

Nebraska FTIR Proficiency Testing Program

By Dana El-Hajjar, MBA, BS, Technical Director, Chemistry, NPHL

Background

The Nebraska Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (FTIR) Proficiency Testing (PT) program was started in 2004 as a means of assuring capabilities of laboratories in Nebraska to test for unknown substances in environmental samples. The program was established to maintain proficiency on the FTIR Microscopy laboratory units, but has since expanded to include agencies that have the field versions of FTIR as well. It was recognized that FTIR units had been used by 1st responders and hazmat teams prior to documenting their proficiency with the instrumentation. This gap was addressed by the PT program. In March 2008 the proficiency testing program was opened to laboratories and agencies outside Nebraska that may be involved in testing of unknown substances using FTIR analysis.

How it Works

Three PT challenges are planned for each year. Samples are to be identified using FTIR analysis and reported within two weeks. The samples are mailed to laboratories in each challenge. Results will be mailed to laboratories, and event summaries will be posted on the NPHL web page after every PT challenge.

Who Can Enroll

This program is open to any laboratory or agency that tests unknown substances using FTIR analysis. This includes public health laboratories, civil support teams, environmental laboratories, HAZMAT units, fire departments, health departments, and etc.

How to Join

If you are interested in participating in this proficiency testing program please send an e-mail to: ftir-pt@nphl.org, or call us at (402) 559-9421. More information about the PT Program can be found on our website at www.nphl.org.