

PART 3—IMPROPER BUSINESS PRACTICES AND PERSONAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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3.000 Scope of part.

This part prescribes policies and procedures for avoiding improper business practices and personal conflicts of interest and for dealing with their apparent or actual occurrence.

Subpart 3.1—Safeguards**3.101 Standards of conduct.****3.101-1 General.**

Government business shall be conducted in a manner above reproach and, except as authorized by statute or regulation, with complete impartiality and with preferential treatment for none. Transactions relating to the expenditure of public funds require the highest degree of public trust and an impeccable standard of conduct. The general rule is to avoid strictly any conflict of interest or even the appearance of a conflict of interest in Government-contractor relationships. While many Federal laws and regulations place restrictions on the actions of Government personnel, their official conduct must, in addition, be such that they would have no reluctance to make a full public disclosure of their actions.

3.101-2 Solicitation and acceptance of gratuities by Government personnel.

As a rule, no Government employee may solicit or accept, directly or indirectly, any gratuity, gift, favor, entertainment, loan, or anything of monetary value from anyone who (a) has or is seeking to obtain Government business with the employee's agency, (b) conducts activities that are regulated by the employee's agency, or (c) has interests that may be substantially affected by the performance or non-performance of the employee's official duties. Certain limited exceptions are authorized in agency regulations.

3.101-3 Agency regulations.

(a) Agencies are required by Executive Order 11222 of May 8, 1965, and 5 CFR 735 to prescribe "Standards of Conduct." These agency standards contain—

(1) Agency-authorized exceptions to 3.101-2; and

(2) Disciplinary measures for persons violating the standards of conduct.

(b) Requirements for employee financial disclosure and restrictions on private employment for former Government employees are in Office of Personnel Management and agency regulations implementing Public Law 95-521, which amended 18 U.S.C. 207.

3.102 [Reserved]**3.103 Independent pricing.****3.103-1 Solicitation provision.**

The contracting officer shall insert the provision at 52.203-2, Certificate of Independent Price Determination, in solicitations when a firm-fixed-price contract or fixed-price contract with economic price adjustment is contemplated, unless—

(a) The acquisition is to be made under the simplified acquisition procedures in Part 13;

(b) [Reserved]

(c) The solicitation is a request for technical proposals under two-step sealed bidding procedures; or

(d) The solicitation is for utility services for which rates are set by law or regulation.

3.103-2 Evaluating the certification.

(a) *Evaluation guidelines.* (1) None of the following, in and of itself, constitutes "disclosure" as it is used in subparagraph (a)(2) of the Certificate of Independent Price Determination (hereafter, the certificate):

(i) The fact that a firm has published price lists, rates, or tariffs covering items being acquired by the Government.

(ii) The fact that a firm has informed prospective customers of proposed or pending publication of new or revised price lists for items being acquired by the Government.

(iii) The fact that a firm has sold the same items to commercial customers at the same prices being offered to the Government.

(2) For the purpose of subparagraph (b)(2) of the certificate, an individual may use a blanket authorization to act as an agent for the person(s) responsible for determining the offered prices if—

(i) The proposed contract to which the certificate applies is clearly within the scope of the authorization; and

(ii) The person giving the authorization is the person within the offeror's organization who is responsible for determining the prices being offered at the time the certification is made in the particular offer.

(3) If an offer is submitted jointly by two or more concerns, the certification provided by the representative of each concern applies only to the activities of that concern.

(b) *Rejection of offers suspected of being collusive.* (1) If the offeror deleted or modified subparagraph (a)(1) or (a)(3) or paragraph (b) of the certificate, the contracting officer shall reject the offeror's bid or proposal.

(2) If the offeror deleted or modified subparagraph (a)(2) of the certificate, the offeror must have furnished with its offer a signed statement of the circumstances of the disclosure of prices contained in the bid or proposal. The chief of the contracting office shall review the altered certificate and the statement and shall determine, in writing, whether the disclosure was made for the purpose or had the effect of

restricting competition. If the determination is positive, the bid or proposal shall be rejected; if it is negative, the bid or proposal shall be considered for award.

(3) Whenever an offer is rejected under subparagraph (b)(1) or (b)(2) of this section, or the certificate is suspected of being false, the contracting officer shall report the situation to the Attorney General in accordance with 3.303.

(4) The determination made under subparagraph (b)(2) of this section shall not prevent or inhibit the prosecution of any criminal or civil actions involving the occurrences or transactions to which the certificate relates.

3.103-3 The need for further certifications.

A contractor that properly executed the certificate before award does not have to submit a separate certificate with each proposal to perform a work order or similar ordering instrument issued pursuant to the terms of the contract, where the Government's requirements cannot be met from another source.

3.104 Procurement integrity.

3.104-1 General.

(a) This FAR section 3.104 implements section 27 of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy Act (41 U.S.C. 423), as amended by section 814 of the Fiscal Year 1990/1991 National Defense Authorization Act, Public Law 101-189, section 815 of the Fiscal Year 1991 National Defense Authorization Act, Public Law 101-510, and section 4304 of the Fiscal Year 1996 National Defense Authorization Act, Public Law 104-106 (hereinafter, the Office of Federal Procurement Policy Act, as amended, is referred to as "the Act"). Agencies may supplement 3.104 and any clauses required by 3.104, and may use agency specific definitions to identify individuals who occupy positions specified in 3.104-4(d)(1)(ii). Such supplementation and definitions must be approved at a level not lower than the senior procurement executive of the agency, unless a higher level of approval is required by law for that agency.

(b) Agency employees are reminded that there are other statutes and regulations that deal with the same or related prohibited conduct, for example—

(1) The offer or acceptance of a bribe or gratuity is prohibited by 18 U.S.C. 201, 10 U.S.C. 2207, 5 U.S.C. 7353, and 5 CFR Part 2635;

(2) Section 208 of Title 18, United States Code, and 5 CFR Part 2635 preclude a Government employee from participating personally and substantially in any particular matter that would affect the financial interests of any person from whom the employee is seeking employment;

(3) Post-employment restrictions are covered by 18 U.S.C. 207 and 5 CFR Parts 2637 and 2641, which prohibit certain activities by former Government employees, includ-

ing representation of a contractor before the Government in relation to any contract or other particular matter involving specific parties on which the former employee participated personally and substantially while employed by the Government;

(4) Parts 14 and 15 place restrictions on the release of information related to procurements and other contractor information which must be protected under 18 U.S.C. 1905;

(5) Other laws such as the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a) and the Trade Secrets Act (18 U.S.C. 1905) may preclude release of information both before and after award (see 3.104-5); and

(6) Use of nonpublic information to further an employee's private interest or that of another and engaging in a financial transaction using nonpublic information are covered by 5 CFR 2635.703.

3.104-2 Applicability.

(a) The restrictions at 3.104-4(a) and (b) apply beginning January 1, 1997, to the conduct of every Federal agency procurement using competitive procedures for the acquisition of supplies or services from non-Federal sources using appropriated funds.

(b) The requirements of 3.104-4(c) apply beginning January 1, 1997, in connection with every Federal agency procurement using competitive procedures, for a contract expected to exceed the simplified acquisition threshold. Such requirements do not apply after the contract has been awarded or the procurement has been canceled.

(c) The post-employment restrictions at 3.104-4(d) apply to any former official of a Federal agency, for services provided or decisions made on or after January 1, 1997.

(d) Former officials of a Federal agency whose employment by a Federal agency ended before January 1, 1997, are subject to the restrictions imposed by 41 U.S.C. 423 as it existed before Public Law 104-106. Solely for the purpose of continuing those restrictions on those officials to the extent they were imposed prior to January 1, 1997, the provisions of 41 U.S.C. 423 as it existed before Public Law 104-106 apply through December 31, 1998.

3.104-3 Definitions.

As used in this section—

"Agency ethics official" means the designated agency ethics official described in 5 CFR 2638.201 and any other designated person, including—

(1) Deputy ethics officials described in 5 CFR 2638.204, to whom authority under 3.104-7 has been delegated by the designated agency ethics official; and

(2) Alternate designated agency ethics officials described in 5 CFR 2638.202(b).

"Compensation" means wages, salaries, honoraria, commissions, professional fees, and any other form of

compensation, provided directly or indirectly for services rendered. Compensation is indirectly provided if it is paid to an entity other than the individual, specifically in exchange for services provided by the individual.

“Contract,” for purposes of the post-employment restrictions at 3.104-4(d), includes both competitively awarded and non-competitively awarded contracts.

“Contractor bid or proposal information” means any of the following information submitted to a Federal agency as part of or in connection with a bid or proposal to enter into a Federal agency procurement contract, if that information has not been previously made available to the public or disclosed publicly:

(1) Cost or pricing data (as defined by 10 U.S.C. 2306a(h) with respect to procurements subject to that section, and section 304A(h) of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949 (41 U.S.C. 254b(h)), with respect to procurements subject to that section).

(2) Indirect costs and direct labor rates.

(3) Proprietary information about manufacturing processes, operations, or techniques marked by the contractor in accordance with applicable law or regulation.

(4) Information marked by the contractor as “contractor bid or proposal information” in accordance with applicable law or regulation.

(5) Information marked in accordance with 52.215-12.

“Decision to award a subcontract or modification of subcontract” means a decision to designate award to a particular source.

“Federal agency” has the meaning provided such term in section 3 of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949 (40 U.S.C. 472).

“Federal agency procurement” means the acquisition (by using competitive procedures and awarding a contract) of goods or services (including construction) from non-Federal sources by a Federal agency using appropriated funds. For broad agency announcements and small business innovative research programs, each proposal received by an agency shall constitute a separate procurement for purposes of the Act.

“In excess of \$10,000,000” means—

(1) The value, or estimated value, at the time of award, of the contract, including all options;

(2) The total estimated value at the time of award of all orders under an indefinite-delivery, indefinite-quantity, or requirements contract;

(3) Any multiple award schedule contract unless the contracting officer documents a lower estimate;

(4) The value of a delivery order, task order, or an order under a Basic Ordering Agreement;

(5) The amount paid or to be paid in settlement of a claim; or

(6) The estimated monetary value of negotiated overhead or other rates when applied to the Government portion of the applicable allocation base.

“Official” means:

(1) An officer, as defined in 5 U.S.C. 2104.

(2) An employee, as defined in 5 U.S.C. 2105.

(3) A member of the uniformed services, as defined in 5 U.S.C. 2101(3).

(4) A special Government employee, as defined in 18 U.S.C. 202.

“Participating personally and substantially in a Federal agency procurement” is defined as follows:

(1) “Participating personally and substantially in a Federal agency procurement” means active and significant involvement of the individual in any of the following activities directly related to that procurement:

(i) Drafting, reviewing, or approving the specification or statement of work for the procurement.

(ii) Preparing or developing the solicitation.

(iii) Evaluating bids or proposals, or selecting a source.

(iv) Negotiating price or terms and conditions of the contract.

(v) Reviewing and approving the award of the contract.

(2) “Participating personally” means participating directly, and includes the direct and active supervision of a subordinate’s participation in the matter.

(3) “Participating substantially” means that the employee’s involvement is of significance to the matter. Substantial participation requires more than official responsibility, knowledge, perfunctory involvement, or involvement on an administrative or peripheral issue. Participation may be substantial even though it is not determinative of the outcome of a particular matter. A finding of substantiality should be based not only on the effort devoted to a matter, but on the importance of the effort. While a series of peripheral involvements may be insubstantial, the single act of approving or participating in a critical step may be substantial. However, the review of procurement documents solely to determine compliance with regulatory, administrative, or budgetary procedures, does not constitute substantial participation in a procurement.

(4) Generally, an individual will not be considered to have participated personally and substantially in a procurement solely by participating in the following activities:

(i) Agency level boards, panels, or other advisory committees that review program milestones or evaluate and make recommendations regarding alternative technologies or approaches for satisfying broad agency level missions or objectives.

(ii) The performance of general, technical, engineering, or scientific effort having broad application not

directly associated with a particular procurement, notwithstanding that such general, technical, engineering, or scientific effort subsequently may be incorporated into a particular procurement.

(iii) Clerical functions supporting the conduct of a particular procurement.

(iv) For procurements to be conducted under the procedures of OMB Circular A-76, participation in management studies, preparation of in-house cost estimates, preparation of “most efficient organization” analyses, and furnishing of data or technical support to be used by others in the development of performance standards, statements of work, or specifications.

“Source selection evaluation board” means any board, team, council, or other group that evaluates bids or proposals.

“Source selection information” means any of the following information which is prepared for use by a Federal agency for the purpose of evaluating a bid or proposal to enter into a Federal agency procurement contract, if that information has not been previously made available to the public or disclosed publicly:

(1) Bid prices submitted in response to a Federal agency invitation for bids, or lists of those bid prices before bid opening.

(2) Proposed costs or prices submitted in response to a Federal agency solicitation, or lists of those proposed costs or prices.

(3) Source selection plans.

(4) Technical evaluation plans.

(5) Technical evaluations of proposals.

(6) Cost or price evaluations of proposals.

(7) Competitive range determinations that identify proposals that have a reasonable chance of being selected for award of a contract.

(8) Rankings of bids, proposals, or competitors.

(9) Reports and evaluations of source selection panels, boards, or advisory councils.

(10) Other information marked as “*Source Selection Information—See FAR 3.104*” based on a case-by-case determination by the head of the agency or designee, or the contracting officer, that its disclosure would jeopardize the integrity or successful completion of the Federal agency procurement to which the information relates.

3.104-4 Statutory and related prohibitions, restrictions, and requirements.

(a) *Prohibition on disclosing procurement information (subsection 27(a) of the Act).* (1) A person described in paragraph (a)(2) of this subsection shall not, other than as provided by law, knowingly disclose contractor bid or proposal information or source selection information before the

award of a Federal agency procurement contract to which the information relates. (See 3.104-5(a).)

(2) Paragraph (a)(1) of this subsection applies to any person who—

(i) Is a present or former official of the United States, or a person who is acting or has acted for or on behalf of, or who is advising or has advised the United States with respect to, a Federal agency procurement; and

(ii) By virtue of that office, employment, or relationship, has or had access to contractor bid or proposal information or source selection information.

(b) *Prohibition on obtaining procurement information (subsection 27(b) of the Act).* A person shall not, other than as provided by law, knowingly obtain contractor bid or proposal information or source selection information before the award of a Federal agency procurement contract to which the information relates.

(c) *Actions required of agency officials when contacted by offerors regarding non-Federal employment (subsection 27(c) of the Act).* If an agency official who is participating personally and substantially in a Federal agency procurement for a contract in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold contacts or is contacted by a person who is a bidder or offeror in that Federal agency procurement regarding possible non-Federal employment for that official, the official shall—

(1) Promptly report the contact in writing to the official's supervisor and to the designated agency ethics official (or designee) of the agency in which the official is employed; and

(2)(i) Reject the possibility of non-Federal employment; or

(ii) Disqualify himself or herself from further personal and substantial participation in that Federal agency procurement (see 3.104-6) until such time as the agency has authorized the official to resume participation in such procurement, in accordance with the requirements of 18 U.S.C. 208 and applicable agency regulations, on the grounds that—

(A) The person is no longer a bidder or offeror in that Federal agency procurement; or

(B) All discussions with the bidder or offeror regarding possible non-Federal employment have terminated without an agreement or arrangement for employment.

(d) *Prohibition on former official's acceptance of compensation from a contractor (subsection 27(d) of the Act).*

(1) A former official of a Federal agency may not accept compensation from a contractor as an employee, officer, director, or consultant of the contractor within a period of one year after such former official—

(i) Served, at the time of selection of the contractor or the award of a contract to that contractor, as the

procuring contracting officer, the source selection authority, a member of a source selection evaluation board, or the chief of a financial or technical evaluation team in a procurement in which that contractor was selected for award of a contract in excess of \$10,000,000;

(ii) Served as the program manager, deputy program manager, or administrative contracting officer for a contract in excess of \$10,000,000 awarded to that contractor; or

(iii) Personally made for the Federal agency—

(A) A decision to award a contract, subcontract, modification of a contract or subcontract, or a task order or delivery order in excess of \$10,000,000 to that contractor;

(B) A decision to establish overhead or other rates applicable to a contract or contracts for that contractor that are valued in excess of \$10,000,000;

(C) A decision to approve issuance of a contract payment or payments in excess of \$10,000,000 to that contractor; or

(D) A decision to pay or settle a claim in excess of \$10,000,000 with that contractor.

(2) Nothing in paragraph (d)(1) of this subsection may be construed to prohibit a former official of a Federal agency from accepting compensation from any division or affiliate of a contractor that does not produce the same or similar products or services as the entity of the contractor that is responsible for the contract referred to in paragraph (d)(1) of this subsection.

3.104-5 Disclosure, protection, and marking of contractor bid or proposal information and source selection information.

(a) Except as specifically provided for in this subsection, no person or other entity may disclose contractor bid or proposal information or source selection information to any person other than a person authorized, in accordance with applicable agency regulations or procedures, by the head of the agency or designee, or the contracting officer, to receive such information.

(b) Contractor bid or proposal information and source selection information shall be protected from unauthorized disclosure in accordance with 14.401, 15.411, 15.413, applicable law, and agency regulations.

(c) In determining whether particular information is source selection information, see the definition in 3.104-3 and consult with agency officials as necessary. Individuals responsible for preparing material that may be source selection information under paragraph (10) of the definition shall mark the cover page and each page that the individual believes contains source selection information with the legend “*Source Selection Information—See FAR 3.104.*” Although the information in paragraphs (1) through (9) of the definition in 3.104-3 is considered to be source selection

information whether or not marked, all reasonable efforts shall be made to mark such material with the same legend.

(d) Except as provided in subparagraph (d)(4) of this subsection, if the contracting officer believes that information marked as proprietary is not proprietary, information otherwise marked as contractor bid or proposal information is not contractor bid or proposal information, or information marked in accordance with 52.215-12 is inappropriately marked, the contractor that has affixed the marking shall be notified in writing and given an opportunity to justify the marking.

(1) If the contractor agrees that the marking is not justified, or does not respond within the time specified in the notice, the contracting officer may remove the marking and the information may be released.

(2) If, after reviewing any justification submitted by the contractor, the contracting officer determines that the marking is not justified, the contracting officer shall notify the contractor in writing.

(3) Information marked by the contractor as proprietary, otherwise marked as contractor bid or proposal information, or marked in accordance with 52.215-12, shall not be released until—

(i) The review of the contractor's justification has been completed; or

(ii) The period specified for the contractor's response has elapsed, whichever is earlier. Thereafter, the contracting officer may release the information.

(4) With respect to technical data that are marked proprietary by a contractor, the contracting officer shall generally follow the procedures in 27.404(h).

(e) Nothing in this section restricts or prohibits—

(1) A contractor from disclosing its own bid or proposal information or the recipient from receiving that information;

(2) The disclosure or receipt of information, not otherwise protected, relating to a Federal agency procurement after it has been canceled by the Federal agency, before contract award, unless the Federal agency plans to resume the procurement;

(3) Individual meetings between a Federal agency official and an offeror or potential offeror for, or a recipient of, a contract or subcontract under a Federal agency procurement, provided that unauthorized disclosure or receipt of contractor bid or proposal information or source selection information does not occur; or

(4) The Government's use of technical data in a manner consistent with the Government's rights in the data.

(f) Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize—

(1) The withholding of any information pursuant to a proper request from the Congress, any committee or subcommittee thereof, a Federal agency, the Comptroller

General, or an Inspector General of a Federal agency, except as otherwise authorized by law or regulation. Any such release which contains contractor bid or proposal information or source selection information shall clearly notify the recipient that the information or portions thereof are contractor bid or proposal information or source selection information related to the conduct of a Federal agency procurement, the disclosure of which is restricted by section 27 of the Act;

(2) The withholding of information from, or restricting its receipt by, the Comptroller General of the United States in the course of a protest against the award or proposed award of a Federal agency procurement contract;

(3) The release of information after award of a contract or cancellation of a procurement if such information is contractor bid or proposal information or source selection information which pertains to another procurement; or

(4) The disclosure, solicitation, or receipt of bid or proposal information or source selection information after award where such disclosure, solicitation, or receipt is prohibited by law. (See 3.104-1(b)(5) and Subpart 24.2.)

3.104-6 Disqualification.

(a) *Contacts through agents.* Disqualification pursuant to 3.104-4(c)(2) may be required even where contacts are through an agent or other intermediary of the agency official or an agent or other intermediary of a bidder or offeror. (See 18 U.S.C. 208 and 5 CFR 2635.603(c).)

(b) *Disqualification notice.* In addition to submitting the contact report required by 3.104-4(c)(1), an agency official who must disqualify himself or herself pursuant to 3.104-4(c)(2)(ii) shall promptly submit to the head of the contracting activity (HCA), or designee, a written notice of disqualification from further participation in the procurement. Concurrent copies of the notice shall be submitted to the contracting officer, the source selection authority if the contracting officer is not the source selection authority, and the agency official's immediate supervisor. As a minimum, the notice shall—

(1) Identify the procurement;

(2) Describe the nature of the agency official's participation in the procurement and specify the approximate dates or time period of participation; and

(3) Identify the bidder or offeror and describe its interest in the procurement.

(c) *Resumption of participation in a procurement.* (1) The individual shall remain disqualified until such time as the agency has authorized the official to resume participation in the procurement in accordance with 3.104-4(c)(2)(ii).

(2) Subsequent to a period of disqualification, if an agency wishes to reinstate the agency official to participation in the procurement, the HCA or designee may authorize

immediate reinstatement or may authorize reinstatement following whatever additional period of disqualification the HCA determines is necessary to ensure the integrity of the procurement process. In determining that any additional period of disqualification is necessary, the HCA or designee shall consider any factors that might give rise to an appearance that the agency official acted without complete impartiality with respect to issues involved in the procurement. The HCA or designee shall consult with the agency ethics official in making a determination to reinstate an official. Decisions to reinstate an employee should be in writing. It is within the discretion of the HCA, or designee, to determine that the agency official shall not be reinstated to participation in the procurement.

(3) An employee must comply with the provisions of 18 U.S.C. 208 and 5 CFR Part 2635 regarding any resumed participation in a procurement matter. An employee may not be reinstated to participate in a procurement matter affecting the financial interest of someone with whom he or she is seeking employment, unless he or she receives a waiver pursuant to 18 U.S.C. 208(b)(1) or (b)(3) or an authorization in accordance with the requirements of 5 CFR Part 2635, as appropriate.

3.104-7 Ethics advisory opinions regarding prohibitions on a former official's acceptance of compensation from a contractor.

(a) An official or former official of a Federal agency who does not know whether he or she is or would be precluded by subsection 27(d) of the Act (see 3.104-4(d)) from accepting compensation from a particular contractor may request advice from the appropriate agency ethics official prior to accepting such compensation.

(b) The request for an advisory opinion shall be submitted in writing, shall be dated and signed, and shall include all information reasonably available to the official or former official that is relevant to the inquiry. As a minimum, the request shall include—

(1) Information about the procurement(s), or decision(s) on matters under 3.104-4(d)(1)(iii), involving the particular contractor, in which the individual was or is involved, including contract or solicitation numbers, dates of solicitation or award, a description of the supplies or services procured or to be procured, and contract amount;

(2) Information about the individual's participation in the procurement or decision, including the dates or time periods of that participation, and the nature of the individual's duties, responsibilities, or actions; and

(3) Information about the contractor, including a description of the products or services produced by the division or affiliate of the contractor from whom the individual proposes to accept compensation.

(c) Within 30 days after the date a request containing complete information is received, or as soon thereafter as practicable, the agency ethics official shall issue an opinion as to whether the proposed conduct is proper or would violate subsection 27(d) of the Act.

(d)(1) Where complete information is not included in the request, the agency ethics official may ask the requester to provide any information reasonably available to the requester. Additional information may also be requested from other persons, including the source selection authority, the contracting officer, or the requester's immediate supervisor.

(2) In issuing an opinion, the agency ethics official may rely upon the accuracy of information furnished by the requester or other agency sources, unless he or she has reason to believe that the information is fraudulent, misleading, or otherwise incorrect.

(3) If the requester is advised in a written opinion by the agency ethics official that the requester may accept compensation from a particular contractor, and accepts such compensation in good faith reliance on that advisory opinion, then neither the requester nor the contractor shall be found to have knowingly violated subsection 27(d) of the Act. If the requester or the contractor has actual knowledge or reason to believe that the opinion is based upon fraudulent, misleading, or otherwise incorrect information, their reliance upon the opinion will not be deemed to be in good faith.

3.104-8 Calculating the period of compensation prohibition.

The one-year prohibition on accepting compensation (see 3.104-4(d)(1)) begins to run as provided in this subsection.

(a) If the former official was serving in one of the positions specified in 3.104-4(d)(1)(i) on the date of the selection of the contractor, but not on the date of the award of the contract, the prohibition begins on the date of the selection of the contractor.

(b) If the former official was serving in one of the positions specified in 3.104-4(d)(1)(i) on the date of the award of the contract (whether or not they were serving on the date of the selection of the contractor), the prohibition begins on the date of the award of the contract.

(c) If the former official was serving in one of the positions specified in 3.104-4(d)(1)(ii), the prohibition begins on the last date the individual served in that position.

(d) If the former official personally made one of the decisions specified in 3.104-4(d)(1)(iii), the prohibition begins on the date the decision was made.

3.104-9 Contract clauses.

(a) The contracting officer shall insert the clause at 52.203-8, Cancellation, Rescission, and Recovery of Funds for Illegal or Improper Activity, in solicitations and contracts with a value exceeding the simplified acquisition threshold.

(b) The contracting officer shall insert the clause at 52.203-10, Price or Fee Adjustment for Illegal or Improper Activity, in solicitations and contracts with a value exceeding the simplified acquisition threshold.

3.104-10 Violations or possible violations.

(a) If the contracting officer receives or obtains information of a violation or possible violation of subsections 27(a), (b), (c), or (d) of the Act (see 3.104-4), the contracting officer shall determine whether the reported violation or possible violation has any impact on the pending award or selection of the source therefor.

(1) If the contracting officer concludes that there is no impact on the procurement, the contracting officer shall forward the information concerning the violation or possible violation, accompanied by appropriate documentation supporting that conclusion, to an individual designated in accordance with agency procedures. With the concurrence of that individual, the contracting officer shall, without further approval, proceed with the procurement.

(2) If the individual reviewing the contracting officer's conclusion does not agree with that conclusion, the individual shall advise the contracting officer to withhold award and shall promptly forward the information and documentation to the HCA or designee.

(3) If the contracting officer concludes that the violation or possible violation impacts the procurement, the contracting officer shall promptly forward the information to the HCA or designee.

(b) The HCA or designee receiving any information describing an actual or possible violation of subsections 27(a), (b), (c), or (d) of the Act, shall review all information available and take appropriate action in accordance with agency procedures, such as—

(1) Advising the contracting officer to continue with the procurement;

(2) Causing an investigation to be conducted;

(3) Referring the information disclosed to appropriate criminal investigative agencies;

(4) Concluding that a violation occurred; or

(5) Recommending an agency head determination that the contractor, or someone acting for the contractor, has engaged in conduct constituting an offense punishable under subsection 27(e) of the Act, for the purpose of voiding or rescinding the contract.

(c) Before concluding that a bidder, offeror, contractor, or person has violated the Act, the HCA or designee may

request information from appropriate parties regarding the violation or possible violation when considered in the best interests of the Government.

(d) If the HCA or designee concludes that the prohibitions of section 27 of the Act have been violated, then the HCA or designee may direct the contracting officer to—

(1) If a contract has not been awarded—

- (i) Cancel the procurement;
- (ii) Disqualify an offeror; or
- (iii) Take any other appropriate actions in the interests of the Government.

(2) If a contract has been awarded—

(i) Effect appropriate contractual remedies, including profit recapture as provided for in the clause at 52.203-10, Price or Fee Adjustment for Illegal or Improper Activity, or, if the contract has been rescinded under paragraph (d)(2)(ii) of this subsection, recovery of the amount expended under the contract;

(ii) Void or rescind the contract with respect to which—

(A) The contractor or someone acting for the contractor has been convicted for an offense where the conduct constitutes a violation of subsections 27(a) or (b) of the Act for the purpose of either—

(1) Exchanging the information covered by such subsections for anything of value; or

(2) Obtaining or giving anyone a competitive advantage in the award of a Federal agency procurement contract; or

(B) The head of the agency, or designee, has determined, based upon a preponderance of the evidence, that the contractor or someone acting for the contractor has engaged in conduct constituting an offense punishable under subsection 27(e)(1) of the Act; or

(iii) Take any other appropriate actions in the best interests of the Government.

(3) Refer the matter to the agency suspension and debarment official.

(e) The HCA or designee shall recommend or direct an administrative or contractual remedy commensurate with the severity and effect of the violation.

(f) If the HCA or designee receiving information concerning a violation or possible violation determines that award is justified by urgent and compelling circumstances, or is otherwise in the interests of the Government, the HCA may authorize the contracting officer to award the contract or execute the contract modification after notification to the head of the agency in accordance with agency procedures.

(g) The HCA may delegate his or her authority under this subsection to an individual at least one organizational level above the contracting officer and of General Officer, Flag, Senior Executive Service, or equivalent rank.

3.104-11 Criminal and civil penalties, and further administrative remedies.

Criminal and civil penalties, and administrative remedies, may apply to conduct which violates the Act (see 3.104-4). See 33.102(f) for special rules regarding bid protests. See 3.104-10 for administrative remedies relating to contracts.

(a) An official who knowingly fails to comply with the requirements of 3.104-4 shall be subject to the penalties and administrative action set forth in subsection 27(e) of the Act.

(b) A bidder or offeror who engages in employment discussion with an official subject to the restrictions of 3.104-4, knowing that the official has not complied with 3.104-4(c)(1), shall be subject to the criminal, civil or administrative penalties set forth in subsection 27(e) of the Act.

(c) An official who refuses to terminate employment discussions (see 3.104-6) may be subject to agency administrative actions under 5 CFR 2635.604(d) if the official's disqualification from participation in a particular procurement interferes substantially with the individual's ability to perform assigned duties.

Subpart 3.2—Contractor Gratuities to Government Personnel

3.201 Applicability.

This subpart applies to all executive agencies, except that coverage concerning exemplary damages applies only to the Department of Defense (10 U.S.C. 2207).

3.202 Contract clause.

The contracting officer shall insert the clause at 52.203-3, Gratuities, in solicitations and contracts with a value exceeding the simplified acquisition threshold, except those for personal services and those between military departments or defense agencies and foreign governments that do not obligate any funds appropriated to the Department of Defense.

3.203 Reporting suspected violations of the Gratuities clause.

Agency personnel shall report suspected violations of the Gratuities clause to the contracting officer or other designated official in accordance with agency procedures. The agency reporting procedures shall be published as an implementation of this section 3.203 and shall clearly specify—

(a) What to report and how to report it; and

(b) The channels through which reports must pass, including the function and authority of each official designated to review them.

3.204 Treatment of violations.

(a) Before taking any action against a contractor, the agency head or a designee shall determine, after notice and hearing under agency procedures, whether the contractor, its agent, or another representative, under a contract containing the Gratuities clause—

(1) Offered or gave a gratuity (*e.g.*, an entertainment or gift) to an officer, official, or employee of the Government; and

(2) Intended by the gratuity to obtain a contract or favorable treatment under a contract (intent generally must be inferred).

(b) Agency procedures shall afford the contractor an opportunity to appear with counsel, submit documentary evidence, present witnesses, and confront any person the agency presents. The procedures should be as informal as practicable, consistent with principles of fundamental fairness.

(c) When the agency head or designee determines that a violation has occurred, the Government may—

(1) Terminate the contractor's right to proceed;

(2) Initiate debarment or suspension measures as set forth in Subpart 9.4; and

(3) Assess exemplary damages, if the contract uses money appropriated to the Department of Defense.

Subpart 3.3—Reports of Suspected Antitrust Violations**3.301 General.**

(a) Practices that eliminate competition or restrain trade usually lead to excessive prices and may warrant criminal, civil, or administrative action against the participants. Examples of anticompetitive practices are collusive bidding, follow-the-leader pricing, rotated low bids, collusive price estimating systems, and sharing of the business.

(b) Contracting personnel are an important potential source of investigative leads for antitrust enforcement and should therefore be sensitive to indications of unlawful behavior by offerors and contractors. Agency personnel shall report, in accordance with agency regulations, evidence of suspected antitrust violations in acquisitions for possible referral to—

(1) The Attorney General under 3.303; and

(2) The agency office responsible for contractor debarment and suspension under Subpart 9.4.

3.302 Definitions.

“Identical bids” means bids for the same line item that are determined to be identical as to unit price or total line item amount, with or without the application of evaluation factors (*e.g.*, discount or transportation cost).

“Line item” means an item of supply or service, specified in an invitation for bids, for which the bidder must bid a separate price.

3.303 Reporting suspected antitrust violations.

(a) Agencies are required by 41 U.S.C. 253(B)(e) and 10 U.S.C. 2305(b)(5) to report to the Attorney General any bids or proposals that evidence a violation of the antitrust laws. These reports are in addition to those required by Subpart 9.4.

(b) The antitrust laws are intended to ensure that markets operate competitively. Any agreement or mutual understanding among competing firms that restrains the natural operation of market forces is suspect. Paragraph (c) below identifies behavior patterns that are often associated with antitrust violations. Activities meeting the descriptions in paragraph (c) are not necessarily improper, but they are sufficiently questionable to warrant notifying the appropriate authorities, in accordance with agency procedures.

(c) Practices or events that may evidence violations of the antitrust laws include—

(1) The existence of an “industry price list” or “price agreement” to which contractors refer in formulating their offers;

(2) A sudden change from competitive bidding to identical bidding;

(3) Simultaneous price increases or follow-the-leader pricing;

(4) Rotation of bids or proposals, so that each competitor takes a turn in sequence as low bidder, or so that certain competitors bid low only on some sizes of contracts and high on other sizes;

(5) Division of the market, so that certain competitors bid low only for contracts let by certain agencies, or for contracts in certain geographical areas, or on certain products, and bid high on all other jobs;

(6) Establishment by competitors of a collusive price estimating system;

(7) The filing of a joint bid by two or more competitors when at least one of the competitors has sufficient technical capability and productive capacity for contract performance;

(8) Any incidents suggesting direct collusion among competitors, such as the appearance of identical calculation or spelling errors in two or more competitive offers or the submission by one firm of offers for other firms; and

(9) Assertions by the employees, former employees, or competitors of offerors, that an agreement to restrain trade exists.

(d) Identical bids shall be reported under this section if the agency has some reason to believe that the bids resulted from collusion.

(e) For offers from foreign contractors for contracts to be performed outside the United States, contracting officers may refer suspected collusive offers to the authorities of the foreign government concerned for appropriate action.

(f) Agency reports shall be addressed to the—

Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
Washington, DC 20530
Attention: Assistant Attorney General, Antitrust
Division

and shall include—

(1) A brief statement describing the suspected practice and the reason for the suspicion; and

(2) The name, address, and telephone number of an individual in the agency who can be contacted for further information.

(g) Questions concerning this reporting requirement may be communicated by telephone directly to the Office of the Assistant Attorney General, Antitrust Division.

Subpart 3.4—Contingent Fees

3.400 Scope of subpart.

This subpart prescribes policies and procedures that restrict contingent fee arrangements for soliciting or obtaining Government contracts to those permitted by 10 U.S.C. 2306(b) and 41 U.S.C. 254(a).

3.401 Definitions.

“Bona fide agency,” as used in this subpart, means an established commercial or selling agency, maintained by a contractor for the purpose of securing business, that neither exerts nor proposes to exert improper influence to solicit or obtain Government contracts nor holds itself out as being able to obtain any Government contract or contracts through improper influence.

“Bona fide employee,” as used in this subpart, means a person, employed by a contractor and subject to the contractor’s supervision and control as to time, place, and manner of performance, who neither exerts nor proposes to exert improper influence to solicit or obtain Government contracts nor holds out as being able to obtain any Government contract or contracts through improper influence.

“Contingent fee,” as used in this subpart, means any commission, percentage, brokerage, or other fee that is contingent upon the success that a person or concern has in securing a Government contract.

“Improper influence,” as used in this subpart, means any influence that induces or tends to induce a Government employee or officer to give consideration or to act regarding

a Government contract on any basis other than the merits of the matter.

3.402 Statutory requirements.

Contractors’ arrangements to pay contingent fees for soliciting or obtaining Government contracts have long been considered contrary to public policy because such arrangements may lead to attempted or actual exercise of improper influence. In 10 U.S.C. 2306(b) and 41 U.S.C. 254(a), Congress affirmed this public policy but permitted certain exceptions. These statutes—

(a) Require in every negotiated contract a warranty by the contractor against contingent fees;

(b) Permit, as an exception to the warranty, contingent fee arrangements between contractors and bona fide employees or bona fide agencies; and

(c) Provide that, for breach or violation of the warranty by the contractor, the Government may annul the contract without liability or deduct from the contract price or consideration, or otherwise recover, the full amount of the contingent fee.

3.403 Applicability.

This subpart applies to all contracts. Statutory requirements for negotiated contracts are, as a matter of policy, extended to sealed bid contracts.

3.404 Contract clause.

The contracting officer shall insert the clause at 52.203-5, Covenant Against Contingent Fees, in all solicitations and contracts exceeding the simplified acquisition threshold, other than those for commercial items (see Parts 2 and 12).

3.405 Misrepresentations or violations of the Covenant Against Contingent Fees.

(a) Government personnel who suspect or have evidence of attempted or actual exercise of improper influence, misrepresentation of a contingent fee arrangement, or other violation of the Covenant Against Contingent Fees shall report the matter promptly to the contracting officer or appropriate higher authority in accordance with agency procedures.

(b) When there is specific evidence or other reasonable basis to suspect one or more of the violations in paragraph (a) above, the chief of the contracting office shall review the facts and, if appropriate, take or direct one or more of the following, or other, actions:

(1) If before award, reject the bid or proposal.

(2) If after award, enforce the Government’s right to annul the contract or to recover the fee.

(3) Initiate suspension or debarment action under Subpart 9.4.

(4) Refer suspected fraudulent or criminal matters to the Department of Justice, as prescribed in agency regulations.

3.406 Records.

For enforcement purposes, agencies shall preserve any specific evidence of one or more of the violations in 3.405(a), together with all other pertinent data, including a record of actions taken. Contracting offices shall not retire or destroy these records until it is certain that they are no longer needed for enforcement purposes. If the original record is maintained in a central file, a copy must be retained in the contract file.

Subpart 3.5—Other Improper Business Practices

3.501 Buying-in.

3.501-1 Definition.

“Buying-in” means submitting an offer below anticipated costs, expecting to—

- (a) Increase the contract amount after award (*e.g.*, through unnecessary or excessively priced change orders); or
- (b) Receive follow-on contracts at artificially high prices to recover losses incurred on the buy-in contract.

3.501-2 General.

(a) Buying-in may decrease competition or result in poor contract performance. The contracting officer must take appropriate action to ensure buying-in losses are not recovered by the contractor through the pricing of—

- (1) Change orders; or
- (2) Follow-on contracts subject to cost analysis.

(b) The Government should minimize the opportunity for buying-in by seeking a price commitment covering as much of the entire program concerned as is practical by using—

- (1) Multiyear contracting, with a requirement in the solicitation that a price be submitted only for the total multiyear quantity; or
- (2) Priced options for additional quantities that, together with the firm contract quantity, equal the program requirements (see Subpart 17.2).

(c) Other safeguards are available to the contracting officer to preclude recovery of buying-in losses (*e.g.*, amortization of nonrecurring costs (see 15.804-6(f)) and treatment of unreasonable price quotations (see 15.803(d)).

3.502 Subcontractor kickbacks.

3.502-1 Definitions.

“Kickback,” as used in this section, means any money, fee, commission, credit, gift, gratuity, thing of value, or compensation of any kind which is provided, directly or indirectly, to any prime contractor, prime contractor employee, subcontractor, or subcontractor employee for the purpose of improperly obtaining or rewarding favorable treatment in connection with a prime contract or in connection with a subcontract relating to a prime contract.

“Person,” as used in this section, means a corporation, partnership, business association of any kind, trust, joint-stock company, or individual.

“Prime contract,” as used in this section, means a contract or contractual action entered into by the United States for the purpose of obtaining supplies, materials, equipment, or services of any kind.

“Prime Contractor,” as used in this section, means a person who has entered into a prime contract with the United States.

“Prime Contractor employee,” as used in this section, means any officer, partner, employee, or agent of a prime contractor.

“Subcontract,” as used in this section, means a contract or contractual action entered into by a prime contractor or subcontractor for the purpose of obtaining supplies, materials, equipment, or services of any kind under a prime contract.

“Subcontractor,” as used in this section—

(a) Means any person, other than the prime contractor, who offers to furnish or furnishes any supplies, materials, equipment, or services of any kind under a prime contract or a subcontract entered into in connection with such prime contract; and

(b) Includes any person who offers to furnish or furnishes general supplies to the prime contractor or a higher tier subcontractor.

3.502-2 Subcontractor kickbacks.

The Anti-Kickback Act of 1986 (41 U.S.C. 51-58) was passed to deter subcontractors from making payments and contractors from accepting payments for the purpose of improperly obtaining or rewarding favorable treatment in connection with a prime contract or a subcontract relating to a prime contract. The Act—

(a) Prohibits any person from—

(1) Providing, attempting to provide, or offering to provide any kickback;

(2) Soliciting, accepting, or attempting to accept any kickback; or

(3) Including, directly or indirectly, the amount of any kickback in the contract price charged by a subcontractor to a prime contractor or a higher tier subcontractor or in

the contract price charged by a prime contractor to the United States.

(b) Imposes criminal penalties on any person who knowingly and willfully engages in the prohibited conduct addressed in paragraph (a) of this subsection.

(c) Provides for the recovery of civil penalties by the United States from any person who knowingly engages in such prohibited conduct and from any person whose employee, subcontractor, or subcontractor employee provides, accepts, or charges a kickback.

(d) Provides that—

(1) The contracting officer may offset the amount of a kickback against monies owed by the United States to the prime contractor under the prime contract to which such kickback relates;

(2) The contracting officer may direct a prime contractor to withhold from any sums owed to a subcontractor under a subcontract of the prime contract the amount of any kickback which was or may be offset against the prime contractor under subparagraph (d)(1) of this subsection; and

(3) An offset under subparagraph (d)(1) or a direction under subparagraph (d)(2) of this subsection is a claim by the Government for the purposes of the Contract Disputes Act of 1978.

(e) Authorizes contracting officers to order that sums withheld under subparagraph (d)(2) of this subsection be paid to the contracting agency, or if the sum has already been offset against the prime contractor, that it be retained by the prime contractor.

(f) Requires the prime contractor to notify the contracting officer when the withholding under subparagraph (d)(2) of this subsection has been accomplished unless the amount withheld has been paid to the Government.

(g) Requires a prime contractor or subcontractor to report in writing to the inspector general of the contracting agency, the head of the contracting agency if the agency does not have an inspector general, or the Department of Justice any possible violation of the Act when the prime contractor or subcontractor has reasonable grounds to believe such violation may have occurred.

(h) Provides that, for the purpose of ascertaining whether there has been a violation of the Act with respect to any prime contract, the General Accounting Office and the inspector general of the contracting agency, or a representative of such contracting agency designated by the head of the agency if the agency does not have an inspector general, shall have access to and may inspect the facilities and audit the books and records, including any electronic data or records, of any prime contractor or subcontractor under a prime contract awarded by such agency.

(i) Requires each contracting agency to include in each prime contract exceeding \$100,000 for other than commer-

cial items (see Part 12), a requirement that the prime contractor shall—

(1) Have in place and follow reasonable procedures designed to prevent and detect violations of the Act in its own operations and direct business relationships (*e.g.*, company ethics rules prohibiting kickbacks by employees, agents, or subcontractors; education programs for new employees and subcontractors, explaining policies about kickbacks, related company procedures and the consequences of detection; procurement procedures to minimize the opportunity for kickbacks; audit procedures designed to detect kickbacks; periodic surveys of subcontractors to elicit information about kickbacks; procedures to report kickbacks to law enforcement officials; annual declarations by employees of gifts or gratuities received from subcontractors; annual employee declarations that they have violated no company ethics rules; personnel practices that document unethical or illegal behavior and make such information available to prospective employers); and

(2) Cooperate fully with any Federal agency investigating a possible violation of the Act.

(j) Notwithstanding paragraph (i) of this subsection, a prime contractor shall cooperate fully with any Federal government agency investigating a violation of Section 3 of the Anti-Kickback Act of 1986 (41 U.S.C. 51-58).

3.502-3 Contract clause.

The contracting officer shall insert the clause at 52.203-7, Anti-Kickback Procedures, in solicitations and contracts exceeding the simplified acquisition threshold, other than those for commercial items (see Part 12).

3.503 Unreasonable restrictions on subcontractor sales.

3.503-1 Policy.

10 U.S.C. 2402 and 41 U.S.C. 253g require that subcontractors not be unreasonably precluded from making direct sales to the Government of any supplies or services made or furnished under a contract. However, this does not preclude contractors from asserting rights that are otherwise authorized by law or regulation.

3.503-2 Contract clause.

The contracting officer shall insert the clause at 52.203-6, Restrictions on Subcontractor Sales to the Government, in solicitations and contracts exceeding the simplified acquisition threshold. For the acquisition of commercial items, the contracting officer shall use the clause with its Alternate I.

Subpart 3.6—Contracts with Government Employees or Organizations Owned or Controlled by Them

3.601 Policy.

(a) Except as specified in 3.602, a contracting officer shall not knowingly award a contract to a Government employee or to a business concern or other organization owned or substantially owned or controlled by one or more Government employees. This policy is intended to avoid any conflict of interest that might arise between the employees' interests and their Government duties, and to avoid the appearance of favoritism or preferential treatment by the Government toward its employees.

(b) For purposes of this subpart, special Government employees (as defined in 18 U.S.C. 202) performing services as experts, advisors, or consultants, or as members of advisory committees, are not considered Government employees unless—

(1) The contract arises directly out of the individual's activity as a special Government employee;

(2) In the individual's capacity as a special Government employee, the individual is in a position to influence the award of the contract; or

(3) Another conflict of interest is determined to exist.

3.602 Exceptions.

The agency head, or a designee not below the level of the head of the contracting activity, may authorize an exception to the policy in 3.601 only if there is a most compelling reason to do so, such as when the Government's needs cannot reasonably be otherwise met.

3.603 Responsibilities of the contracting officer.

(a) Before awarding a contract, the contracting officer shall obtain an authorization under 3.602 if—

(1) The contracting officer knows, or has reason to believe, that a prospective contractor is one to which award is otherwise prohibited under 3.601; and

(2) There is a most compelling reason to make an award to that prospective contractor.

(b) The contracting officer shall comply with the requirements and guidance in Subpart 9.5 before awarding a contract to an organization owned or substantially owned or controlled by Government employees.

Subpart 3.7—Voiding and Rescinding Contracts

3.700 Scope of subpart.

(a) This subpart prescribes Governmentwide policies and procedures for exercising discretionary authority to declare void and rescind contracts in relation to which—

(1) There has been a final conviction for bribery, conflict of interest, disclosure or receipt of contractor bid or proposal information or source selection information in exchange for a thing of value or to give anyone a competitive advantage in the award of a Federal agency procurement contract, or similar misconduct; or

(2) There has been an agency head determination that contractor bid or proposal information or source selection information has been disclosed or received in exchange for a thing of value, or for the purpose of obtaining or giving anyone a competitive advantage in the award of a Federal agency procurement contract.

(b) This subpart does not prescribe policies or procedures for, or govern the exercise of, any other remedy available to the Government with respect to such contracts, including but not limited to, the common law right of avoidance, rescission, or cancellation.

3.701 Purpose.

This subpart provides—

(a) An administrative remedy with respect to contracts in relation to which there has been—

(1) A final conviction for bribery, conflict of interest, disclosure or receipt of contractor bid or proposal information or source selection information in exchange for a thing of value or to give anyone a competitive advantage in the award of a Federal agency procurement contract, or similar misconduct; or

(2) An agency head determination that contractor bid or proposal information or source selection information has been disclosed or received in exchange for a thing of value, or for the purpose of obtaining or giving anyone a competitive advantage in the award of a Federal agency procurement contract; and

(b) A means to deter similar misconduct in the future by those who are involved in the award, performance, and administration of Government contracts.

3.702 Definition.

“Final conviction” means a conviction, whether entered on a verdict or plea, including a plea of nolo contendere, for which a sentence has been imposed.

3.703 Authority.

(a) Section 1(e) of Public Law 87-849, 18 U.S.C. 218 (“the Act”), empowers the President or the heads of executive agencies acting under regulations prescribed by the President, to declare void and rescind contracts and other transactions enumerated in the Act, in relation to which

there has been a final conviction for bribery, conflict of interest, or any other violation of Chapter 11 of Title 18 of the United States Code (18 U.S.C. 201-224). Executive Order 12448, November 4, 1983, delegates the President's authority under the Act to the heads of the executive agencies and military departments.

(b) Subsection 27(e)(3) of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy Act (41 U.S.C. 423) (the OFPP Act), as amended, requires a Federal agency, upon receiving information that a contractor or a person has engaged in conduct constituting a violation of subsection 27(a) or (b) of the OFPP Act, to consider rescission of a contract with respect to which—

(1) The contractor or someone acting for the contractor has been convicted for an offense punishable under subsection 27(e)(1) of the OFPP Act; or

(2) The head of the agency, or designee, has determined, based upon a preponderance of the evidence, that the contractor or someone acting for the contractor has engaged in conduct constituting such an offense.

3.704 Policy.

(a) In cases in which there is a final conviction for any violation of 18 U.S.C. 201-224 involving or relating to contracts awarded by an agency, the agency head or designee, shall consider the facts available and, if appropriate, may declare void and rescind contracts, and recover the amounts expended and property transferred by the agency in accordance with the policies and procedures of this subpart.

(b) Since a final conviction under 18 U.S.C. 201-224 relating to a contract also may justify the conclusion that the party involved is not presently responsible, the agency should consider initiating debarment proceedings in accordance with Subpart 9.4, Debarment, Suspension, and Ineligibility, if debarment has not been initiated, or is not in effect at the time the final conviction is entered.

(c) If there is a final conviction for an offense punishable under subsection 27(e) of the OFPP Act, or if the head of the agency, or designee, has determined, based upon a preponderance of the evidence, that the contractor or someone acting for the contractor has engaged in conduct constituting such an offense, then the head of the contracting activity shall consider, in addition to any other penalty prescribed by law or regulation—

(1) Declaring void and rescinding contracts, as appropriate, and recovering the amounts expended under the contracts by using the procedures at 3.705 (see 3.104-10); and

(2) Recommending the initiation of suspension or debarment proceedings in accordance with Subpart 9.4.

3.705 Procedures.

(a) *Reporting.* The facts concerning any final conviction for any violation of 18 U.S.C. 201-224 involving or relating to agency contracts shall be reported promptly to the agency head or designee for that official's consideration. The agency head or designee shall promptly notify the Civil Division, Department of Justice, that the action is being considered under this subpart.

(b) *Decision.* Following an assessment of the facts, the agency head or designee may declare void and rescind contracts with respect to which a final conviction has been entered, and recover the amounts expended and the property transferred by the agency under the terms of the contracts involved.

(c) *Decision-making process.* Agency procedures governing the voiding and rescinding decision-making process shall be as informal as practicable, consistent with the principles of fundamental fairness. As a minimum, however, agencies shall provide the following:

(1) A notice of proposed action to declare void and rescind the contract shall be made in writing and sent by certified mail, return receipt requested.

(2) A thirty calendar day period after receipt of the notice, for the contractor to submit pertinent information before any final decision is made.

(3) Upon request made within the period for submission of pertinent information, an opportunity shall be afforded for a hearing at which witnesses may be presented, and any witness the agency presents may be confronted. However, no inquiry shall be made regarding the validity of a conviction.

(4) If the agency head or designee decides to declare void and rescind the contracts involved, that official shall issue a written decision which—

(i) States that determination;

(ii) Reflects consideration of the fair value of any tangible benefits received and retained by the agency; and

(iii) States the amount due and the property to be returned to the agency.

(d) *Notice of proposed action.* The notice of proposed action, as a minimum shall—

(1) Advise that consideration is being given to declaring void and rescinding contracts awarded by the agency, and recovering the amounts expended and property transferred therefor, under the provisions of 18 U.S.C. 218;

(2) Specifically identify the contracts affected by the action;

(3) Specifically identify the offense or final conviction on which the action is based;

(4) State the amounts expended and property transferred under each of the contracts involved, and the money and the property demanded to be returned;

(5) Identify any tangible benefits received and retained by the agency under the contract, and the value of those benefits, as calculated by the agency;

(6) Advise that pertinent information may be submitted within 30 calendar days after receipt of the notice, and that, if requested within that time, a hearing shall be held at which witnesses may be presented and any witness the agency presents may be confronted; and

(7) Advise that action shall be taken only after the agency head or designee issues a final written decision on the proposed action.

(e) *Final agency decision.* The final agency decision shall be based on the information available to the agency head or designee, including any pertinent information submitted or, if a hearing was held, presented at the hearing. If the agency decision declares void and rescinds the contract, the final decision shall specify the amounts due and property to be returned to the agency, and reflect consideration of the fair value of any tangible benefits received and retained by the agency. Notice of the decision shall be sent promptly by certified mail, return receipt requested. Rescission of contracts under the authority of the Act and demand for recovery of the amounts expended and property transferred therefor, is not a claim within the meaning of the Contract Disputes Act of 1978 (CDA), 41 U.S.C. 801-813, or Part 32. Therefore, the procedures required by the CDA and the FAR for the issuance of a final contracting officer decision are not applicable to final agency decisions under this subpart, and shall not be followed.

Subpart 3.8—Limitation on the Payment of Funds to Influence Federal Transactions

3.800 Scope of subpart.

This subpart prescribes policies and procedures implementing section 319 of the Department of Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, Pub. L. 101-121, which added a new section 1352 to title 31, United States Code, entitled “Limitation on use of appropriated funds to influence certain Federal contracting and financial transactions” (the Act).

3.801 Definitions.

“Agency,” as used in this section, means an executive agency as defined in 2.101.

“Covered Federal action,” as used in this section, means any of the following Federal actions:

- (a) The awarding of any Federal contract.
- (b) The making of any Federal grant.
- (c) The making of any Federal loan.
- (d) The entering into of any cooperative agreement.

(e) The extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

“Indian tribe” and “tribal organization,” as used in this section, have the meaning provided in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 450B) and include Alaskan Natives.

“Influencing or attempting to influence,” as used in this section, means making, with the intent to influence, any communication to or appearance before an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with any covered Federal action.

“Local government,” as used in this section, means a unit of government in a State and, if chartered, established, or otherwise recognized by a State for the performance of a governmental duty, including a local public authority, a special district, an intrastate district, a council of governments, a sponsor group representative organization, and any other instrumentality of a local government.

“Officer or employee of an agency,” as used in this section, includes the following individuals who are employed by an agency:

(a) An individual who is appointed to a position in the Government under title 5, United States Code, including a position under a temporary appointment.

(b) A member of the uniformed services, as defined in subsection 101(3), title 37, United States Code.

(c) A special Government employee, as defined in section 202, title 18, United States Code.

(d) An individual who is a member of a Federal advisory committee, as defined by the Federal Advisory Committee Act, title 5, United States Code, appendix 2.

“Person,” as used in this section, means an individual, corporation, company, association, authority, firm, partnership, society, State, and local government, regardless of whether such entity is operated for profit or not for profit. This term excludes an Indian tribe, tribal organization, or any other Indian organization with respect to expenditures specifically permitted by other Federal law.

“Reasonable compensation,” as used in this section, means, with respect to a regularly employed officer or employee of any person, compensation that is consistent with the normal compensation for such officer or employee for work that is not furnished to, not funded by, or not furnished in cooperation with the Federal Government.

“Reasonable payment,” as used in this section, means, with respect to professional and other technical services, a payment in an amount that is consistent with the amount normally paid for such services in the private sector.

“Recipient,” as used in this section, includes the contractor and all subcontractors. This term excludes an Indian tribe, tribal organization, or any other Indian organization

with respect to expenditures specifically permitted by other Federal law.

“Regularly employed,” as used in this section, means, with respect to an officer or employee of a person requesting or receiving a Federal contract, an officer or employee who is employed by such person for at least 130 working days within 1 year immediately preceding the date of the submission that initiates agency consideration of such person for receipt of such contract. An officer or employee who is employed by such person for less than 130 working days within 1 year immediately preceding the date of the submission that initiates agency consideration of such person shall be considered to be regularly employed as soon as he or she is employed by such person for 130 working days.

“State,” as used in this section, means a State of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, a territory or possession of the United States, an agency or instrumentality of a State, and multi-State, regional, or interstate entity having governmental duties and powers.

3.802 Prohibitions.

(a) Section 1352 of title 31, United States Code, among other things, prohibits a recipient of a Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement from using appropriated funds to pay any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with any of the following covered Federal actions: the awarding of any Federal contract; the making of any Federal grant; the making of any Federal loan; the entering into of any cooperative agreement; or, the modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(b) The Act also requires offerors to furnish a declaration consisting of both a certification and a disclosure. These requirements are contained in the provision at 52.203-11, Certification and Disclosure Regarding Payments to Influence Certain Federal Transactions, and the clause at 52.203-12, Limitation on Payments to Influence Certain Federal Transactions.

(1) By signing its offer, an offeror certifies that no appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid in violation of the prohibitions in 31 U.S.C. 1352.

(2) The disclosure shall identify if any funds other than Federal appropriated funds (including profit or fee received under a covered Federal action) have been paid, or will be paid, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with a Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(c) The prohibitions of the Act do not apply under the following conditions:

(1) *Agency and legislative liaison by own employees.*

(i) The prohibition on the use of appropriated funds, in paragraph (a) of this section, does not apply in the case of a payment of reasonable compensation made to an officer or employee of a person requesting or receiving a covered Federal action if the payment is for agency and legislative liaison activities not directly related to a covered Federal action.

(ii) For purposes of subdivision (c)(1)(i) of this section, providing any information specifically requested by an agency or Congress is permitted at any time.

(iii) The following agency and legislative liaison activities are permitted at any time where they are not related to a specific solicitation for any covered Federal action:

(A) Discussing with an agency the qualities and characteristics (including individual demonstrations) of the person's products or services, conditions or terms of sale, and service capabilities.

(B) Technical discussions and other activities regarding the application or adaptation of the person's products or services for an agency's use.

(iv) The following agency and legislative liaison activities are permitted where they are prior to formal solicitation of any covered Federal action:

(A) Providing any information not specifically requested but necessary for an agency to make an informed decision about initiation of a covered Federal action.

(B) Technical discussions regarding the preparation of an unsolicited proposal prior to its official submission.

(C) Capability presentations by persons seeking awards from an agency pursuant to the provisions of the Small Business Act, as amended by Pub. L. 95-507, and subsequent amendments.

(v) Only those activities expressly authorized by subparagraph (c)(1) of this section are permitted under this section.

(2) *Professional and technical services.* (i) The prohibition on the use of appropriated funds, in paragraph (a) of this section, does not apply in the case of—

(A) Payment of reasonable compensation made to an officer or employee of a person requesting or receiving a covered Federal action or an extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of a covered Federal action, if payment is for professional or technical services rendered directly in the preparation, submission, or negotiation of any bid, proposal, or application for that Federal action or for meeting requirements imposed by or pursuant to law as a condition for receiving that Federal action;

(B) Any reasonable payment to a person, other than an officer or employee of a person requesting or receiving a covered Federal action, if the payment is for professional or technical services rendered directly in the preparation, submission, or negotiation of any bid, proposal, or application for that Federal action, or for meeting requirements imposed by or pursuant to law as a condition for receiving that Federal action. Persons other than officers or employees of a person requesting or receiving a covered Federal action include consultants and trade associations.

(ii) For purposes of subdivision (c)(2)(i) of this section, “professional and technical services” shall be limited to advice and analysis directly applying any professional or technical discipline. For example, drafting of a legal document accompanying a bid or proposal by a lawyer is allowable. Similarly, technical advice provided by an engineer on the performance or operational capability of a piece of equipment rendered directly in the negotiation of a contract is allowable. However, communications with the intent to influence made by a professional (such as a licensed lawyer) or a technical person (such as a licensed accountant) are not allowable under this section unless they provide advice and analysis directly applying their professional or technical expertise and unless the advice or analysis is rendered directly and solely in the preparation, submission or negotiation of a covered Federal action. Thus, for example, communications with the intent to influence made by a lawyer that do not provide legal advice or analysis directly and solely related to the legal aspects of his or her client's proposal, but generally advocate one proposal over another are not allowable under this section because the lawyer is not providing professional legal services. Similarly, communications with the intent to influence made by an engineer providing an engineering analysis prior to the preparation or submission of a bid or proposal are not allowable under this section since the engineer is providing technical services but not directly in the preparation, submission or negotiation of a covered Federal action.

(iii) Requirements imposed by or pursuant to law as a condition for receiving a covered Federal award include those required by law or regulation and any other requirements in the actual award documents.

(iv) Only those services expressly authorized by subdivisions (c)(2)(i)(A) and (B) of this section are permitted under this section.

(v) The reporting requirements of 3.803(a) shall not apply with respect to payments of reasonable compensation made to regularly employed officers or employees of a person.

3.803 Certification and disclosure.

(a) Any contractor who requests or receives a Federal contract exceeding \$100,000 shall submit the certification and disclosures required by the provision at 52.203-11, Certification and Disclosure Regarding Payments to Influence Certain Federal Transactions, with its offer. Disclosures under this section shall be submitted to the contracting officer using OMB standard form LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities.

(b) The contractor shall file a disclosure form at the end of each calendar quarter in which there occurs any event that materially affects the accuracy of the information contained in any disclosure form previously filed by such person under paragraph (a) of this section. An event that materially affects the accuracy of the information reported includes—

(1) A cumulative increase of \$25,000 or more in the amount paid or expected to be paid for influencing or attempting to influence a covered Federal action; or

(2) A change in the person(s) or individual(s) influencing or attempting to influence a covered Federal action; or

(3) A change in the officer(s), employee(s), or Member(s) of Congress contacted to influence or attempt to influence a covered Federal action.

(c) The contractor shall require the submittal of a certification, and if required, a disclosure form, by any person who requests or receives any subcontract exceeding \$100,000 under the Federal contract.

(d) All subcontractor disclosure forms (but not certifications), shall be forwarded from tier to tier until received by the prime contractor. The prime contractor shall submit all disclosure forms to the contracting officer at the end of the calendar quarter in which the disclosure form is submitted by the subcontractor. Each subcontractor certification shall be retained in the subcontract file of the awarding contractor.

3.804 Policy.

(a) The contracting officer shall obtain certifications and disclosures as required by the provision at 52.203-11, Certification and Disclosure Regarding Payments to Influence Certain Federal Transactions, prior to the award of any contract exceeding \$100,000.

(b) The contracting officer shall forward a copy of all contractor disclosures furnished pursuant to the clause at 52.203-12, Limitation on Payments to Influence Certain Federal Transactions, to the official designated in accordance with agency procedures, for subsequent submission to Congress. The original of the disclosure shall be retained in the contract file.

3.805 Exemption.

The Secretary of Defense may exempt, on a case-by-case basis, a covered Federal action from the prohibitions of this section whenever the Secretary determines, in writing, that such an exemption is in the national interest. The Secretary shall transmit a copy of such exemption to Congress immediately after making such a determination.

3.806 Processing suspected violations.

Suspected violations of the requirements of the Act shall be referred to the official designated in agency procedures.

3.807 Civil penalties.

Agencies shall impose and collect civil penalties pursuant to the provisions of the Program Fraud and Civil Remedies Act, 31 U.S.C. 3803 (except subsection (c)), 3804-3408, and 3812, insofar as the provisions therein are not inconsistent with the requirements of this subpart.

3.808 Solicitation provision and contract clause.

(a) The provision at 52.203-11, Certification and Disclosure Regarding Payments to Influence Certain Federal Transactions, shall be included in solicitations expected to exceed \$100,000.

(b) The clause at 52.203-12, Limitation on Payments to Influence Certain Federal Transactions, shall be included in solicitations and contracts expected to exceed \$100,000.

Subpart 3.9—Whistleblower Protections for Contractor Employees

3.900 Scope of subpart.

This subpart implements 10 U.S.C. 2409 and 41 U.S.C. 251, *et seq.*, as amended by Sections 6005 and 6006 of the Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act of 1994 (Pub. L. 103-355).

3.901 Definitions.

“Authorized official of an agency” means an officer or employee responsible for contracting, program management, audit, inspection, investigation, or enforcement of any law or regulation relating to Government procurement or the subject matter of the contract.

“Authorized official of the Department of Justice” means any person responsible for the investigation, enforcement, or prosecution of any law or regulation.

“Inspector General” means an Inspector General appointed under the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended. In the Department of Defense that is the DOD Inspector General. In the case of an executive agency that does not have an Inspector General, the duties shall be performed by an official designated by the head of the executive agency.

3.902 Applicability.

This subpart applies to all Government contracts.

3.903 Policy.

Government contractors shall not discharge, demote or otherwise discriminate against an employee as a reprisal for disclosing information to a Member of Congress, or an authorized official of an agency or of the Department of Justice, relating to a substantial violation of law related to a contract (including the competition for or negotiation of a contract).

3.904 Procedures for filing complaints.

(a) Any employee of a contractor who believes that he or she has been discharged, demoted, or otherwise discriminated against contrary to the policy in 3.903 may file a complaint with the Inspector General of the agency that awarded the contract.

(b) The complaint shall be signed and shall contain—

- (1) The name of the contractor;
- (2) The contract number, if known; if not, a description reasonably sufficient to identify the contract(s) involved;
- (3) The substantial violation of law giving rise to the disclosure;
- (4) The nature of the disclosure giving rise to the discriminatory act; and
- (5) The specific nature and date of the reprisal.

3.905 Procedures for investigating complaints.

(a) Upon receipt of a complaint, the Inspector General shall conduct an initial inquiry. If the Inspector General determines that the complaint is frivolous or for other reasons does not merit further investigation, the Inspector General shall advise the complainant that no further action on the complaint will be taken.

(b) If the Inspector General determines that the complaint merits further investigation, the Inspector General shall notify the complainant, contractor, and head of the contracting activity. The Inspector General shall conduct an investigation and provide a written report of findings to the head of the agency or designee.

(c) Upon completion of the investigation, the head of the agency or designee shall ensure that the Inspector General provides the report of findings to—

- (1) The complainant and any person acting on the complainant's behalf;
- (2) The contractor alleged to have committed the violation; and
- (3) The head of the contracting activity.

(d) The complainant and contractor shall be afforded the opportunity to submit a written response to the report of findings within 30 days to the head of the agency or

designee. Extensions of time to file a written response may be granted by the head of the agency or designee.

(e) At any time, the head of the agency or designee may request additional investigative work be done on the complaint.

3.906 Remedies.

(a) If the head of the agency or designee determines that a contractor has subjected one of its employees to a reprisal for providing information to a Member of Congress, or an authorized official of an agency or of the Department of Justice, the head of the agency or designee may take one or more of the following actions:

- (1) Order the contractor to take affirmative action to abate the reprisal.
- (2) Order the contractor to reinstate the person to the position that the person held before the reprisal, together with the compensation (including back pay), employment benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment that would apply to the person in that position if the reprisal had not been taken.
- (3) Order the contractor to pay the complainant an amount equal to the aggregate amount of all costs and

expenses (including attorneys' fees and expert witnesses' fees) that were reasonably incurred by the complainant for, or in connection with, bringing the complaint regarding the reprisal.

(b) Whenever a contractor fails to comply with an order, the head of the agency or designee shall request the Department of Justice to file an action for enforcement of such order in the United States district court for a district in which the reprisal was found to have occurred. In any action brought under this section, the court may grant appropriate relief, including injunctive relief and compensatory and exemplary damages.

(c) Any person adversely affected or aggrieved by an order issued under this section may obtain review of the order's conformance with the law, and this subpart, in the United States Court of Appeals for a circuit in which the reprisal is alleged in the order to have occurred. No petition seeking such review may be filed more than 60 days after issuance of the order by the head of the agency or designee. Review shall conform to Chapter 7 of Title 5, United States Code.

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