



*The ABA Certification Program*

**Procedures Manual for the Certification of  
Construction Materials Testing  
Laboratories**

**January 2015**

## **Foreword**

Around the world, certification has become a definitive requirement for laboratories associated with product testing, public health, medicine, environmental assessments, and construction projects. Certification is necessary in order to ensure that testing is carried out in accordance with the recognized standards. Afghanistan construction sector must own official laboratory certification requirements for material testing laboratories. Even without regulatory and international trade pressures, laboratories should continually seek to become certified in order to demonstrate, in a definitive way, their technical competence. Afghanistan Builders Association is committed to enhance the quality of construction material testing through their Lab Certification Program which will be implemented by Pasaar Consulting Inc.

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## 1 Introduction

The objective of the Afghanistan Builders Association-Lab Certification Program (ABA LCP) is to provide a mechanism for formally recognizing the competency of a testing laboratory to perform specific tests on construction materials. This program is designed for all laboratories including independent private laboratories, manufacturers' in-house laboratories, university laboratories, and governmental laboratories. ABA encourages Afghan construction laboratories to provide feedback on the operation of ABA LCP.

## 2 Scope of ABA Lab Certification Program

ABA will certify laboratories for specific tests on asphalt binders, cutback asphalts, emulsified asphalts, soils, aggregates, Hot Mix Asphalt, cement, concrete, metals, supplementary cementitious materials, steel material and masonry. The specific tests for which ABA grants certification are those included in the scope of the ABA on-site assessment programs for which knowledge, facilities, apparatus and procedures are evaluated. The LCP includes standard methods of testing, practices, specifications, and guides from standard development organizations including AASHTO and ASTM. We are working to recognize laboratories based on ISO/IEC/ANSI in near future.

Certification applies to testing performed within the laboratory accredited and testing performed in the field (on-site). Certification applies to the work performed by technicians named in the certificate of the lab issued by ABA after the successful evaluation of the laboratory whether the test was performed in the certified laboratory or in the field or in another location on behalf of the accredited laboratory.

Certification is permitted to be extended to a temporary facility for up to one year without first undergoing an on-site assessment if the temporary facility is staffed, equipped, and sufficiently controlled by a main facility that is ABA certified for the testing being conducted at the temporary facility. The temporary facility must be implementing the quality management system of the main facility. All work at the temporary facility must be supervised by ABA certified personnel that conform to the requirements of Section 3.4. Temporary facilities include trailers or other structures, and the personnel and equipment associated with them that have been established for a specific project.

The temporary facility's information will be listed under the same ABA certification directory listing of the main facility for up to 12 months. The listing shall indicate the location of the temporary facility, the scope of testing, and the expiration date of the temporary extension of certification.

Any situations that are not described in this manual such as joint venture or other shared responsibility arrangement must be approved by the ABA-LCP.

ABA Certification Program requires a laboratory to comply with the requirements of AASHTO R 18, "*Recommended Practice for Establishing and Implementing a Quality System for Construction Materials Testing Laboratories.*" At the option of the laboratory, by meeting additional requirements, certification can be extended to include recognition of a laboratory's compliance with the following standards:

ASTM C1077 - *Standard Practice for Laboratories Testing Concrete and Concrete Aggregates for Use in Construction and Criteria for Laboratory Evaluation*

ASTM C1093 – *Standard Practice for Certification of Testing Agencies for Unit Masonry*

ASTM C1222 - *Standard Practice for Evaluation of Laboratories Testing Hydraulic Cement*

ASTM D3666 - *Standard Specification for Minimum Requirements for Agencies Testing and Inspecting Bituminous Paving Materials*

ASTM D3740 - *Standard Practice for Minimum Requirements for Agencies Engaged in the Testing and/or Inspection of Soil and Rock as Used in Engineering Design and Construction*

### 3 ABA Certification Program Criteria

#### 3.1 Quality Management System Criteria

The laboratory shall establish, implement, and maintain a quality management system which meets the requirements specified in AASHTO R 18. A laboratory must satisfy additional criteria as listed above in order to be recognized by ABA for complying with ASTM standards C1077, C1093, C1222, D3666, D3740, and E329. Additionally, the laboratory must:

1. Maintain a system for sample retention and documentation,
2. Keep the laboratory records for the past 3 years, and
3. Include a system to rate the laboratory services by clients.

#### 3.2 On-Site Assessment and Quality Management System Evaluation Criteria

The laboratory shall comply with relevant AASHTO and ASTM Materials Requirement Standards on-site assessments and quality management system evaluations. ABA will issue an assessment report noting the compliance or non-compliance of the laboratory with the LCP requirements. Failure to receive applicable on-site assessments will result in revocation of certification. The laboratory shall, within 30 calendar days of the date of issuance of the formal assessment report noting the deficiencies, provide ABA LCP with satisfactory evidence that all deficiencies noted were either corrected or that action has been taken to correct the deficiencies.

#### 3.3 Proficiency Testing Criteria

The laboratory shall participate in all proficiency sample programs required for the test method(s) included in the scope of the laboratory's **certification** (see Table 1). The laboratory shall, within 60 calendar days of the date of issuance of a proficiency sample report, (1) investigate to determine the possible reason(s) for results beyond 2 standard deviations of the grand average (i.e. z-scores greater than 2.0), (2) take action to correct any issues that are uncovered in the investigation, and (3) document and maintain records of the investigation and corrective actions taken.

Consecutive occurrences of either nonparticipation or results beyond 2.5 standard deviations of the grand average (i.e. z-scores greater than 2.5) will result in suspension of accreditation for the applicable test method(s). In order for reinstatement of accreditation for the test method(s) to occur, the laboratory must receive ratings within 2 standard deviations of the grand average on the next regularly scheduled round of proficiency samples or on an extra proficiency sample. Extra proficiency samples are surplus samples that were produced for a regularly scheduled round of testing and are available for purchase by contacting the ABA-LCP.

When available, the ABA-LCP offer extra proficiency sample(s) that allow laboratories that have had their accreditation suspended for proficiency testing issues the opportunity to test sample(s) for reinstatement of accreditation. Test results must be accompanied by a completed corrective action report identifying the probable source of previous low ratings and the changes that have been implemented before performing testing on the extra proficiency sample. The laboratory is responsible for the cost of the extra proficiency sample(s). If the laboratory receives ratings beyond 2 standard deviations on the extra proficiency sample(s), the suspension will remain in effect. If the laboratory receives ratings within 2 standard deviations and the corrective action supplied by the laboratory includes a root cause analysis that has been found to be acceptable, the suspension will be removed. In either case, laboratories must receive satisfactory ratings on the next regularly scheduled round of

proficiency samples to avoid future revocation of accreditation for the affected test method(s). If the laboratory receives ratings beyond 2 standard deviations on two extra proficiency samples, reinstatement can only occur on the next regularly scheduled round of proficiency testing. The fee for the proficiency testing will be covered by the annual fee paid by laboratories to ABA-LCP.

### **3.4 Personnel Qualification Criteria**

The laboratory's personnel shall conform to the qualifications outlined in 3.4.1 through 3.4.5 and must be full-time employees of the laboratory at the location that is certified or is seeking certification. In addition, if the laboratory is certified or is seeking certification for additional ASTM quality standards that require certifications, such as C1077, C1093, D3666, D3740, and E329, valid certifications must be held by the appropriate personnel acting in the specified capacities. At least one person must fulfill the requirements of each position, where relevant. It is possible for an individual to act in multiple capacities, but the laboratory must conform to the requirements for each position unless it is otherwise stated in the individual ASTM standard to which the laboratory is attempting to conform.

#### **3.4.1 Lab Manager**

The Lab manager of inspection or testing services provides direction for the technical activities of the laboratory and is responsible for ensuring that all testing is carried out in a way that complies with the requirements of this document. The person holding this position shall: (1) be a full-time employee of the laboratory, (2) be a civil engineer and have experience in satisfactorily directing testing or inspection services, or both, for the materials covered by the certification, (3) be proficient in reading and writing English, and (4) have at least 3 years of experience in the inspection and testing of construction materials.

It is understood that some tests are frequently conducted at small field or peripheral locations. Therefore, it is not required that the manager be directly present at such locations at all times. If technical direction is provided by a manager who is not present at the physical location of laboratory at all times, the laboratory must provide the ABA-LCP with sufficient evidence that proves that technical direction is being provided on a full-time basis. It is the responsibility of the laboratory to ensure that the evidence is comprehensive. This evidence will be forwarded to the ABA-LCP for review. If the evidence is not found to be acceptable by the ABA-LCP, the laboratory's request for certification will be denied until the laboratory has a manager in place at that location that conforms to the requirements of Section 3.4.1.

#### **3.4.2 Laboratory Supervisor**

The laboratory supervisor is the primary supervisor in the laboratory. This position provides direct oversight to the technical staff and is often responsible for on-site training and evaluation of technicians. The laboratory supervisor shall be a civil engineer and have at least 3 years of experience in the inspection and testing of construction materials.

#### **3.4.3 Supervising Laboratory Technician**

The supervising laboratory technician is the testing technician that also provides direct oversight to the technical laboratory staff and can be responsible for on-site training and evaluation of technicians. The supervising laboratory technician shall be proficient in English to fully understand the ASTM and relevant AASHTO standards, and have at least 3 years of experience in the inspection and testing of construction materials.

#### **3.4.4 Field Technician**

The field technician is the testing technician that also provides direct oversight to the technician staff that operates in the field, but this person is not necessarily required to work in the field all

the time. The field technician shall have at least 3 years of experience in the inspection and testing of highway construction materials.

#### 3.4.5 Technician

The technician maintains appropriate certifications for assigned responsibilities and performs technical duties such as sampling, sample preparation, testing, and recording of results as appropriate. The technician must have at least one year experience in sampling, sample preparation, testing, and recording of results of the tests for which the laboratory applies for certification.

### 3.5 Additional General Criteria

1. The laboratory shall notify ABA-LCP in writing within 30 calendar days of any major change in its quality management system, capability to perform tests for which it is accredited, laboratory ownership, location (see Section 5), managerial personnel, facilities, and any other change which may affect the scope and capability of its certification. If there is a name or ownership change of the laboratory, the laboratory must submit a copy of its new AISA License or other substantiating evidence to ABA-LCP.
2. The laboratory's functional organization shall be consistent with that reported by the laboratory and appear adequate to support their testing capability.
3. Interviews with supervisory and technical staff members responsible for performing tests shall indicate that the documented practices for training and assuring competency are consistent with actual laboratory practice.
4. The laboratory operation shall not be impaired by management problems.
5. The laboratory shall have managerial staff with the authority and resources needed to discharge their duties.
6. The laboratory shall maintain a ratio of supervisory to non-supervisory personnel which ensures adequate supervision.
7. The laboratory shall provide effective separation between neighboring testing areas which are incompatible.
8. The laboratory shall be organized in such a way that confidence in its independence of judgment, integrity, honesty, and impartiality is maintained at all times.
9. The laboratory personnel shall have the necessary education, training, technical knowledge and experience for their assigned functions.
10. The laboratory shall conduct tests and render reports accurately, objectively, and without bias.
11. The laboratory shall use good organization practices and shall take adequate measures to ensure good housekeeping in the laboratory.
12. The laboratory's work load, indicated by their record system, shall be consistent with available equipment, facilities and personnel.
13. The laboratory shall pay all fees charged for services required for certification.
14. For those test methods for which it is seeking certification:
  - a) The laboratory shall maintain facilities (fixed or mobile) for proper control of the laboratory environment.
  - b) The laboratory shall maintain facilities for proper storage, handling and conditioning of test specimens and samples.
  - c) The laboratory shall maintain necessary calibration equipment and reference standards.
  - d) The laboratory shall maintain facilities and equipment conforming to specification requirements necessary for the testing performed.



- e) The laboratory shall have the test areas, energy sources, lighting, heating and ventilation necessary to facilitate performance of tests.
  - f) The laboratory shall have an environment which does not adversely affect test results and shall have facilities for the effective monitoring, control and recording of environmental conditions as appropriate.
  - g) The laboratory personnel shall demonstrate the capability of performing tests according to the current version of test specifications.
  - h) The laboratory shall demonstrate adequate care when recording and processing data and test results.
15. The laboratory shall demonstrate proper techniques for selecting, identifying, handling, conditioning, storing and retaining test samples.

### **3.6 Adding Test Methods to Certification**

If a laboratory wishes to add test methods to the scope of its certification the laboratory should contact the ABA-LCP Program to determine the appropriate course of action.

In some cases, another on-site assessment may not be necessary if another test method that closely resembles the newly requested test method(s) has already been observed during the current tour assessment.

If a laboratory wishes to add ASTM quality management system standards, such as ASTM C1077, D3666, D3740, and E329, to the scope of certification, it shall submit evidence of conformance to the ABA-LCP for review. This addition is permitted to occur without an additional on-site assessment. Applicable fees will be charged for this review.

### **3.7 Confidentiality and Consent to Release Information**

ABA-LCP ensures that all confidential information obtained from laboratories is held in confidence. This includes findings noted in on-site assessments, proficiency sample testing results, and reasons for certification actions. The only laboratory-specific information that can be shared with the public is that which is available in the ABA-LCP's website. Confidential information is not shared with anyone beyond ABA-LCP staff without the written consent of the laboratory. A Consent to Release Information form or acceptance of the terms of the specifier tools on ABA-LCP's website must be submitted by laboratory management before information will be released by ABA-LCP to external sources.

## **4 Certification Process**

### **4.1 Application**

A laboratory desiring information on ABA-LCP on-site assessment, quality management system evaluation, and proficiency sample programs should contact ABA-LCP using the following contact information:

Afghanistan Builders Association  
Karti Char behind Shahzada Shahr wedding hall  
Telephone: +93 786 425886  
Email: [lcp@pasaar.net](mailto:lcp@pasaar.net) and copy to [lcp@aba.af](mailto:lcp@aba.af)  
Website: [www.aba.af](http://www.aba.af)

Laboratories requesting certification must (1) complete a Certification Request Form (CRF) available at ABA-LCP website, [www.aba.af](http://www.aba.af) (2) Sign the Criteria Compliance Form (CCF), and (3) submit an application fee. Arrangements will then be made for the laboratory to receive appropriate ABA-LCP's on-site assessments, and quality management system evaluations.

The applicant laboratory must agree to comply with the requirements for certification and supply any information needed for the evaluation of the laboratory.

Laboratories wishing to expand the scope of their certification to include a new field(s) of testing must include an applicable quality management system evaluation(s) in the scope of their on-site assessment and must submit a deficiency response as described in Section 4.4.4.

Applications for initial certification and requests for certification in new fields of testing which do not satisfy the above requirements will be considered but may require an additional visit to the laboratory before processing can proceed.

## 4.2 On-Site Assessment

The on-site assessment and quality management system evaluation requirements specified by ABA-LCP include a visit by ABA-LCP's laboratory assessors to evaluate the apparatus and procedures used to conduct the physical tests for which the laboratory requested certification and to determine if the laboratory's quality management system implementation activities are consistent with those specified in the laboratory's quality management system manual. Chemical tests for cement are evaluated based on a review of the laboratory's test qualification data as described in AASHTO T 105 and ASTM C114.

The personnel used by the laboratory during the ABA-LCP's on-site assessments shall be representative of the personnel available at that laboratory location during the period between assessments. The temporary acquisition of personnel to enhance the results of the assessment is prohibited. The ABA-LCP Program operate laboratory assessment programs covers all part of the country. Typical ABA-LCP assessment tours take approximately one week for completion.

ABA-LCP generally uses one assessor for soil, aggregate and bituminous materials testing laboratories. However, ABA-LCP may elect to send two or more assessors, at the same time, to laboratories that test soil, aggregate, bituminous materials and other materials as needed. A single ABA-LCP assessor conducts the inspection of cement, concrete, concrete aggregate, masonry testing laboratory and other materials. Therefore more than one assessor could visit a laboratory requesting coverage of all fields of testing included in ABA-LCP. These visits would generally occur at different times. The time required for each visit will vary depending on the number of tests covered and the willingness of the laboratory to assist the assessor.

At the completion of each ABA-LCP's assessment, the assessor holds a briefing conference with the laboratory staff to summarize the findings and point out deficiencies requiring correction (deviations from standard methods of test for which certification is requested or problems with the laboratory's quality management system). The assessor leaves a copy of a preliminary report, signed by the assessor and a laboratory manager, identifying the deficiencies. On returning to the office, the assessor prepares a formal report and sends it to the laboratory.

The laboratory must provide ABA-LCP with satisfactory evidence that all deficiencies noted were either corrected or that action has been taken to correct deficiencies before ABA can grant certification (see Section 4.4.4). In most cases, this evidence will take the form of written documentation. Occasionally, however, because of action or inaction by the management of a laboratory, another visit to the laboratory may be required before granting certification. The laboratory may have to pay an additional fee for this service, if it is required.

A laboratory may obtain additional specific information about the ABA-LCP on-site assessment programs by contacting the ABA-LCP (see Section 4.1 for contact information).

### **4.3 Certification Decisions**

ABA-LCP compiles all necessary information resulting from the on-site assessment(s), quality management system evaluation(s), proficiency testing, and communications from the laboratory which describe steps taken to correct identified deficiencies. The certification decision is made by the certification board of ABA-LCP. All certification decisions are confined to those matters specifically related to the scope of the certification being considered. ABA evaluates a laboratory's certification status; every 12 months after the initial certification; on random and unspecified occasions; and whenever there is evidence to question a laboratory's conformance to certification requirements.

#### **4.3.1 Initial Certification**

ABA certification is initially granted on a test-by-test basis after successful completion of a process which includes submission of an application and payment of fees, on-site assessment and quality management system evaluation of the laboratory, and resolution of identified deficiencies. If a laboratory has a deficiency in a specific test, it may choose to withdraw certification for the test rather than respond to the deficiency. ABA-LCP staff review the documents submitted by the laboratory and prepare a report for review by the Chair of the ABA-LCP. If certification is denied, the laboratory is notified of the reason for the denial and given an opportunity to respond or appeal the decision. If a laboratory satisfies all AASHTO certification criteria, the director of the ABA-LCP approves the laboratory's request for certification, and ABA-LCP prepares a certificate of certification for the signature of the ABA president. The certificate is sent to the laboratory, and the laboratory's information is entered in the ABA-LCP Directory of Certified Laboratories (see Sections 6 and 7).

#### **4.3.2 Annual Certification Review**

The certification status of a laboratory is reviewed annually. The annual certification review determines whether the laboratory has received all applicable on-site assessments and quality management system evaluations. The review also includes an evaluation of updated personnel information. A CCF must be completed and submitted online with supporting documentation during the anniversary month in which the laboratory was first granted certification or during the month that precedes the anniversary month. The laboratory has a total of 60 days from the issuance of the first reminder email to submit the CCF and supporting documentation for review.

The ABA-LCP sends an email to the laboratory's certification and laboratory contacts that instructs them to submit the CCF 30 days prior to the first day of the laboratory's annual review month. Another reminder is sent on the first day of the laboratory's anniversary month if the CCF has not yet been submitted. Once the laboratory submits the documentation, the ABA-LCP staff completes the review to ensure compliance with personnel criteria defined in this document and in any quality management system specifications included in the scope of the laboratory's certification. If the laboratory does not submit the document during the month of their anniversary date, or if a review indicates that the laboratory has not complied with certification requirements, action will be taken to suspend certification in appropriate areas, and the laboratory will be notified of the unresolved criteria. Laboratories will be required to pay the annual fee specified by ABA-LCP.

#### **4.3.3 Random On-Site Assessments and Quality Management System Evaluations of Certified Laboratories**

ABA-LCP will evaluate laboratories randomly to ensure they comply by Certification Criteria. Each on-site assessment and quality management system evaluation of a certified laboratory ensures that laboratories possess the equipment and staff utilized during certification and follows the quality management system. If the assessment indicates that the laboratory has not complied with certification requirements, action will be taken to suspend certification in appropriate areas, and the laboratory will be notified of the unresolved criteria.

#### **4.3.4 Deficiency Resolution Following an On-Site Assessment**

If notified of a deficiency resulting from an on-site assessment, a laboratory must respond to ABA-LCP within 90 calendar days of the issuance of the final report. The response must include a description of the corrective action taken and substantiating evidence, such as records, copies of newly prepared or revised documents, equipment invoices, or photographs. If more than 90 calendar days are needed to resolve a deficiency, the laboratory shall provide ABA-LCP with a written plan for resolving the deficiency including an estimated completion date and any evidence of action taken such as equipment purchase orders. Plans for future resolution of deficiencies will be reviewed and may result in certification being granted, denied, suspended, or revoked. If there is a deficiency that is identified as a repeat issue, a root cause analysis is required as part of the response that addresses the deficiency. If a laboratory does not respond within 90 calendar days of the issuance of the report, or if responses received are inadequate, action will be taken to suspend or deny certification in appropriate areas and the laboratory will be notified of the unresolved criteria. If a laboratory does not resolve a deficiency within 150 calendar days of the issuance of the final report, and desires to maintain its certification, an additional on-site assessment may be required.

#### **4.3.5 Deficiency Resolution Following Notification of Unresolved Criteria**

When notified of unresolved criteria a laboratory is given the opportunity to respond to the conditions specified in the notification. Responses will be reviewed and will result in certification being granted, reinstated, denied, suspended, or revoked.

### **4.4 Appeal Procedure**

A laboratory denied certification or whose certification has been revoked has the right of appeal if it believes it has submitted sufficient information to warrant certification. ABA uses a one-level appeal procedure as documented below. Certification will continue to be denied or revoked throughout the appeals process unless the original decision has been overturned.

#### **4.4.1 Appeal Procedure**

A laboratory makes the appeal by sending explanations and supporting documentation to ABA-LCP. The appeal and supporting documentation must be sent within 30 calendar days from receiving notice of denial or revocation. Upon receipt of an appeal, ABA-LCP prepares a memorandum for the director of the ABA-LCP presenting the appeal and the laboratory's supporting documentation. ABA-LCP sends the memorandum and supporting documentation to the Certification Board of the ABA-LCP which includes the ABA president, the ABA-LCP director, and other representatives for comments and recommendations.

Based on all the comments and recommendations made, the ABA-LCP director prepares an appeal ballot for the voting members of Certification Board requesting that they agree or disagree with the recommendation of the director. Support of at least 2/3 of the voting members of the ABA-LCP is required to uphold the recommendation of the Chair. If the recommendation is not upheld, the opposite position is the ruling of the ABA-LCP.

The laboratory is notified of the decision on its appeal by email, return receipt requested. Decisions are emailed within 15 calendar days from when the decision is made by the ABA-LCP. If the appeal is denied, the notification letter will include the reason for the denial. If the laboratory decides to resolve the issue, the laboratory must provide ABA-LCP with evidence of corrective action taken. If the appeal is granted, the scope of the laboratory's certification is revised to include the additional test(s).

### **4.5 Suspension and Revocation of Certification**

A laboratory may have its entire certification or its certification for specific test methods suspended or revoked if it is found not to conform to ABA-LCP criteria.

#### **4.5.1 Suspension of Certification**

Suspension is a temporary removal of the accredited status of a laboratory when it is found to be out of compliance with the terms of its certification. The action of suspension is not necessarily tied to the annual review process and may occur at any time for cause. Reasons for suspension include, but are not limited to, loss of key personnel, loss of major equipment, damage by fire or flood, changing laboratory location, failure to pay fees, and failure to resolve deficiencies related to the requirements of certification. The director of the ABA-LCP will notify a laboratory of the reasons for and conditions of the suspension, the action(s) required for reinstatement, and the deadline for satisfactorily completing the action. The ABA-LCP directory will show the laboratory's status as suspended.

#### **4.5.2 Revocation of Certification**

A laboratory may have its certification revoked if the laboratory fails to meet program requirements or it is concluded that the deficiencies are too major and/or too numerous to be corrected in a reasonable time frame. Generally, the decision to revoke a laboratory's certification is made by the Chair of the ABA-LCP. However, the ABA-LCP Director may unilaterally revoke certification of a laboratory if the laboratory acts in such a manner as to bring ABA into disrepute, the laboratory makes any statements relative to its certification that ABA considers false or misleading, or is involved in corruption. The laboratory will be notified of the reasons for the revocation. The laboratory may appeal the revocation as outlined in Section 4.5.3.

A laboratory having its certification revoked must return its certificates of certification and cease use of the ABA-LCP logo on its reports, correspondence, or advertising. The ABA-LCP directory will no longer list the revoked laboratory. A revoked laboratory, or a laboratory which voluntarily withdraws its certification, may be required to reapply for certification as if it were a new laboratory and receive new on-site assessments.

#### **4.5.3 Appealing Revocation**

After receipt of a notification of revocation, a laboratory may elect to enter an appeal within 30 calendar days of notification. If a laboratory appeals the decision, the laboratory's certification will remain revoked during the appeals process.

### **4.6 Surveillance On-Site Visits**

At the request of the ABA member, the director of the ABA-LCP can approve surveillance on-site visits to an accredited facility to (1) investigate a history of not correcting previously identified deficiencies, and (2) ensure that changes in the laboratory's quality management system, capability to perform tests for which it is accredited, laboratory ownership, location, management and technical personnel, and equipment and facilities do not affect the laboratory's certification status. If a recommendation is made for a surveillance on-site visit to confirm laboratory compliance with the requirements of the ABA-LCP Program, the laboratory will be notified in writing and will be expected to receive the surveillance visit within the timeframe identified in the notification. These surveillance on-site visits are scheduled with laboratory personnel and will be made at additional cost to the laboratory.

If the laboratory is still found not to comply with the requirements of ABA-LCP during the surveillance on-site assessment, the laboratory's certification will be suspended, and the laboratory will have no more than 30 days to provide evidence that it is in compliance with the requirements of ABA-LCP. If the laboratory does not provide the necessary evidence, the laboratory's certification will be revoked, and the laboratory may be required to reapply for certification.

### **4.7 Reports and Complaints from External Agencies**

If a national or international authority determines that the laboratory is operating in a way that violates the criteria specified in this document, the ABA-LCP will submit the evidence collected by the agency to

the ABA-LCP for a certification decision. The ABA-LCP Program reserves the right to revoke a laboratory's certification for any reason that calls into question the reputation of the certification program.

The laboratory in question will have 7 days to refute any external complaints by submitting a written explanation to ABA before certification action will be taken. The procedures for suspension, revocation, and appeals in Section 4.6 will be followed when a certification action results from an external complaint.

## **5 Laboratory Relocation**

If a laboratory relocates to an address that differs from the location where the most recent ABA-LCP on-site assessment took place, the laboratory must inform ABA-LCP in writing prior to the move date. The ABA-LCP Program will then notify the laboratory that they must submit (1) a new CCF showing the revised address, (2) a description of any personnel changes, including a revised organizational chart, (3) evidence that equipment has been properly calibrated or standardized at the new location if the accuracy of such equipment may have been affected by the move, and (4) evidence of proper environmental controls to ensure that test method requirements are met, where applicable. This documentation must be submitted within 60 days of the laboratory relocation. Once the information is reviewed, a decision will be made about whether a surveillance on-site assessment is required to verify ongoing technical competence.

## **6 Certificate of Certification**

ABA issues a certificate of certification which includes the name and location of the laboratory, and a reference to the ABA-LCP's website address where the laboratory's scope of certification and specific test methods are listed. The official current status of certification is maintained on the ABA-LCP's website. Certificates do not list the expiration date of the certification. The ABA Certification for an individual laboratory does not expire because it is a continual process.

Laboratories receive certificates free of charge upon initial certification. Laboratories requesting an additional copy of a certificate will be charged a \$200 processing fee for each certificate issued.

## **7 Directory of Accredited Laboratories**

ABA maintains a directory of accredited laboratories containing the following information for each laboratory:

- a) Name and location of the laboratory
- b) Contact person at the laboratory
- c) Telephone number
- d) Certification initiation dates
- e) Scope of the certification (list of certified tests)

## **8 Fees**

Laboratories participating in ABA-LCP are charged appropriate fees for on-site assessments according to ABA-LCP's normal billing procedures. In addition, laboratories participating in ABA-LCP will receive an invoice from ABA each year for the annual LCP administrative fee.

**Fee structure**

- a. Annual fee, equivalent to the first time fee. The fee will be charged per test. The range is between USD 2,000 to USD 4,500 depending on the number of tests certified.
- b. Second inspection fee (25 – 40 % of first inspection fee). This fee will be applicable if the lab is inspected for the second time after it was found deficient for the first time. It will be up to USD 500.
- c. Fee for trip to outside Kabul plus lodging and per diem. The lab will need to pay in advance.

**Table. 1- Fields of Testing and On-Site Assessment, Quality Management System Evaluation, and Proficiency Testing Requirements**

<b>Fields of Construction Materials Testing</b>	<b>On-Site Assessment (Including Quality Management System Evaluation) Requirements</b>	<b>Proficiency Testing Requirements Including</b>
Soils (ASTM D3740)	ABA Soils Assessment Including Quality Management System Evaluation	ABA Soils Proficiency Samples
Asphalt Cements/Cutback Asphalts (ASTM D3666)	ABA Asphalt Cements Assessment Including Quality Management System Evaluation	ABA Asphalt Cement Proficiency Samples
Emulsified Asphalts (ASTM D3666)	ABA Emulsified Asphalt Assessment Including Quality Management System Evaluation	ABA Emulsified Asphalt Proficiency Samples
Hot Mix Asphalt (ASTM D3666)	ABA HMA Assessment Including Quality Management System Evaluation	ABA HMA Proficiency Samples
Aggregates (ASTM C1077, D3666)	ABA Aggregate Assessment Including Quality Management System Evaluation	ABA Coarse & Fine Aggregate Proficiency Samples
Concrete (ASTM C1077)	ABA Concrete Assessment Including Quality Management System Evaluation	ABA Concrete Proficiency Samples
Cement (ASTM C1222)	ABA Cement Assessment Including Quality Management System Evaluation	ABA Cement Proficiency Samples
Masonry (ASTM C1093)	ABA Masonry Assessment Including Quality Management System Evaluation	ABA Concrete Masonry Unit Proficiency Samples
Metals	ABA Metals Assessment Including Quality Management System Evaluation	ABA Reinforcing Bar Proficiency Samples
Sprayed Fire-Resistive Materials (SFRM)	ABA SFRM Assessment Including Quality Management System Evaluation	Not Applicable
Supplementary Cementitious Materials	ABA Supplementary Cementitious Materials Assessment Including Quality Management System Evaluation	ABA Pozzolan Proficiency Samples
ABA ISO/IEC 17025 Assessment	Those laboratories seeking recognition for compliance to ISO/IEC 17025 must receive a separate ABA ISO/IEC 17025 Assessment in addition to ABA on-site assessments.	ABA requirements apply