

Microbiology Expert Committee (MEC) Meeting Summary

April 9, 2024

I Welcome and Roll Call:

Cody, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:34pm Eastern on March 12, 2024, by teleconference. Attendance is recorded in Attachment A – there were 12 members present. Associates present: Nigel Allison, Tiffany Carey, Antoine Chamsi, Thekkekalathil Chandra, Bryan Disch, Joe Guzman, KeShawne Ingram, Deanna Kiska, Morgan Koelliker, David Lo, Alma McCammond and Christabel Monteiro. Paul Junio attended in the absence of Ilona Taunton as the scribe for minutes.

II Approval of Agenda

Cody asked for approval of the Agenda. Hearing no objections, she declared the agenda approved.

III Approval of March Meeting minutes

The Meeting minutes from the March 12, 2024 were emailed to all members along with the announcement for this meeting. Cody asked if there were any comments or corrections needed for the minutes. Hearing none, she accepted a motion from Robin Cook and a second from Maria Fayard to approve the minutes. All in attendance voted to approve.

IV Discussion on return of SIRs 423, 425 and 471

SIR 423 - The word 'prove' is problematic. Cody suggested verify. Paul offered demonstrate, but said that verify is used elsewhere. Robin agreed with verify. Cody was checking against 7.3.6. Maria Fayard thought that either verify or demonstrate would be appropriate. Cody said that she liked demonstrate and asked for any comments. Hearing none, demonstrate will be used and that will require the lab to do the testing. Robin moved to approve the revision to SIR 423. Matt seconded. Voting to approve were Tina Buttermore, Cody Danielson, Robin Cook, Maria Fayard, Maria Friedman, Matt Graves, Silky Labie, Liz Lesold, Brian Mercer, Patsy Root, Bob Royce, and Elisa Snyder. There were no nays or abstentions.

SIR 417 - Cody expects SIR 425 to be more challenging, so SIR 471 was discussed next. The suggestion was made to switch the first two sentences. We should also remove the reference to SIR 97 as that language is included in the response. Liz asked if we needed to comment that we don't offer how to advice? Robin said it can be included in the SIR submittal. Maria Friedman said that was correct. Silky moved to approve the revision to SIR 471. Liz seconded it. Voting to approve were Tina Buttermore, Cody Danielson, Robin Cook, Maria Fayard, Maria Friedman, Matt Graves, Silky Labie, Liz Lesold, Brian Mercer, Patsy Root, Bob Royce, and Elisa Snyder. There were no nays or abstentions.

SIR 425 - Neither yes nor no response was given. Robin said that if we respond yes, we are adding a requirement to the standard, while if we respond no, the response was

rejected by the AC. This says nothing about sterility checks. Two states either have or still allow the COA from the manufacturer. It wasn't the intent to require that the parent lab verify for each satellite laboratory. We've been asked for the interpretation and 'no' is the appropriate answer. Tina pointed out that 7.3.1 leads off with "The laboratory shall demonstrate..." That statement led to general agreement that our response should be no. Maria Fayard commented that all pieces of the standard have to be taken into account. Brian said that we have to address test conditions. The committee had general agreement and would add comments in the committee comment section. Maria Fayard moved to approve SIR 425. Robin seconded. Voting to approve were Tina Buttermore, Cody Danielson, Robin Cook, Maria Fayard, Maria Friedman, Matt Graves, Silky Labie, Liz Lesold, Brian Mercer, Patsy Root, Bob Royce, and Elisa Snyder. There were no nays or abstentions.

V. Continued Discussion over Autoclaves (Section 1.7.3.7.b.ii.a)

There was general agreement that Module 2 covers waste disposal. Given that it is covered in Module 2, is it ok to delete the biological indicator requirement? Robin would like to strike Sentence 2 of Draft 7.3.6 b ii a 2. Liz commented that if it is addressed in Module 2, why do we have it here at all? Maria Friedman asked if we were talking about biological indicators relative to waste. The indicators are needed to prove that it works. Robin countered that performance checking and sterility testing also does this, don't they? This is already in the EPA Laboratory Certification Manual, so the requirement exists for Drinking Water work. Including it in Module 5 makes it mandatory for other matrices. Maria Friedman stated that California requires this. Robin added that each state can do that. Liz stated that it is also in SM 9020, so it applies beyond Drinking Water already. Cody asked if we need to require it in Module 5? It was asked if there are more requirements like this that are also in SM 9020. Cody wasn't sure. Liz and Robin looked. Liz said that the Laboratory Equipment section 4H in 9020B states to use a chemical steam indicator, which won't verify sterilization. Heat indicating tape does this. Her preference is to leave the biological indicator in Module 5. Robin asked if she wanted it left in because it's in 9020, or because it's important? Liz said that it is in so many places because it is important, and should be left in on that basis. Robin countered by asking if it is just in so many places and we're used to it, as opposed to it being important. Biological indicators don't tell you anything that performance checks don't already tell you. Chandra and Brian agreed with this. Maria Friedman offered the regulatory point of view stating that Module 5 can't supersede method requirements. Silky stated that two programs require it. Who wouldn't – is it just RCRA since CWA and SDWA do? Robin added that CWA doesn't follow Standard Methods. Silky asked if this change would just cause confusion? Brian said the removal would open the opportunity for others to remove it. Silky said that from a lab perspective, we're doing it for other methods so we might as well continue to do so. It could be confusing for small laboratories in terms of 'do we or don't we?'. Liz agreed. Robin didn't think that lessening confusion was a good reason to leave it in Module 5. It should only be left in if it is good for microbiological work. Maria Friedman asked if we were going to vote or continue discussion? Cody said that this is just discussion, and that we are looking for consensus. Cody hopes to put this into email for continued discussion.

Having reached the end of the scheduled time, the meeting adjourned at 15:00 Eastern. The next meeting of the Microbiology Expert Committee will be Tuesday, May 7 at 1:30PM Eastern.

A summary of action items and backburner/reminder items can be found in Attachment B.

Attachment A - Participants

Microbiology Expert Committee (MEC)

Members	Affiliation	Balance	Contact Information
Hunter Adams 2026 Absent	City of Wichita Falls	Lab	hunter.adams@wichitafallstx.gov
Tina Buttermore 2027* Present (1:38PM)	Pace Analytical	Lab	tina.buttermore@pacelabs.com
Robin Cook (Vice Chair) 2024* Present	City of Daytona Beach	Lab	cookr@codb.us
Cody Danielson (Chair) 2025 Present	Oklahoma DEQ	Lab	Cody.Danielson@deq.ok.gov
Maria Fayard 2026* Present (left 2:38PM)	ORELAP	AB	maria.j.fayard@oha.oregon.gov
Maria Friedman 2025* Present (1:43PM)	California ELAP	AB	qamfriedman@gmail.com
Matt Graves 2025* Present	ERA	Other	matt_graves@waters.com
Jessica Hoch 2025 Absent	Texas Comm. on Env. Quality	Other	jessica.hoch@tceq.texas.gov
Silky Labie 2026* Present	ELCAT, LLC	Other	elcatllc@centurylink.net
Ashley Larssen 2024* Absent	KC Water	Lab	ashley.larssen@kcmo.org
Elizabeth Lesold 2027* Present	NYSDOH ELAP	AB	elizabeth.lesold@health.ny.gov
Brian Mercer 2027* Present	City of Plantation	Lab	bmercerc@plantation.org
Patsy Root 2027* Present	IDEXX	Other	Patsy-Root@IDEXX.com
Robert Royce 2025* Present	New Jersey DEP	AB	Robert.Royce@dep.nj.gov
Elisa Snyder 2026 Present	City of Austin - Austin Water	Lab	elisa.snyder@austintexas.gov
Ilona Taunton Program Administrator Absent	The NELAC Institute	NA	ilona.taunton@nelac-institute.org
Paul Junio TNI Scribe Present	The NELAC Institute	NA	paul.junio@nelac-institute.org

* - eligible to serve another term

Attachment B
Action Items – MEC

	Action Item	Who	Expected Completion	Actual Completion
104	Implementation Guidance for Temperature Distribution and Equilibrium.	Committee	TBD	See note in 5/11/21 minutes. 4/11/23: Working on Temperature Distribution. 7/11/23: Working on Equilibrium; Anticipated January 2024
113	Complete Response to Draft Comments Process	All	Voting is complete.	5/10/22: Voted on Comments: 2, 3, 7, 8, 9 and 10 6/14/22: Voted on Comments 5 and 6. 2/14/23: Final vote on 1, 4 and 11. 4/11/23: Need to post the document.
114	Work on Questions for the Credentialing Exam	Cody		Get to Jerry as soon as possible.
115	Committee motions, minutes, and votes as needed	Cody	Ongoing	Captured in meeting minutes whether in meeting or via email

Attachment C

Backburner / Reminders – MEC

	Item	Meeting Reference	Comments
1	Update charter (if needed) every 5 years.	n/a	Ongoing
2	Review Method codes and send comments to Robin for Paul Junio.		Moved to back-burner on 6/9/20.
3	Provide an update on what has been done with the method codes and database after Jennifer's review and internal EPA meetings.		This was moved from the Action Items table. Notes: 6/9/20: Ask Jennifer for a follow-up. 11/9/20 – Not available for a follow-up.