



CHOOSING A LABORATORY

Quality environmental samples are expensive and time consuming to collect and require quality laboratory analyses to maintain their value. Voluntary parties and their consultants must have environmental samples analyzed by a laboratory qualified to analyze the suspected contaminants and contaminated media. Such laboratories must also be certified by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Division of Health and Environmental Laboratories (DHEL). The Kansas Environmental Laboratory Certification program was authorized by the Kansas legislature in 1978 with the enactment of K.S.A. 65-1,109a. The program was implemented by the enactment of K.A.R. 28-15-35 through 28-15-37. In 1999 the state of Kansas became a nationally recognized accrediting authority. This recognition was obtained as the KDHE Environmental Laboratory Improvement Office implemented the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) standards for laboratory accreditation.

The KDHE Laboratory Improvement Program Office maintains a list of NELAC accredited laboratories on its web page accessible through the Internet at www.kdhe.state.ks.us/envlab/index.html. Qualified environmental consultants should know which laboratories may be used for each environmental media and for each type of contaminant likely to be encountered at the property.

Voluntary parties who wish to shop around for the best laboratory to fill their particular needs should contact several accredited commercial laboratories and obtain information useful to compare services, such as:

- Can the laboratory analyze the media of concern for the known or suspected contaminants?
- Can the laboratory handle the anticipated number of samples within the holding time limits for the various types of samples to be collected?
- Can the consultant transport or ship the samples to the laboratory within the holding limits for the various samples to be collected?
- Does the laboratory have any special requirements for the anticipated types of samples and can the consultant collect, preserve, and transport samples to meet those requirements?
- Does the laboratory's schedule for producing analytical results and their data formats meet the project schedule and data needs?
- What will the analyses cost?