

Date: December 12, 2011

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From: The Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP) Quality Assurance Team (QAT)

Subject: SWAMP Data Classifications for Holding Time Violations - Vote Tally and Updated Definition

Background

After issuing the November 11, 2011 memo *SWAMP Data Classifications for Holding Time Violations*, the QAT contacted SWAMP representatives from each region to discuss their interpretation of the program's data classification policy for holding time violations. The regional representatives supported the interpretation that is loosely based on the data validation rules found in the EPA's National Functional Guidelines.

Because the DMT has followed this same policy in its validation of existing SWAMP data, no changes are required to the permanent side of the program's database. However, in order to avoid further confusion, the following revised definitions will appear in future versions of the *Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program Quality Assurance Program Plan*.

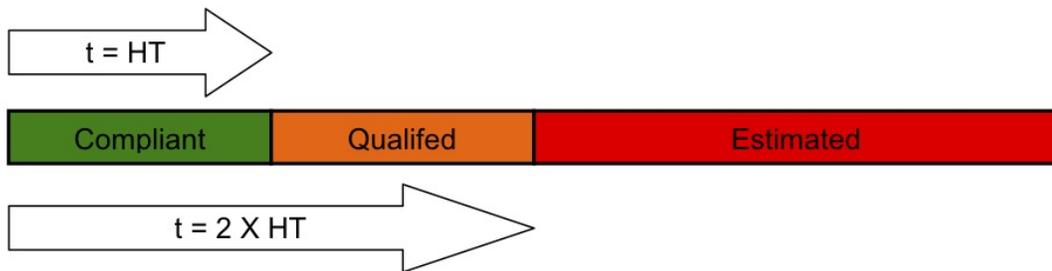
Revised Definitions

In order to determine data classifications, the time period is measured from the start of the process, and not from the point where the holding time expires. For example, when applying classifications based on the collection to analysis holding time, the time period

used to validate the data begins at the time the samples were collected, and not at the time the holding time expires.

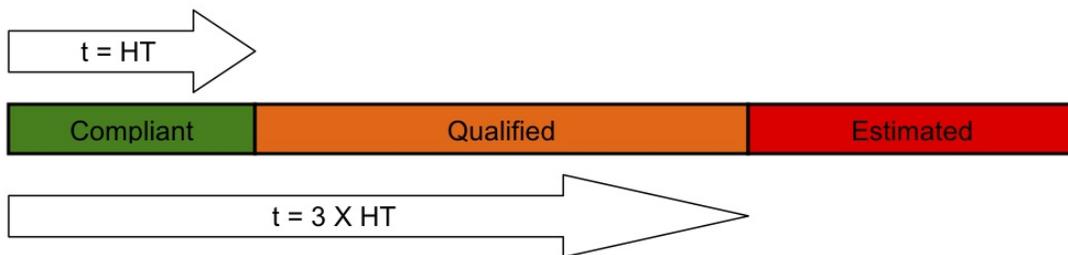
Chemistry Samples:

- Chemistry sample results flagged for holding time violations where the total elapsed time is less than two times the specified holding time will be classified as *Qualified*.
- Chemistry sample results flagged for holding time violations where the total elapsed time is greater than two times the specified holding time will be classified as *Estimated*.



Organic Samples:

- Organic sample results flagged for holding time violations where the total elapsed time is less than three times the specified holding time will be classified as *Qualified*.
- Organic sample results flagged for holding time violations where the total elapsed time is greater than three times the specified holding time will be classified as *Estimated*.



Example

Consider a sample for total phosphorus analysis. This is a chemistry sample, with a 28-day holding time between collection and analysis. Therefore:

- If the sample is analyzed up to 28 days from collection, the result will be classified as *Compliant*.
- If the sample is analyzed 29 to 56 days from collection, the result will be classified as *Qualified*.
- If the sample is analyzed 57 or more days from collection, the result will be classified as *Estimated*.