

Sample Matrix level accreditation by ALS Environmental

Written by Luke

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Since the Spring release of the United Kingdom Accreditation Services (UKAS) document 'Guidance on Water Matrices Definitions for Sampling and Testing to ISO/IEC 17025', which defines standard Water Matrix types, ALS Environmental have been working to towards this standard nomenclature in their systems to mirror the guidance.

In order to fully utilise the updated matrix guidance ALS Environmental has mirrored the UKAS descriptors with their Water Sample Matrices. Since the guidance was released in June 2014, they have been working with their customers to supply the information in line with the UKAS guidance and over 90% of samples now comply with this request.

The eleven standard Water Matrix Types are listed below with a brief descriptor. To download the ALS Environmental UKAS Water Matrix description please [click here](#) .

<u>Water Matrix Types</u>	Brief Description
Drinking Water	<i>Water for Drinking only.</i>
Ground Water	<i>Water from an aquifer</i>
Land Leachate	<i>Water drained from Landfill or Contaminated Land sites</i>
Prepared Leachate	<i>Leachates prepared by a laboratory</i>
Process Water	<i>Water that is used in a process</i>
Recreational Water	<i>Water that is used for an activity i.e. Swimming Pool Water</i>
Saline Water	<i>Water that contains a significant proportion of dissolved salts</i>
Surface Water	<i>Water that runs over soils or rocks</i>
Trade Effluent	<i>Water discharged to waste water systems from Industry</i>
Treated Sewage	<i>Liquid sewage that has been treated prior to discharge</i>
Untreated Sewage	<i>Liquid carried away in sewers or drains that is not toxic</i>

The importance of this change is based around the UKAS accreditation that they hold against each test. This is known as Sample Matrix Accreditation and is being driven by UKAS as part of the ISO / EN 17025:2005 accreditation. ALS Environmental will be providing Sample Matrix Accreditation from Friday 2nd January 2015.

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From this point onwards they will require all customers to provide a specific matrix type with all sample submissions. Where this is not provided they will contact you to ascertain this information prior to reporting your results. If no matrix type is provided, then your analytical data will be reported as unaccredited.

ALS Environmentals Quality Director, Christopher Caird, explained how the SMA will see customers receive enhanced quality analytical data:

"The aim of any analysis by a UKAS ISO EN 17025:2005 accredited laboratory is to better understand the "normal" chemical and/or microbial assay.

"All of our accreditation is based on method validations against known matrices. These matrices have been matched to conform with the updated UKAS guidance on Water Matrix types; and by asking customers to define their matrices against these UKAS definitions, we can provide a higher quality of analytical data."

If you have any questions on the new UKAS guidance for the Water Matrix types, or matrix level accreditation in general, please contact your [customer service co-ordinator](#) or call the laboratory on 02476 42 12 13.