



# Minerals and Metals Sector *Update*

---

## MMS Scientists Help Reduce Vulnerability From Terrorist Attacks

---

Arising from its long-standing interest in the effects of explosives, the Canadian Explosives Research Laboratory (CERL) in the Minerals and Metals Sector has developed, over the last few years, considerable expertise in the protection of civilian infrastructure against explosive blasts. This expertise is increasingly in demand in today's security-conscious environment. This work is aimed at protecting people and facilities from the effects of deliberate or accidental explosions.

For example, working in close partnership with Public Works and Government Services Canada, CERL has developed a software-based screening tool that allows the blast vulnerability of government buildings to be rapidly evaluated, which will permit better prioritization of spending on building retrofits. The laboratory produced guidelines for the use of protective film to harden windows, as well as a review of strategies for the protection of government assets against explosions. CERL also carried out, on behalf of other government departments and the private sector, several detailed blast vulnerability assessments on a wide range of structures from heritage buildings in downtown Ottawa to airport facilities. In partnership with the Energy Infrastructure Protection Division of Natural Resources Canada and under the U.S.-Canada Smart Border initiative, CERL is helping reduce the blast vulnerability of vital cross-border energy infrastructure such as oil and gas pipelines and hydro-electric generating stations.

For more information on CERL, visit [www.nrcan.gc.ca/mms/cerl](http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/mms/cerl).

**Contact: Ettore Contestabile, 613-995-1363**  
[econtest@nrcan.gc.ca](mailto:econtest@nrcan.gc.ca)

---

## Proficiency Testing of Mineral Analysis Laboratories

---

Investors, amongst others, rely on laboratory results to assess the value of mineral deposits that have an impact on the potential growth and value of mining companies. But what if the results are not reliable? Concerns reached a peak in 1996 with the Bre-X incident of salting of core samples. In order to address international quality concerns, the Standards Council of Canada requested that Natural Resources Canada establish a Proficiency Testing Program for mineral analysis laboratories (PTP-MAL) to provide laboratories with the opportunity to get an independent assessment of their performance.

Twice per year, the CANMET Mining and Mineral Sciences Laboratories (MMSL) prepare samples for assessment by interested laboratories from around the world who feed the results of their analyses on these samples back to MMSL. The results are then statistically analyzed and participants receive a confidential report with the assessment of their analyses and a certificate of proficiency, if merited. Participation in PTP-MAL is actually obligatory for a laboratory to be accredited to ISO/IEC 17025. Approximately 45 laboratories worldwide participate in the program. The next assessment is scheduled to run in the fall of 2004.

For more information on this program, visit [www.nrcan.gc.ca/mms/canmet-mtb/mmsl-lmsm/ccrmp/ptp/visitors.htm](http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/mms/canmet-mtb/mmsl-lmsm/ccrmp/ptp/visitors.htm).

**Contact: Maureen Leaver, 613-992-1055**  
[mleaver@nrcan.gc.ca](mailto:mleaver@nrcan.gc.ca)

---

**M M S** • Contributing Knowledge and Expertise

---

Minerals and Metals Sector  
Natural Resources Canada  
580 Booth Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0E4  
Canada

E-mail: [info-mms@nrcan.gc.ca](mailto:info-mms@nrcan.gc.ca)  
Fax: (613) 952-7501

[www.nrcan.gc.ca/mms](http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/mms)

---