

August 12, 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR State Directors  
State Metrologists (including GIPSA/USDA, LA County)

From: Georgia L. Harris  
Weights & Measures Division  
Laboratory Metrology Group Leader

Subject: **Annual Submission for 2009 and 2009-2010 NIST Laboratory Recognition**

The following information is provided to assist you in preparing for the 2009 and 2009-2010 review cycles. It is preferred that all items be submitted electronically in any format except e-mail: CD, DVD, floppy disk, Zip disk, or even USB sticks are all acceptable formats. Please put the laboratory name (two-digit state codes) and date in all file names that you submit as well as on any forms you complete. E.g., "Appendix B.doc" could be "XX Appendix B 08.doc." As a reminder: we do *not* track items submitted by e-mail.

### **Review Cycle and Deadlines**

In order to maintain or obtain NIST/OWM Recognition for your laboratory, you must submit materials each year between October 1 and November 15. The due date is November 15 each year. We will consider items post-marked by the deadline to be compliant.

Materials that are not submitted on time may not be reviewed prior to the expiration of your current Recognition certificate. We will make no commitments of timely reviews for late submissions. Items that are significantly late may not be reviewed until the next review cycle.

### **Table 1 – Items to Submit**

Review the attached Table 1 for items that need to be submitted by all laboratories. If you have a certificate that expires in 2008, you do not have a current certificate, or your current certificate is conditional, you will need to submit everything on the list as well as an update related to the reasons for the conditional status. Modifications were made to Table 1 during the most recent update to Handbook 143 in 2007. You may complete a self-assessment using the table and submit it with your assessment.

Detailed descriptions of the information on Table 1 can be found in NIST Handbook 143, Program Handbook, 2007 edition, (available on line: <http://www.nist.gov/labmetrology>, State Laboratory Program.) Blank forms can be downloaded in Word format from the site listed above. See exceptions for laboratories with 2-year certificates that do not expire this year.

Laboratories with *current* 2-year certificates that do not expire this year (i.e., 2008-2009) must submit:

- Appendix B (application)
- Updated Uncertainty tables to include Precision assessment ( $P_n$ ) (for mass as a minimum)
- Proficiency Testing Follow-up Forms
- Updated Training & Succession Plan Assessment (reviewed and updated from 2008 based on training at the 2008 RMAP meetings)
- Your latest Management Review (conducted within the past 12 months)

Keep in mind that, even though some items are not requested in the submission this year, internal assessments, technical audits, and management reviews are **REQUIRED** to be completed within your laboratory on an annual basis. These items *may* be requested during our review to verify conditions as needed.

## **Two-Year Certificates**

If a number of conditions are met during this review cycle, WMD will issue 2-year certificates. The benefit of this certificate is that only Appendix B, Uncertainty tables, Proficiency Testing forms and “special request” items and updates will be required during the next submission cycle in 2009 for the 2010 cycle. To be eligible for a 2-year certificate, the following conditions must be met:

- Must submit a COMPLETE package on time (Use Table 1 as a checklist). Incomplete submissions will either be converted to a one-year certificate or you will get a notice that we are not reviewing your submission until the missing items are completed.
- Must have a *current* certificate from the latest cycle (i.e., 2008 or 2007-2008).
- Must have a record of submitting on time (3 of last 5 years, latest 2) or be NVLAP accredited.
- Current certificate must not be “conditional.”
- Must not have any unresolved deficiencies; deficiencies identified in previous reviews may be resolved with this submission. (Review previous letters to make sure all reviewed items have been resolved.)
- Must be up to date with LAP problems, Quality Manual, Administrative Procedures, and PT participation, reporting, and corrective action.

## **Quality Manuals**

Send quality manuals and administrative procedures if there are updates and if updates have been recommended. The quality manuals must comply with the CURRENT version of NIST Handbook 143 (2007)! In some cases, you have been notified that you will not obtain recognition unless updates are completed. The content of this handbook has been circulated since 2005 and we have noted that it would be required for compliance. Laboratories accredited to NVLAP have had to comply since 2005.

## **Proficiency Tests**

To evaluate measurement assurance and compliance to the published WMD policy, please submit copies of “Laboratory Follow Up and Corrective Action Checklist” forms for all round robins that were completed during 2008 (that have not already been identified in a previous submission). Forms are available on the NIST website: <http://ts.nist.gov/ts/htdocs/230/235/roundrobin/roundrobins.htm>. We expect that if corrective action was appropriate, that it was completed, or that it is in progress with a planned completion date.

## **Training & Succession Plan**

We are requesting evidence that your laboratory is compliant with training requirements, and has a training and succession plan for laboratory staff. These items need to be considered as a part of your internal audits and management reviews. Please review items covered at the 2008 RMAP meetings to 1) conduct a technical audit of section 5.2 (HB 143); 2) document and plan training; 3) document the approach the laboratory plans to take regarding staffing/succession. In the technical audit of section 5.2 you may reference sections from your Quality Manual, Administrative Procedures, and Management Review as long as all items are submitted this year.

## **Weighing Equipment Assessment**

We are conducting a special weighing equipment assessment this year. Manufacturers (Mettler and Sartorius) presented information at all of the Regional Measurement Assurance Program training session about which of their mass comparator and balance models no longer have parts and service available and which are being phased out. We are conducting a special assessment this year to determine which balances are in use in the State laboratories. If your Uncertainties tables note which balances are noted along with a precision assessment ( $P_n$ ), that is sufficient. The new Uncertainties template (Excel file) available on the NIST website includes these features. If you do not include this information on your uncertainties tables, a complete assessment of your balances and planned replacement schedule needs to be submitted as a separate item.