

Indiana Standards Laboratory

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Appropriate Use of NIST Test Report Numbers

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Indiana Standards Laboratory does not provide National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) numbers or NIST Reference Numbers on Certificates or Reports for calibrated items. Several of our customers, directed by their auditors and their customers, have requested NIST report numbers to prove traceability.

The International Vocabulary of Metrology – Basic and General Concepts and Associated Terms (VIM), ISO Guide 99:2007 defines traceability as:

“Property of a measurement result whereby the result can be related to a reference through a documented unbroken chain of calibrations, each contributing to the measurement uncertainty.”

The NIST website, pertaining to the evidence of traceability:

“Test report numbers issued by NIST are used solely for administrative purposes. Although they often uniquely identify documents that bear evidence of traceability, test report numbers themselves do not address the issues listed in II.B.1 above, and should not be considered as the sole evidence of traceability.”

(http://www.ncsli.org/c/Downloads/GeneralFiles/NCSLInternationalPositionontheUseofNIST_Numbers.pdf)

It is part of our annual accreditation audit that we prove our traceability, so our certificate of compliance to 17025 should be collateral enough to prove to your auditor or customer that we are in fact traceable.

Further policies/positions on traceability have been published by National Conference of Standards Laboratories (NCSL), L-A-B (our accreditation body), A2LA, and Fluke, stating the same position. Conforming with the metrology community, we are not listing NIST Report Numbers on our calibration reports.

As always, you are welcome to physically audit our laboratory.



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