

Minimum Recommendations for a Fiber Counting Round Robin Program

Organization of an Interlaboratory Quality Control Program for Phase Contrast Microscopists

1. Analysts must participate at least semiannually in a round robin fiber counting program with at least two other separate organizations.*
2. The program should be based on a written agreement with the responsibilities of each participant clearly described and the time period for each round between the participants specified.
3. Each round should consist of a minimum of four samples but ideally as many as eight.
4. Samples should cover a range of concentrations; the sample mix should not contain only proficiency samples or all very low clearance activity samples, but a combination of client samples and proficiency samples from all NIOSH 7400 loading ranges.
5. Samples should be representative of the organization typical workload. †
6. The responsibility for producing samples and initiating each round may be assumed by a single organization or it may be rotated among the participants. In any case, the procedure should be specified.
7. Samples should be sent by the coordinating organization to the first participant in the cycle, and then each participant should promptly perform counts and send samples to the next participating organization. The allowable time for samples at each organization should be specified but should not exceed four weeks.
8. Results should be sent to the coordinating organization for review and statistical analysis.
9. The coordinating organization should prepare a summary of the round including the date of issue, the company names (or identifiers) of all participants, and a summary report of the statistical analysis that compares the results of all participants. ‡ Control limits or other statistics should come from the round data of your interlaboratory quality assurance group and not from the published data for IHPAT, AAT or other proficiency program rounds.
10. The coordinating organization should provide this summary to each participant. This should take place within four weeks after results are submitted.
11. For the most value from your round robin participation, all analysts in the organization should count and report results on all round robin samples in each round.

* Requirement of the NIOSH 7400 Method Issue 3

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‡ Requirement of the AAR Policy

