



**ENCOURAGING ACCREDITED LABORATORIES AND
INSPECTION BODIES TO USE THEIR ACCREDITATION
BODY'S ACCREDITATION SYMBOL ON REPORTS**

PURPOSE

This document will help accredited laboratories and inspection bodies understand the importance of including their accreditation body's symbol on reports for tests, calibrations and inspection activities that are covered by their scopes of accreditation..

AUTHORSHIP

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FURTHER INFORMATION

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Many laboratories use their discretion as to whether they include their accreditation body's symbol on their test, calibration and inspection reports, especially as it is often not required by the accreditation body. Indeed, some laboratories charge more for their tests if the symbol is to be included on the report. The accredited laboratory or inspection body should consider the consequences of not including the accreditation symbol on a report issued for work covered by its scope of accreditation.

If a laboratory or inspection body is accredited, but does not include a symbol on their reports, the laboratory or inspection body may be seen to imply that either it is not accredited at all, or it is not accredited for the tests or inspections covered by the report. Clients of accredited laboratories and regulatory authorities will often seek a visible indication that the laboratory is accredited by an accreditation body recognised under the APLAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA).

When a product arrives in a country, and accreditation of the test, calibration or inspection is the basis for deciding if the product is safe to use and to be released onto the market, decision makers will look for the accreditation body symbol. If there is no symbol on the report, the products will either be destroyed, returned to the country from where they came, or have to be retested in an accredited laboratory in the importing country. All these options add significant additional cost to the product. This has happened to many products because compliance with a test, calibration or inspection could not be clearly assumed by the presence of the accreditation symbol on the report.

Decision makers around the world do not always make further enquiries into the acceptability of reports that do not include an accreditation body's accreditation symbol, nor should they have to. Decision makers such as regulators rarely make telephone calls, and will not send faxes or emails to laboratories or accreditation bodies in an attempt to confirm whether a report without an accreditation body's symbol is in fact acceptable. Decision makers simply look for a symbol. If "tested once, accepted globally" is to be the true mantra of accreditation, then the use of an accreditation body's symbol is imperative.

A manufacturer or exporter will often actively choose a laboratory or inspection body accredited for a specific test, calibration or inspection of interest, so as to make use of the MRA to which the local accreditation body is a signatory. A laboratory or inspection body that is accredited has a marketing advantage over its non-accredited competitors because of its access to the benefits of the MRA.

A system has been established to avoid the problems outlined above and it should be utilised to its fullest.

In some countries, decision makers such as regulators and buyers have been "trained" to look for an accreditation body symbol on accredited reports. They use an APLAC document titled, "International Recognition of Test, Calibration and Inspection Reports (What to look for on reports to make sure they are from an accredited laboratory or inspection body)", APLAC document number PR 008, as an accreditation body identification chart. The current issue of APLAC PR 008 can be downloaded from the documents section of the APLAC website www.aplac.org

The use of an accreditation body's symbol on an accredited laboratory's report is essential for the acceptance of the report under the APLAC MRA.