

Environmental Health and Drinking Water Branch

EHDW Circular Letter # 2026-04

TO: All Connecticut Certified Environmental Laboratories
FROM: Dawn Shaban, ELCP, Supervising Environmental Analyst
DATE: 3/9/2026

SUBJECT: Annual Proficiency Tests

The Environmental Laboratory Certification Program (ELCP), in accordance with RCSA 19A-36-A61, proficiency test (PT) samples are required annually for drinking water, wastewater and solid waste/soil matrices for methods in which certification is held. The drinking water regulations require laboratories to analyze a PT sample for each drinking water method that a laboratory has been approved. The non-potable water/wastewater and solid waste/soil categories, laboratories need only to analyze one matrix specific PT sample for each analyte listed on the certified parameter list for which the laboratory is approved.

Important Notes:

- **To maintain certification, each lab should make certain that the results for these analyses are received electronically from the provider to DPH.ELCP@ct.gov no later than July 31, 2026.**
- Each certified laboratory is responsible for making their arrangements directly with one or more of the proficiency test sample providers that have been approved by a proficiency testing provider accreditor (PTPA) that meets the TNI requirements. A list of these providers is given at:
<http://www.nelac-institute.org/ptproviders.php><http://ts.nist.gov/nvlap>
- Since laboratories are certified by both method and analyte, all PT provider study reports must list the method used for each analysis, identifying it by the full method number. The methods must match the methods found on the laboratories certified parameter list. The results can be rejected for incorrect method citation reporting.

Please refer to the attached CT ELCP 2026 Proficiency Testing Sample Guidance document for further information.

**CT DPH ELCP
Proficiency Testing Sample Guidance
2026**

Effective Date: – February 24, 2026

Additional Matrix Specific information:

Drinking Water

Each certified laboratory must analyze a “Water Supply”(drinking water) PT sample for every parameter for which it wishes to hold certification in, including chemistry, radiochemistry and microbiology. Data from “Water Pollution” (wastewater) PT samples are not acceptable. There are a few exceptions where there are no commercially available PTs; radon, odor and asbestos.

- If a laboratory is certified for two or more techniques for the analysis of one parameter, it must analyze a PT sample by each technique. (Examples of this situation are laboratories using both methods 200.7 and 200.8 for metals analysis and laboratories using MTF, MMO-MUG, and/or MF techniques for coliform/*E. coli*.)
- Colilert and Colilert 18 are considered two different media, and two PTs must be completed. Presence/Absence and enumeration are also considered two separate parameters and must each have their own PT.
- An HPC PT will be required annually for each method for which certification is held.
- The PT sample used to demonstrate proficiency for the analysis of uranium using method 200.8 may be either a Water Supply radiochemistry PT sample or a Water Supply metals PT sample.
- Vinyl chloride is evaluated separately from the other 20 volatile organic compounds (VOCs), i.e., it is not covered by the “VOC 80% rule.” A laboratory must analyze a vinyl chloride PT each year and achieve results within $\pm 40\%$ of the true value in order to be certified for vinyl chloride. The vinyl chloride PT sample must contain a quantifiable amount of vinyl chloride; it cannot be omitted from the sample. [See 40 CFR 141.24(f)(17)(ii).]
- The per- & polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) must be analyzed from the same ampule and achieve results within $\pm 30\%$ of the true value in order to maintain certification. [See 40 CFR 141.901(b)(2).] The 80% rule does not apply to the PFAS compounds.

Non-potable Water and Solid Waste

Each certified laboratory must analyze a PT sample for every parameter for which it wishes to be certified, including chemistry, radiochemistry and microbiology.

- If a laboratory is certified for two or more techniques for the analysis of one parameter, it must analyze a PT sample by each technique. (Examples of this situation are laboratories using both methods 200.7 and 200.8 for metals analysis).
- Analytes may be combined as appropriate by the analytical method/technology (e.g. BNA’s may be analyzed by Method 625 or Method 8270 for non-potable water/wastewater and reported for both methods).
- The DMR QA PTs do fulfil the requirement for the ELCP certification, results for wastewater PTs that are submitted to CT DEEP also need to be submitted to CT ELCP.

Make-ups:

- Any laboratory which fails to analyze any PT sample successfully in its first 2026 study must obtain and analyze a second set of samples for the failed analyte(s). The make-up PTs must be from a PT study that is different from the original study. The results for make-up studies must be received to CT ELCP by December 31, 2026.
- If make-up PTs for THMs, halo-acetic acids, the PFAS compounds in which certification is held, or the 20 regulated volatile organic compounds are analyzed, the data for all the regulated THMs, halo-acetic acids, PFAS, or volatiles in the PT(s) must be submitted. Vinyl chloride is excluded from this requirement. The regulated compound lists can be found here: [National Primary Drinking Water Regulations | US EPA](#)
- The use of “quick turn-around” or supplemental PT samples is acceptable. If they were originally part of a previous PT study, they must not have been previously sent to the same laboratory, and their original identity must be masked and replaced with unique identification numbers.
- If a laboratory is unsuccessful in analyzing both the original (first) PT sample and the make-up (second) PT sample for any analyte, a root cause investigation should take place with a corrective action before a third PT is analyzed.
- If a laboratory is unsuccessful in analyzing three PT samples within a calendar year for any parameter, its certification for that analyte can be downgraded.

Reports:

- A copy of all results for both the original study and any make-up studies must be emailed directly from the provider to dph.elcp@ct.gov as soon as they are available.
- Because laboratories are certified by both method and analyte, all PT provider study reports must list the method used for each analysis, identifying it by the full method number. The methods must match the methods found on the laboratories certified parameter list. The results can be rejected for incorrect method citation reporting.
- Microbiology PT reports often fail to distinguish between fecal coliform and *E. coli* data. Laboratories should ask their providers to clearly indicate on their reports which organisms were tested for. Specifically, the category “fecal coliform/E. coli” is not definitive.
Reports should state either “fecal coliform” or “E. coli”, but not both.
- Microbiology PT reports should include the media used in the methods citations if possible. (The use of abbreviated media descriptions, i.e., “shorthand”, is acceptable.)

Scheduling of PTs:

It is strongly recommended that each laboratory schedule the analysis of all its PT samples as early in the year as possible. It is particularly important to do this for radiochemistry samples because they are offered less frequently than others.

Due dates – summary:

- PT data should be received by July 31, 2026.
- If any data received on or before July 31 include unsatisfactory results, satisfactory make-up data must be received by December 31, 2026. If not, the laboratory can be downgraded.
- Extensions of these deadlines may be granted for certain circumstances; this needs to be communicated to ELCP.

Contact information:

Questions and comments should be directed to:

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