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# FITSI Certification Holder Handbook

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Requirements for  
Maintenance and  
Recertification of  
Federal IT Security  
Institute (FITSI)  
Sponsored  
Certifications

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## 1. Overview

Congratulations on earning the Federal IT Security Professional (FITSP) Certification! We welcome all Certification Holders to the FITSP Certification Program. The Federal IT Security Institute (FITSI) was founded in 2009 to help secure the Nation's federal information systems by certifying that the federal workforce (civilian personnel, military, and contractors) understands and can apply appropriate federal Information Technology (IT) security standards. FITSI has many Certification Holders and members worldwide, and we are pleased you are a part of our organization.

The Federal IT Security Institute (FITSI) is a 501c6 non-profit certification body accredited by the ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB) under ISO 17024:2012. FITSI manages and administers the FITSP Certification Program. FITSP stands for the Federal IT Security Professional and is broken into four individual IT security certification programs targeted at the Federal workforce based upon role. The four roles are Auditor, Designer, Manager, and Operator.

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## 2. Applicability

This Handbook applies to all FITSP Certification Holders and provides pertinent information regarding a FITSP certification's ongoing maintenance and recertification requirements.

FITSI has issued two different types of certifications since it began in 2009. The original FITSP Certification identified by the FITSP-Auditor, FITSP-Designer, FITSP-Manager, and FITSP-Operator were issued up until 2020. In 2020 FITSP started issuing the Next Generation FITSP Certification certificates with an -NG extension. The main difference is that the NG certifications require retesting every six years. In contrast, the original FITSP certifications allow the use of CPEs to renew every three years.

Unless otherwise called out, the policies, procedures, and processes identified in this *FITSI Certification Holder Handbook* and any other *FITSI Handbooks* apply to both certification certificates discussed previously. Both certification certificates are grouped and referred to as the "FITSP Certification Program" collectively.

The most up-to-date *FITSI Certification Holder Handbook* can be found at <http://www.fitsi.org/documents.html>.

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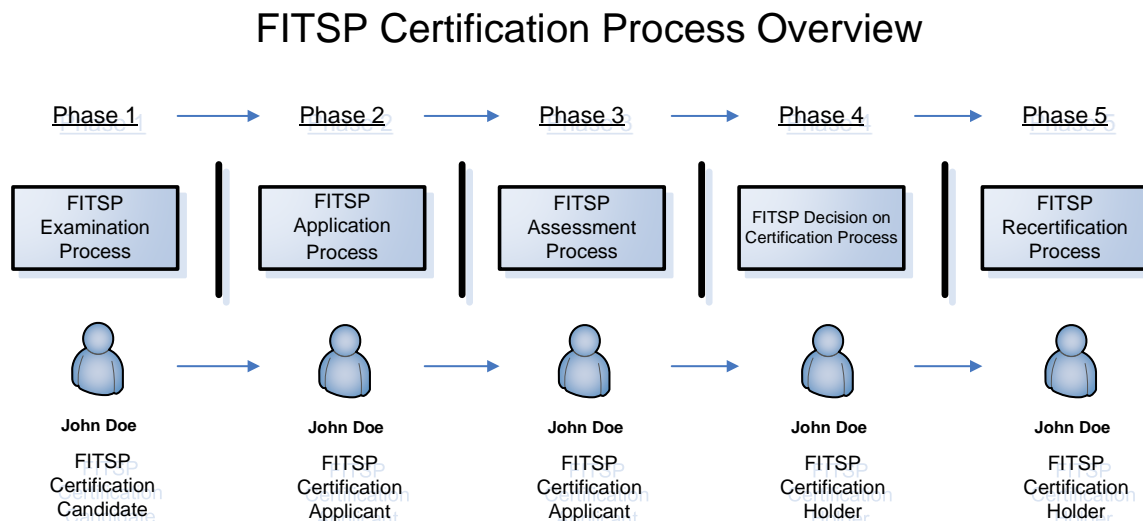
### 3. FITSP Certification Process

#### A. Overview

FITSI uses several processes to manage the FITSP Certification Program. These processes include:

1. An examination process
2. An application process
3. An assessment process
4. A certification decision process
5. A recertification process

The diagram below illustrates how these processes work together. Depending upon where the person seeking certification is in the process, they are either considered a Certification Candidate, Certification Applicant, or a Certification Holder.



**Figure 1:** FITSP Certification Process Overview

As part of earning a Federal IT Security Professional (FITSP) certification, FITSP Certification Candidates must successfully pass a certification exam (Phase 1) and submit a formal FITSI Certification application and supporting documentation (Phase 2). Once the FITSP Certification Application is submitted, FITSI will conduct an assessment of all the items in the application (Phase 3) and render a formal certification decision (Phase 4). During this formal certification decision phase, a determination is made on whether the FITSP certification will be granted to the individual. Certification Applicants who become Certification Holders in Phase 4 move to Phase 5, where they must meet certain criteria to be recertified. This process is visually represented in Figure 1 above.

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## B. Certification Candidate vs. Certification Applicant vs. Certification Holder

In this document, three different terms define individuals involved in the FITSP Certification Program. They represent an individual based on their stage in the certification process. These terms are:

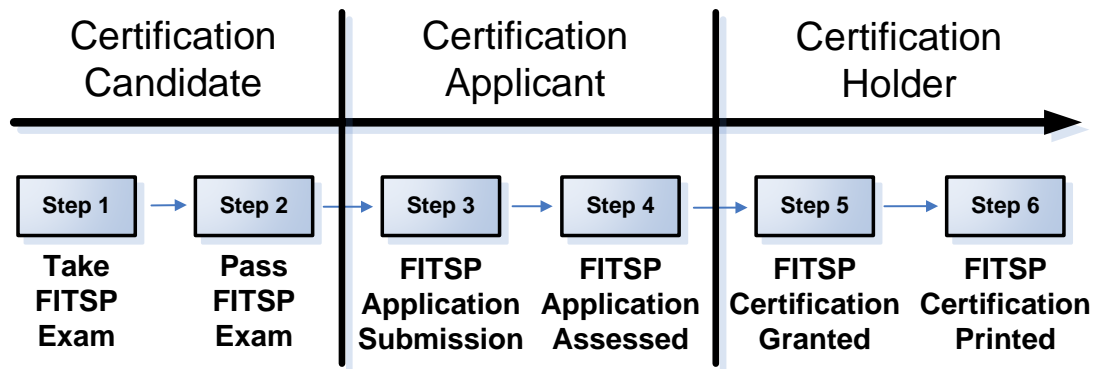
- Certification Candidate
- Certification Applicant
- Certification Holder

A Certification Candidate is an individual who is planning to take, has taken, or even passed a given FITSP examination but **they have not yet applied for or been granted a FITSP Certification.**

A Certification Applicant is an individual who has taken and passed a FITSP examination and has either submitted their FITSI Certification Application Package or is having the FITSI Certification Application Package assessed by FITSI. **They have not been granted a FITSP Certification.**

A Certification Holder is an individual who has gone through all the steps as a Certification Candidate and Certification Applicant and has received formal notice that **they have been granted the FITSP certification.**

Below is a visual representation of how these terms are used:



**Figure 2:** Relationship between a Certification Candidate, a Certification Applicant, and a Certification Holder

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## 4. Certification Maintenance Requirements

A Certification Holder's maintenance requirements can differ depending on which FITSP Certification they possess.

### A. Original FITSP Certifications

Original FITSP certifications have the following maintenance requirements:

- Abide by the FITSI Code of Ethics
- Pay an Annual Maintenance Fee (AMF). The annual fee is listed on the *FITSI Fee Schedule*, found at <http://www.fitsi.org/documents.html>. This fee can be paid at the FITSI Private Portal.
- Register 60 CPEs at the FITSI private portal over three years. Full details are provided in the *Earning CPE Units for FITSI Certifications Handbook*.

### B. FITSP-NG Certifications

FITSP-NG certifications have the following maintenance requirements:

- Abide by the FITSI Code of Ethics
- Pay an Annual Maintenance Fee (AMF). The annual fee is listed on the *FITSI Fee Schedule*, found at <http://www.fitsi.org/documents.html>. This fee can be paid at the FITSI Private Portal.



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## 5. Verifying the Status of a FITSP Certification Holder

The process for verifying certification status is outlined in the *FITSI Certification Verification Handbook*, which can be found at <http://www.fitsi.org/documents.html>.

Certification Holders can use the online tool listed in the *FITSI Certification Verification Handbook* to check their status or even allow verification of their certification status with third parties.

Certification Holders control access to this tool in that they must provide their last name and their FITSI certification number to the person verifying the certification.

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## 6. FITSI Code of Ethics

All FITSP Certification Holders must abide by the FITSI Code of Ethics, found in the *FITSI Code of Ethics Handbook* at <http://www.fitsi.org/documents.html>. Violations of any tenet of the FITSI Code of Ethics may be grounds for revocation of a Certification Holder's FITSP certification(s) and/or FITSI membership (where applicable).

If a FITSP Certification Holder is believed to have violated the FITSI Code of Ethics, a complaint may be submitted to FITSI for review and possible disciplinary actions. Complaints are discussed later in this Handbook in Section 14: The Complaint Process.

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## 7. Recertification Requirements

Federal standards are constantly changing, requiring a Certification Holder to maintain knowledge currency. The FITSP certification will expire and requires recertification. The details below define the requirements for recertification.

### A. Original FITSP Certifications

The original FITSP certifications are valid for three years. During those three years, Certification Holders must meet the following requirements to be eligible for recertification:

- Abide by the FITSI Code of Ethics
- Pay an Annual Maintenance Fee (AMF). The annual fee is listed on the *FITSI Fee Schedule*, found at <http://www.fitsi.org/documents.html>.
- Earn 60 CPEs at the FITSI private portal over three years. Full details are provided in the *Earning CPE Units for FITSI Certifications Handbook*.

### B. FITSP-NG Certifications

The FITSP-NG certifications are valid for six years. During those six years, Certification Holders must meet the following requirements to be eligible for recertification:

- Abide by the FITSI Code of Ethics
- Pay an Annual Maintenance Fee (AMF). The annual fee is listed on the *FITSI Fee Schedule*, found at <http://www.fitsi.org/documents.html>.
- Retest every six years at the end of the certification cycle

Certification Holders that meet the first two requirements above can retest at no charge up to six months before expiration. If the Certification Holder does not retest in the six months before the expiration date, they are not considered certified after the expiration period has passed. At that point, they will have to retest and reapply for the FITSP certification as if they were a new FITSI Certification Candidate.

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## 8. Use of the FITSP Certification Logo and Mark

FITSI has published a policy on the usage requirements of FITSI Logos and Marks by FITSP Certification Holders and other FITSI stakeholders. This policy is documented in the *FITSI Logo and Mark Usage Requirements Handbook*.

This Handbook is published and accessible at the following FITSI location:  
<http://www.fitsi.org/documents.html>.

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## 9. Request for Certification Certificate and ID Card Duplicates

A Certification Holder may request additional copies of a certification certificate or FITSI ID card. The *FITSI Fee Schedule* provides the most current fees for certification certificates and ID card duplicates. This schedule can be found at <http://www.fitsi.org/documents.html>.

The procedure for requesting and obtaining duplicates is the following:

1. The Certification Holder should notify FITSI via email at [contactus@fitsi.org](mailto:contactus@fitsi.org) which item they are requesting for a duplicate.
2. The Certification Holder should visit the following link and make payment for the item: <http://www.fitsi.org/fees.html>.
3. Once the payment is complete, FITSI will generate the duplicate.
4. Requests for duplicates will be fulfilled within 30 calendar days of receipt.

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## 10. Certification Suspension and Certification Withdrawal

FITSP certifications must always remain in good standing during the certification cycle. Certification Holders can have their FITSP certification(s) suspended or withdrawn (revoked) due to non-compliance with the certification maintenance requirements or violations against the FITSI Code of Ethics.

FITSI uses the following definitions for suspension and withdrawal:

- **Suspension:** a temporary stop, delay, interruption, or cessation of a FITSP Certification Holder's certification issued by FITSI.
- **Withdrawal:** cancellation or revocation of a FITSP Certification Holder's certification issued by FITSI.

A certification may be put into a suspended state for the following reasons:

- Failure to stay current with Annual Maintenance Fees (AMFs)
- Having a complaint against a Certification Holder for violation of the FITSI Code of Ethics.

The suspension period lasts for up to 90 days. During this time, the Certification Holder must refrain from further promotion of the certification while suspended. To remove the certification from a suspended state, the Certification Holder will need to address the issue causing the suspension to occur.

If the Certification Holder does not address the issue causing the suspension to occur after 90 days, the certification will be withdrawn (revoked).

Reasons for withdrawal (revocation) of the certification are:

- Continued failure to bring outstanding Annual Maintenance Fees (AMFs) current after 90 days
- Having been found through the complaint process to violate the FITSI Code of Ethics in a manner that warrants withdrawal.
- Failure to address the issue causing the suspension to occur.

If a certification is withdrawn (revoked), the Certification Holder must discontinue all claims and references to the certification and discontinue the use of the FITSI Certification Logo.

Refer to Section 8: Use of the FITSP Certification Logo and Mark to learn how to access the *FITSI Logo and Mark Usage Requirements Handbook* for more details on how FITSI addresses the certification logo and mark issues during a FITSP Certification suspension or FITSP Certification withdrawal.

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## 11. Certification Reinstatement

A withdrawn (revoked) certification can be reinstated up to 18 months from the withdrawal date by submitting a *FITSI Certification Reinstatement Application*. Additional fees and penalties apply. This form can be found at <http://www.fitsi.org/documents.html>.

For example, an individual who has voluntarily allowed a certification to lapse (and, as a result, FITSI has withdrawn the certification) is not certified and may not use any FITSP certification designation (including the FITSP Certification Logo and/or Mark). The certified status may be reinstated with the following actions if the certification lapse is within the 18 months of the date the certification was withdrawn:

- The Certification Holder can submit the *FITSI Certification Reinstatement Application* and any outstanding AMF fees

**Important Note:** A Certification Holder who has had their certification withdrawn for violation of the FITSI Code of Ethics cannot have their FITSI certification reinstated. FITSI permanently maintains records of those members and Certification Holders who have a certification withdrawn (revoked) for violations of the FITSI Code of Ethics to ensure those individuals are barred from obtaining future FITSP certifications.

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## 12. Resignation of Certification

A Certification Holder may resign their FITSP certification(s) by sending a notification email to [contactus@fitsi.org](mailto:contactus@fitsi.org) declaring in the email they are resigning their certification(s) as of a specific date. The email declaring resignation must originate from the email address that FITSI has on file for the Certification Holder. Resignation does not relieve a Certification Holder of unpaid dues or previously incurred charges.

FITSI will respond to the email notifying the Certification Holder that their resignation of certification as of a specific date has been accepted. FITSI will also acknowledge that the Certification Holder has been (or will be) removed from the certification records associated with that individual as of the specific date.

The Certification Holder must discontinue using the FITSP Certification Logo or FITSP Certification Text Mark as of the specific date once they are notified that FITSI has accepted their notification of certification resignation. The FITSP Certification Logo and FITSP Certification Text Mark must be removed from any stationery, websites, resumes, business cards, and other promotional materials associated with the resigning Certification Holder.

Any FITSP Certification Holder resigning their certification(s) may be required to return the FITSI ID card(s), FITSP challenge coin(s), and FITSP certification certificate(s).



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## 13. The Appeals Process

Any decision rendered by a FITSI committee, FITSI Personnel (consultant, employee, or volunteer) that impacts a FITSI member, Certification Candidate, Certification Applicant, or Certification Holder may be appealed through the FITSI Appeals Committee. All appeals must be made within 30 calendar days of the receipt of the decision being appealed.

Appealable decisions include:

- Certification Denial
- Certification Revocation
- Refund Refusal
- Other decisions or issues

An appeal must be filed by submitting the *Appeals Form* in the *FITSI Appeals and Complaint Application* found at <http://www.fitsi.org/documents.html>. The completed form should be emailed to FITSI at [contactus@fitsi.org](mailto:contactus@fitsi.org).

Once an *Appeals Form* is received, FITSI will carry out the following steps:

1. Initial Appeal Acknowledgement. The Appeals Committee will acknowledge receipt of the appeal within 30 calendar days of receipt. The email acknowledgment will include:
  - Explanation of the appeals process for the issue at hand
  - The Appeals Committee member point of contact
  - A timeline for response and decision by the Appeals Committee
2. Appeals Review. The Appeals Committee will render a decision within 30 calendar days of receipt of the appeal unless additional information is required. In the event additional information is required, the Appeals Committee will render a decision within 30 calendar days of receipt of the required information. The decision will be provided via email to the appellant.
3. Appeals Decision/Response. The Appeals Committee's response will be either appeal accepted or appeal denied. All responses will include a detailed explanation of the decision.
4. Appeals Escalation. All decisions made by the Appeals Committee are considered final.

The appeal submission and subsequent investigation and decision shall not result in any discriminatory actions against the appellant.

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## 14. The Complaint Process

Complaints can be lodged against FITSI for the following areas:

- Complaint regarding examination items
- Complaint regarding the examination process
- Complaint regarding specific exam circumstances
- Complaint against any FITSI committee, FITSI Personnel (consultant, employee or volunteer), FITSI member, Certification Candidate, Certification Applicant or Certification Holder the complainant feels is in violation of any FITSI policy
- Other issues

A complaint can be filed by submitting the *Complaint Form* in the *FITSI Appeals and Complaint Application* found at <http://www.fitsi.org/documents.html>. The completed form should be emailed to FITSI at [contactus@fitsi.org](mailto:contactus@fitsi.org).

The Appeals Committee will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 30 calendar days of receipt. The email acknowledgment will include:

- Explanation of the complaint process for the issue at hand
- The Appeals Committee member point of contact
- A timeline for response and decision by the Appeals Committee

All complaints must be submitted with supporting information. The FITSI Appeals Committee will review the nature of the complaint and render a decision on the complaint within 60 calendar days of receipt. FITSI will provide the complainant with progress reports during the 60 calendar days and an outcome. Each complainant will receive the Appeals Committee's decision or recommendation.

The response from the Appeals Committee will be one of the following:

- Complaint denied
- Complaint accepted
- Request for more information

Responses may include a detailed explanation of the response. All decisions made by the Appeals Committee are considered final.

In the event a complaint against a certified person is substantiated by the Appeals Committee, the Certification Director will send a memo notifying the subject of the complaint about the complaint within 30 days of the Appeals Committee's decision.

Any information provided to FITSI will be treated confidentially, and the complainant's identity will not be revealed to the accused without prior permission of the complainant.

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## 15. Using the FITSI Private Portal

### A. Account Details

FITSP Certification Holders have access to the FITSI private portal. Unique login information to the portal is established when the Certification Holder signs up to take the FITSP Certification exam.

FITSI members have also provisioned an account for access when they sign up for membership.

FITSI uses an email address as the username and a unique password at least six characters long with a minimum of one alphabetic character, one upper case character, and one numeric character. Certification Holders can use special characters such as @ ! \$ % #, but these are not a requirement.

### B. Login

Once the Certification Holder receives their private portal login information, they can access the FITSI private portal via the **Login** section of <http://www.fitsi.org>. The login screen looks like this:

Federal IT Security Institute x +

https://www.fitsi.org/activek/login.asp

3213 Duke St #190  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
Phone 703-828-1196

Home Login

### FITSI Account Login

Please log in with your email address and password.

#### Account Login

Email Address:

Password:

Login

If you can't remember your Password,  
please [click here](#)

If you don't yet have a FITSI account,  
please [click here](#) to register.

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**Figure 3:** The FITSI Private Portal Login Screen

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### C. Login Lockout

If a Certification Holder mistypes their password too many times, their account will be locked out. The Private Portal will lockout accounts for 30 minutes, and after 30 minutes wait period, the account will be reactivated automatically.

### D. Password Reset

If a Certification Holder forgets their password, they can use the Password Reset feature. This feature will send an email to the Certification Holder with a temporary password that must be used within 30 minutes. Also, a link is included in the email to make returning to the login screen easier.

Once the Certification Holder logs in with their temporary password, they will be presented with an Update Personal Info page where they can change their password to one that only they know. Certification Holders can also change additional personal information such as an address, phone number, etc.

### E. Services

The *Member and Certification Holder Services* section allows the Certification Holders to perform several useful self-service functions. These functions include, but are not limited to:

- Use the "My Profile" application to update profile information
- Record CPE units (not applicable for FITSP-NG certifications).
- Register for FITSP Certification Review courses
- Join the FITSI Evangelist Program

### F. Paying Certification Holder Dues

Certification Holders will use the Private Portal to pay their Annual Maintenance Fees (AMF). Thirty days before the AMF due date, a red button will appear in the yellow account summary box in the upper right of the Private Portal home page. The Certification Holder uses this button to pay for one certification cycle. A visual of the red button is listed below:

<b>Name:</b>	Joe Doe
<b>FITSI ID:</b>	10010
<b>Affiliation Type:</b>	Certification Holder
<b>Certifications:</b>	FITSP-M-NG
<b>Affiliated Since:</b>	3/11/2021
<b>AMF due date:</b>	3/11/2022

[Pay Annual Dues](#)

If the Certification Holder is delinquent, they must follow this "Pay Annual Dues" link multiple times to bring the AMFs current. The system will automatically update the AMF Due Date value after each successful payment.

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## **G. Account Directory**

FITSI provides Certification Holders and members the option to include contact information in an online Account Directory via the FITSI private portal. The type and scope of information published is controlled by the Certification Holder or member through their online account profile. When a new online account is created, the default policy is "Not Published." The Certification Holder can control the type of information they wish published in the Directory from the following list:

- All personal information
- Hide email addresses
- Show name only
- Don't include me in the Directory

The option to select from the above list is found in the "My Profile" sub-option of the Member and Certification Holder Services feature on the FITSI Private Portal homepage.

## **H. Requesting Support**

If a Certification Holder needs support in accessing the FITSI private portal or other issues, they should contact FITSI at [contactus@fitsi.org](mailto:contactus@fitsi.org) with the words REQUESTING SUPPORT in the subject area. The Certification Holder will need to provide the following information:

- Full Name
- FITSI ID and Certification numbers (found on the Certification Holder's FITSI ID card)
- Preferred email address for FITSI use

Certification Holders should indicate the type and level of support they require in the body of the message. FITSI will endeavor to respond to all requests within two business days.

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## 16. Forms

The most current version of the forms referenced in this Handbook can be downloaded from <http://www.fitsi.org/documents.html>.

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## 17. Appendix A, FITSI Contact Information

### **FITSI Mailing Address:**

Federal IT Security Institute (FITSI)  
3213 Duke St. #190  
Alexandria, VA 22314

Phone: 703-828-1196  
Web site: <http://www.fitsi.org>  
General Email: [contactus@fitsi.org](mailto:contactus@fitsi.org)