



U.S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION

633 3rd St. NW, Suite 200

Washington, DC 20001

Notice of Clarification

NOC 21-01: VSTL Accreditation Status

Issued by Program Director on July 23, 2021

Section of Manual to Be Clarified:

Voting System Test Laboratory Manual, version 2.0:

3.8. Expiration and Renewal of Accreditation. A grant of accreditation is valid for a period not to exceed two years. A VSTL's accreditation expires on the date annotated on the Certificate of Accreditation. VSTLs in good standing shall renew their accreditation by submitting an application package to the Program Director, consistent with the procedures of Section 3.4 of this Chapter, no earlier than 60 days before the accreditation expiration date and no later than 30 days before that date. Laboratories that timely file the renewal application package shall retain their accreditation while the review and processing of their application is pending. VSTLs in good standing shall also retain their accreditation should circumstances leave the EAC without a quorum to conduct the vote required under Section 3.5.5.

Purpose:

The Voting System Test Lab (VSTL) accreditation process is an essential component of the EAC's testing and certification program. It consists of two assessments: one by the National Institute of Standards and Technology's (NIST) National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation Program (NVLAP) and one by the EAC.

NVLAP accreditation is the primary means by which the EAC ensures that each VSTL meets and continues to meet the technical requirements of the EAC program. It sets the standards for each VSTL's technical, physical, and personnel resources, as well as its testing, management, and quality assurance policies and protocols. NVLAP reviews VSTLs one year after their initial accreditation and biennially thereafter.

The EAC VSTL assessment takes additional steps to ensure that laboratory policies are in place regarding compliance management and issues like conflict of interest, record maintenance, and financial stability. It also ensures that the VSTL is willing and capable to work with EAC in its Testing and Certification Program. This is performed by regularly working closely with the labs and performing audits biennially and generating certificates.



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The EAC is the sole Federal authority for the accreditation and revocation of accreditation of VSTLs.

Clarification:

The intent of section 3.8 in the Voting System Test Laboratory Manual, version 2.0 is to make clear that the VSTL accreditation is subject to reassessment by NVLAP and the EAC with a period of approximately two years, at the discretion of the EAC. It is not intended to describe the EAC VSTL accreditation revocation process, which is described in chapter 5 of the Voting System Test Laboratory Manual, version 2.0.

Federal law (HAVA) provides that EAC accreditation of a voting system test laboratory may not be revoked unless the EAC Commissioners vote to revoke the accreditation.

52 U.S. Code § 20971(c)(2). APPROVAL BY COMMISSION REQUIRED FOR REVOCATION - The accreditation of a laboratory for purposes of this section may not be revoked unless the revocation is approved by a vote of the Commission.

The VSTL Certificate of Accreditation that is issued after the EAC performs the audit, and the expiration date listed on the certificate relates to the EAC program requirement to reassess VSTLs periodically to ensure conformance to the requirements of the testing and certification program for a VSTL. For that reason, the EAC has removed the expiration date from the certificate and instead will track the reassessment period separately.

Conclusion:

As of the date of this document, section 3.8 in the Voting System Test Laboratory Manual, version 2.0 is replaced with the following:

3.8. VSTL Accreditation Reassessment. The accreditation of a laboratory for purposes of this section may not be revoked unless the revocation is approved by a vote of the Commission consistent with Chapter 5 of this manual. Reassessment of VSTLs shall occur two years from the date their most recent Certificate of Accreditation was issued, or at the discretion of the EAC. VSTLs in good standing shall request reassessment their accreditation by submitting an application package to the Program Director, consistent with the procedures of Section 3.4 of this Chapter, no earlier than 60 days before and no later than 30 days prior to the reassessment date, or a date chosen at the discretion of the EAC. VSTLs in good standing shall retain their accreditation while the review and processing of their application is pending and should circumstances leave the EAC without a quorum to conduct the vote as specified under Section 3.5.5.