



**File Code:** 6320  
**Route To:** (6320)

**Date:** February 14, 2006

**Subject:** All-Risk Acquisition Authority, Cost Consciousness, and Reporting

**To:** Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, IITF Director, and WO Staff

It has been a busy year for providing acquisition support on fire suppression and all-risk incidents. We are grateful and proud that so many buying teams and acquisition individuals have volunteered to participate on assignments, even rising to the need for coverage during the holidays, and we thank you for that.

All-risk assignments have unique challenges. The importance of getting the job done in emergency situations can never be overlooked. However, while emergency situations may justify using sole-source acquisition procedures rather than seeking full and open competition, they do not negate our responsibility to meet all statutes, regulations, policies, and warrant authorities. As this season closes, we would like to bring to your attention some issues of concern that have come to light.

The Forest Service Acquisition Regulations (FSAR), Part 4G01, Exhibits 1-1 and 1-2 address warrant level authorities. The Exhibits identify that personnel with Level IC warrants that are GS-8 or higher may execute Emergency Equipment Rental Agreements (EERAs) using established geographic area rates. However, only Contracting Officers (COs) with Level IC warrants that are GS-11 or higher may execute EERAs using negotiated rates. This includes the rental of land. Micro-purchase authorities must also be adhered to, and all-risk assignments provide no special thresholds or authorities for use of purchase cards unless issued in writing. We ask that all of you revisit the FSAR and ensure you have a good understanding of your authorities, as well as micro-purchase authorities, when performing wildland fire and all-risk incident assignments. Transactions outside of a COs authority must be ratified by an appropriate official and delays contractor payments. In the past few months several transactions have been identified for ratification.

EERAs should be issued at incidents only when absolutely necessary. Mobilizing existing EERA vendors with established pre-season Agreements where reasonable prices were obtained, is far more preferable than signing up vendors at the incident - when it may be difficult, if not impossible to obtain a reasonable price. In addition, COs negotiating and establishing pre-season Agreements should consider having separately priced mobilization costs for wildland fire versus all-risk assignments, or a ceiling fixed-price after vendors travel a defined number of miles. This could result in great mobilization cost savings when vendors are mobilized from the west to the east and vice versa.



Cost effectiveness is always an issue of concern. Meeting incident needs, especially during the immediate emergency timeframes, is paramount. However, buying teams frequently continue working (especially at all-risk incidents) long after the emergency timeframes have passed, such as is the case for those participating in the Katrina effort. When emergency timeframes that threaten lives or property have passed, we would like to remind COs that limited or full and open competition should be obtained whenever possible. In addition, various contracts, orders, and/or Agreements that may no longer be cost-effective should be reassessed.

We ask that you revisit rental transactions at incidents (both wildland fire and all-risk) when it is clear the incident base or remote bases will be in place longer than an initial short period. The rental of tents, yurts, trailers, office machines, and similar rental items should be looked at closely, as it takes only a short rental time before we have paid the purchase price many times over. There are a variety of ways to disposition purchased equipment, as applicable.

We would also like to remind everyone of the Hurricane Stewardship Plan reporting requirements. Anyone assigned to Katrina incidents or other hurricane efforts need to keep clear and accurate logs of all purchases, regardless of dollar amount. Copies of your logs should be forwarded to Jan McCluskey so she can include them in the monthly Departmental report, as required. We are concerned that additional reporting of all-risk incident purchases of any type may be forthcoming. Therefore, we are currently working on a database titled "All-Risk Reporting Tool" where buying team purchase information for any incidents (both wildland fire and all-risk) can be entered and sorted electronically. This may replace the current hand-written or Excel spreadsheet buying team logs and make any reporting much easier. We hope to have the database program completed very soon.

Once again, we appreciate your participation in buying teams and the great work you have done on incident assignments. Your dedication and professional capability adds to the Forest Service reputation of our unique and effective capability to respond to emergency situations. We are fortunate to have all of you on our acquisition workforce. If you have questions regarding this information, please contact Jan McCluskey at (208) 387-5612.

/s/ Melissa J. Jones (for)  
RONALD E. HOOPER  
Director, Acquisition Management

cc: Jan D McCluskey  
Mary A Szymoniak

Tina Ledger