



Steps



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OFFICE OF ACQUISITION MANAGEMENT
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From the Editor

Spring is here! Like all of the trees and flowers in bloom this time of year, GSA is undergoing growth and change too. In the upcoming issue(s) of *Steps*, be on the lookout for information on program updates and new initiatives. This issue of *Steps* contains some interesting articles on a host of topics that may have an impact on you and your contract, including environmental requirements, the role of the Industrial Operations Analyst (IOA) and issues related to global supply. If you would like to provide feedback and/or have suggestions for subjects to cover in future newsletters, please feel free to contact Sheri Meadema at sheri.meadema@gsa.gov.



Do You Know Your Administrative Contracting Officer?

Your Administrative Contracting Officer (ACO) is responsible for many contract administration functions, including sales-related issues and Mass Modifications. If you know who your ACO is, remember you can contact them any time for contract assistance. If you do not know who your ACO is, check out the ACO locator at the Vendor Support Center website (<http://vsc.gsa.gov>). Under the "Contract Administration" menu, click "ACO Locator."



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GSA Steps: sheri.meadema@gsa.gov

Were You Aware That There is a New Revision to FED-STD-123 “Marking for Shipment (Civil Agencies)”?

The old version of FED-STD-123G, dated June 6, 1997, has been superseded by FED-STD-123H, dated August 8, 2007, making this a good time to discuss some of the most common marking and packing issues that GSA industry partners face with shipments bound for GSA depots. Some of the most common marking and packing mistakes are the exclusion of the National Stock Number (NSN) and unit of issue on the transport package.

The standard requires every transport package be labeled with the information found in the sidebar box in characters at least 9 mm (3/8”) high, unless space does not permit 9 mm characters. In such

cases smaller characters are permitted. It is important to remember that the information included on the transport package is just as important as the information included on the unit and intermediate package. Placing the correct information on the transport package will help GSA depot personnel receive the material more efficiently and effectively and will also reduce the amount of remarking charges levied against GSA’s industry partners.

For the latest version of FED-STD-123: <http://assist.daps.dla.mil/quicksearch>.

Any questions relating to FED-STD-123H should be addressed to the ACO assigned to your contract.

According to FED-STD-123H, the transport package should include the following information:

1. Purchase order number
2. National Stock Number
3. Consignor
4. Consignee
5. Number of pieces
6. Weight, and
7. Cube

*For more detailed information please see Part 4.1.2 of FED-STD-123H

GLOBAL SUPPLY

Keep It Clean!

As a Global Supply contractor in partnership with GSA, it is imperative that you maintain a satisfactory performance history that includes timely delivery of all orders issued. GSA uses your performance history as part of its evaluation process for award of future contracts.

The first step towards achieving a satisfactory record is communicating with your Administrative Contract Officer (ACO). Any issues that may impede with successful performance of your contract should be communicated to the ACO immediately.

Second, ensure that your GSA 1678 “Status of Orders Received and Shipped” (or equivalent form used by your ACO) is forwarded to your ACO so they may confirm that you have received all orders issued to your firm. If you did not receive an order due to a system error, your ACO will immediately issue you a copy and modify the delivery due date. Also, be sure to respond to your ACO’s inquiry for delivery status because your ACO is responsible for monitoring delivery to ensure that orders are being shipped in a timely manner to maintain adequate inventory in our distribution centers.

Third, if you are unable to meet the delivery due date, you must contact your ACO to inform them of the reason for the delay and to negotiate a new date.



Your Industrial Operations Analyst (IOA) and the Contractor Assistance Visit (CAV)

Your Industrial Operations Analyst, usually referred to as an IOA, conducts personal visits to your company to explain performance requirements, provide marketing information, resolve sales reporting or fee payment issues, and ensure that you are complying with the terms and conditions of your contract. Your IOA is not an auditor! You should view your IOA as an assistant who provides valuable information and addresses all of your questions and concerns.

These personal visits are formally referred to as Contractor Assistance Visits, commonly called CAVs. A CAV will be performed periodically by your IOA.

There are a number of objectives associated with the Contractor Assistance Visit. One of these objectives is to ensure that you understand the terms and conditions of your Schedule contract. The CAV also provides you with the opportunity to ask questions or seek clarifications on any ambiguous issues. If you are having problems, we want to identify and correct them as soon as possible to avoid any future troubles.

You can plan to be visited by an IOA at least twice during each contract term. One visit will occur between 24 and 36 months into the contract term and another will occur 6 to 12 months before the expiration of the contract term. Although this is the norm, there are some circumstances that may require additional visits.

Determining who should be present during a CAV is dependant upon your business model and who is responsible for the various requirements of your contract. Optimally, try to have your designated contract administrator present, as well as other personnel who are responsible for the identification, creation, and submission of your sales data. If the IOA has sales or marketing information to disseminate, it may be a good idea to have your sales and/or marketing persons available as well. If you have products on your contract, you should have someone present who

has knowledge of the country of origin of your products. You should also have someone present who has knowledge about any environmental attributes for the products and services on your contract.

It's to your benefit that the IOA is able to perform a comprehensive visit while at your location. This can be accomplished by making sure that your subject matter experts are close at hand. Your visit will also run more smoothly if you have information pertinent to your contract readily available for review. Your IOA will let you know what will be covered and how the visit will be conducted in advance of the actual visit.

Some contract compliance information gathered by the IOA during the visit will be used to determine the rating that you receive on your report card. For more information on the report card and to see a sample, please visit <http://vsc.gsa.gov/casi/>



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GSA Federal Supply Schedules' State and Local Purchasing Programs Vendor Fact Sheet

1122 Counterdrug Program (www.gsa.gov/1122program)

- ▶ State and local governments can support their counterdrug efforts by purchasing equipment at reduced rates from GSA. Under the authority of the 1994 National Defense Authorization Act, 42 states, by using their own funds, can take advantage of the discounts available to the federal government.
- ▶ Each state participating in the 1122 Program designates a State Point of Contact (SPOC) to administer the state's activities under the program, by validating the counterdrug mission of each procurement request, and ensuring the availability of funds.
- ▶ Limited Schedules and Special Item Numbers (SINs) are open for purchase and only available for this one specific purpose.

IT Cooperative Purchasing- Section 211 of the E-Government Act of 2002 (www.gsa.gov/cooperativepurchasing)

- ▶ Section 211 authorized GSA sales of Federal Supply Schedule 70 IT products and services and IT Special Item Numbers on the Consolidated Schedule to state and local governments, at any time for any reason, through the introduction of Cooperative Purchasing.
- ▶ Sales data collected based on SINs:
 - FY03 (March – September): \$5 million
 - FY04: \$75 million
 - FY05: \$140 million
 - FY06 : \$239 million
 - FY07 (to date): \$193 million
- ▶ Approved vendors have a **COOP PURCH** symbol next to their approved SINs in e-library and next to their approved products and services in *GSA Advantage!*

The screenshot shows the GSA Schedules e-Library website. The main navigation bar includes "Home", "Federal Supply Schedule Listing", "Basic Schedule Ordering Guidelines", and "Help". The page title is "GSA Schedules e-Library".

The "Welcome..." section states: "Schedules e-Library is your one source for the latest GSA contract award information. GSA offers unparalleled acquisition solutions to meet today's acquisition challenges. GSA's key goal is to deliver excellent acquisition services that provide best value, in terms of cost, quality and service, for federal agencies and taxpayers."

The "Search" section has a text input field for "enter Keywords, Contract Number, Contractor/Manufacturer Name, Schedule/SIN/GWAC Number" and a "Search" button. Below it is a link: "▶ View an Alphabetical Listing of available Contractors (a-z)".

The "Category Guide" section lists various categories with expandable arrows:

- ▶ Spring/Summer
- ▶ Disaster Relief
- ▶ Homeland Security
- ▶ IT Solutions & Electronics
- ▶ Law Enforcement, Fire, & Security
- ▶ Recreation & Apparel
- ▶ Tools, Hardware, & Machinery
- ▶ Vehicles & Watercraft
- ▶ Building & Industrial
- ▶ Furniture & Furnishings
- ▶ Hospitality, Cleaning, & Chemicals
- ▶ Laboratory, Scientific, & Medical
- ▶ Office Solutions
- ▶ Services
- ▶ Travel & Transportation Solutions
- ▶ Wildland Fire & Equipment

The "e-Library News..." section features a headline: "CONSERVE ENERGY- ENERGY MANAGEMENT SERVICES". The text below reads: "Are you looking for ways to manage your energy consumption? Energy Management Services are now available under Schedule 03FAC Facilities Maintenance and Management. These services can include: audits and audit plans, resource efficiency management, use of alternative energy sources, and building commissioning services. Also, a variety of energy management program support services are available that can include: energy planning and strategies, billing and management oversight, preparation of statements of work, energy choice analysis, risk management, metering services, and vulnerability assessments. www.gsa.gov/energyservices"

The "Technology Contracts" section states: "GSA technology contracts cover the whole spectrum of IT solutions, from network services and information assurance to telecommunications and purchase of hardware and software." Below it is a link: "▶ View Technology Contracts".

The "State and Local Governments" section is highlighted with a red circle. It contains the following text:


- Cooperative Purchasing** COOP PURCH
- Section 211 of the E-Government Act of 2002 enables states and localities to purchase IT products, services, and support equipment from Federal Supply Schedules.
- ▶ View authorized vendors
- ▶ Cooperative Purchase FAQ

The "Disaster Recovery" section is also visible, with the following text:

- Disaster Recovery Purchasing** DISAST RECOV
- Section 833 of the National Defense Authorization Act allows state and local governments to purchase products and services to facilitate recovery from a major disaster.
- ▶ View participating vendors
- ▶ Disaster Recovery Purchasing FAQ

The footer of the page includes "GSA Federal Supply Schedules" and "VA Federal Supply Schedules". The browser status bar at the bottom shows "Internet" and "100%".

Disaster Recovery Purchasing, Section 833 (www.gsa.gov/disasterrecovery)

- ▶ Section 833 of the FY07 Defense Authorization Act authorizes GSA to allow state and local governments access to the GSA Federal Supply Schedules to purchase products and services to be used to **facilitate recovery** from a major disaster, terrorism or nuclear, biological, chemical, or radiological attack.
- ▶ Interim Rule published February 2, 2007: **Advance purchasing** prior to a declared disaster is allowed under the Disaster Recovery Purchasing Interim Rule, as long as the products and services being purchased will be used to recover from a declared disaster.
 - *“In the aftermath of emergency events, State or local governments’ systems may be disrupted. Thus, use of Federal Supply schedule contracts prior to these events to acquire products or services to be used to facilitate recovery is authorized. Again, the state or local government will be responsible for ensuring that purchased products or services are to be used to facilitate recovery.”*
- ▶ Participation in the Disaster Recovery Purchasing Program is voluntary.
 - State and local government can choose to participate or not.
 - The vendor community can choose to participate on two levels:
 - Schedule contract level
 - Order level
- ▶ Mass modification issued mid-February 2007
 - Data on GSA e-library updates as modifications are accepted
 - Vendors appear on e-library with a  symbol next to the company name
 - The price of supplies and services available to State/local entities will include the industrial funding fee (IFF) to cover the administrative costs incurred to operate the schedules program.

www.gsa.gov/stateandlocal

Understanding the Basis of Award

Do you know who the basis of award customer/class of customer is for your contract? Do you monitor the pricing and discounts offered to your basis of award customer? Have you maintained the established discount relationship with GSA? Knowing the answer to these questions is critical to the effective management of your MAS contract. Let’s talk details.

When you submitted your offer to GSA, you completed the CSP-1 to disclose the best pricing and/or discounts given to any customer. Your Procurement Contracting Officer (PCO) used that information to develop the pricing objectives for negotiations. Once you completed negotiations, you should have included a statement regarding your negotiated basis of award customer and/or most favored customer in your Final Proposal Revision (FPR). Your FPR should have been incorporated in to the final award of your contract.

Price Reduction Clause 552.238-75, in your contract, states “before award of a contract, the Contracting Officer and the Offeror will agree upon (1) the customer (or category of customers) which will be the basis of award, and (2) the Government’s price or discount relationship to the identified customer (or category of customers). This relationship shall be maintained throughout the contract period.” Any change in the pricing or discounts given to the identified customer that disturbs this relationship constitutes a price reduction.

So what happens if you have not been paying attention to the basis of award customer, and what should you do now? It’s possible that you may have breached the Price Reduction clause in your contract, and this is a very serious issue. The first thing you need to do is review your award documentation to identify the basis of award customer and the discount relationship that you established with GSA. Then, do a self-audit to determine if you have maintained the relationship. If you find that you have breached the Price Reduction clause, or if you are unsure, notify your PCO immediately.

If you find that you have breached the Price Reduction clause, or if you are unsure, notify your PCO immediately.

GO GREEN!

How You Can Help FAS Assist Federal Agencies in Meeting Energy Efficient Product Procurement Requirements

Agencies are required to purchase ENERGY STAR® and Federal Energy Management Program (FEMP) designated products (FAR 23.2). This requirement applies to all energy consuming products and equipment purchased from any vendor through any acquisition method.

GSA and the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) must clearly identify and prominently display ENERGY STAR® and other products that meet FEMP efficiency recommendations in paper and online catalogues (Energy Policy Act and Energy Independence and Security Act).

What is FAS doing to comply?

It's our goal to increase the availability of environmental products offered by our industry partners, increase the visibility of compliant products in our inventory, and make it easier for our buyers to locate and purchase compliant products.

As a result, FAS established environmental specialty categories in its two online purchasing systems— GSA *Advantage!*® and GSA Global Supply System. This feature allows buyers to easily locate and shop for a variety of environmental products, including products that are FEMP-designated or ENERGY STAR®-qualified. In order to ensure the integrity of the ENERGY STAR® designations, FAS has partnered with ENERGY STAR® to create a matching script that will mark ENERGY STAR® qualified products automatically. For FEMP items, however, contractors will need to assign the designation themselves using the Schedule Input Program (SIP) or Electronic Data Interchange (EDI).

In addition, FAS will enact measures to aid buyers in purchasing qualifying products. Beginning in the fourth quarter of FY 2008, purchasers using GSA *Advantage!*®

who place items in the shopping cart that do not meet established energy efficiency requirements will receive a reminder to check for compliant alternatives.

In the future, GSA *Advantage!*® will also include additional environmental attributes for items meeting the bronze, silver, and gold standards set forth by Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT). EPEAT is a system to help purchasers in the public and private sectors evaluate, compare and select desktop computers, notebooks and monitors based on their environmental attributes. EPEAT designated products are required by Executive Order 13423. Visit the EPEAT website (www.epeat.net) for more information.

What should I do?

FAR 23.2 requirements place a priority on the purchase of energy-efficient products, meaning that federal buyers will have a purchasing preference for ENERGY STAR® qualified products and products that meet FEMP specifications. If you have a MAS contract, it is important to properly identify ENERGY STAR and FEMP products in accordance with GSAR 552.238-72, Identification of Products That Have Environmental Attributes. This requirement applies to both printed and electronic publications. As such, you are encouraged to examine your offerings to ensure that compliant items are properly designated in your paper pricelist and in your electronic catalog submission.



The bullet points below will assist you in complying with this requirement and in keeping your products in high demand. We want potential customers to find you!

Review the GSA Schedules and Special Item Numbers (SINs) containing ENERGY STAR® and FEMP specifications.

- ▶ Update your GSA *Advantage!*® item descriptions and product designations to accurately represent the environmental attribute(s) associated with each product offered. Remember that properly identifying items that are energy-efficient and keeping this information up to date is required by GSAR 552.238-72.
- ▶ Remove any inappropriate designations. Remember, ENERGY STAR® and FEMP designations apply to a whole item, not parts of an item. For example, a refrigerator may be ENERGY STAR® qualified, but a replacement part for a refrigerator may not be ENERGY STAR® qualified.
- ▶ Make all environmental marketing claims clear to the buyer. You need to be able to substantiate any environmental attributes associated with the products that you offer. For help, take a look at the Federal Trade Com-

mission's (FTC) *Guides for the Use of Environmental Marketing Claims*, which outlines principles and guidance for making environmental claims. The FTC takes corrective actions against any vendor making deceptive claims, so be sure to follow the rules! If you have any questions regarding environmental marketing claims, please reference the FTC guide at: www.ftc.gov/bcp/grnrule/guides980427.htm.

What GSA Schedule items are covered?

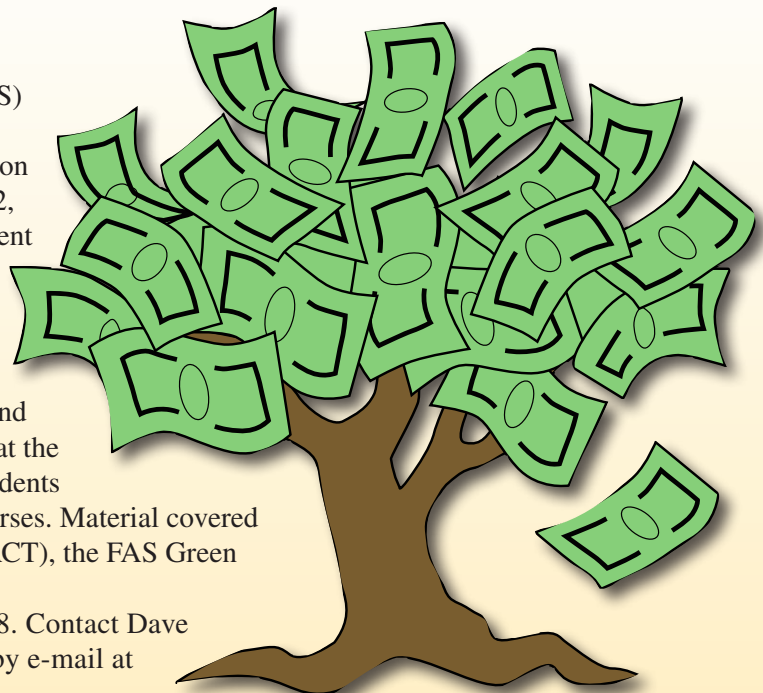
To view the items covered by Section 104 EPACT requirements and the pertinent GSA Schedule and Special Item Number (SIN), visit www.gsa.gov/enviro. In the left sidebar, click on "Energy Efficient Products," and then click on "Energy Efficient Product Library." This will lead you to the "Energy Efficient Products Offered" spreadsheet. The spreadsheet lists the energy efficiency requirements for each item.

Additional information on ENERGY STAR® and FEMP can be found at: www.energystar.gov/products and <http://eere.energy.gov/femp/procurement>.

The Greening of FAS

It is the goal of the Federal Acquisition Service (FAS) to be a committed leader in green purchasing. To facilitate this commitment, FAS Office of Acquisition Management (QV) awarded a contract on March 12, 2008, to Management Concepts, Inc., for the development of two courses that will explain the purpose of green purchasing. The courses will be geared toward the FAS acquisition workforce, and GSA/FAS customer agencies. Additionally, a vendor orientation for GSA/FAS industry partners will be developed. The courses and vendor orientation will be given in a classroom setting at the FAS facility in Arlington, VA. A maximum of thirty students per class will be chosen by QV to participate in the courses. Material covered will include Section 104 of the Energy Policy Act (EPACT), the FAS Green Purchasing Plan, and other material.

The courses are scheduled to be given in July 2008. Contact Dave Vacca (QV0B) for more details at (703) 605-2625 or by e-mail at david.vacca@gsa.gov.



Revised MAS New Contract Orientation Webcast

The GSA is committed to helping our Multiple Award Schedule (MAS) contract holders be successful. We recognize that you're not always able to attend new contractor orientation seminars that are held around the country. That's why we translated all of the information that you need to know into a webcast! This online presentation contains critical information on contract requirements and your responsibilities as a contract holder. It also provides links to various marketing resources to help you on your way. The webcast is not limited to new contractors; it's a perfect way for veterans of the Schedules program to brush up on contract requirements, or to bring new employees up to speed.

The presentation has recently been updated and is available through our Vendor Support Center (VSC) website at <http://vsc.gsa.gov>, under "Vendor Training."

We realize that watching a presentation on the web deprives you of the ability to ask questions and provide feedback. That's why we hold live, monthly online chat sessions that give you the opportunity to ask questions and receive real-time answers from GSA personnel. After you

register and view the webcast, you will get periodic e-mails alerting you of upcoming chat sessions. We can't wait to talk with you, so please join us! In addition to being able to provide feedback during the chat sessions, you will also be able to tell GSA how you think we did through an electronic survey. A couple of weeks after you view the orientation, you will receive a short feedback survey via email. We strongly encourage you to provide comments and suggestions for improvement so that we can ensure that the new contractor orientation webcast is as informative and useful as it can be.

We hope that we've provided you with a beneficial and accessible tool to help you navigate your road to success.

Note! When you register to watch the orientation, please be sure to indicate that you are a GSA Schedule contract holder, and insert your contract number(s). This is how we make sure that you've received the training that you need to manage your contract effectively.

If you have any questions regarding the purpose or content of the presentation, please contact Sheri Meadema at 703.605.2577.

<http://vsc.gsa.gov>

Do You e-Pay?

As you know, your Industrial Funding Fee (IFF) must be paid to GSA quarterly. Did you also know that you can pay this fee online? That's right, no more mailing paper checks. After you report your sales at the Vendor Support Center (VSC) website (<http://vsc.gsa.gov>), you will have the option of immediately paying the IFF due. You can either pay with a credit card or by online check (EFT) using the Department of the Treasury's secure online payment website, pay.gov. You can also make an electronic payment at any time using the "Make a Payment" link from your contract menu at the VSC website. Visit the Vendor Support Center for more information. Click on "Reporting Sales," then "72A Online Reporting."