

NOTICES

Minimum Levels of Controlled Substances or Their Metabolites in Blood to Establish Presence of Controlled Substance

[41 Pa.B. 2295]

[Saturday, April 30, 2011]

Under 75 Pa.C.S. § 1547(c)(4) (relating to chemical testing to determine amount of alcohol or controlled substance), as amended by the act of September 30, 2003 (P. L. 120, No. 24), the Department of Health (Department) is publishing a notice of the minimum levels of Schedule I, II and III controlled substances or their metabolites that must be present in a person's blood for the test results to be admissible in a prosecution for a violation of 75 Pa.C.S. § 1543(b)(1.1), § 3802(d)(1), (2) or (3) or § 3808(a)(2) (relating to driving while operating privilege is suspended or revoked; driving under influence of alcohol or controlled substance; and illegally operating a motor vehicle not equipped with ignition interlock).

Although there are hundreds of controlled substances in Schedules I, II and III, quantitation limits are listed only for commonly abused controlled substances for which testing procedures are readily available. The minimum quantitation limits listed for each drug or metabolite are the lowest concentrations that one or more of the laboratories in the Department's approval program for facilities offering these testing services specified they can reliably determine.

The limit of quantitation (LOQ) for any laboratory will depend on the equipment and procedure employed for confirmatory testing. Laboratories approved by the Department to test blood for controlled substances or their metabolites will have LOQs at or above the minimum quantitation limits listed in this notice.

Clinical laboratories that operate in this Commonwealth and that perform analyses of blood to determine controlled substance content must be approved by the Department in accordance with 28 Pa. Code § 5.50 (relating to approval to provide special analytical services) and be listed in notices published twice annually in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*. The approval process requires laboratories to demonstrate an acceptable level of proficiency in determining the presence of controlled substances or their metabolites in their blood.

This testing is a two-step process. The first step involves the screening of blood using a relatively rapid and inexpensive technique to presumptively determine which specimens may contain the substance or a metabolite of the substance for which the blood is screened. The second step utilizes a more sensitive and specific procedure to substantiate the presence and concentration of the substance or its metabolite that was presumptively detected in the initial screening procedure.

Confirmatory analyses employed to substantiate the presence of a drug or drug metabolite generally focus on identifying and quantitatively determining the concentration of the parent drug or a primary metabolite if extensive biotransformation occurs. The detection limits listed were developed by reviewing the minimum reportable concentrations for confirmatory analyses that laboratories in the Department's approval program specified they could measure. The concentrations listed are the lowest levels that any of the laboratories approved by the Department to test blood for controlled substance content specify they can reliably determine.

The list contains only those substances that are included in the Department's proficiency testing program designed to provide assurance that laboratories approved to test blood for controlled substance content can reliably identify and measure the concentrations of drugs and their metabolites in blood. The Department will publish superseding revisions of this notice approximately every 2 years or as the need otherwise arises.

Persons with a disability who require an alternative format for this notice (for example, large print, audiotape or Braille) should contact Dr. M. Jeffery Shoemaker, Director of the Division of Chemistry and Toxicology of the Bureau of Laboratories, at (610) 280-3464, for speech and/or hearing impaired persons V/TT (717) 783-6154, or by using the Pennsylvania AT&T Relay Service at (800) 654-5984 (TT).

Class	Substance	Minimum Quantitation Limits	
		Schedule	(nanograms/milliliter)
<i>Amphetamines</i>			
	Amphetamine	II	5
	Methamphetamine	II	5
<i>Analgesics</i>			
	Methadone	II	20
<i>Cannabinoids</i>			
	Delta-9-carboxy THC*	I	1
<i>Cocaine</i>			
	Cocaine	II	5
	Benzoyllecgonine	II	5
<i>Hallucinogens</i>			
	Phencyclidine	II	1
<i>Opiates</i>			
	Codeine	II	5
	Hydrocodone	II	5
	Hydromorphone	II	2.5
	6-Monoacetylmorphine	II	2.5
	Morphine	II	5
	Oxycodone	II	5
<i>Sedatives/Hypnotics</i>			
	Amobarbital	II	40
	Pentobarbital	II	40
	Secobarbital	II	40

*THC = tetrahydrocannabinol

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