United States Environmental Protection Agency

EPA's Water Laboratory Alliance:
A Powerful Resource for State Primacy Agencies

Overview

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) launched the Water Laboratory Alliance (WLA) in 2009. This launch marked a dynamic effort to equip the Nation's Water Sector with a means to analyze samples in response to natural, intentional or unintentional contamination incidents. The WLA is comprised of laboratories with the expertise to analyze water samples for chemical, biological or radiochemical contaminants.

The launch of the WLA coincided with the second phase roll-out of EPA's Environmental Response Laboratory Network (ERLN). The WLA is an integral part of the ERLN, focusing solely on water. The ERLN also addresses other environmental matrices including air, soil and surfaces.

How does the WLA benefit state primacy agencies?

While state drinking water primacy agencies cannot themselves become WLA Members, primacy agencies can benefit from the WLA in several ways:

Did you know? There is no limit on the number of laboratories within a state that can apply for WLA membership.

- First, primacy agencies benefit from expanded laboratory capability and capacity within their states. This ensures that drinking water systems are better prepared to respond to contamination incidents.
- Second, primacy agencies have access to WLA security-related tools and resources, such as:
  - **EPA's Compendium of Environmental Testing Laboratories (Laboratory Compendium):** Primacy agencies can use the Laboratory Compendium to identify WLA Member laboratories to provide analytical support to impacted water systems. **https://cfext.epa.gov/cetl**
  - **WLA Response Plan (WLA-RP):** The best practices contained in the WLA-RP can aid primacy agencies in coordinating laboratory support. **https://www.epa.gov/waterlabnetwork/water-laboratory-alliance-response-plan**
  - **Water Contaminant Information Tool (WCIT):** Provides primacy agencies with contaminant information on more than 800 potential contaminants. **https://www.epa.gov/waterdata/water-contaminant-information-tool-wcit**
- Primacy agencies also have access to WLA Training Center courses. This resource provides training on topics ranging from chain of custody, to coordination of water contamination incident response through tabletop exercises. **https://www.epa.gov/waterlabnetwork/water-laboratory-alliance-training-center**

How will state laboratories and water utilities benefit from the WLA?

State laboratories and water systems can access critical resources that strengthen their preparedness level for responding to water contamination incidents.

Specific benefits of leveraging the WLA resources include:

- Opportunities to participate in water contamination emergency response exercises and webcasts.
- Enhanced networking opportunities with Water Sector stakeholders including utilities, laboratories, emergency responders and government personnel.
- Enhanced preparedness for emergency response.
- Improved knowledge of how to identify laboratories when the nature or scope of a contamination incident exceeds in-house capabilities or capacity.
- Priority access to water security-related training, tools and resources.

Did you know?
Best practices included in the WLA-RP can be leveraged by all Water Sector Stakeholders; not just laboratories!

As WLA Members, both state and utility laboratories, become part of a network with enhanced laboratory capabilities. Members can quickly identify and access qualified laboratories nationwide to help support their analytical needs. This support can be scaled to varying levels depending on the type and volume of sample analyses required. Accessing WLA laboratory support is not limited to specialized capabilities. Member laboratories can be accessed for more routine analytical needs such as processing regulatory samples or providing surge capacity.

Did you know?
Utilities can access the WLA whether or not their laboratory is a WLA Member.

WLA Member laboratories have the added recognition of being identified as a member of the network. Membership in such laboratory networks can enhance a laboratories' credibility, especially when pursuing governmental opportunities.

Did you know?
Providing support during a contamination incident is completely voluntary. When a WLA Member laboratory is contacted, it can decide whether or not to provide services.

How can laboratories become WLA Members?

State, utility, public health, environmental and commercial laboratories must apply to be part of the ERLN and can apply for WLA membership at the same time. Access the membership application at **https://www.epa.gov/waterlabnetwork/water-laboratory-alliance-membership-application**. In addition to completing the membership application, laboratories must register for EPA's Laboratory Compendium at **https://cfext.epa.gov/cetl**.

Did you know?
Becoming a WLA Member is completely FREE!

For detailed information on how to become a WLA Member, access the "Becoming a Water Laboratory Alliance Member" training course at **https://www.epa.gov/waterlabnetwork/learn-about-water-laboratory-alliance#Apply**.

DON'T WAIT— Tell Your State Labs to Become Members Today!

For additional information on the WLA, contact the WLA Helpline at 703-461-2400 or **WLA@epa.gov**, or visit the WLA homepage at **https://www.epa.gov/waterlabnetwork**.