

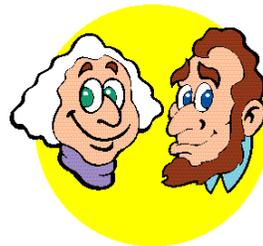
The Penetrant Professor from Met-L-Chek®



AMS 2647

Committee K work has continued on revisions to [AMS 2647](#) via convenient and fairly frequent telephone conferences. The last such conference was held on January 17, and it was the usual two hour meeting. Since this specification is mostly a user specification, there were only a few inputs from Met-L-Chek®. However, we assisted in correcting wording that referred to penetrants as methods A, B, etc., when the specification really referred to the removal method. We also were able to remove [ASTM D 95](#) as a reference document, thus helping to remove a problem that has come up from time to time regarding the analytical method used to determine water content. The revised [AMS 2647](#) document will reference [ASTM E-1417](#), as it presently does, but will delete the specific reference to [ASTM D-95](#). This is because [ASTM D -95](#) is already referenced in [ASTM E-1417](#), along with the Karl Fischer method. [AMS 2647](#) will reference [ASTM E-1417](#) as the source of the

approved analytical methods for water content. This should eliminate some inadvertent confusion concerning the approved analytical methods.



AUDITS

Many years ago, the government inspectors in the Los Angeles area had a system based on the belief that all contractors to the government were intent on cheating the government, and that it was the mission of the inspectors to discover how the cheating was being done. It was a situation where the inspectors were the adversaries of the contractors and worked against them. This system monitored the inspectors closely, and rewarded those who consistently wrote up the contractors. Inspectors who found more items to write up, ranked higher in the boss'

estimation than those who did not. Unfortunately, this is not an uncommon situation in our society. In the case of the government inspectors, the primary mission was to insure that the government received the product that had been ordered, that the correct amount was delivered, that the packaging and marking was correct, etc. But the mission became corrupted by a secondary mission that was entirely unrelated to the primary mission. This secondary mission was to perform in such a way as to meet the expectation that there were lots of things to complain about and to write the company up no matter how minuscule the issue.



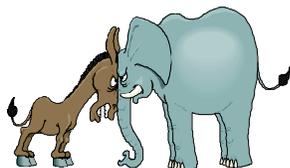
Sometime after this situation, the government had a change of heart and decided to work with contractors instead of against them. The change was dramatic, in that both the inspector and the contractor had the same goal, which was to insure that the government got what it was

Feb 2008

supposed to get, in terms of quantity, quality, etc. If small deficiencies were found, such as a missing certification for the adhesive on a label, instead of writing the contractor up, the inspector would allow the contractor to phone for the certification, thus saving time, effort, and often the return of the inspector for a second inspection. To say the least, the arrival of the inspector was no longer a dreaded event, but one in which both parties met with the same objective.



Recently we have heard troubling stories concerning auditors in the NDT field, in which the auditors apparently have the same attitude that the government inspectors used to have, i.e., that the auditor was to assume that the contractor was deficient, and that it was his job to locate where this was. It was the auditor versus the contractor, and the more deficiencies that the auditor found, the better he or she was ranked. These stories have reported that inspectors have voiced bias against some manufacturer's products, even alleging that certain suppliers products are not qualified, when, in fact they are. We have also heard that like the government inspectors



mentioned above, those inspectors who find lots of things to write up are rewarded, and that those who do not find enough have their results overridden by supervisors who change conforming grades to non conforming grades. These purported actions are separate and distinct from also reported circumstances where the auditor exercises his power to demand fancy meals, etc., although we have never heard of a report where the auditor asked for a bribe.

To the extent that these hearsay reports may be true, it is really a black eye on the auditing process. In our opinion, an NDT audit has the primary purpose of insuring that the inspection process is performed according to the customer's requirements, and that the proper records are kept to verify this. If this primary intent is subverted by secondary requirements to generate non-conforming paperwork, it is a disservice to both the customer and the company under audit. The only benefactor is the auditor or auditing company, who reap the benefits of either money or "ataboys", for write ups that are meaningless in the scheme of the intent of the audit.

In our opinion, the government inspectors "got it right" when they decided that it was better, more cost efficient, and more logical to work with the contractor instead of working against him. We do not know whether present auditors are tasked to work against or with the contractors, but the gossip that we have heard

indicates that at least some auditors appear to pride themselves as being against the contractor. It would seem to be far better to adopt more of a team attitude. We share what we hear with the NDT community to encourage others to bring to light questionable audit behavior and practice if not policy.

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PROFESSOR
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DEVELOPER STUDIES

In the last issue of the PENETRANT PROFESSOR, we hinted that the research work on developers being conducted at Iowa State University might result in a published paper in MATERIALS EVALUATION sometime this Summer. In the meantime, however, a portion of the work has been published in the January 2008 edition of TNT, The NDT Technician. This should make interesting reading for anyone who is involved in production line penetrant testing, and we highly recommend it.

The Penetrant Professor