages will recall the first woman to fly across the Atlantic Ocean, Amelia Earhart. Like Amelia, this issue's featured A2LA assessor has initiative, innovation, and the ability to successfully improve the industry.

Mitzi Miller's story begins on a small farm in a small town, Ellijay, Georgia, 90 minutes northwest of Atlanta, not far from the start of the Appalachian Trail. Mitzi's father and mother operated a grocery store. An only child with few playmates, she spent her early years helping her grandmother tend a productive vegetable garden (which provided much of the family's food) and roaming the surrounding woods and fields with her dog Duchess. "I spent an inordinate amount of time out-of-doors."

While Mitzi was still in elementary school, her father abandoned the grocery business for the ministry. He accepted a call from a church in Texas, and the family moved there. "He went to college at the age of 30 and then to the seminary. He graduated from the seminary the same year I graduated from college." As a minister, "his special talent was taking small churches and helping them grow."

Qualities that would serve Mitzi well in her professional career were inherited from her forebears and developed by her experiences in these formative years: self-sufficiency, a gift for growing things, an entrepreneurial spirit, an openness to change and a respect for the environment.

It appeared in high school and college that Mitzi's career might be spent on the stage or in the operating room. Her Texas high school had an excellent drama department. She had roles in many plays and thought she'd like to be an actress. Then her family moved to Georgia, and she enrolled in a small college in northern Georgia which had few opportunities for an aspiring actress but heavy emphasis on math and science. Mitzi discovered an aptitude for the curriculum and set her sights on becoming a doctor.

To prepare for medical school, Mitzi took lots of chemistry courses, at which she excelled. So much so that she spent her first two summer breaks working on National Science Foundation grants at the University of Georgia, in Athens. She impressed the professor in charge and he encouraged, and then enabled her to transfer to that institution for the last two years of college. "He told me Georgia's better science offerings and a degree from a major university would enhance my career opportunities. I told him I couldn't afford the tuition, so he hired me to continue my work in his chemistry lab during the school year."

The same professor helped her to get a summer job in industry - at a General Electric weapon-parts laboratory in Florida. The experience proved to be invaluable, when the dream of a medical career failed to materialize.

Her degree in chemistry and experience with the GE lab led Union Carbide to hire Mitzi in 1977 to work at the Uranium Enrichment Facility in Oak Ridge, which the company was then operating under contract to DOE. She would spend the next 13 years at Oak Ridge.

For the first years, she was engaged in materials testing and production problem solving. Then, in 1984, in the wake of Three-Mile Island and the wave of anti-nuclear sentiment, Oak Ridge shut down its uranium enrichment operation, leaving 150+ chemists in need of work. "Probably because I was always open to changes and new techniques," the Oak Ridge laboratory manager assigned Mitzi "to see what kind of businesses we could get into and then plot a path to get there."

As fortune would have it, the environmental testing and analysis market was beginning to blossom. "Superfund was fully funded and the Contract Laboratory Program (CLP) had been started by EPA." Mitzi became the project manager responsible for getting Enrichment Laboratory prepared and then qualified as a CLP laboratory. "We were the only DOE laboratory with the CLP classification, and DOE wanted an in-house lab to provide guidance and analysis to support DOE's "Superfund-type" work. It allowed talented chemist's talent to be refocused from materials and uranium to environmental."

Having established this new business at Oak Ridge, Mitzi passed the management of it to a colleague and moved on to the next challenge. "We found that the military needed QA and oversight on lots of environmental work and that they wanted a non-commercial lab that could not complete in the private sector to do it. So I started a new group to manage the Navy's entire quality assurance program and half of the Air Force's program." Oak Ridge managed 80 laboratories in the program. According to Mitzi, "the process we used was similar to A2LA's accreditation program."

It was during this period that Mitzi came to realize that "it made no sense" for each program to have its own unique certification/ accreditation approaches. "My personal goal was to get reciprocal agreements among the different programs." She also met John Locke and Pete Unger in the mid-'80s, although she would not begin her work as an A2LA assessor until she had made yet another career change.

The first phase of that change occurred in 1990. DOE began to discourage its labs from doing outside work and it announced plans to shut down substantial pieces of the Oak Ridge operation. So Mitzi "turned to the private sector" taking a job with a small software company, Automated Compliance Systems, where she honed her already considerable business skills. "I got a real view of business, when I was asked to market and sell our laboratory-systems software to the environmental industry." She then moved to a management position with Automated Compliance Systems.

The culmination of all her working experience and her success in both science and business was the formation, in 1992, of her own company, Environmental Quality Management (EQM). "I had received a very attractive offer for a high level position with a major corporation. I was inclined to accept it when my husband said, 'Why not do the same work for yourself.' So I did."

EQM, based in Knoxville, TN and Richland, WA, specializes in data quality assessment, development of sampling and analysis plans and field sampling analysis, quality systems design and improvement, training, and third-party auditing. EQM has a highly qualified set of eight staff (radio chemists, geologists, lawyer) and an impressive list of clients: including Bechtel, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Fluor Daniel, Babcock & Wilcox, Lockheed Martin, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory and British Nuclear Fuels.

One of its clients for the 3rd-party auditing, of course, is A2LA, which considers Mitzi one of its best environmental assessors. According to an A2LA spokesman, "she has superb technical, interpersonal and management skills. She has a reputation for being tough but fair - and always helpful to labs. And she has a wealth of knowledge on numerous subjects related to environmental issues/regulatory compliance."

Mitzi is a skilled facilitator and makes good use of this ability. "One of the unique things our company does is to facilitate communication between regulators and owners, for example at the decommissioned nuclear facility at Hanford, Washington. We help the parties reach a consensus about the desired data quality objectives for the remediation project." This facilitation work "makes it easier to do lab assessments for A2LA. I believe you can assess people and motivate them to do a better job without offending them."

Given her early love of nature and her 16 years of varied experience in the environmental field, is Mitzi an environmentalist?

She's certainly pro-environment but doesn't apply this term of art to herself. "I've met a lot of environmentalists who want their view to prevail at all costs. That's too extreme. I think there need to be reasonable compromises. There are lots of ways to manage, mitigate damage to and even benefit the environment using modern technological advances. What is needed is better judgment."

We asked Mitzi what she thinks of U.S. policies on the environment and got some thoughtful, well-balanced opinions.

"I think the U.S. has set up a system such that the public will no longer tolerate government or business causing extreme environmental insult. I believe we have sufficient laws but not a lot of funding for their enforcement. With a little more funding to enforce laws we could use a lot of technology that's being developed to reduce negative impacts and cure a lot of the environmental problems we have.

"One of the concerns I have is the extremists on both sides of environmental issues. I don't

believe we are well served by extremists on either side. The business leaders I've met, for the most part, are concerned about environmental insult. They have families too. And they realize that it does them no good to insult the environment.

"One of our big problems is that the U.S. Government does not pick a path and stick to it. Every time the Administration changes we get a change, often a radical shift in environmental philosophy. This is a real pitfall in the U.S."

Mitzi cites an unfortunate example of inconsistency in U.S. environmental policy - our nation's attitude toward pollution in other parts of the world.

"I've spent time in recent years in Thailand and Russia. When you see the environmental conditions in countries like these, it makes the U.S. look like a garden spot. Many countries don't even have the basics like safe drinking water.

"At one time, the U.S. was overly active in pushing environmental reform around the globe. Now, we have become too passive about influencing other nations. Lots of them are just coming into the industrial age. We should be encouraging them to learn from our mistakes, avoid some of the damaging industrial developments in our past and jump ahead to the more environmentally friendly systems that will be coming into place in the U.S. Instead, our inconsistent attitude sends the wrong message to the Third World."

Finally, what about Global Warming and the Kyoto Pact?

"Global warming is a definite issue. I believe we should nationally encourage implementation of corrective measures that we know will work. It will take time. But we must motivate people by making it financially worthwhile to take these measures. We need to create financial incentives. As for the Kyoto Agreement, the U.S. should be supportive, but we are backing away from our leadership role."

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## **New Calibration Program Requirements Published**

A2LA recently published its revised Calibration Program Requirements. This document includes A2LA-specific program requirements that calibration laboratories must meet in addition to the requirements contained in ISO/IEC 17025:1999.

A2LA will continue to offer calibration laboratories the option of being assessed to ANSI/NCSL Z540-1-1994 in addition to ISO/IEC 17025:1999. The Calibration Program Requirements include a section containing the ANSI/NCSL Z540-1 requirements that are not covered by ISO/IEC 17025:1999 or the A2LA-specific requirements.

The revised Calibration Program Requirements also include three new A2LA-specific requirements beyond 17025 and ANSI/NCSL Z540-1 that were not in the previous program. Following is a summary of these new requirements:

- Calibration laboratories are now required to maintain a list of primary laboratory standards and the calibration services that calibrate the standards, including the name, location, and accreditation status of the calibration provider. (Section 2.1.1)

- Calibration laboratories utilizing intrinsic standards are required to conduct and document inter-comparisons and periodic checks, and document the calibration history of the standard or system components and the device used to measure differences between the intrinsic standard and unknown values. (Section 2.1.3)
- Expanded requirements that apply when certificates or reports include a recalibration interval or statements of compliance. (Section 2.1.5)

The new Calibration Program Requirements are available for implementation immediately. After October 1, 2001, all assessments will be conducted against the new requirements. Laboratories assessed against the new requirements before January 1, 2002 will be given six months to comply with the three new requirements outlined above. After January 1, 2002, laboratories will be required to meet all requirements at the time of assessment.

The new requirements and the accompanying checklist are available from A2LA Headquarters and at [www.a2la.org](http://www.a2la.org). For questions regarding this document, please contact Thomas Adams at (301) 644 3219, or [tmadams@a2la.org](mailto:tmadams@a2la.org).

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## **Wanted: Qualified Construction Materials & Geotechnical Engineering Assessors**

A2LA is seeking a number of construction materials and geotechnical engineering assessors. Candidates must be peer experts who are knowledgeable about the specific tests and materials covered under A2LA's Construction Materials and Geotechnical Engineering Accreditation Programs (see [www.a2la.org](http://www.a2la.org)). Required qualifications for acceptance into the A2LA assessor training program are:

- Ten years or more of recent and relevant technical experience;
- Ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing;
- Demonstrated leadership ability, poise, tact, persistence, integrity and maturity; and
- Willingness to travel.

Interested persons can obtain more information by sending a cover letter, resume and technical references to Joe Kane at A2LA Headquarters, 5301 Buckeystown Pike, Suite 350, Frederick, MD 21704.

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## Six Persons Join A2LA Staff

A2LA hired six persons recently, five of them for its Laboratory Services Department, to handle the increased demand for accreditation, and a sixth person as an Administrative Associate. Four of the new Laboratory Services Dept. employees hold the title of Laboratory Services Officer: Richard A. Christin, Sr., Ada Hensley, Bradley W. Moore and Timothy William Rasinski. The fifth, Matalya Dowdy, is a Laboratory Services Associate. The sixth new hire is Bethany Goldstein, who holds the position of Administrative Associate.

### Ms. Goldstein

is a Maryland native and a recent high school graduate. She plans to further her education at Montgomery College. Among her leisure pursuits are hiking, biking and painting.



### Mrs. Hensley

is a native and resident of Martinsburg, West Virginia, and a graduate of that state's Shepherd College with a degree in biology and chemistry. She began her professional career at Life Technologies, in the field of oligonucleotide synthesis, validation and R&D. Her special interests are cancer research and saltwater ecology; her leisure activities, fishing, camping, gardening and playing ball with her two sons.



### Ms. Dowdy

will work at A2LA while continuing to pursue her degree in psychology at Mount Saint Mary's College. After her graduation next year, she plans to go to law school and then on to a career in international law. She is a native of Leominster, MA and has lived in Maryland for the past 20 years.



### Mr. Rasinski

was a public school teacher for 13 years, with expertise in math, physics and the sciences. His own education took place in Maryland, at Towson State University (B.S.



### Mr. Moore

was formerly a laboratory technician for an aluminum-testing laboratory. His B.S. biology degree is from Frostburg (MD) State University. He enjoys basketball, baseball, golf



### Mr. Christin

comes to A2LA from a consulting and transportation manufacturing firm, where he served as Manager of Quality Assurance. He has nine years experience as an




physics) and Frostburg State University (M.A. humanities). He has also worked as an electronics technician and a computer specialist. His hobbies include Civil War target shooting, model railroading, sailing, scuba diving and skiing.

and traveling. electrical engineer engaged in railcar engineering, quality control inspections and vendor/manufacturer assessments, at the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority (METRO). His other experiences in the transportation field include preparing a section for ISO 9000 registration and performing value engineering studies. He also has 20 years experience as a microwave and computer power engineer and served in the U.S. Navy for three years. He holds degrees from Mount St. Mary's College and New York University (Suffolk Community College).

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## **Credit Card Payments**

A2LA has been accepting credit card payments for membership and training course fees with great success for quite some time. Under a new policy, laboratories may now pay all accreditation fees by credit card as well. A2LA believes many laboratories will find this a convenient payment method. Only two cards, Visa and MasterCard, are accepted at this time. A2LA is exploring the option of accepting other credit cards in the future. To take advantage of this new payment option, please contact Teresa McCarthy at (301) 644-3229 or [tmccarthy@a2la.org](mailto:tmccarthy@a2la.org).

  
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