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PRESS RELEASE

US EPA Re-Certifies AS-EPA Laboratory

The American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency (AS-EPA) is proud to report the re-certification of its new laboratory in the new AS-EPA office in Utulei. According to AS-EPA Director Ameko Pato, "The re-certification of the AS-EPA laboratory is a significant accomplishment for the American Samoa Government and for the people of American Samoa as it is the only USEPA certified lab on island to test the integrity of our drinking water that is produced and distributed by ASPA."

Amy Wagner, USEPA Region 9 Certification Officer, administered an intensive on-site evaluation of the AS-EPA laboratory on April 19, 2013. The on-site evaluation was based on general laboratory practices, analytical methodologies, sample collection, handling, and preservation, quality assurance, record keeping, action response to laboratory results, laboratory personnel, laboratory facility, and data reporting. Also, included in the on-site evaluation is the passing of an on-site audit at least once every three years and the ability to satisfactorily analyze a set of Proficiency Testing (PT) samples annually. This is an important component in order to determine water sample compliance under the Safe Drinking Water Act.

After a long intensive day, Ms. Wagner presented the results to the Director and granted AS-EPA full certification status until 2016. Ms. Wagner commended the lab personnel for their commitment to duty and exemplary service. AS-EPA laboratory personnel that were re-certified and present during the on-site evaluation are: Lab Chief, Josephine Regis and Lab Analysts Ativalu Tago, Joe Kim and Daystar Parker.

AS-EPA has maintained its certification and integrity throughout the years. Lab certification is necessary in order for a lab to produce scientifically valid and legally defensible data, which further ensures that data presented to the public are factual and reliable. On a yearly basis, the AS-EPA water laboratory process an average of 1,600 drinking water samples and nearly 2,200 recreational marine water samples for microbial contamination. Local drinking water samples are tested for Total Coliform bacteria (TC) and Escherchia Coli (EC) bacteria. Certified analysts collect, test, and analyze water samples daily.

In the Director's remarks, "As a public servant, I would like to share this significant accomplishment with the people of American Samoa as these are some of the many services that AS-EPA provides in order to protect public health and the quality of life in American Samoa." For more information about the AS-EPA Laboratory, please call 633-2304.