NSF International Certification Scheme	Doc. No. **BGD 01**
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Introduction

NSF requires that all laboratories testing on its behalf are competent to undertake the work. Laboratories may be independent or, in some instances, a manufacturer's test facility maybe deemed acceptable.

Laboratories shall ideally have accreditation to ISO 17025 and have listed within their scope the appropriate Product Standard(s). Their national accreditation body must be a signatory to the Multilateral Agreement or member of ILAC (International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation).

The following sections explain the requirements for laboratories seeking registration with NSF.

Application process

In the first instance the laboratory is required to complete a *'Laboratory Application Form' (Form BC22)* and submit payment of the Application Fee to cover administration costs. For laboratories not having a recognised ISO 17025 accreditation, and / or a scope of accreditation that does not include the product standards being requested for recognition with NSF; then 'Attachment 1' of the Form BC22 shall be completed.

Please return the completed form to Paul Taylor (Director), email : ptaylor@nsf.org

Definitions of NSF registered laboratories

There are three laboratory 'types' and these are defined as follows :

Mechanical (3rd Party) - Independent laboratories undertaking mechanical testing in accordance with ISO 17025 requirements, but not necessarily accredited or with a suitable scope of accreditation.

CIAS laboratories - Laboratories who undertake testing for the NSF Chemical Inhibitor Approval Scheme.

Manufacturer's test facilities - A manufacturer's own test facilities that it uses for factory production control or product development. (Note : this currently applies to manufacturers of mechanical products).

Requirements of NSF registered laboratories

For specific details relating to each laboratory 'type', refer to the relevant Appendix to this Guidance Document.

NSF assessments

Laboratories will be charged additional fees for any audits required by NSF to verify compliance with ISO 17025. These assessments shall take place as defined in the appropriate Appendix. However, NSF has the right to undertake additional audits as necessary, which may be at short notice if deemed necessary.

If NSF is unable to inspect the laboratory due to national regulations, international treaties or trade embargoes, then unfortunately the laboratory cannot be considered for registration with NSF.

Qualification of Independent Witnesses

In some instances it is necessary for an independent witness to be at the laboratory to verify testing activities. (Reference the Appendices for when this applies). Persons wishing to be considered for independent witness activities are required to completed Form BC30 (Independent Witness Questionnaire) and return this to the Director.

The witness shall qualify providing they meet the following

- understand the basic operation of the product being tested;
- have some knowledge of the tests being carried out (either from previous experience of working in a test laboratory or by reference to the Laboratory test procedures being used);
- have a Quality Management qualification such as ISO 9001 lead auditor, ISO 17025 internal auditor, or equivalent;
- have no conflict-of-interest such as being an employee, shareholder, carrying out other work for the manufacturer or laboratory as a consultant or in some other way financially connected with either the manufacturing or testing organisation except by acting as a NSF Approved Witness or auditor;
- be paid by NSF, who will then invoice the laboratory.
- report any variations of test conditions or parameters (either observed by the witness or notified to the witness by the test laboratory) in writing to NSF (and also make a note for their records);
- countersign the hard copy of the test report and any associated notes to confirm that they witnessed the testing being carried out.

NOTE : NSF will need to ratify the use of a witness prior to them being used. Details of witnesses used by laboratories shall be kept on file with NSF.

Witnessing the testing of products

NOTE : Reference NSF Guidance Document BGD 05 (Requirements for the independent witnessing of Manufacturer's Laboratory testing) for additional information.

The integrity of NSF certification rests on its third party independence. One tenet of this requires that testing carried out for certification must have third party independence. This is ensured by either a third party laboratory carrying out the testing or, where a manufacturer's test facility is used, the testing is witnessed by an independent third party. (The TMV3 Scheme licence holders first adopted these requirements in 2001).

The principle of witnessing the testing is to ensure that all the required tests are satisfactorily carried out on the randomly selected samples.

Therefore the following must be witnessed:

- the unpacking of the selected samples prior to testing starting, ensuring that the sample or packaging has not been tampered with or exchanged (the witness may also select the samples, however this is not necessary if the samples have already been selected and packaged by another independent person agreed by NSF);

- the setting up and dismantling of any endurance tests or automated tests;
- any tests which involve continuous technician intervention or operation;
- (For TMV3 testing) the packing and dispatch of the test sample B (the sample which has undergone endurance) at the end of testing.

The witness must also ensure that the sample could not have been exchanged or tampered with during endurance tests or automated tests and in the periods between tests. It is advised that the witness uses a tamper evident tag (or tamper evident bag in which to place the sample) during any extended periods where the sample is not being tested and a witness is not present. The witness should also check the logs associated with endurance and automated tests to satisfy themselves that the sample has not been tampered with or exchanged when they were not present. The witness does not need to remain present when there is no laboratory technician intervention or operation and the test samples have been controlled as described previously.

Interlaboratory Comparison Tests

Laboratories will be expected to enter into 'inter-laboratory' comparison tests as required by NSF.

(For further detail, refer to the NSF Guidance Document BGD 02 'Guidance on interlaboratory comparison testing').

Registration of laboratories with NSF

All registration of laboratories for NSF testing activities are at the sole discretion of the NSF Technical Assessment Panel (TAP), with endorsement from the NSF Advisory Committee.

Laboratories will be expected to sign the Subcontractors Agreement (Form BC12) prior to undertaking any work associated with NSF.

Test Reports

NSF requires that laboratories submit their test results in the form of a Test Report in accordance with the requirements of ISO 17025.

NSF will consider Test Reports up to 1 year old from the date of issue.

Results will not be accepted for testing carried out prior to the laboratory becoming registered with NSF.

NOTE : Test Report content and sampling requirements shall be in accordance with the relevant NSF Certification Procedure (BCCP) for the product type being assessed. The BCCP's should be viewed prior to any testing being undertaken to ensure the laboratory is clear upon NSF's testing requirements to support its certification activities. The BCCP's are available from NSF upon request.

Comment

This NSF Guidance Document will be reviewed by the NSF Advisory Committee at 3 yearly intervals.

Appendices

Refer to the following Appendices for specific requirements for the different types of laboratories :

Appendix A - Requirements for Mechanical (3rd Party) laboratories
Appendix B - Requirements for laboratories associated with the Chemical Inhibitor Association Scheme
Appendix C - Requirements for a Manufacturer's test facility (mechanical).

Appendix A

Requirements for Mechanical (3rd Party) laboratories

Definition

Mechanical (3rd Party) - Independent laboratories undertaking mechanical testing in accordance with ISO 17025 requirements, but not necessarily accredited or with a suitable scope of accreditation.

Requirements of NSF registered laboratories

The table below identifies the requirements for Mechanical (3rd Party) laboratories :

Type of laboratory *	Is the laboratory ISO 17025 accredited?	Is the test standard on the laboratory's scope of accreditation?	Is an initial NSF ISO 17025 assessment required?	Is an annual NSF ISO 17025 assessment required?	Is testing to be independently witnessed?
Mechanical (3rd Party)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No*	No
Mechanical (3rd Party)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mechanical (3rd Party)	No	Not applicable	Yes	Yes	Yes

* Re.assessed every 5 years following initial registration with NSF.

Appendix B

Requirements for laboratories associated with the Chemical Inhibitor Association Scheme

Definition

CIAS laboratories - Laboratories who undertake testing for the NSF Chemical Inhibitor Approval Scheme.

Requirements of NSF registered laboratories

The table below identifies the requirements for laboratories associated with the Chemical Inhibitor Association Scheme :

Type of laboratory *	Is the laboratory ISO 17025 accredited?	Is the test standard on the laboratory's scope of accreditation?	Is an initial NSF ISO 17025 assessment required?	Is an annual NSF ISO 17025 assessment required?	Is testing to be independently witnessed?
CIAS	Yes	Yes	Yes	No*	No
CIAS	No	Not applicable	Yes	Yes	No

* Re.assessed every 5 years following initial registration with NSF.

Appendix C

Requirements for a Manufacturer's test facility (mechanical)

Definition

Manufacturer's test facilities - A manufacturer's own test facilities that it uses for factory production control or product development. (Note : this currently applies to manufacturers of mechanical products).

Requirements of NSF registered laboratories

The table below identifies the requirements for a Manufacturer's test facility (mechanical) :

Type of laboratory *	Is the laboratory ISO 17025 accredited?	Is the test standard on the laboratory's scope of accreditation?	Is an initial NSF ISO 17025 assessment required?	Is an annual NSF ISO 17025 assessment required?	Is testing to be independently witnessed?
Manufacturer's test facilities (mechanical)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No*	Yes
Manufacturer's test facilities (mechanical)	No (Test results not acceptable to NSF)	Not applicable	--	--	--

* Re.assessed every 5 years following initial registration with NSF.

NOTE : The 'chain of custody' of samples and 'witness of testing' by an 'independent representative' is not necessary where a manufacturer's own test facility is used to test another manufacturer's product.

Revision History					
AESOP Issue #	NSF Issue #	Page #s	Description of Change	Author	Effective Date
--	6	1	Contact details updated.	P Davis	25.01.17
--	7	1-7	Company name change	A Jones	01.05.17