

September 14, 2005

MEMORANDUM FOR NVLAP Laboratories and Assessors

From: Warren R. Merkel
Chief, Laboratory Accreditation Program

Subject: NVLAP Transition to New Accreditation Requirements (ISO/IEC 17025:2005)

In May 2005, ISO published the revised standard ISO/IEC 17025:2005, *General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories*. The international laboratory accreditation community has adopted the 2005 version and has agreed to a two-year transition period to move from the requirements of the current (1999) version to the requirements of the 2005 version.

The purpose of this memorandum is to announce the transition plan and timeline that NVLAP will use to implement the requirements of the new edition of ISO/IEC 17025. Since the first edition of ISO/IEC 17025 referred to ISO 9001:1994 and ISO 9002:1994, which have been superseded by ISO 9001:2000, the second edition of ISO/IEC 17025 was written to align ISO/IEC 17025 with ISO 9001:2000. In the second edition, clauses have been amended or added only when considered necessary for alignment.

NVLAP accreditation requirements, which include clauses 4 and 5 of ISO/IEC 17025, are published in NIST Handbook 150, *NVLAP Procedures and General Requirements*, clauses 4 and 5 and annexes A and B. NIST Handbook 150 is undergoing revision to incorporate the new edition of ISO/IEC 17025 and will be released in the near future.

In the meantime, NVLAP is making information about the new requirements available to you, so that you may prepare for the transition. Accordingly, we are sending to you the attached 2005 edition of the NIST Handbook 150 Checklist (formerly called the "General Operations Checklist"). The checklist has been annotated to identify new or changed requirements that are considered significant; minor changes in terminology have not been annotated. To download an electronic version of the checklist, please visit the Assessor Resources page of the NVLAP web site <www.nist.gov/nvlap>, where this document is available in both Adobe PDF and Microsoft Word formats.

To assist you with identifying and understanding the requirement changes in ISO/IEC 17025, we have attached a summary document entitled "Changes to ISO/IEC 17025." This summary is available in electronic format on the NVLAP web site.

The NVLAP transition plan is as follows:

- Beginning November 1, 2005, all NVLAP on-site assessments, including those of initial applicant laboratories, will be conducted using the new NIST Handbook 150 Checklist.
- Currently accredited laboratories that are assessed on or after November 1, 2005, and before May 15, 2006, will have until June 15, 2006, to resolve nonconformities to the new requirements. Nonconformities reported against current requirements must be resolved within the normal 30-day time frame after an assessment.
- Currently accredited laboratories that are assessed on or after May 15, 2006, will have 30 days to resolve nonconformities to both current and new requirements.

When a laboratory has been assessed and found fully compliant with the new NVLAP requirements, it will be issued a Certificate and Scope of Accreditation to ISO/IEC 17025:2005. In accordance with the Joint ISO-ILAC-IAF Communiqué dated 18 June 2005 (attached), a statement similar to the following will appear on each new certificate to say that an accredited laboratory's management system meets the principles of ISO 9001:2000:

"This laboratory is accredited in accordance with the recognized International Standard ISO/IEC 17025:2005. This accreditation demonstrates technical competence for a defined scope and the operation of a laboratory quality management system (refer joint ISO-ILAC-IAF Communiqué dated 18 June 2005)."

Additionally, NVLAP program-specific handbooks are being revised to update all references to applicable international guides and standards and are being reformatted to match the structure of the soon-to-be-released NIST Handbook 150:2005. The first group of program-specific handbooks (Acoustical Testing, Common Criteria Testing, Construction Materials Testing, and Ionizing Radiation Dosimetry) are scheduled to be posted on the NVLAP web site by October 1, 2005.

Please contact your assigned NVLAP Program Manager if you have any questions about the revised standard or the schedule for its implementation.

Attachments