

NVLAP[®] NEWS

NATIONAL VOLUNTARY LABORATORY ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

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NVLAP Labs Meet ISO/IEC 17025:2005

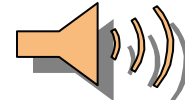
One hundred percent of NVLAP-accredited laboratories have met ISO/IEC 17025:2005. In a memo dated September 14, 2005, NVLAP laboratories were informed of the transition plan and timeline for implementation of the requirements of the new edition of ISO/IEC 17025:2005, *General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories*. Laboratories were given two years to transition to the new requirements. As of September 30, 2007, all NVLAP-accredited laboratories met the deadline.

New NVLAP Program Personal Body Armor Testing

NVLAP announces the establishment of a laboratory accreditation program and the availability of applications for accreditation of laboratories that perform testing of body armor using National Institute of Justice draft standard 0101.06 Ballistic Resistance of Personal Body Armor developed by the NIST Office of Law Enforcement Standards for the Department of Justice. Additional standards may be added in the future. Laboratories wishing to be considered for accreditation in the first group must submit applications by December 15, 2007. Laboratories whose applications are received after that date will be considered on an as-received basis.

The U.S. Department of Justice (DoJ), National Institute of Justice (NIJ) requested that NIST establish a laboratory accreditation program for laboratories that test body armor for the DoJ law enforcement certification program. In response to the request from NIJ, and after consultation with interested parties through a public workshop and other means, the Chief of NVLAP established an accreditation program for laboratories that test for the ballistic resistance of personal body armor.

Laboratories may obtain requirement documents and an application for accreditation for this program by calling (301) 975-4016, by writing to NVLAP Body Armor Testing Program Manager, NVLAP, 100 Bureau Drive, Stop 2140, Gaithersburg, MD 20899-2140, or by sending an e-mail to nvlap@nist.gov.



Check out our website at www.nist.gov/nvlap for updates to NVLAP publications and other important information.

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ILAC/IAF Conference in Sydney, Australia October 19-31, 2007

The 2007 International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation—International Accreditation Federation 2007 Sydney Conference is sponsored by the National Association of Testing Authorities, Australia and the Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand.

NVLAP staff participating in this year's conference are Sally Bruce, Chief of NVLAP, Vanda White, NVLAP Quality Manager, Betty Ann Sandoval, NVLAP representative to APLAC (Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation), Barbara Belzer, NVLAP representative to IAAC (InterAmerican Accreditation Cooperation), and Kurt Fischer, NVLAP technical representative for telecommunications.

ILAC is an international cooperation of laboratory and inspection accreditation bodies which this year celebrates its 30th anniversary of helping remove technical barriers to trade. ILAC provides a framework for developing and harmonizing laboratory and inspection accreditation practices, promoting laboratory and inspection accreditation to industry, governments, regulators and consumers, assisting and supporting developing accreditation systems, and global recognition of laboratories and inspection facilities via the ILAC Arrangement, thus facilitating acceptance of test, inspection and

calibration data accompanying goods across national borders.

IAF (International Accreditation Forum, Inc.) is the world association of Conformity Assessment Accreditation Bodies and other bodies interested in conformity assessment in the fields of management systems, products, services, personnel and other similar programs of conformity assessment. Its primary function is to develop a single worldwide program of conformity assessment which reduces risk for business and its customers by assuring them that accredited certificates may be relied upon. Accreditation assures users of the competence and impartiality of the body accredited. IAF members accredit certification or registration bodies that issue certificates attesting that an organization's management, products or personnel comply with a specified standard (called conformity assessment.)

The conference will be packed with meetings on accreditation issues, working groups for training, the Arrangement Committee, Laboratory Committee, Marketing and Communications Committee, and Proficiency Testing Consultative Group. The General Assemblies of both IAF and ILAC will round out the meeting schedules.

Accreditation vs. Certification

The terms “accreditation” and “certification” are sometimes used interchangeably, however, they are not synonymous. Certification is used for verifying that personnel have adequate credentials to practice certain disciplines, as well as for verifying that products meet certain requirements.

NVLAP is a system for accrediting laboratories found competent to perform specific tests or calibrations or types of tests or calibrations. NVLAP is not a certifier of test data, a certifier of products, or an operator of a certification program.

Accreditation is used to verify that laboratories have an appropriate quality management system and can properly perform certain test methods (e.g., ANSI, ASTM, and ISO test methods) and calibration parameters according to their scopes of accreditation. NVLAP accreditation covers both the management system of a laboratory and the technical capabilities of a laboratory.

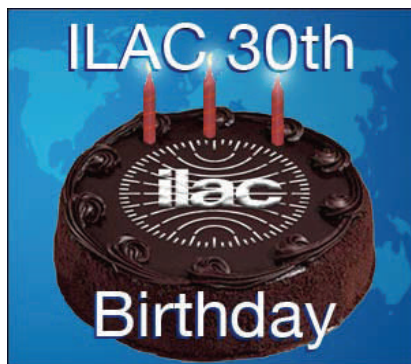
The assessment of laboratories is performed to check compliance with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17025, *General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories*. NVLAP, as a member of the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) and a signatory to the ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement, performs the assessment and offers accreditation services in conformance with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17011, *Conformity assessment – General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies*.

Upon satisfactory assessment and successful completion of proficiency testing (where applicable), the laboratory is issued a Certificate of Accreditation along with a Scope of Accreditation listing the test methods or calibration parameters that the laboratory is accredited to perform. The NVLAP accreditation period is one year. To renew its accreditation, a laboratory must demonstrate that it continues to satisfy all NVLAP requirements for accreditation.

Please visit the following links for additional resources and information about these conformity assessment terms:

- John W. Locke, “Words Matter: Registration, certification or accreditation?,” *Quality Digest*, available at <<http://www.qualitydigest.com/feb03/departments/lastword.shtml>>.
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- Peter Unger, “Accreditation or Registration?,” available at <<http://ts.nist.gov/Standards/Accreditation/upload/Accreditation-vs-Registration.pdf>>.

For more information about NVLAP accreditation, visit the NVLAP website at <<http://www.nist.gov/nvlap>>.



ILAC is the international cooperation of laboratory and inspection accreditation bodies which this year celebrates its 30th anniversary. One of the primary aims of ILAC is the removal of technical barriers to trade. The ability of authorities to trust technical standards and procedures from different countries reaches an important milestone this year - with the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) celebrating 30 years of helping the world's economies overcome technical barriers to trade.

ILAC's evolution was prompted by the Tokyo round of international trade negotiations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). The outcome was the GATT Standards Code, an agreement between a number of the member states encouraging recognition of the equivalence of different standards, and the variety of testing and accreditation regimes.

ILAC's Chair, Daniel Pierre said: "The first conference on International Laboratory

ILAC Celebrates 30 Years

(International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation
1977-2007)

Accreditation, was convened in Copenhagen in 1977 by Mr. Per Lund Thoft of the Ministry of Trade, Denmark with the support of Dr. Howard Forman of the US Department of Commerce. Twenty countries from around the world, the EEC Commission and ISO accepted their invitation."

The conference gave countries that already had, or were planning accreditation schemes an opportunity to compare notes and experiences. The delegations with practical experience were The National Testing Board of Denmark (1977), NVLAP US Department of Commerce (1976), BSI's System of the Registration of Test House, UK (1977) NATA - Australia (1947) and TELARC - New Zealand (1973).

"The outcome of that first ILAC conference was the idea that mutual recognition agreements between accreditation bodies meant any laboratory, anywhere could have their test results recognised as reliable. ILAC from its inception has worked to create an international framework to support international trade through the removal of technical barriers. This is now recognized through the ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) .

Fifty-eight signatories, representing 46 economies have now signed the ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement, enhancing the

acceptance of products and services across national borders," Mr. Pierre said.

Further information about ILAC is available from their website at:

<http://ilac.org/aboutilac.html>

"One of the primary aims of ILAC is the removal of technical barriers to trade."



The Bilateral MOU—1982 (left to right) John Locke, NVLAP, USA, Peter Forrest, NATLAS, UK

Photo provided by John Locke, USA

U.S. Access Board and NIST Provide Accessible Voting System Training Test Laboratories

On Aug. 24, 2007, NIST sponsored a training session by the U.S. Access Board for voting system test laboratories. The U.S. Access Board is an independent federal agency devoted to accessibility for people with disabilities. The attendees included representatives from laboratories active in the NIST National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation Program (NVLAP) and the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) voting system testing accreditation programs. Also attending were members of the U.S. Access Board, the EAC, NVLAP, and other NIST personnel involved in accessibility issues.

Testing laboratories are currently being accredited to the 2002 Voting System Standard (VSS-2002) and 2005 Voluntary Voting System Guidelines (VVSG-2005). NIST provided technical assistance for developing the VVSG-2005 and the newest version of the Voluntary Voting System Guidelines, not yet finalized. NVLAP provides the ISO 17025-based accreditation for these voting system testing laboratories on this basis that the NIST director recommends qualified laboratories to the EAC.

The purpose of the training was to provide information on voting machine accessibility that affects the way the laboratories test voting systems today and to discuss new issues arising in the upcoming standard. Presenters from the U.S. Access Board presented the provisions of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Section 255 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. The labs also had the opportunity to question the EAC and NIST representatives regarding accreditation and testing concerns.

The bulk of the meeting consisted of an exchange of ideas regarding specific testing requirements. Voting systems have to meet standards that support access by people with many different types of disabilities. Most people think of disabilities as they relate to seeing, hearing, and mobility limited individuals; however, those with aging, reading, and foreign language concerns also face accessibility challenges. The laboratories were interested in knowing what their testing responsibilities were and how they differed or related to those of the voting machine manufacturers. Examples of machines and specific requirements were discussed.

The labs found the meeting very helpful and had an opportunity to use the forum to exchange ideas and confirm that they were testing to the same requirements. They noted that it would be valuable to including voting system manufacturers in future training sessions.

NVLAP Updates Handbooks and Issues New Laboratory Bulletins via the Web

In an effort to make the latest information available to our laboratories and assessors, NVLAP has added updated Program-specific Handbooks (NIST HB 150 series) to its website. Newly updated Handbooks are available for Energy Efficient Lighting and Efficiency of Electric Motors. The updated Handbook for Electromagnetic Compatibility and Telecommunications has recently cleared the editorial review process and is scheduled to be posted to the NVLAP website in November.

New Laboratory Bulletins have been issued in 2007 for the following programs: Calibration Laboratories, Bulk Asbestos Analysis, Carpet and Carpet Cushion, Wood-based Products, Efficiency of Electric Motors, Airborne Asbestos Analysis, Thermal Insulation Materials, Commercial Products Testing, and Fasteners and Metals.

The following web address contains access to the NVLAP Program-specific Handbooks and Laboratory Bulletins <<http://ts.nist.gov/Standards/Accreditation/handbook.cfm>>.



APLAC Celebrates 15th Anniversary

In 2007, the Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation, Inc. (APLAC) celebrates its 15th Anniversary. The culmination of this celebration will be at APLAC's General Assembly and associated meetings from December 2-7, 2007 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Since its inception in 1992 and especially since the inaugural signing of the APLAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) in 1997, APLAC has helped to serve international trade by reducing barriers and facilitating recognition of test, measurement and inspection reports issued by accredited organizations through the APLAC MRA.

APLAC now boasts the successful establishment of a fully operational MRA linking 26 accreditation bodies in 17 economies across the Asia-Pacific region. Its principal objectives are to foster the development of competent laboratories inspection bodies and reference material producers in member economies, to harmonize accreditation practices in the region and with other regions, and to facilitate mutual recognition of test, measurement and inspection reports through the APLAC MRA. To learn more about APLAC, please visit www.aplac.org.



WHAT WE DO

The National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation Program (NVLAP) provides third-party accreditation to testing and calibration laboratories. NVLAP's accreditation programs are established in response to Congressional mandates or administrative actions by the Federal Government or from requests by private-sector organizations. NVLAP is in full conformance with the standards of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), including ISO/IEC 17025 and ISO/IEC 17011.

NVLAP Mission Statement

To deliver high quality, value-driven accreditation services to testing and calibration laboratories by:

- ◆ meeting or exceeding customer expectations;
- ◆ operating to globally accepted requirements for accreditation bodies;
- ◆ promoting world-wide acceptance of test and calibration results of NVLAP-accredited laboratories; and
- ◆ pursuing organizational and technical excellence.



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NVLAP is located on the beautiful campus of the National Institute of Standards and Technology in Gaithersburg, MD

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