

TECHNICAL BULLETIN

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SUBJECT: Sample Size

On occasion, laboratories have reported receiving samples of insufficient sizes from us. When this occurs, the laboratories either fail to report results or they add disclaimers to their results indicating that sample sizes were insufficient. While we do not want to damage building materials needlessly by procuring overly large samples, we need to make sure we are taking adequate samples of all suspect materials.

It appears that most inadequately sized samples have been obtained during procurement of floor tile mastic. At times, mastic does not adhere well to the floor tile sample leaving the tile sample with either no mastic present or nothing more than a stain of associated mastic. When this occurs, surveyors should scrape additional mastic from the substrate and place in a separate sample vial to eliminate confusion.

Inadequate sample sizes often cause us to: revisit the site to procure additional samples; add caveats to our bulk sample records regarding need for additional samples and analyses; or even question validity of results. Conversely, proper sample sizes usually provide us an opportunity to rectify quality control sample inconsistencies since there are sufficient quantities of materials left to reanalyze.

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