



Ohio Administrative Code

Rule 3745-4-04 Level 1 data requirements and reporting.

Effective: March 1, 2021

(A) Except as provided by paragraph (D) of rule 3745-4-01 of the Administrative Code, all data submitted to the director for consideration as level 1 credible data shall be collected and submitted by level 1, level 2 or level 3 qualified data collectors (QDCs) approved by the director pursuant to rule 3745-4-03 of the Administrative Code. The director shall accept the data as level 1 credible data provided the requirements of this rule are met. The director shall have sole authority in determining whether data meet these requirements. Data reporting shall be in a format consistent with the requirements listed in this rule.

(B) Data submitted by a QDC shall meet the following to be accepted as level 1 credible data:

(1) Adherence to a study plan. Persons submitting data to Ohio EPA as a QDC under section 6111.53 of the Revised Code shall prepare and adhere to a project study plan.

(a) The QDC shall prepare and submit to the director for approval a project study plan using educational monitoring program guidance materials, citizen monitoring program guidance materials, or other valid resources.

(b) Upon completion of the plan review, the director shall send written notification of deficiencies in the plan, if any are found, to the QDC and provide the QDC a reasonable opportunity to address such deficiencies. If the deficiencies are not addressed, the director may disapprove the study plan.

(c) A plan submitted by a QDC not disapproved within sixty days of the initial submittal or, where a notification of deficiency has been issued, within sixty days of any revised submittal, shall be considered to have been approved.

(d) The director shall disapprove a site-specific plan that does not include the certification statement in paragraph (B)(3)(c) of this rule.



(2) Use of appropriate test methods. In preparing the project study plan, the QDC shall be responsible for selecting the appropriate field and laboratory methods, including quality assurance/quality control steps, that fit the objectives and purpose of the data collection project. All methods should be commensurate with the purposes of level 1 and the need for sufficient rigor and sensitivity to detect relatively large differences in water quality over time or from sampling site to sampling site. The QDC may select from parameters and test methods published by the director pursuant to paragraph (C) of this rule or similar parameters and test methods recommended by an educational or citizen monitoring program or reported in the scientific literature.

(3) Data reporting. QDCs choosing to submit data to Ohio EPA shall submit all collected data. Submission of data may be done at any time, but shall be done no later than one year after completion of the study identified in the project study plan. For ongoing sampling programs, data submission should begin no later than one year after the initial phase of study identified in the project study plan. The following shall be submitted:

(a) Level 1 sample data using the online credible data database, or in a pre-approved format acceptable to the director.

(b) A certification that, to the best of the QDC's knowledge and belief, the data were collected in accordance with the procedures required by the approved project study plan.

(c) A signed statement from each QDC working on the project certifying that the QDC has not been convicted of or pleaded guilty to a violation of section 2911.21 of the Revised Code (criminal trespass) or a substantially similar municipal ordinance within the previous five years.

(4) Data approval process. The director shall review data submissions to verify that they were submitted by a QDC, that appropriate test methods and quality control/quality assurance practices were used, and that the data reporting requirements are complete. The review shall ensure that all components of the plan for the collection of data were followed. If substantial discrepancies are found, the director may decide not to approve the data. The timeframe for submission of data may be extended at the directors discretion for good cause. The director shall maintain a record of all submissions acceptable as level 1 data.



(C) Publication of appropriate test methods.

The director from time to time shall publish examples of appropriate level 1 test methods for commonly sampled parameters. These can be found online at:

https://epa.ohio.gov/dsw/credibledata/parameters_testing_methods.