Data Validation Criteria for Water Quality Parameters Measured in the Field

Quality Level	Quality Assurance Plan	Water Temperature Methods	pH Methods	Dissolved Oxygen Methods	Turbidity Methods	Conductivity Methods	Bacteria Methods	Data Uses
A+	DEQ QAPP approved by DEQ QA Officer	Thermometer Accuracy checked with NIST standards A ≤ ± 0.5°C P ≤ ± 0.5°C	Calibrated pH electrode A ≤ ± 0.2 S.U. P ≤ ± 0.3 S.U.	Winkler titration or calibrated Oxygen meter A ≤ ± 0.2 mgL^{-1} P ≤ ± 0.3 mgL^{-1}	Nephelometric Turbidity meter A ≤ ± 5% Standard value P ≤ ± 5% (± 1 NTU if NTU < 20)	Meter with temp correction to 25°C A ≤ ± 7% of standard value P ≤ ± 10%	DEQ Approved Methods Absolute difference between log-transformed values P ≤ 0.6 log	Regulatory, permitting, compliance (e.g., 303(d) and 305(b) assessments)
A	External QAPP	External Data Thermometer Accuracy checked with NIST standards A ≤ ± 0.5°C P ≤ ± 0.5°C	External Data Calibrated pH electrode A ≤ ± 0.2 S.U. P ≤ ± 0.3 S.U.	External Data Winkler titration or calibrated Oxygen meter A ≤ ± 0.2 mgL^{-1} P ≤ ± 0.3 mgL^{-1}	External Data Nephelometric Turbidity meter A ≤ ± 5% Standard value P ≤ ± 5% (± 1 NTU if NTU <20)	External Data Meter with temp correction to 25°C A ≤ ± 7% of standard value P ≤ ± 10%	External Data DEQ Approved Methods Absolute difference between log-transformed values P ≤ 0.6 log	Regulatory, permitting, compliance (e.g., 303(d) and 305(b) assessments)
B	Minimum Data Acceptance Criteria Met	Thermometer Accuracy checked with NIST standards A ≤ ± 1.0°C P ≤ ± 2.0°C	Any Method A ≤ ± 0.5 S.U. P ≤ ± 0.5 S.U.	Winkler titration or calibrated Oxygen meter A ≤ ± 1 mgL^{-1} P ≤ ± 1 mgL^{-1}	Any Method A ≤ ± 30% P ≤ ± 30%	Meter with temp correction to 25°C A ≤ ± 10% of standard value P ≤ ± 15%	DEQ Approved Methods Absolute difference between log-transformed values P ≤ 0.8 log	Regulatory, permitting, compliance (e.g., 303(d) and 305(b) assessments) with professional judgment
C		A > ± 1.0ºC P > ± 2.0°C	A > ± 0.5 S.U. P > ± 0.5 S.U.	A > ± 2 mgL^{-1} P > ± 2 mgL^{-1}	A > 30% P > 30%	A > ± 10% P > ± 15%	Absolute difference between log-transformed values P > 0.8 log	Void data. Not used for 303(d) and 305(b) assessments
D		Missing Data	Missing Data	Missing Data	Missing Data	Missing Data	Missing Data	Missing Data
E	No QAPP provided	No Precision Checks	Any Method No Precision Checks	Any Method No Precision Checks or A ≤ ± 2 mgL^{-1} P ≤ ± 2 mgL^{-1}	Any Method No precision checks	Meter without routine calibration No precision checks	Any Method No precision checks	Informational purposes only
F	See accompanying notes							

Data Validation Criteria for Water Quality Parameters Measured in the Field

Notes:

QA definitions of Data Quality Levels

A+ – Data of known Quality; collected by DEQ; meets QC limits established in the QAPP.
A – Data of known Quality; submitted by entities outside of DEQ; meets QC limits established in a *DEQ-approved* QAPP.
B – Data of known *but lesser* Quality; data may not meet established QC but is within marginal acceptance criteria; or data value may be accurate, however controls used to measure Data Quality Objective elements failed (e.g., batch failed to meet blank QC limit); the data may be useful in limited situations or in supporting other, higher quality data. **Note:** Statistics for **turbidity, conductivity,** and **bacteria** are concentration-dependent; thus low-concentration B level data may be considered acceptable for all uses.
C – Data of unacceptable Quality; data are typically discarded (Void) in response to analytical failure. **Note:** There may be rare instances where there may be field data that may still meet DQOs as determined by the Project Officer. In these cases a result should be entered instead of "Void" however the grade must remain at C. There must also be a comment in the final report that explains the qualification.
D – Incomplete data; no sample collected or no reportable results, typically due to sampling failure.
E – Data of unknown quality or known to be of poor quality; no QA information is available, data could be valid, however, no evidence is available to prove either way. Data is provided for Educational Use Only.
F – Exceptional Event; "A" quality data (data is of known quality), but not representative of sampling conditions as required by the project plan.(e.g., a continuous water quality monitor intended to collect background environmental conditions collects a sample impacted by a fire that created anomalous conditions to the environment).

Data Quality Level Grading Criteria:

A = Accuracy as determined by comparison with standards, e.g., during equipment calibration or pre- and post-deployment checks

P = Precision as determined by replicate measurements, e.g., during field duplicates, field audits, or split samples