



Department of Energy  
Acquisition Regulation

No. AL-2002-07  
Date 10/02/02

# ACQUISITION LETTER

This Acquisition Letter is issued under the authority of the Procurement Executives of DOE and NNSA

**Subject: Review of Management Contractors Purchasing Systems -  
Purchase Card Considerations**

References	Title
DEAR 970.44	Management and Operating Contractor Purchasing
DEAR 970.4401	Responsibilities
DEAR 970.4401-1	General
DEAR 970.4401-2	Review and Approval
DEAR 970.4402	Contractor Purchasing System
DEAR 970.4402-1	Policy
DEAR 970.4402-2	General Requirements

## When is this Acquisition Letter (AL) Effective?

This AL is effective 10 business days after the date of issuance.

## When Does this Acquisition Letter Expire?

This AL will remain in effect until it is canceled or rescinded.

## Who is the Point of Contact?

Contact Richard Langston of the Office of Procurement and Assistance Policy, on 202-586-8247 or via e-mail at [richard.langston@pr.doe.gov](mailto:richard.langston@pr.doe.gov).

## **What is the Purpose of this AL?**

The purpose of this AL is to provide guidance to contracting officers regarding the review and approval of the purchasing systems of the Department's major facility management contractors whose contracts contain the Contractor Purchasing System clause, DEAR 970.5244-1. The guidance focuses on the use by contractors of purchase cards to effect the purchase of property and services.

## **What is the Background of this Acquisition Letter?**

Commercial organizations, including Government contractors, have for many years made effective use of purchase cards to facilitate the acquisition of property and services. Purchase cards provide a convenient mechanism for facilitating the acquisition and payment processes for relatively small dollar value items as well as delivery orders against established contracts. Purchase cards may also provide a mechanism for empowering other than contracting professionals to directly acquire small dollar value items at significantly reduced administrative costs and in a more timely fashion. Major facility management contractors may, as authorized by the Contracting Officer, obtain purchase cards through the General Services Administration SMARTPAY Program. Contractors may also choose to use other bank card programs.

Pursuant to the Contractor Purchasing System clause, DEAR 970.5244-1, the Department's major facility management contractors must obtain the Contracting Officer's approval of their purchasing systems to ensure that costs incurred are allowable and reasonable. This AL provides contracting officers with additional guidance concerning the Department's expectations for contractor managed purchase card programs for use in determining whether contractor purchasing systems adequately protect the Government's interests under a cost reimbursement contract. The AL also further defines the role of the contracting officer in ensuring that major facility management contractors conform to approved purchasing system policies and procedures.

## **What Are the Responsibilities of the Contracting Officer?**

- √ Contracting officers should, in their review and approval of a contractor's purchasing system, ensure that systems which authorize the use of purchase cards provide adequate policies, procedures and management controls to guard against fraud, waste, and abuse and ensure the incurrence of allowable costs; the absence of such may result in the disapproval of the contractor's purchasing system, and disallowance of associated costs, as appropriate.
- √ Contracting officers should, as a facet of their normal operational awareness and systems oversight, ensure that contractor purchase card policies, procedures and management controls are implemented by major facility management contractors.
- √ Contracting officers should ensure that they have access to major facility management contractors' list of purchase card users and associated single purchase or other card use restrictions or limitations.

## **What Are DOE's Expectations Regarding An Acceptable Purchase Card Program?**

In reviewing a contractor's purchasing system in accordance with DEAR 970.44, contracting officers should determine whether the contractor intends to use purchase cards to facilitate procurement actions and, if so, the issuing institution. If cards are to be authorized for use, the contractor's written system description must provide policies and procedures for the use of purchase cards that provide effective management controls to guard against fraud, waste, and abuse, and ensure that purchase card expenditures meet contract criteria for the reimbursement of allowable costs. Contractors who use the Federal government's GSA SMARTPAY Program must comply with the terms and conditions of the GSA SMARTPAY contract and develop local purchase card procedures which reflect the policies and principles set forth in the DOE Guidelines and Operating Procedures for Use of the GSA SMARTPAY Purchase Card. For contractors using other, commercially available, purchase card programs, the contractor's purchasing system should contain the following program elements which are indicative of an effective management system that provides adequate controls for the use of purchase cards:

1. Designation of a purchase card program coordinator or other central management official responsible for maintenance of policies and procedures, interface with the issuing bank, interface with the DOE contracting officer, and overall purchase card program management and oversight.
2. Written limitations on the use of the purchase card (e.g., subject matter restrictions, dollar limits on individual transactions, and monthly or yearly total expenditures) as appropriate to the need of its prescribed uses and its user(s).
3. Written designation and authorization of cardholders and reviewing or approving officials.
4. Maintenance of an up-to-date listing of all authorized cardholders and their purchase limitations.
5. Training of cardholders and reviewing or approving officials prior to assuming their roles and receiving cards.
6. Procedures for assuring cards are available only to those with a confirmed need.
7. Prescribed limitations on the number of cardholders that may be assigned to reviewing or approving officials in order to ensure that control functions will be effectively carried out.

8. Procedures regarding internal annual audit or review of the effectiveness of the contractors purchase card policies and procedures, cardholder files, and transactions in accordance with standard sampling techniques.  
This may be accomplished by internal audit staff operating under the Cooperative Audit Program, by the contractor purchase card coordinator, or both.
9. Procedures for communication to the DOE contracting officer of issues identified as a result of audits/reviews, including the identification of any transactions which have or may have resulted in unallowable costs (costs incurred as a result of purchase card transactions which are unallowable in amount or purpose, including costs associated with fraudulent transactions are unallowable under the contract.)
10. Procedures to ensure the collection of rebates, if available and when appropriate.
11. Procedures for ensuring that cards are canceled at the termination of an authorized user's employment
12. Policies and procedures for sanctioning the abuse or misuse of purchase cards in effecting purchasing transactions including procedures for assignment to a position not authorized purchase card usage when appropriate in response to abuse or misuse.
13. Transaction management controls, including:
  - a) Controls to ensure the appropriateness of the transaction and the absence of fraud, waste or abuse (e.g., controls requiring each purchase or class of purchases to be reviewed and approved in advance and/or subsequent to the transaction by a designated independent reviewing or approving official);
  - b) Controls requiring that invoices or packing lists for supplies or services are reviewed and approved by the cardholder and a designated independent reviewing or approving official in order to confirm appropriate billing and actual receipt of goods or services ordered; and,
  - c) Controls requiring that property acquired through purchase cards is entered into the contractor's property management system as appropriate.