

file that may be necessary to determine the merits of the protest; and

* * * * *

(h) *Award of costs.* (1) If the GAO determines that a solicitation for a contract, a proposed award, or an award of a contract does not comply with a statute or regulation, the GAO may recommend that the agency pay to an appropriate protester the cost, exclusive of profit, of filing and pursuing the protest, including reasonable attorney, consultant, and expert witness fees, and bid and proposal preparation costs. The agency shall use funds available for the procurement to pay the costs awarded.

(2) The protester shall file its claim for costs with the contracting agency within 60 days after receipt of the GAO's recommendation that the agency pay the protester its costs. Failure to file the claim within that time may result in forfeiture of the protester's right to recover its costs.

(3) The agency shall attempt to reach an agreement on the amount of costs to be paid. If the agency and the protester are unable to agree on the amount to be paid, the GAO may, upon request of the protester, recommend to the agency the amount of costs that the agency should pay.

(4) Within 60 days after the GAO recommends the amount of costs the agency should pay the protester, the agency shall notify the GAO of the action taken by the agency in response to the recommendation.

(5) No agency shall pay a party, other than a small business concern within the meaning of section 3(a) of the Small Business Act (see 19.001, "Small business concern"), costs under paragraph (h)(2) of this section

(i) For consultant and expert witness fees that exceed the highest rate of compensation for expert witnesses paid by the Government pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3109 and 5 CFR 304.105; or

(ii) For attorney's fees that exceed \$150 per hour, unless the agency determines, based on the recommendation of the Comptroller General on a case-by-case basis, that an increase in the cost of living or a special factor, such as the limited availability of qualified attorneys for the proceedings involved, justifies a higher fee. The cap placed on attorneys' fees for businesses, other than small businesses, constitutes a benchmark as to a "reasonable" level for attorney's fees for small businesses.

(6) Before paying a recommended award of costs, agency personnel should consult legal counsel. Section 33.104(h) applies to all recommended awards of costs that have not yet been paid.

(7) Any costs the contractor receives under this section shall not be the

subject of subsequent proposals, billings, or claims against the Government, and those exclusions should be reflected in the cost agreement.

(8) If the Government pays costs, as provided in paragraph (h)(1) of this section, where a postaward protest is sustained as the result of an awardee's intentional or negligent misstatement, misrepresentation, or miscertification, the Government may require the awardee to reimburse the Government the amount of such costs. In addition to any other remedy available, and pursuant to the requirements of subpart 32.6, the Government may collect this debt by offsetting the amount against any payment due the awardee under any contract between the awardee and the Government.

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

48 CFR Parts 42 and 53

[FAC 97-03; FAR Case 95-034; Item XI]

RIN 9000-AH18

Federal Acquisition Regulation; Novation and Related Agreements

AGENCIES: Department of Defense (DoD), General Services Administration (GSA), and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The Civilian Agency Acquisition Council and the Defense Acquisition Regulations Council have agreed on a final rule amending the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) to facilitate the processing of novation and related agreements. This regulatory action was not subject to Office of Management and Budget review under Executive Order 12866, dated September 30, 1993, and is not a major rule under 5 U.S.C. 804.

EFFECTIVE DATE: February 9, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: The FAR Secretariat, Room 4035, GS Building, Washington, DC 20405, (202) 501-4755, for information pertaining to status or publication schedules. For clarification of content, contact Ms. Linda Klein, Procurement Analyst, at (202) 501-3775. Please cite FAC 97-03, FAR case 95-034.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

A. Background

The purpose of this rule is to facilitate the process of novating contracts and to provide guidelines for contracting officers, while preserving the Government's interests in business combinations affecting its contracts. A proposed rule was published in the **Federal Register** on August 21, 1996 (61 FR 43294). Eighteen comments were received from six respondents. All comments were considered in the development of the final rule.

B. Regulatory Flexibility Act

The Department of Defense, the General Services Administration, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration certify that this final rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities within the meaning of the Regulatory Flexibility Act, 5 U.S.C. 601, *et seq.*, because novation agreements generally affect only a relatively small number of large and small business entities.

C. Paperwork Reduction Act

The Paperwork Reduction Act does not apply because the changes to the FAR do not impose recordkeeping or information collection requirements, or collections of information from offerors, contractors, or members of the public which require the approval of the Office of Management and Budget under 44 U.S.C. 3501, *et seq.*

List of Subjects in 48 CFR Parts 42 and 53

Government procurement.

Dated: December 1, 1997.

Edward C. Loeb,

Director, Federal Acquisition Policy Division.

Therefore, 48 CFR parts 42 and 53 are amended as set forth below:

1. The authority citation for 48 CFR parts 42 and 53 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 40 U.S.C. 486(c); 10 U.S.C. chapter 137; and 42 U.S.C. 2473(c).

PART 42—CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION

2. Section 42.1203 is amended by revising paragraphs (b) and (c); redesignating paragraphs (d) through (f) as (f) through (h), respectively; and adding new paragraphs (d) and (e) to read as follows:

42.1203 Processing agreements.

* * * * *

(b) The responsible contracting officer shall—

(1) Identify and request that the contractor submit the information necessary to evaluate the proposed agreement for recognizing a successor in interest or a name change. This information should include the items identified in 42.1204 (e) and (f) or 42.1205(a), as applicable;

(2) Notify each contract administration office and contracting office affected by a proposed agreement for recognizing a successor in interest, and provide those offices with a list of all affected contracts; and

(3) Request submission of any comments or objections to the proposed transfer within 30 days after notification. Any submission should be accompanied by supporting documentation.

(c) Upon receipt of the necessary information, the responsible contracting officer shall determine whether or not it is in the Governments interest to recognize the proposed successor in interest on the basis of—

(1) The comments received from the affected contract administration offices and contracting offices;

(2) The proposed successor's responsibility under subpart 9.1, Responsible Prospective Contractors; and

(3) Any factor relating to the proposed successor's performance of contracts with the Government that the Government determines would impair the proposed successor's ability to perform the contract satisfactorily.

(d) The execution of a novation agreement does not preclude the use of any other method available to the contracting officer to resolve any other issues related to a transfer of contractor assets, including the treatment of costs.

(e) Any separate agreement between the transferor and transferee regarding the assumption of liabilities (e.g., long-term incentive compensation plans, cost accounting standards noncompliances, environmental cleanup costs, and final overhead costs) should be referenced specifically in the novation agreement.

* * * * *

3. Section 42.1204 is amended by—

a. Revising the section heading and paragraph (a) introductory text, (a)(1), and the introductory text of (a)(2);

b. Redesignating paragraphs (b), (c), (d), and (e) as (c), (e), (h), and (i), respectively;

c. Adding new paragraphs (b), (d), (f), and (g); and

d. Revising newly redesignated paragraph (e) to read as follows:

42.1204 Applicability of novation agreements.

(a) 41 U.S.C. 15 prohibits transfer of Government contracts from the contractor to a third party. The Government may, when in its interest, recognize a third party as the successor in interest to a Government contract when the third party's interest in the contract arises out of the transfer of—

(1) All the contractor's assets; or

(2) The entire portion of the assets involved in performing the contract. (See 14.404-2(l) for the effect of novation agreements after bid opening but before award.) Examples of such transactions include, but are not limited to—

* * * * *

(b) A novation agreement is unnecessary when there is a change in the ownership of a contractor as a result of a stock purchase, with no legal change in the contracting party, and when that contracting party remains in control of the assets and is the party performing the contract. However, whether there is a purchase of assets or a stock purchase, there may be issues related to the change in ownership that appropriately should be addressed in a formal agreement between the contractor and the Government (see 42.1203(e)).

* * * * *

(d) When considering whether to recognize a third party as a successor in interest to Government contracts, the responsible contracting officer shall identify and evaluate any significant organizational conflicts of interest in accordance with subpart 9.5. If the responsible contracting officer determines that a conflict of interest cannot be resolved, but that it is in the best interest of the Government to approve the novation request, a request for a waiver may be submitted in accordance with the procedures at 9.503.

(e) When a contractor asks the Government to recognize a successor in interest, the contractor shall submit to the responsible contracting officer three signed copies of the proposed novation agreement and one copy each, as applicable, of the following:

(1) The document describing the proposed transaction, e.g., purchase/sale agreement or memorandum of understanding.

(2) A list of all affected contracts between the transferor and the Government, as of the date of sale or transfer of assets, showing for each, as of that date, the—

(i) Contract number and type;

(ii) Name and address of the contracting office;

(iii) Total dollar value, as amended; and

(iv) Approximate remaining unpaid balance.

(3) Evidence of the transferee's capability to perform.

(4) Any other relevant information requested by the responsible contracting officer.

(f) Except as provided in paragraph (g) of this section, the contractor shall submit to the responsible contracting officer one copy of each of the following documents, as applicable, as the documents become available:

(1) An authenticated copy of the instrument effecting the transfer of assets; e.g., bill of sale, certificate of merger, contract, deed, agreement, or court decree.

(2) A certified copy of each resolution of the corporate parties' boards of directors authorizing the transfer of assets.

(3) A certified copy of the minutes of each corporate party's stockholder meeting necessary to approve the transfer of assets.

(4) An authenticated copy of the transferee's certificate and articles of incorporation, if a corporation was formed for the purpose of receiving the assets involved in performing the Government contracts.

(5) The opinion of legal counsel for the transferor and transferee stating that the transfer was properly effected under applicable law and the effective date of transfer.

(6) Balance sheets of the transferor and transferee as of the dates immediately before and after the transfer of assets, audited by independent accountants.

(7) Evidence that any security clearance requirements have been met.

(8) The consent of sureties on all contracts listed under paragraph (e)(2) of this section if bonds are required, or a statement from the transferor that none are required.

(g) If the Government has acquired the documents during its participation in the pre-merger or pre-acquisition review process, or the Government's interests are adequately protected with an alternative formulation of the information, the responsible contracting officer may modify the list of documents to be submitted by the contractor.

NOVATION AGREEMENT

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PART 53—FORMS

53.242-1 [Amended]

4. Section 53.242-1 is amended by revising "42.1203(f)" to read "42.1203(h)".

53.243 [Amended]

5. Section 53.243 is amended by revising "42.1203(f)" to read "42.1203(h)".

[FR Doc. 97-31824 Filed 12-8-97; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**GENERAL SERVICES
ADMINISTRATION****NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND
SPACE ADMINISTRATION****48 CFR Part 47**

[FAC 97-03; FAR Case 97-017; Item XII]

RIN 9000-AH78

**Federal Acquisition Regulation;
Commercial Bills of Lading, Small
Package Shipments**

AGENCIES: Department of Defense (DoD), General Services Administration (GSA), and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The Civilian Agency Acquisition Council and the Defense Acquisition Regulations Council have agreed on a final rule amending the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) to raise the threshold for requiring receipted freight bills for small package shipments, and the maximum amount that the Government may pay for invoiced but unsupported transportation charges. This regulatory action was not subject to Office of Management and Budget review under Executive Order 12866, dated September 30, 1993, and is not a major rule under 5 U.S.C. 804.

EFFECTIVE DATE: February 9, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: The FAR Secretariat, Room 4035, GS Building, Washington, DC 20405, (202) 501-4755, for information pertaining to status or publication schedules. For clarification of content, contact Ms. Linda Klein, Procurement Analyst, at (202) 501-3775. Please cite FAC 97-03, FAR case 97-017.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**A. Background**

Based upon the benefits encountered during a 6-month test conducted by the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, Denver Center, this rule amends FAR 47.303-17 to raise the threshold for requiring receipted freight bills for small package shipments from \$25 to \$100, and the maximum amount

that the Government may pay for invoiced but unsupported transportation charges from \$100 to \$250. These increased amounts are considered to more accurately reflect shipping costs in today's business environment.

B. Regulatory Flexibility Act

The final rule does not constitute a significant FAR revision within the meaning of FAR 1.501 and Public Law 98-577, and publication for public comments is not required. However, comments from small entities concerning the affected FAR subpart will be considered in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 610. Such comments must be submitted separately and should cite 5 U.S.C. 601, *et seq.* (FAC 97-03, FAR case 97-017), in correspondence.

C. Paperwork Reduction Act

The Paperwork Reduction Act (Pub. L. 96-511) is deemed to apply because the final rule contains information collection requirements. Accordingly, a revised paperwork burden reflecting a decrease in burden as a result of the increase to thresholds will be forwarded to the Office of Management and Budget under 44 U.S.C. 3501, *et seq.*

List of Subjects in 48 CFR Part 47:

Government procurement.

Dated: December 1, 1997.

Edward C. Loeb,

Director, Federal Acquisition Policy Division.

Therefore, 48 CFR Part 47 is amended as set forth below:

PART 47—TRANSPORTATION

1. The authority citation for 48 CFR part 47 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 40 U.S.C. 486(c); 10 U.S.C. chapter 137; and 42 U.S.C. 2473(c).

47.303-17 [Amended]

2. Section 47.303-17 is amended in paragraph (d)(1) by removing "\$25" and inserting "\$100"; in (d)(2) by removing "\$100" and inserting "\$250"; and in the second sentence of paragraph (e) by replacing "47.303-17(d)(1)" with "paragraph (d)(2) of this subsection" and "\$25" with "\$250".

[FR Doc. 97-31825 Filed 12-8-97; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**GENERAL SERVICES
ADMINISTRATION****NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND
SPACE ADMINISTRATION****48 CFR Part 53**

[FAC 97-05; FAR Case 96-022; Item XIII]

RIN 9000-AH74

**Federal Acquisition Regulation;
Standard Form 1406, Preaward Survey
of Prospective Contractor—Quality
Assurance**

AGENCIES: Department of Defense (DoD), General Services Administration (GSA), and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The Civilian Agency Acquisition Council and the Defense Acquisition Regulations Council have agreed on a final rule amending the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) to revise Standard Form 1406, Preaward Survey of Prospective Contractor—Quality Assurance, to delete references to canceled specifications and to conform the language in the form to the current quality assurance guidance in the FAR. This regulatory action was not subject to Office of Management and Budget review under Executive Order 12866, dated September 30, 1993, and is not a major rule under 5 U.S.C. 804.

EFFECTIVE DATE: February 9, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: The FAR Secretariat, Room 4035, GS Building, Washington, DC 20405, (202) 501-4755, for information pertaining to status or publication schedules. For clarification of content, contact Ms. Linda Klein, Procurement Analyst, at (202) 501-3775. Please cite FAC 97-05, FAR case 96-022.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**A. Background**

Revision of the Standard Form 1406 is necessary due to the cancellation of military specifications, such as MIL-Q-9858 and MIL-I-45208, which are cited in the form, and to conform the language in the form to the current language in FAR Part 46.

B. Regulatory Flexibility Act

The final rule does not constitute a significant FAR revision within the meaning of FAR 1.501 and Public Law 98-577, and publication for public comments is not required. However, comments from small entities concerning the affected FAR subpart