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What is ASCLD/LAB?

American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors
Laboratory Accreditation Board

- Non-profit Corporation
- Governed by volunteer full-time Laboratory Managers
- Supported by small professional staff



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How did ASCLD/LAB come to be?

- Established by ASCLD in mid 70s
- Objectives were established
- First laboratories accredited in 1982
- Delegate Assembly formed in 1984
- Bylaws adopted & ASCLD/LAB formed as an independent corporate entity

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ASCLD/LAB Today

- Two accreditation programs
 - Legacy
 - International
- 338 laboratories currently accredited
 - 22 Federal
 - 178 State
 - 104 Local
 - 24 Private
 - 10 International
- 56 labs are accredited under the International Program
- 282 labs are accredited under the Legacy Program.

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ASCLD/LAB Objectives

- Improve the quality of laboratory services
- Develop and maintain criteria to assess performance and strengthen operations
 - Provide independent, impartial and objective operational reviews
- Offer a means of identifying laboratories that meet established standards

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Organization of ASCLD/LAB

Delegate Assembly
comprised of director
of
accredited laboratories and systems
or their designees

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Board of directors is elected to 4-year terms by Delegate Assembly

- Eleven (11) Board members
- Eight (8) from Delegate Assembly membership
- One (1) from public at-large
- One (1) from law enforcement or prosecuting attorneys
- One non-voting ex-officio president of ASCLD.

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Professional Staff

- Executive Director
- Legacy Program Manager
- International Program Manager
 - Quality Manager
- Proficiency Test Manager
 - Business Manager
 - Training Manager
- 3 Administrative Assistants
 - Financial Assistant
- Twelve (12) part-time staff inspectors

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Approximately 500 volunteer inspectors/assessors

- Volunteers are the heart of the program
- Primarily active practitioners in the various accredited disciplines
- Senior or supervisory level personnel
- Selected from accredited laboratories and trained by ASCLD/LAB as inspectors and assessors

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Who/ What does ASCLD/LAB accredit?
Crime/ Forensic Laboratories

Definition of Crime/ Forensic Laboratory

A laboratory
(with at least one full-time scientist)
which examines physical evidence in criminal matters
and provides opinion testimony with respect to such physical evidence in a court of law.

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ASCLD/LAB Accreditation
A voluntary program in which a crime laboratory meets established standards in:

- Management
- Operations
- Personnel
- Equipment
- Physical Plant
 - Security
- Health & Safety

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Legacy Program

The ASCLD/LAB Legacy program consists of statements of **principles**, **basic standards**, **criteria** for evaluation of the standards, and a **discussion**.

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An example . . .

- **Principle** – Management will be more effective when, before initiating any course of action, the objectives are clearly determined, articulated, and understood.
- **Standard** – The laboratory should establish objectives which are relevant to the community that it serves and communicate them to all employees orally and in written form.
- **Criteria** – Does the laboratory have a written statement of its objectives?
- **Discussion** – A written statement of objectives fulfills a need for direction through a careful analysis of what the director and the parent organization believe are the appropriate functions of the laboratory . . .

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ASCLD/LAB currently accredits in nine (9) disciplines

- Controlled Substances
- Toxicology
- Trace Evidence
- Biology
- Latent Prints
- Firearms/Toolmarks
- Questioned Documents
- Digital & Multimedia Evidence
- Crime Scene (optional)

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Does ASCLD/LAB Accredite Only a Part of a Laboratory?

A laboratory must apply for and be accredited in all disciplines in which it conducts examinations.

One exception is that a laboratory has an option to not apply for accreditation in crime scene.

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How does the accreditation process work for interested laboratories?

- Prospective applicants purchase and review a current accreditation manual
- Candidates conduct a self-assessment using the standards in the manual
- Candidates initiate necessary corrective actions, prepare required manuals and document their procedures.

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How does the accreditation process work? . . . continued

- When the candidate laboratory is satisfied that it is prepared, an application including all required documentation is completed and submitted to ASCLD/LAB
- An inspection team captain (generally a staff inspector) is selected by ASCLD/LAB and the application documents are sent to the team captain for review
- The applicant laboratory and the team captain agree upon a date for an on-site inspection
- An inspection team of ASCLD/LAB trained inspectors, of the appropriate size (a minimum of 2 inspectors), is assembled

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How does the accreditation process work? . . . continued

- At the conclusion of the inspection, the team conducts holds a closing meeting with the laboratory to review and summarize the findings.
- A draft report will be prepared by the inspection team captain. The report will be audited and the audited report will be sent to the laboratory director, usually within ten days.
- The laboratory may begin the process of correcting deficiencies noted in the report. If the laboratory takes exception to a finding in the report, it has the option to appeal to the Board.

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How does the accreditation process work? . . . continued

- The laboratory will work with the inspection team captain in determining compliance with the requirements of the program. A supplemental report will be prepared and the Board will make a decision concerning the granting of accreditation.
- Accreditation is granted for a period of five (5) years.

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What are the Requirements for Accreditation?

- There are approximately 140 evaluation standards in the current program
- Some of the standards are only applicable to specific disciplines
- The standards are designated as either Essential, Important or Desirable

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Essential, Important & Desirable

- **Essential Standards** are defined as standards which directly affect and have fundamental impact on the work product of the laboratory or the integrity of the evidence.
- **Important Standards** are defined as standards which are considered to be key indicators of the overall quality of the laboratory but may not directly affect the work product nor the integrity of the evidence.
- **Desirable Standards** are defined as standards which have the least effect on the work product or the integrity of the evidence but which nevertheless enhance the professionalism of the laboratory.

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Compliance Requirements

To become accredited a laboratory must comply with

100% of the Essential criteria,
75% of the Important criteria and
50% of the Desirable criteria

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General Standards
which must be met by examiners in all disciplines include the following:

- Operational and technical procedure manuals
- Quality manual
- Documented training program
- Documentation of chain of custody
- Proper identification and storage of evidence
- Facility security

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General Standards . . . continued

- Examination documentation
- Protection of evidence from loss, cross transfer, contamination and/or deleterious change
- External proficiency testing
- Technical review of the work product
- Monitoring of testimony

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for additional information about crime laboratory accreditation contact . . .

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OR VISIT
www.ascld-lab.org

Thank You !!
