

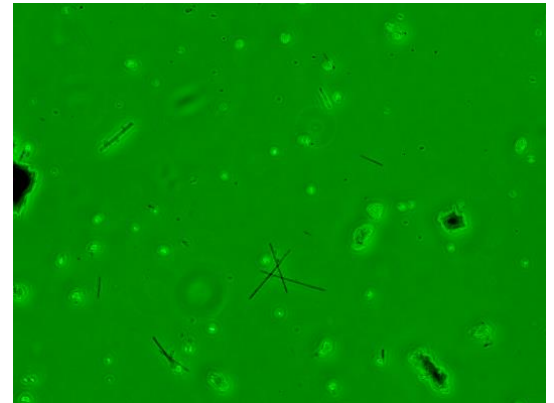
Regular Inter-laboratory Counting Exchange for proficiency testing:



- Suitable for all laboratories involved in the counting of fibres by phase contrast microscopy (PCM);
- Operated by the Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL);
- Scheme includes asbestos and MMMF across a range of fibre densities;
- Independent assessment of measurement quality.

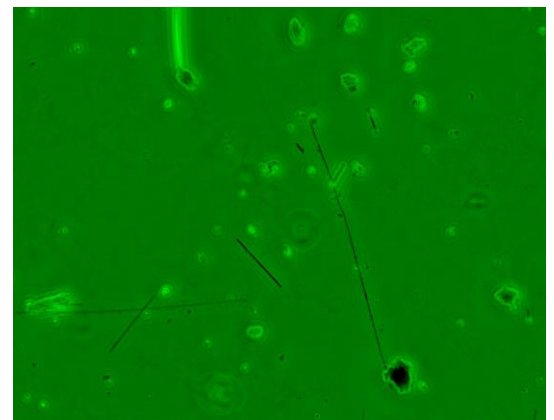
Purpose of RICE

- Promote quality and comparability in the measurement of airborne fibres by PCM;
- Help laboratories monitor and improve the quality of their analytical measurements;
- Enable laboratories to demonstrate competence with respect to measurement and regulatory standards;
- Provide information to participants on technical issues and methodologies related to the measurement of airborne fibres.



Benefits of RICE participation

- Provides laboratories with a mechanism to compare their measurements with others in the industry worldwide;
- Enables laboratories to demonstrate the quality of their results to third parties, e.g. customers, regulators and accreditation bodies;
- Facilitates the monitoring of trends, over time, in the quality of measurements;
- Helps and educates laboratory staff and their customers.





RICE operation

The scheme circulates three rounds per year, with a minimum of 12 slides per round. The exact number of slides is determined by the number of analysts in the laboratory. Each batch of slides includes a small number of “candidate” slides which are not used in the laboratory assessment. The distribution date is detailed on the RICE application form and the HSL PT webpage.

Test materials are a mixture of historical industrial slides and laboratory generated slides using specialist equipment. The aim is to supply slides that reflect typical airborne fibre concentrations in the workplace and during asbestos removal projects (asbestos clearance).

The recommended method for the scheme is PCM and the WHO fibre counting rules (HSG 248; 2005). However, any equivalent or comparable method can be used.

For a comprehensive overview of the scheme please refer to the RICE Information Book for Participants, available to download from HSL website: www.hsl.gov.uk

Reporting

Participant results for RICE are submitted through HSL’s online data entry system. A unique user name, password and web link will be provided on registration.

Participants obtain a “slide” score for each round and a “four round” cumulative score which is used for proficiency assessment. Guidance is given on whether the laboratory score achieved indicates satisfactory or unsatisfactory performance.

Participants’ provisional reports are issued within 7 working days after submitting results. The final certificate is issued approximately 10 working days following the final deadline date.

The scheme is fully confidential as participants only have access to their own results sent to them via email.

For further information contact:

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