Purpose:

The revisions being proposed to NIST Handbook 44, 5.54. Taximeters Code are intended to both; modify existing requirements and add new requirements for taximeters so they are applicable and appropriate to the current technology used in these devices. In addition, a number of recommended changes have been developed to eliminate any disparity in the application of regulatory standards between taximeters that are addressed in HB44, 5.54. and those being proposed in a new, separate Transportation Network Measurement Systems Code.

Changes being proposed pertain to requirements for sealing, display requirements, and other features and to account for the use of location services (e.g., GPS) as measuring sources for time and distance. The implementation of these changes is intended to ensure that these measuring systems are accurate and will facilitate transactions that are transparent for passengers and transportation service providers.

Background / Discussion:

The Committee has received multiple proposals over the past several years related to updating the current NIST Handbook 44 Taximeters Code to reflect current technology as well as a request to establish criteria for GPS-based time and distance measuring systems. In April 2012, NIST OWM established a U.S. National Working Group to work on these issues.

The USNWG on Taximeters has submitted a number of proposed changes to the HB44 Taximeters Code over the past 2-3 years. These initial changes were focused primarily on updating the code to account for the use of more advanced equipment (e.g., Passenger Information Monitors or PIMs, Mobile Data Terminals or MDTs, credit card readers, printers).

More recently, the work group's efforts were focused on the development of standards intended for "transportation network measurement systems" (TNMS) that calculate passenger fares based on time and distance derived from location services. A characteristic of TNMS that prompted the work group to develop separate requirements was the manner in which the consumer (rider) acquired this type of service and the means provided as an interface between rider, driver, and transportation network company. This interface is typically in the form of a software application program or "app." The recognition that the TNMS are almost entirely software-based was another factor that moved the USNWG to develop a separate set of requirements for these systems. The proposal for this new TNMS code has been submitted for consideration as a new item in the S&T Committee.

During the USNWG meeting discussions, the work group members recognized that when developing new requirements for TNMS or modifying requirements for taximeters there was a potential risk of creating unintended, unfair advantages for either type of device. Since these devices are used to calculate charges for the same type of service, the work group believed that there should be a parallel set of requirements.

The USNWG members also recognized that the traditional-type of taximeters were evolving in such a way that would incorporate some of the technologies used within TNMS and that the differences between the two type of devices/system were becoming less clearly defined. This prompted the work group to develop the two separate codes in some ways where they will mirror each other in certain sections.

The USNWG has now finalized a draft for proposed changes in the NIST Handbook 44 Taximeters Code which is being submitted for consideration as a voting item. For details of those meetings as well as the details for requirements and changes to those requirements being proposed by the USNWG, please contact Mr. John Barton as noted in the "Item Under Consideration."