

The Texas Department of Public Safety Crime Laboratory Service is revising methods used in the analysis of alcohol in biological specimens. Detailed changes are outlined below and will go into effect November 7, 2016. These changes will affect any cases that are completed after November 7, 2016.

1. **Quantitative calculation will be determined using a multipoint calibration curve.** Previously, DPS utilized a single point calibration.
2. **The reported numerical result will be calculated as the average of the two results obtained from the quantitative column used in a headspace gas chromatographic system following two samplings of a biological specimen.** A second column within the instrument will be used to verify the identity of ethanol and other volatiles. Previously, a numerical result was obtained from two separate columns within the headspace gas chromatographic system, and the final result was the average of the four results obtained following two samplings.
3. **Criteria for acceptance of data have been made more stringent. Allowed tolerance between the two numerical results obtained from unknown biological specimens must be within:**
  - a. **+/- 5% for results at or above 0.080 g/100 mL.** Previously, results had to be within 10% for results above 0.100 g/100 mL.
  - b. **+/- 0.004 g/100 mL if one or both results are less than 0.080 g/100 mL.** Previously, results had to be within 0.010 g/100 mL if at least one result was below 0.100 g/100 mL.

The methods follow the guidance published by relevant professional organizations such as Society of Forensic Toxicologists / American Academy of Forensic Sciences (SOFT/AAFS) and Scientific Working Group for Forensic Toxicology (SWGTOX).

The changes are part of the Crime Laboratory Service's commitment to continued scientific improvement and, none were initiated due to a complaint or as a result of a nonconformance with accreditation standards.

The multipoint calibration curve and single column quantitation have been admissible in Texas courts.

In summary, the methods used by the Texas Department of Public Safety to obtain alcohol levels in biological specimens are being modified effective November 7, 2016. The lab reports will look and read the same as previous lab reports. The current alcohol analysis policies are posted publicly along with all other Crime Laboratory Service procedures on the DPS website.

As always, if questions arise when reviewing any test report, the prosecutor is encouraged to contact the scientist who signed the report. The phone number to reach that individual is contained within the letterhead of the report.