

TES Bretby is the UK's premier environmental testing laboratory producing high quality analytical data for more than 20 years. As a Mowlem plc business, we provide a comprehensive range of environmental analytical services to consulting, industrial and government clients situated within the UK, Europe and across many countries world-wide. Our main business aim is to provide you with meaningful data, not just facile numbers.

MCERTS Performance Standard for laboratories undertaking chemical testing on soil

What is MCERTS?

The Environment Agency has established its Monitoring Certification Scheme, MCERTS, to deliver high quality environmental measurements. The scheme is progressively being extended to cover all regulatory monitoring activities. The MCERTS performance standard for soil analysis, to be implemented on 1 September 2004, is an application of ISO 17025:2000 and includes specific requirements for:



- the selection and validation of methods
- sampling pre-treatment and preparation
- the estimation of measurement uncertainty
- participation in proficiency testing schemes
- the reporting of results and information.

How will it affect you as procurers of soil testing?

When procuring chemical testing of soil you will need to be aware of the following issues:

- All data submitted to the Agency, for regulatory purposes, must conform to MCERTS requirements.
- Does the laboratory have MCERTS for all the parameters you require? If not they must subcontract to a laboratory that has the accreditation.
- Ensure the laboratory methods are appropriate and fit for purpose in terms of:
Parameter
Critical levels of interest (the level at which a decision is made)
Matrix type
- Ensure your sampling procedures, preservation and transportation are appropriate to minimise loss of analytes and for the analytical methods chosen. You will need to record details in the field.
- Ensure that details are recorded to satisfy complete audit trails, e.g. location of sample, depth, date/time taken, site preservation details.



What is TES's current position?

We are one of the first UK labs to be awarded MCERTS and now have the accreditation for:

Acid soluble sulphate
Elemental Sulphur

We have been granted accreditation subject the clearance of minor non-conformances for:

*Easily liberated, complex and total cyanide**
*Volatile Organic Compounds**
Heavy Metals by ICPMS
Thiocyanate
TPH GCFID
BTEX HS FID

* The accreditation for Total cyanide and the VOCs which are not listed in Annex A have been referred to the Environment Agency for approval.

Over the course of the next few months we will be making applications to add the remainder of the analytes listed in the Annex A of the MCERTS Standard.

Annex A, Performance Characteristics

Table 1 - metallics and organometallics

Antimony, arsenic, barium, beryllium, water sol boron, cadmium, cobalt, copper, chromium, iron, lead, manganese, mercury, molybdenum, nickel, organolead compounds, organotin compounds, selenium, thallium, vanadium, zinc,

Table 2 - inorganics

Easily liberated cyanide, complex cyanide, sulphide, sulphate, sulphur, thiocyanate.

Table 3 - organics

Benzene, benzo(a)pyrene, chlorobenzene, chloromethane, chlorophenol, chlorotoluene, dichloroethane, 1,2-dichloroethene, dichloromethane, dioxins, ethylbenzene, furans, hexachloro-1,3-butadiene, hydrocarbons, nitroaromatics, pentachlorophenol, phenols, phthalate esters, polyaromatic hydrocarbons, PCBs, tetrachloroethane, tetrachloroethene, tetrachloromethane, toluene, trichloroethane, trichloroethene, trichloromethane, vinyl chloride, xylene.



Meeting Point

Andy Peirce

Having worked for TES for almost 30 years, Andy is well qualified for his role as Business Improvement and Quality Systems Administrator. Andy has worked in most of the lab areas and is fully conversant with all details of soil and water analysis. He is

now devoting much of his time to the extension of our MCERTS accreditation.

CONTACT US

For further information about any of the issues raised in this bulletin or to discuss your analytical requirements please contact:

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