

## Federal Acquisition Regulation

1.602-1

considered in formulating acquisition policies and procedures.

(b) The opportunity to submit written comments on proposed significant revisions shall be provided by placing a notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER. Each of these notices shall include—

(1) The text of the revision or, if it is impracticable to publish the full text, a summary of the proposal;

(2) The address and telephone number of the individual from whom copies of the revision, in full text, can be requested and to whom comments thereon should be addressed; and

(3) When 1.501-3(b) is applicable, a statement that the revision is effective on a temporary basis pending completion of the public comment period.

(c) A minimum of 30 days and, normally, at least 60 days will be given for the receipt of comments.

### 1.501-3 Exceptions.

(a) Comments need not be solicited when the proposed coverage does not constitute a significant revision.

(b) Advance comments need not be solicited when urgent and compelling circumstances make solicitation of comments impracticable prior to the effective date of the coverage, such as when a new statute must be implemented in a relatively short period of time. In such case, the coverage shall be issued on a temporary basis and shall provide for at least a 30 day public comment period.

### 1.502 Unsolicited proposed revisions.

Consideration shall also be given to unsolicited recommendations for revisions that have been submitted in writing with sufficient data and rationale to permit their evaluation.

### 1.503 Public meetings.

Public meetings may be appropriate when a decision to adopt, amend, or delete coverage is likely to benefit from significant additional views and discussion.

## Subpart 1.6—Career Development, Contracting Authority, and Responsibilities

### 1.601 General.

(a) Unless specifically prohibited by another provision of law, authority and responsibility to contract for authorized supplies and services are vested in the agency head. The agency head may establish contracting activities and delegate broad authority to manage the agency's contracting functions to heads of such contracting activities. Contracts may be entered into and signed on behalf of the Government only by contracting officers. In some agencies, a relatively small number of high level officials are designated contracting officers solely by virtue of their positions. Contracting officers below the level of a head of a contracting activity shall be selected and appointed under 1.603.

(b) Agency heads may mutually agree to—

(1) Assign contracting functions and responsibilities from one agency to another; and

(2) Create joint or combined offices to exercise acquisition functions and responsibilities.

[60 FR 49721, Sept. 26, 1995]

### 1.602 Contracting officers.

#### 1.602-1 Authority.

(a) Contracting officers have authority to enter into, administer, or terminate contracts and make related determinations and findings. Contracting officers may bind the Government only to the extent of the authority delegated to them. Contracting officers shall receive from the appointing authority (see 1.603-1) clear instructions in writing regarding the limits of their authority. Information on the limits of the contracting officers' authority shall be readily available to the public and agency personnel.

(b) No contract shall be entered into unless the contracting officer ensures that all requirements of law, executive orders, regulations, and all other applicable procedures, including clearances and approvals, have been met.

**1.602-2 Responsibilities.**

Contracting officers are responsible for ensuring performance of all necessary actions for effective contracting, ensuring compliance with the terms of the contract, and safeguarding the interests of the United States in its contractual relationships. In order to perform these responsibilities, contracting officers should be allowed wide latitude to exercise business judgment. Contracting officers shall—

- (a) Ensure that the requirements of 1.602-1(b) have been met, and that sufficient funds are available for obligation;
- (b) Ensure that contractors receive impartial, fair, and equitable treatment; and
- (c) Request and consider the advice of specialists in audit, law, engineering, information security, transportation, and other fields, as appropriate.

[48 FR 42103, Sept. 19, 1983, as amended at 70 FR 57451, Sept. 30, 2005]

**1.602-3 Ratification of unauthorized commitments.***(a) Definitions.*

*Ratification*, as used in this subsection, means the act of approving an unauthorized commitment by an official who has the authority to do so.

*Unauthorized commitment*, as used in this subsection, means an agreement that is not binding solely because the Government representative who made it lacked the authority to enter into that agreement on behalf of the Government.

(b) *Policy.* (1) Agencies should take positive action to preclude, to the maximum extent possible, the need for ratification actions. Although procedures are provided in this section for use in those cases where the ratification of an unauthorized commitment is necessary, these procedures may not be used in a manner that encourages such commitments being made by Government personnel.

(2) Subject to the limitations in paragraph (c) of this subsection, the head of the contracting activity, unless a higher level official is designated by the agency, may ratify an unauthorized commitment.

(3) The ratification authority in subparagraph (b)(2) of this subsection may

be delegated in accordance with agency procedures, but in no case shall the authority be delegated below the level of chief of the contracting office.

(4) Agencies should process unauthorized commitments using the ratification authority of this subsection instead of referring such actions to the Government Accountability Office for resolution. (See 1.602-3(d).)

(5) Unauthorized commitments that would involve claims subject to resolution under the Contract Disputes Act of 1978 should be processed in accordance with subpart 33.2, Disputes and Appeals.

(c) *Limitations.* The authority in subparagraph (b)(2) of this subsection may be exercised only when—

(1) Supplies or services have been provided to and accepted by the Government, or the Government otherwise has obtained or will obtain a benefit resulting from performance of the unauthorized commitment;

(2) The ratifying official has the authority to enter into a contractual commitment;

(3) The resulting contract would otherwise have been proper if made by an appropriate contracting officer;

(4) The contracting officer reviewing the unauthorized commitment determines the price to be fair and reasonable;

(5) The contracting officer recommends payment and legal counsel concurs in the recommendation, unless agency procedures expressly do not require such concurrence;

(6) Funds are available and were available at the time the unauthorized commitment was made; and

(7) The ratification is in accordance with any other limitations prescribed under agency procedures.

(d) *Nonratifiable commitments.* Cases that are not ratifiable under this subsection may be subject to resolution as recommended by the Government Accountability Office under its claim procedure (GAO Policy and Procedures Manual for Guidance of Federal Agencies, Title 4, Chapter 2), or as authorized by FAR Subpart 50.1. Legal advice should be obtained in these cases.

[53 FR 3689, Feb. 8, 1988, as amended at 60 FR 48225, Sept. 18, 1995; 71 FR 57380, Sept. 28, 2006, 72 FR 63029, Nov. 7, 2007]

## Federal Acquisition Regulation

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### 1.603 Selection, appointment, and termination of appointment.

#### 1.603-1 General.

Subsection 414(4) of title 41, United States Code, requires agency heads to establish and maintain a procurement career management program and a system for the selection, appointment, and termination of appointment of contracting officers. Agency heads or their designees may select and appoint contracting officers and terminate their appointments. These selections and appointments shall be consistent with Office of Federal Procurement Policy's (OFPP) standards for skill-based training in performing contracting and purchasing duties as published in OFPP Policy Letter No. 05-01, Developing and Managing the Acquisition Workforce, April 15, 2005.

[59 FR 67015, Dec. 28, 1994, as amended at 73 FR 21800, Apr. 22, 2008]

#### 1.603-2 Selection.

In selecting contracting officers, the appointing official shall consider the complexity and dollar value of the acquisitions to be assigned and the candidate's experience, training, education, business acumen, judgment, character, and reputation. Examples of selection criteria include—

(a) Experience in Government contracting and administration, commercial purchasing, or related fields;

(b) Education or special training in business administration, law, accounting, engineering, or related fields;

(c) Knowledge of acquisition policies and procedures, including this and other applicable regulations;

(d) Specialized knowledge in the particular assigned field of contracting; and

(e) Satisfactory completion of acquisition training courses.

#### 1.603-3 Appointment.

(a) Contracting officers shall be appointed in writing on an SF 1402, Certificate of Appointment, which shall state any limitations on the scope of authority to be exercised, other than limitations contained in applicable law or regulation. Appointing officials shall maintain files containing copies

of all appointments that have not been terminated.

(b) Agency heads are encouraged to delegate micro-purchase authority to individuals who are employees of an executive agency or members of the Armed Forces of the United States who will be using the supplies or services being purchased. Individuals delegated this authority are not required to be appointed on an SF 1402, but shall be appointed in writing in accordance with agency procedures.

[61 FR 39190, July 26, 1996]

#### 1.603-4 Termination.

Termination of a contracting officer appointment will be by letter, unless the Certificate of Appointment contains other provisions for automatic termination. Terminations may be for reasons such as reassignment, termination of employment, or unsatisfactory performance. No termination shall operate retroactively.

## Subpart 1.7—Determinations and Findings

SOURCE: 50 FR 1726, Jan. 11, 1985; 50 FR 52429, Dec. 23, 1985, unless otherwise noted.

### 1.700 Scope of subpart.

This subpart prescribes general policies and procedures for the use of determinations and findings (D&F's). Requirements for specific types of D&F's can be found with the appropriate subject matter.

### 1.701 Definition.

*Determination and Findings* (D&F) means a special form of written approval by an authorized official that is required by statute or regulation as a prerequisite to taking certain contract actions. The *determination* is a conclusion or decision supported by the *findings*. The findings are statements of fact or rationale essential to support the determination and must cover each requirement of the statute or regulation.

[50 FR 1726, Jan. 11, 1985 (interim rule), and 50 FR 52429, Dec. 23, 1985 (final rule), as amended at 67 FR 13053, Mar. 20, 2002]