

How to understand the product testing database

When you explore this data, keep in mind that it has limitations. Test methods can only quantify the amount of chemical in a product sample down to a certain level - called the “reporting limit.” The reporting limit varies based on the instrument used, analysis methods, and other factors. The lab uses letter codes to communicate the results.

The **Analysis Value** column contains information about the amount detected, but it does not necessarily mean the chemical was found in the sample. To understand the number in this column, we must first understand the qualifier codes.

The **Qualifier** code column tells us how to read the **Analysis Value** column. For example, U means the chemical was not found in the sample above the reporting limit. See Table 1 for a full list of codes in the database. Figure 1 shows an example of what you might find in the database and what it means.

Table 1: Codes used in Ecology’s product testing database

Qualifier Code	Description
E	The chemical was found, but there is some uncertainty about the reported amount because the instrument was not calibrated with a high enough standard.
J	The chemical was found in the sample but there is some uncertainty about the reported amount. The uncertainty could be due to a range of factors, most often because one or more of the quality control tests were outside of acceptable limits.
N	There is some uncertainty regarding the identification of the chemical found but the amount reported is accurate.
NJ	There is some uncertainty regarding both the identification of and amount of the chemical. These results should be used with caution.
U	The chemical was not found in the sample above the reporting limit. The amount shown in the Analysis Value is the reporting limit.
UJ	The chemical was not found in the sample above the reporting limit. This limit has some uncertainty to it.
(blank)	The absence of a code means the chemical was found in the amount shown without errors or concerns.

Figure 1. Using qualifier codes to understand the Analysis Value

Analysis Value ↕	Qualifier
0.18 ppm	
0.49 ppm	U

In the first row, the chemical was found in the sample at 0.18 parts per million (ppm). Because there is no qualifier code, we can be certain of this result.

In the second row, the qualifier code U tells us the chemical was not detected above the reporting limit (the minimum amount we can confidently detect). The chemical may or not be present in the sample, but we were unable to find it at the minimum detectable level. With a U code, the amount listed is the reporting limit, not the amount of a chemical in a sample.

In the **DETAIL** column, click **VIEW** to see more information about each test result.

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Product Testing Data

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Detail	Chemical ↕	Product Description ↕	Component Description	Component Material	Brand	Store	Analysis Value ↕	Qualifier	Analysis Method	Extraction Method	
View	Antimony	7440-36-0	Old ID: OT012-a00, Sheriff Badges	Old ID: OT012-c01, silver metal badge	Historical Record - material was not recorded	Oriental Trading	Oriental Trading	6.23 ppm		EPA200.8	SW3052

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Made In Country Name	Manufactured Date	Manufacturer(s)	Distributor(s)	Importer(s)
CHINA		Historical record - business name was not recorded		

Exposure	Minimum Age	Maximum Age
Short contact (<1hr)	3 years	

Brake Edge Code	Brake Compliance Code	Brake Vehicle Make Name	Brake Vehicle Model Name	Brake Vehicle Year Date

Component Details

Product Description	Component Description	Component Material Name	Duplicate Quantity	Composite Of Components	Processing Method Code	Processing Method Description
Old ID: OT012-a00, Sheriff Badges	Old ID: OT012-c01, silver metal badge	Historical Record - material was not recorded	1		UNKNOWN	Unknown method - only for historic data where the method can't be determined.

Sent To Lab Date	Returned By Lab Date	Collected for Study	QAAP
		Metals and Phthalates in Tier 3 Children's Products	Phthalates and Metals in Tier 3 Children's Products

These reports can provide more context for what the results mean. We continue to post new reports on our website, when available.