

## Procurement & Property Division Policy Memorandum

|   |                        |   |
|---|------------------------|---|
| Subject: <b>Contract and Purchase Order Checklists</b>        |                        | Number:<br>4-02                         |
| Distribution:<br>ARS Headquarters,<br>Areas, and<br>Locations | Date:<br>July 11, 2003 | This Replaces:<br><b>Not Applicable</b> |

### Background

As part of the vision for modernization and consistency across Agriculture Research Service's (ARS's) contracting and purchasing functions, the Procurement and Property Division's (PPD) strategic plan included the objective of standardizing and modernizing ARS procurement files. Contract and Purchase Order files contain many, varied, and often voluminous documents. The Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) contains guidance on how these files are to be organized.

Files should be able to stand on their own. They should be neat and kept in an orderly fashion so as to allow review during any phase of the procurement process. The contract file is a record of how and why the Contracting Officer conducted the procurement process. A file is well-documented when it can demonstrate to all future readers the issues, analyses, actions, and determinations that led to the actual contract or purchase order without having to consult the individuals responsible.

The File Format Checklists were developed in order to standardize recordkeeping functions. The intent of the standardization is to: facilitate the processing of all procurement actions, assuring file requirements are not inadvertently overlooked; to present a professional format for all procurement work; and to effectuate a more expeditious review of contract files.

---

Policy Guidance

Personnel are required to follow the provided checklists in implementing the FAR guidance contained at 4.803 and 4.804. The File Format Checklists have been updated to incorporate recent acquisition reform and to take advantage of electronic capabilities for disseminating information. The Checklists are intended to provide guidance on organizing and documenting the acquisition process from identification of requirements through closeout procedures. They are quick and ready references that supplement the requirements of FAR Subparts 4.803 and 4.804. The Checklists should not be used as a substitute for the FAR, Agriculture Acquisition Regulation (AGAR), and Departmental Regulations. Contracting personnel are responsible for knowing and understanding the content of these documents.

The Checklists contain lists for Contracts, with separate Checklists for Construction and A&E Contracting and Small Purchases. Contract Checklists are broken down into phases to include (a) Acquisition Planning; (b) Procurement Request & Solicitation Development; (c) Solicitation & Evaluation; (d) Award; (e) Contract Administration; and (f) Closeout.

Instant instructions have been provided with the File Format Checklists.

---

Action Required by REE

**Policy Branch, PB**

Maintain checklists for ARS use on the PPD website. Date all versions of the Checklists, and update Checklists, as required, to comply with changes in law, regulation, policy, or best practices. Use e-mail notification to make contracting offices aware of the latest version of the Checklists.

**CO's, Contract Specialists, and Purchasing Agents**

Use the latest version of the File Format Checklists to capture and document all actions necessary in all procurement actions.

**AAO's and DAD's**

Provide the necessary oversight to assure Checklists are in use and are being properly used in order to capture all necessary information.

---

PPD Point of Contact

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact the cognizant Procurement Analyst that handles your respective Area or AFM Division (refer to the PPD Homepage for your contact at <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/divisions/ppd>).

---

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
Larry R. Cullumber, Director  
Procurement and Property Division