

Subject: HHS METRIC PROGRAM

8-25-00	Purpose
10	scope
20	Background
30	Definitions
40	Policy
50	Procedures
60	Acquisition Guidelines
70	Major Duties and Responsibilities
80	Reporting Requirements
90	Exceptions

8-25-00 PURPOSE

This chapter prescribes Departmental policies, procedures, and responsibilities for implementing the provisions of Public Law 94-168, as amended, the "Metric Conversion Act of 1975," (Title 15, United States Code, Sections 205a through **205K**).

8-25-10 SCOPE

This chapter applies to each Operating Division (**OPDIV**) of the Department and the Office of the Secretary (OS).

8-25-20 BACKGROUND

- A. Public Law 94-168, the "Metric Conversion Act of **1975**," (Title 15, United States Code, Sections 205a through **205k**) states that the policy of the United States shall be to coordinate and plan the increasing **use** of the metric **system** in the United States.
- B. Section 5164 of the "Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988," Public Law 100-418, amended the Metric Conversion Act of 1975 to provide:
 1. That the metric system of measurement is the preferred system of weights and **measures** for United States trade and commerce;

2. That each Federal agency shall, by a date certain and to the extent economically feasible by the end of Fiscal Year 1992, use the metric system of measurement in its procurements, grants, and other business-related activities (unless metric **usage is** impractical or would have an adverse **impact** on the market share of U.S. firms); and
 3. That agencies shall **seek out ways** to increase understanding of the metric system of measurement through educational information and guidance and in Government publications.
- c. Executive Order 12770, Metric Usage in Federal Government Programs, establishes governmentwide procedures for implementing the Metric Conversion Act of 1975.
 - D. Title 15, Code of Federal Regulations, "Metric Conversion Policy for Federal Agencies," Part 19, Subpart B, published **by** the Department of Commerce, provides guidance to Federal agencies in changing to the **use** of the metric **system** of measurement.
 - E. Federal Standard 3768, "Preferred Metric Units for General Use By The Federal Government," January 27, 1993, lists preferred metric units recommended for **use** throughout the Federal Government.

8-25-30 DEFINITIONS

- A. Metric System of Measurement. The International **System** of Units (**or** SI from the French "**Le Systeme International d'Unites**") as established by the General Conference on Weights and Measures in 1960, and as interpreted or modified for the United states by the Secretary of Commerce. The units are listed in Federal Standard 3768.
- B. Hard Metric. The replacement of a standard inch-pound size with an accepted metric size for a particular purpose. An example of size substitution might **be:** selling or packaging liquids **by** the liter instead of by the pint or quart (as for soft drinks), or instead of **by** the gallon (as for gasoline).

- C. Soft Metric. The result of a mathematical conversion of inch-pound measurements to metric equivalents for a particular purpose. The physical characteristics are not changed.
- D. Inch-Pound Units. Units based upon the yard and the pound commonly used in the United States and **defined** by the National Institute of Standards and Technology. (Units having the same names in other countries may differ in magnitude).
- E. Dual Systems. The use of both inch-pound and metric systems. For example, an item is designed, produced, and described in inch-pound values with soft metric values also shown for information or comparison purposes.
- F. Hybrid Systems. The use of both inch-pound and hard metric values in specifications, standards, supplies, and services; e.g., an engine with internal parts in metric dimensions and external fittings or attachments in inch-pound dimensions.

8-25-40 POLICY

It is the policy of the Department to support Federal transition to the metric system and to use the metric system of measurement in all procurements, grants, and other business related activities unless such use is **impracticable** or is likely to cause significant inefficiencies or loss of markets to United States firms.

8-25-50 PROCEDURES

- A. Each OPDIV and OS will:
 - 1. Encourage industry in the change to the metric system by acquiring commercially available metric products and services that meet the functional requirements of HHS, so long as competition is maintained.
 - 2. Make training opportunities available as necessary to increase employee awareness and understanding of metric system conversion.
 - 3. Participate on Government/industry subcommittees and working panels and groups.

4. Develop specifications and standards for procurements in metric when metric is the accepted industry system. Commercially developed metric specifications and internationally developed voluntary standards using metric will be adopted whenever possible.
 5. Specify and accept bulk (loose, unpackaged) materials in metric units, unless the use of such units is incompatible with existing systems. Procure measuring devices, shop, and laboratory equipment in metric or dual units of measurement when possible.
 6. Charge metric conversion costs to normal OPDIV and/or OS operating expenses. However, these costs are to be identified to the extent feasible. This includes the cost of metric aids, tools, equipment, and training.
 7. Use metric units of measurement in technical reports, studies, publications, and position papers (except those dealing with dimensions in inch-pound units). Inch-pound units may be cited in parentheses.
 8. Coordinate all metric conversion efforts which are likely to involve major public affairs activity with the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs.
- B. **OPDIVs** and OS may retain the measurement units in which a system **is** originally designed for the life of the system, unless conversion is necessary or advantageous.

8-25-60 ACQUISITION GUIDELINES

A. Basic Requirements

1. The metric system of measurement, or a dual system stating both metric and inch-pound units, will be used in all procurement documents where measurements are required, including purchase descriptions, specifications, and standards, unless one of the exceptions provided for in Section 8-25-90 is applicable.

2. The requesting official is responsible for documenting and signing any decision not to use metric measurements.
3. Documentation for decisions not to use metric measurements must identify the specific exception which applies and explain the reasons for its applicability.

B. Metric Decision Points in the Acquisition Process

1. Advance Planning

- (a) HHSAR 307.104-1 requires development of an acquisition planning document for all new negotiated acquisitions which are expected to exceed \$100,000. The acquisition plan is to be developed jointly by the project officer and the contract negotiator. As part of this process, **acquisition** plans should be reviewed to determine applicability of metric measurements.
- (b) A key decision point concerning use of metric measurement in advance acquisition planning is the description of work to be done. Whether a specification, purchase description or statement of work is used (**HHSAR 307.105-3**), this point is a critical one for the program or project officer to determine the suitability of metric usage in the contract.

2. Small Purchases

Small purchase acquisition methods (HHSAR 313.104) are designed to acquire defined, off-the-shelf, standard supplies, equipment or services which may be awarded on the basis of a fixed price quote. Attempts should be made to obtain such items in metric measurements when available, economically feasible and practical to meet program/project needs. The unavailability of items in metric from required sources of supply, such as mandatory GSA schedules, is sufficient justification for non-metric purchase and a statement to that effect should be included in the purchase file.

3. Requests For Contract (RFC)

Program offices are responsible for preparing the RFC when planning for contracts estimated to exceed the small purchase threshold (**HHSAR** 315.70). If a decision regarding the use of metric measurements has not already been made and documented in the advance planning process, the RFC is another point in the contracting process where a decision by the program office regarding the impact of use of metric units must be made based on program requirements.

4. Requests For Proposals (RFP)/Quotations (RFQ)/
Invitation For Bids (IFB)

Unless the official contract file contains a written justification for not using metric measurements in accordance with the exceptions permitted by this chapter, **RFPS**, **RFQS** or **IFBS** prepared by the contracting officer, for either equipment, materials or services which are measurement sensitive, must use metric measurements.

Any deviations from this requirement, based on exceptions permitted by this chapter, must be documented in the official contract file.

c. Responsibilities of Contracting Officers

1. The Contracting Officer is responsible for ensuring that metric measurements are used throughout the acquisition process, including all solicitation and contract documents. If metric measurement is not used, the Contracting Officer must ensure that the file contains appropriate justification.
2. The Contracting officer should provide the requesting office information concerning qualified sources capable of satisfying the requested items or services in metric measurements and any potential impact on competition.
3. AS a part **of** the file documentation process, the **CONtracting.Officer** must review the requesting office's decision regarding metric use and determine if any exceptions to metric use meet the requirements of this chapter.

8-25-70 MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Assistant Secretary for Management and Budget. The Assistant Secretary for Management and Budget (**ASMB**) is responsible for:
1. Ensuring HHS-wide implementation of the "Metric Conversion Act of **1975**," as amended, by September 30, 1992;
 2. Establishing HHS policy for the application and use of the metric system of measurement; and
 3. Appointing an HHS Metric Executive to carry out the responsibilities set forth in Executive Order 12770, and to chair the HHS Metric Transition Steering Committee (**MTSC**).
 4. Approving exceptions to the HHS Metric Program in accordance with Section 8-25-90.
- B. Deputy Assistant Secretary for Budget, ASMB. The Deputy Assistant Secretary for Budget, ASMB, is responsible for collecting necessary data from **OPDIVs** and OS, preparing the annual report to the Congress on metric implementation actions, and ensuring that the report is included in the annual budget as required by Title 15, United States Code, Sections j-1.
- C. Director, Office of Management, U.S. Public Health Service. The Director, Office of Management, is responsible for:
1. Providing technical advice and guidance to OPDIVs and OS regarding Federal requirements for the use of the metric system of measurement;
 2. Serving as the HHS Metric Executive;
 3. Representing HHS on the Federal Interagency Committee on Metric Policy (**ICMP**);
 4. Appointing an HHS representative to serve on the Metrication Operating Committee (**MOC**) of the ICMP, its Steering Group, and the HHS MTSC; and
 5. Ensuring appropriate HHS representation on **MOC** subcommittees.

- D. Heads of OPDIVs. Heads of OPDIVs are responsible for:
1. Ensuring organizational implementation of the "Metric Conversion Act of **1975,**" as amended;
 2. Designating an organizational element to manage metric conversion activities;
 3. Designating an individual as the Metric coordinator for their OPDIV who will also serve on the HHS **MTSC;**
 4. Ensuring that personnel are provided education on the metric system, and training, as needed, in specific metric practices and uses; and
 5. Identifying Federal legislation, regulations, and procedures that unduly restrict **use** of the metric **system,** and where applicable, initiating action to eliminate those restrictions and ease transition to the metric system.
- E. HHS Metric Transition Steering Committee. Members of the HHS MTSC are responsible for planning and coordinating transition to the metric system, and advising their respective OPDIVs on matters relating to metrication.

8-25-80 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Each OPDIV shall submit to the Director, Office of Management, PHS, for transmittal to the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Budget, ASMB, by December 1 of each year, a report which includes:

- A. Significant metric accomplishments;
- B. Significant problems encountered in **metric** conversion;
- C. Any recommendations regarding HHS Metric Program policy or activities, including actions planned for the current and future fiscal years to further implement the metric **system:** and
- D. Other relevant information (e.g., information pertaining to metric conversion costs).

8-25-90 EXCEPTIONS

- A. Exceptions to the use of the metric **system** in procurement, grants, and other business related activities are permitted only to the extent that such use is impracticable or is likely to **cause** significant inefficiencies or loss of markets to United States firms.
- B. Exceptions to the HHS Metric Program, other than those stated above, require the approval of the Assistant Secretary for Management and Budget.