# Tips for Working with Microsoft Word Forms

NVLAP has converted several of its most used on-site assessment forms to Microsoft Word forms to allow you to fill out the forms on your computer.  There are both advantages and disadvantages to Word forms that you should be aware of when deciding whether to use the form-enabled version or the Adobe PDF version of a NVLAP form.  (All of the forms are available as Adoble PDF documents, which can be downloaded and printed in the traditional manner.)

The following tips may be useful to you when working with Microsoft Word forms:

1)     When you first open a form file, depending upon how your computer is set up, you may receive a security warning saying that the file contains macros.  It is okay to disable the macros if you wish, as this should not affect the functionality of the form.

2)     By design, a user cannot fill out a Microsoft Word form unless it has been protected to allow only certain types of editing.  The good news is that completed forms are consistent in appearance and content and that controlled documents cannot be altered in accordance with NVLAP's document control policy.

The bad news is that Word's protection feature disables quite a few important functions, even if only a single section of a document is protected.  As well as the spell-checker, many of the items on the View, Insert, Format, Tools, and Table menus are disabled.

3)     To fill out a protected form, you may enter information only into the gray-shaded areas or click on check boxes. Use the Tab key to move from form field to form field.

4)     The forms have no page breaks in order to allow the forms to "grow" as you type and add text.  You do not need to add page breaks before sending a form to NVLAP.  Note that the Previous Page and Next Page arrows on the vertical scroll bar are disabled.

5)     To work around the spell-checker issue, you may type the text in another document and spell check it.  Then you can copy the clean text and paste it into the gray-shaded areas of the Word form.  DO NOT unprotect a document in order to check the spelling.

6)     When you enter a laboratory's NVLAP Lab Code on page 1 of a form (in the shaded box in the upper right corner), it will automatically be printed in the header of all pages that follow.  You will not be able to see this until you print the document, but the Lab Code is really there!  This is accomplished through the use of the "bookmark" feature in Word with "fill-in enabled" turned on in the forms options.

7)     As forms are revised, we will be adding a date field to page 1 of each form, which will automatically be printed in the header of all pages that follow−just like the Lab Code reference in the header.  Please ensure that both the Lab Code and the date have been entered on page 1.