



National Association for Proficiency Testing

A Non-Profit Organization Dedicated to Excellence in Metrology & Test Measurement

General ILC/PT Participation Instructions

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ELIGIBILITY

Any organization that performs the type of measurements covered in any given NAPT-Sponsored ILC/PT is welcome to participate in that ILC/PT. Although you do not have to be a member of NAPT to participate, we encourage you to consider joining NAPT. Please see our website for more information on membership benefits.

TERMS & CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

In order to participate in a NAPT-Sponsored ILC/PT and as a part of your enrollment, you agree to the following requirements:

- Follow all instructions – failure to do so may result in unsatisfactory performance in the ILC/PT and/or participant being responsible for any damage to the ILC/PT kit(s)
- Assure your laboratory is capable of performing required measurements prior to enrolling in the ILC/PT
- Assure the credibility and validity of your reported data and calculations
- Adhere to the ILC/PT schedule (see section entitled “ILC/PT Schedule/Timeframe”)
- Assure confidentiality of results and do not disclose private information
- Provide additional information/supplementary documentation to Technical Advisors as requested to allow for thorough review of results and the measurement process used
- Understand your obligation to repair/replace ILC/PT artifact(s) damaged while in your possession
- Assure proper protection, packaging and shipping methods to safeguard ILC/PT Kit(s)
- Each lab is responsible for the cost of shipping the ILC/PT kit to the following lab on the schedule
- Participating labs located outside of the USA are responsible for any and all associated international ship costs, to include but not limited to: duties, taxes, tariffs and brokerage fees
- Understand that NAPT is not responsible for inadvertent damage to any measuring equipment used to perform a NAPT-Sponsored ILC/PT
- Promptly inform NAPT of any difficulty in meeting these contractual requirements

Submission of a Request to Participate form and/or the Acceptance Notice, indicates you have read, understand and agree to these terms and conditions



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TRANSFERENCE OF INFORMATION

Throughout the remainder of this document, NAPT refers to the submittal of forms, documents and correspondence. All information that is requested of a participant can be submitted by any one the following means:

- ✓ NAPT Website - www.proficiency.org
- ✓ NAPT E-mail - napt@proficiency.org
- ✓ NAPT Fax # - (305) 425-5728
- ✓ US Mail - 901 Twelve Oaks Center Drive, Suite 920
Wayzata, MN 55391

All correspondence from NAPT is sent by e-mail to the participating company's main contact unless otherwise notified.

Please call NAPT with any questions at (952)303-6126.

HOW TO ENROLL

- Submit a Request to Participate form
- After processing your Request to Participate, NAPT will:
 - Enroll your organization in the selected ILC/PT(s)
 - Invoice your organization for participation, if you have not already paid for enrollment
- Mail your payment to NAPT or call to pay by credit card
 - All enrollments are considered tentative until we receive payment
 - **Reports will not be issued until NAPT has processed the payment**

ILC/PT START DATE – ILC/PT KIT(S) DELIVERY

- NAPT will send you a confirmation indicating your position on the distribution list for the selected ILC/PT(s)
- Wait times are estimated based on the number of participants ahead of you on the distribution list for a given ILC/PT and are an approximation only. **NAPT cannot guarantee a specific start date for any ILC/PT – All participants are dependent on the cooperation of all the previous participants to keep the ILC/PT Kit(s) moving on a timely basis**



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CONFIRMATION OF ABILITY TO PARTICIPATE

- In order to ensure that participants have the technical ability and appropriate reference standards to perform the measurements called out in the ILC/PT(s), you are required to do the following at the time of scheduling the PT artifact(s):
 - Review the specific ILC/PT Instruction Sheet(s) and Data Reporting Sheet(s)
 - Submit written documentation of your ability to participate in the ILC/PT via one of the following:
 - Request to Participate form
 - Acceptance Form (e-mailed to you)
 - E-mail stating that you have reviewed the necessary documents and are accepting the terms of participation for the particular ILC/PT Kit requested
- **If you do not submit the requested documentation shown above prior to receipt of the ILC/PT Kit(s) it will be considered confirmation by you of your laboratory's ability to participate in the ILC/PT and you will assume all responsibility/costs associated with your inability to participate**
- If upon reviewing the specific ILC/PT documents you find that you cannot participate in the ILC/PT in which you are enrolled, you must contact NAPT immediately

RECEIVING THE ILC/PT KIT(S)

- You will receive an ILC/PT Start Notice approximately 2 weeks prior to the expected receipt of the ILC/PT Kit(s) at your facility
- Your PT Start Notification will include:
 - General ILC/PT Participation Instructions
 - ILC/PT Participant Instructions for the specific ILC/PT you are enrolled in
 - Data Reporting Sheet for the specific ILC/PT you are enrolled in
 - Shipping & Receiving form
- Submit the Shipping & Receiving form to NAPT confirming receipt of the ILC/PT kit(s) and package contents when it arrives as well as the condition of the ILC/PT kit
- If you haven't received the ILC/PT kit(s) within two weeks after you receive your PT Start Notice, please let us know so that we can track it down for you
- If the ILC/PT artifact(s) appears to have been damaged during shipment please notify NAPT immediately for instructions



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ILC/PT SCHEDULE/TIMEFRAME

- **Participate (acquire measurements) in the ILC/PT and ship ILC/PT kit(s) to the next participant within 3 days of receiving the ILC/PT kit(s)**
- **Please Note: If the ILC/PT kit remains onsite at your laboratory for more than time allotted, you will be charged a Late Fee of \$125/week**
- **Delays in shipping ILC/PT kit(s) result in longer wait times for other participants and increase the likelihood of delays in issuing your Preliminary Report and Final Report**

PERFORMING THE ILC/PT

- **Read all instructions before beginning the ILC/PT** (All documents necessary for ILC/PT participation are attached to your PT Start Notice and are also available on the NAPT website)
- Failure to follow instructions may result in unsatisfactory performance in the ILC/PT and/or participant being responsible for any damage to the ILC/PT test artifact(s)
- In most cases, you will calibrate/measure the ILC/PT artifact(s) as you normally would, (i.e., use your normal methodology, procedure, equipment, etc.)
- Any special handling/calibration/measuring guidelines will be described in the ILC/PT Participant Instructions
- **Do NOT tamper with or make any adjustments to the ILC/PT artifact(s) – As found measurements only**
- Zeroing an instrument, preloading an artifact, and appropriate/standard cleaning of ILC/PT artifact(s) before and after performing the test are not considered making an adjustment
- Perform the ILC/PT at the required measurements indicated on the Data Reporting Sheet for the ILC/PT you are participating in

DATA REPORTING/UNCERTAINTY REPORTING

- Report reading (or average of readings where appropriate) taken and associated uncertainty for each measurement
- Ensure that your reported values are correlated appropriately (if applicable)
- When an ILC/PT requires correlation of reported data to an indicated nominal value, your result for each measurement description before correlation must be within 3% of that nominal value. If you are not able to achieve a measurement within 3% of the nominal value indicated in the measurement description, do **NOT** report results for that measurement point



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- Report all uncertainties at $K=2$ (coverage factor associated with a 2 sigma, 95.45%, normal distribution conforming to the methodologies presented in ISO Guide to the Expression of Uncertainty in Measurement)
- Your reported uncertainties must represent each measurement taken, NOT a specification of the range or just the uncertainty of the standard(s) used to acquire the measurements
- **Report your results (measurements and associated uncertainties) in the unit of measurement indicated on the Data Reporting Sheet**

SUBMITTING YOUR RESULTS

- **Submit your completed Data Reporting Sheet to NAPT on same day as measurement taken**
- It is your responsibility to completely and accurately report your data
- Data that is not submitted properly must be resubmitted before your Preliminary Report is issued
- Delay in submitting participant data is the primary reason for delays in issuing reports to all participants
- **When an organization needs additional time to compute the associated uncertainty of a measurement, the organization must first report measurement taken to NAPT on date of participation and then can report associated uncertainties of the measurements within 5 days of participation**
- If you do not submit complete results to NAPT within 5 days after performing the ILC/PT:
 - Your participation in that ILC/PT will be cancelled
 - You will not receive any reports
 - No refunds will be issued

SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENTATION

- To assist NAPT with the in-depth technical review of this ILC/PT, we ask that you provide the following supplementary documentation:
 - Copy of your organization's Data Reporting Sheet/Certificate of Calibration/Inspection Report, etc. (what you would normally provide to customers when performing this type of measurement)
 - Uncertainty Budget and procedure associated with measurements made
 - If you did not utilize an industry standard practice, please provide a brief description of the measurement procedure used to perform the ILC/PT
- If a Technical Advisor requests any additional supplementary documentation, you must submit this before your data is analyzed and a Preliminary Report issued



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SHIPPING THE ILC/PT KIT(S)

- **Ship ILC/PT kit as soon as possible after you finish the ILC/PT in order to keep wait times for all participants to a minimum**
- You will be notified where to ship the ILC/PT kit in the ILC/PT Ship Notice that you will receive during your participation
- **Ensure the ILC/PT kit and all package contents listed in the PT Kit Binder as well as the binder itself, are appropriately protected and securely packaged before shipping**
- If ILC/PT kit(s) is not properly packaged you will be responsible for any cost of replacement/repair to the ILC/PT artifact(s) due to damage during shipping
- ILC/PT kits(s) must be shipped 2nd Day Air via UPS or FedEx
- Submit Shipping and Receiving form to NAPT immediately upon shipping the ILC/PT kit(s)
Tracking numbers must be relayed to NAPT on day of shipping ILC/PT kit

GETTING YOUR ILC/PT RESULTS

- Reports will **NOT** be issued unless NAPT has received payment for your participation
- Your Preliminary Report will be issued in PDF format within one week of NAPT receiving your properly submitted ILC/PT results
 - This timeframe only applies to ILC/PTs with an established history—participants in new ILC/PTs will receive reports after an appropriate baseline for comparison has been established
- After you receive your Preliminary Report review your data carefully to make sure it is correct
- **If there are any discrepancies in the Preliminary Report please notify NAPT within 10 days or your results will be considered correct as reported**
- If you need to make any changes to your reported data please submit a revised Data Reporting Sheet **along with detailed documentation explaining why revised data is being submitted**
- Final Reports are issued after the 10 day review period unless NAPT is notified by the participant that the Preliminary Report is satisfactory and early issuance of the Final Report is requested
 - This timeframe for final reports only applies to ILC/PTs with an established history—participants in new ILC/PTs will receive Final Reports after an appropriate baseline for final comparison is established and validated



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UNDERSTANDING YOUR ILC/PT RESULTS

- ILC/PT results include the following data analysis: Participants should read NAPT document “Supplemental to ILC/PT Reports - *A guide for interpretation of reports issued by NAPT* – issued to all participants during participation
- We strongly encourage all participants to understand the purpose of each report – each has a specific purpose and should not be used for other purposes
- Your reported values and associated uncertainties are compared against reference values and uncertainties established using appropriate robust statistical methods prior to issuance of Preliminary Reports and Final Reports
- Initial reference data is provided by approved reference and/or pivot laboratories
- During the course of each ILC/PT, regularly scheduled Technical Reviews are conducted to ensure that your results are being compared to appropriate and accurate reference values
- Reference values and uncertainties are subject to change as an ILC/PT progresses as a result of these ongoing Technical Reviews—your results may therefore differ slightly between issuance of Preliminary and Final Reports
- NAPT Staff and/or Technical Advisors are available to assist in the interpretation of data
- If you are using this evaluation for proof in an accreditation audit, your assessor may review your results and follow up on any corrective action that you take as a result of your performance in the ILC/PT

CONFIDENTIALITY

- Participant anonymity is strictly maintained throughout the ILC/PT and in all reports
- Most NAPT-Sponsored ILC/PTs follow a modified circular distribution in which each participant agrees not to disclose ILC/PT kit shipping or receiving information
- When necessary, we incorporate a star distribution to ensure a higher degree of confidentiality
- If you would like to utilize a star distribution for a NAPT-Sponsored ILC/PT that is following a modified circular distribution, you will be responsible for any associated additional shipping charges
- ILC/PT results and any conclusions based on the outcome of any given ILC/PT may be released to the public with assurance that participant anonymity is maintained



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QUESTIONS/CONCERNS/COMMENTS

NAPT is a nonprofit association formed to help organizations like yours meet their proficiency testing needs. Our mission is to provide you with the best information, tools and service to help improve measurement processes and results through participation in proficiency testing programs.

We greatly appreciate any comments, concerns, questions or suggestions on how we can better serve you. Please submit your comments or questions online (Request for Information form) or send an e-mail to napt@proficiency.org.