



CONCEPT LIFE SCIENCES

Deviating Samples

I want to make you fully aware of a policy that has been in the process of being enforced by our accreditation body (UKAS) since 2011. UKAS have given all accredited laboratories a mandatory action to implement a policy based upon a document issued by the European co-operation for Accreditation (EA).

For those not aware of the EA, their website explains their role in the harmonisation of standards across Europe (<http://www.european-accreditation.org/home>).

The EA document, EA/LC(07)60, discusses the issue of 'deviating samples' within laboratories. The policy statement puts the onus onto laboratories to clearly state in final reports when samples that have been analysed may be compromised in some way. UKAS issued their first policy statement in 2010 on this and Concept quickly adopted a policy associated with this. UKAS have further clarified their expectations in a new policy statement issued in 2013 (TPS 63 Edition 01, June 2013, "UKAS Policy on Deviating Samples"), link below,

http://www.ukas.com/technical-information/publications-and-tech-articles/publications/Technical_Policy_Statements.asp

Critical to the assessment of a sample's fitness for testing is an understanding of storage conditions from sampling to delivery (and storage within the lab), dates of sampling and the scope of testing required. There are many sources of information on best practice in sample transport and storage, including US EPA, ISO and EU/CEN methods and standards. A common theme is the appropriate use of containers, transport/storage temperatures, preservatives and time from sampling to extraction/analysis. Concept offers customers appropriate containers based upon the expected analytical suites of interest and cool boxes for transport of samples to the laboratory. When at Concept samples' integrity is maintained where required until analysis is performed.

Acceptable holding times for samples vary, depending upon the source of information. In general VOCs are the most demanding, with US EPA methods stipulating a maximum seven day holding time from sampling (BS ISO 18512:2007 states four days). SVOCs have a more lenient two week time mentioned to extraction, with analysis within a month. When analysing waters, parameters such as ammonia are very time-dependent unless they are preserved.

Concept currently add the following caveats to reports, based upon these situations occurring.

1. When the date of sampling has not been provided. "The date of sampling has not been provided and therefore the time from sampling to analysis is unknown. It is possible therefore that the results provided may be compromised."





2. When there has been a significant delay in analysing the samples. “These samples have been analysed exceeding recommended holding times. It is possible therefore that the results provided may be compromised.”
3. When samples are received in inappropriate containers. “These samples were received in containers that may be inappropriate for this parameter of interest. It is possible therefore that the results provided may be compromised.”

If you have any questions concerning this matter please don't hesitate to contact your project manager in the first instance, or indeed come directly to me.

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