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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **A2LA Now Offers Accreditation for Forensic Examination**

**Frederick, MD October 25, 2010** The American Association for Laboratory Accreditation is proud to announce the expansion of its laboratory accreditation activities to include a new field – Forensic Examination. The launch of the A2LA Forensic Examination Accreditation Program is the culmination of years of research and involvement with the forensic community to offer an accreditation program that will meet the needs of state and federal crime laboratories and those of the commercial industry.

In early 2009, a report was published in the U.S. 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 mandatory accreditation and personnel certification.

Upon reviewing this report and in response to requests from our customers, the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA) began work to create a forensic accreditation program. While the main focus of the program was considered to be forensic testing and inspection (scene investigation) conducted by medical, mechanical, electrical, engineering, software and environmental organizations, it was determined that the program should be designed so that it could apply to all organizations performing inspections and testing for use in criminal and civil proceedings, including government and private laboratories and inspection bodies.

It is hoped that the addition of the forensic examination program to A2LA’s accreditation offerings will help to bridge the gap between what is normally considered forensic examination (DNA, Fingerprints, Crime Scene Examination) and the often overlooked work of the commercial industry for civil litigation (Forensic Engineering, Failure Analysis, Accident Analysis).

The program will consist of two separate accreditation options. The first offering is for assessment and accreditation of forensic testing laboratories. Laboratories seeking accreditation under this option will be assessed for compliance to the international standard ISO/IEC 17025 as well as A2LA policies and requirements, including assessment to A2LA supplemental document *R221 - Specific Requirements: Forensic Examination Accreditation Program–Testing*.

The second accreditation option is for the assessment and accreditation of forensic inspection bodies (e.g. crime scene units, forensic engineering – structural failure inspection). Organizations seeking accreditation under this option will be assessed for compliance to the international standard ISO/IEC 17020 as well as A2LA policies and requirements, including assessment to A2LA supplemental document *R309 - specific Requirements: Forensic Examination Accreditation Program–Inspection*.

A2LA is currently accepting new applications for accreditation from testing laboratories and inspection bodies for the Forensic Examination Accreditation Program. Further, A2LA is working with existing accredited laboratories to add compliance with these new requirements to their existing scopes of accreditation. There are resources devoted to ensuring prompt attention to all interested parties’ needs. Please direct any questions about applying for accreditation to the contact listed above. Existing laboratories should direct their questions about expanding their scope (through the use of A2LA form *F108 – Request for Expansion of Scope of Accreditation–Testing*) to their current Accreditation Officer at A2LA.

### **ABOUT A2LA:**

A2LA is a nonprofit, non-governmental, public service, membership society, whose stated mission is to “provide world-class accreditation and training services for testing and calibration laboratories, inspection bodies, proficiency testing providers,

*reference material producers and product certifiers. These and other future services should create stakeholder confidence in the quality, competence and integrity of all A2LA-accredited organizations and in their products and services.”*

Services are available to any type of conformity assessment body (CAB), whether governmental or private. A2LA is the largest multi-discipline accreditation body in the United States.

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