This bulletin supersedes and replaces the 2002 version of Assessor Bulletin AB-3-2002.

The purpose of this bulletin is to remind assessors to check for laboratory compliance with NVLAP’s policy for referencing NVLAP accreditation (see NIST Handbook 150:2006, 1.8 and Annex A). Misuse of the term NVLAP and the NVLAP symbol can lead to market confusion and unfair competition among laboratories.

Assessors should pay particular attention to the requirements of Annex A of the NIST Handbook 150 Checklist when conducting an on-site assessment. Annex A, A.1 b) states that a “laboratory shall have a policy and procedure for controlling the use of the term NVLAP and the NVLAP symbol.” A policy may reference Annex A and state that laboratory management is committed to conformity in this area; however, a procedure must be laboratory-specific.

Specific emphasis should be given to the procedures and implementation of the items listed in NIST Handbook 150:2006, 1.8.2; that is,

- web sites
- test and calibration reports
- letterheads
- contracts
- business cards
- brochures
- advertising
- any other use not specified in NIST Handbook 150.

Assessors must sample the above-listed items to ensure that the laboratory’s policy and procedure are effectively implemented. It is suggested that an assessor request the procedure and view a laboratory’s web site as part of the documentation review prior to the on-site assessment visit.

Please contact your NVLAP Program Manager if you have questions about this bulletin. If you are unsure of whether a laboratory has properly referenced its accreditation, note the concern on the NIST Handbook 150 Checklist and ask the laboratory to send a copy of the reference to the NVLAP Program Manager for review.