



Quality Division Use Only

Quality Tracking #:	2021-024	Classification:	Corrective Action
Non-Conformance Level:	Class III	Section:	Seized Drugs
Date of Discovery:	04/16/21	Date of Incident:	01/01/21

Forensic Case Number(s), if applicable:	Agency Case Number(s), if applicable:
2020-14448 2020-14765 2020-16335 2020-17014	051938420 142804620 158290520 163851720
2020-17087 2020-17562 2020-17798 2020-17803	165416220 168429420 171119820 171790120
2020-17818 2021-18337 2021-18742 2021-18818	172580120 003199421 006263321 008331021
2021-18876 2021-18886 2021-18905 2021-18974	006579421 114537120 008696721 116434120
2021-18981 2021-18988 2021-18991 2021-18993	008693621 008905621 009175821 009180321

Description of Non-conformance:
 The required monthly check for the Seized Drugs balance MT #2 was not performed during the month of January 2021. This was discovered during the section's preparation for the Seized Drugs internal audit.

Additional Information/Follow-Up:
 The Quality Manual requires balances to be performance checked monthly. The section's performance check policy for top-loading balances follows the Quality Manual requirement. The performance checks completed in December 2020 and in February 2021 for MT#2 both passed. In addition, an external calibration check for MT#2 was performed on December 14, 2020. The Quality Division's review of the balance logbook showed that monthly checks were performed since this occurrence and the balance readability for each check weight has been within acceptable ranges.

Actions Taken:
 To identify cases involved, the section manager ran two queries. The first query involved all cases assigned to the analyst in 2020 and showed that all cases were completed by December 31, 2020, and therefore were not affected by the missed balance check for January 2021. The second query showed the cases assigned to the analyst in January 2021 during the month of the missed balance check. This query identified 38 cases that were in progress during the month of January. Of these 38 cases, 20 were identified where balance MT#2 was used. The review of these case files showed that none of the reported weights included uncertainty because none of the values were at a critical weight cutoff.

 Samples in the involved cases were reweighed by the analyst, and the values were documented in the case files. The section manager reviewed the after analysis weight notations and documented the review in each case file.



The after-analysis weights were lower than the reported values, which is to be expected due to the use of a portion of the evidence during testing and the possibility of evaporation of moisture/liquid.

During a section meeting held on June 4, 2021, staff were updated on the status of this nonconformance and were reminded for clarification purposes that the monthly check for top-loading balances is to be performed within the same month as the balance is used.

Summary of Root Cause Analysis:

Note: Incidents are documented for tracking purposes and trend analysis. Root Cause Analysis is not required for incidents.

The root cause of this occurrence was attributed to the disruption of the analyst's normal routine. Due to the pandemic, the Seized Drugs section changed their onsite schedule to alternating weeks. During this period, the analyst was onsite during the following weeks: December 28, 2020-January 1, 2021, January 11-15, 2021, and January 25-29, 2021. The check performed on December 28, 2020 was performed on the first day of the week as is usual for this analyst. The month of January started during the week of this performance check. This occurrence led the analyst to believe that the January check had already been satisfied. A contributing cause to this nonconformance is because this analyst often performs the required weekly checks on both of the analytical balances. Completing the performance check during the week of December 28, 2020 -January 1, 2021 led her to believe that she had satisfied the top-loading balance requirement for the month of January.

Section Manager: James Miller

Date: 06/11/21

Division Director: Amy Castillo

Date: 06/15/21

Incidents or Corrective Actions that involve the Biology/DNA section are reviewed by the Technical Leader and CODIS Administrator.

Technical Leader: N/A

Date: N/A

CODIS Administrator: N/A

Date: N/A

Quality Director: Erika Ziemak

Date Closed: 06/16/21