



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
6000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-6000

SEP 14 2010

CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

MEMORANDUM FOR: SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Updated Guidance Concerning the Acquisition of Information Assurance (IA) and IA-enabled Products

- References:
- (a) National Security Telecommunications and Information Systems Security Policy (NSTISSP) No. 11, "National Policy Governing the Acquisition of Information Assurance (IA) and IA-Enabled Information Technology Products," January 2000.
  - (b) DoD Directive 8500.01E, "Information Assurance," October 24, 2002.
  - (c) DoD Instruction 8500.2, "Information Assurance Implementation," February 6, 2003.
  - (d) National Information Assurance Partnership Common Criteria Evaluation and Validation Scheme Policy Letter No. 12, Subject: Letter of Intent (LOI) Requirement for CCEVS, October 1, 2009.<sup>1</sup>

Reference (a) governs the acquisition of IA and IA-enabled products for the entire federal government. It requires all COTS IA and IA-enabled IT products used on information systems entering, processing, storing, displaying, or transmitting national security information to be evaluated and validated, as appropriate, in accordance with:

- The International Common Criteria for Information Security Technology Evaluation Mutual Recognition Arrangement; or
- The National Security Agency (NSA)/National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) National Information Assurance Partnership (NIAP) Evaluation and Validation Program; or
- The NIST Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS) validation program.

Reference (b) gives the National Security Agency (NSA) responsibility for establishing criteria and processes for evaluating and validating all IA and IA-enabled IT products used in DoD information systems. The criteria are promulgated through NIAP Protection Profiles, applicable to specific IT technologies (e.g. firewalls, operating systems).

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<sup>1</sup> Available at <http://www.niap-ccevs.org/>



Enclosure 2 to Reference (c) requires that DoD information systems incorporating IA and IA-enabled IT products and that require use of the product's IA capabilities comply with the evaluation and validation requirements of NSTISSP No. 11 (Reference (a)) as specified by NSA. However, because of the low number of evaluated products available at the time, certain qualifications to the requirements were necessary when the policy was issued in February, 2003. Over time, it became apparent that some of those qualifications resulted in inconsistent and sometime misunderstood application of Reference (a). In order to achieve more consistent and efficient use of scarce resources, the NIAP has issued Reference (d) and other guidance that limits the circumstances under which products may be evaluated to:

- Products claiming compliance with a U.S. approved Protection Profile (with an EAL no higher than that specified in the profile), or

- When a U.S. approved Protection Profile does not exist and a government agency requests a Common Criteria evaluation, NIAP will consider accepting a product into evaluation at EAL2 only. Validator resource availability and customer need (as specified in the LOI) will serve as the basis for acceptance.

While the recent NIAP guidance appears to conflict with some of that in Enclosure 2 to reference (c), it is consistent with NSA's responsibilities under references (b) and (c) and should be followed by all DoD Components.

References (a), (b), and (c) are all currently under revision, and all three will provide updated guidance regarding the acquisition of IA and IA-enabled IT products.



Cheryl J. Roby  
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