

(a) Authority to issue and sign Government bills of lading for the transportation of headstones and markers is further delegated to:

(1) Chief, Centralized Contracting Division, Office of Operations Support.

(2) Freight Rate Specialist, Office of Operations Support.

(b) Authority to procure, in emergency situations when the servicing supply organization cannot be utilized, and in accordance with the provisions of FAR Part 13, supplies, equipment, and nonpersonal services (including construction) required for the operation of national cemeteries is delegated to:

(1) Director, National Cemetery System, and Director, Office of Field Operations, National Cemetery System.

(2) Director, National Cemetery Area Office.

(c) Authority to procure items and nonpersonal services up to \$300 per transaction for the operation of national cemeteries is delegated to the Director of each national cemetery. The authority is to be used only in emergency situations when the servicing supply organization cannot be utilized, and the method of purchase is limited to the use of SF 44, Purchase Order—Invoice—Voucher, (FAR 13.306).

[49 FR 12583, Mar. 29, 1984. Redesignated and amended at 52 FR 24010, June 26, 1987; 54 FR 31964, Aug. 3, 1989; 63 FR 69217, Dec. 16, 1998]

801.670-5 Letters of agreement.

(a) Authority to execute, award, and administer letters of agreement (subject to the limitation prescribed in 837.2) is delegated to the following:

(1) General Counsel.

(2) Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management.

(3) Under Secretary for Health.

(4) Under Secretary for Benefits.

(5) Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs.

(6) Deputy Assistant Secretary for Acquisition and Materiel Management

(7) Inspector General.

(8) Directors, Regional Medical Education Centers (limited to obtaining instructors and training pursuant to section 7471 of Title 38, United States Code).

(9) Directors, Domiciliary and Medical Centers and Research and Develop-

ment Service Directors authorized to sign for the Chief Research and Development Officer (limited to obtaining peer review of research (see 837.2)).

(b) The contracting officers named in paragraphs (a) (1) through (7) of this section may designate one or more subordinates, and authority to execute letters of agreement is hereby delegated to such subordinates. Such subordinates will be no more than one organizational level below the contracting officers designated in paragraph (a) of this section, except that the Under Secretary for Health may designate the Veterans Integrated Service Network Directors. All such designations will be in writing, will specifically state the scope and limitations of the designees' contractual authority, and will also specifically prohibit further delegation by the designees. Copies of the delegation will be submitted to the Office of Acquisition and Materiel Management, Acquisition Administration Team.

(c) Copies of all letters of agreement issued by the designees identified in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section will be forwarded to the servicing contracting activity in order that the procurement action may be entered into the Federal Procurement Data System.

[49 FR 12583, Mar. 29, 1984, as amended at 50 FR 791, Jan. 7, 1985. Redesignated at 52 FR 24010, June 26, 1987, and further amended at 54 FR 31964, Aug. 3, 1989; 54 FR 40062, Sept. 29, 1989; 61 FR 11586, Mar. 21, 1996; 63 FR 69218, Dec. 16, 1998]

801.680 Contracting authority of the Inspector General.

(a) As provided by section 6(a) of Pub. L. 95-452 (October 12, 1978), the Inspector General is authorized to enter into contracts and other arrangements for audits, studies, analyses, and other services with public agencies and with private persons, and to make such payments as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of the Act, to the extent and in such amounts as may be provided in advance by appropriations Acts.

(b) In exercising the special authority provided in paragraph (a) of this section, the Inspector General may request the assistance of the servicing Acquisition and Materiel Management

Service in developing appropriate contract or agreement documents.

(c) If, in the opinion of the Inspector General, a reason to exercise the special authority does not exist, the services required by the Inspector General shall be obtained by the servicing Acquisition and Materiel Management Service or the local purchase and contract activity in accordance with the provisions of FAR and VAAR.

(d) Contracts entered into under the authority of paragraph (a) of this section are subject to the provisions of the Federal Acquisition Regulation. In addition, such contracts are subject to those provisions of VAAR which implement and supplement the FAR on matters other than those stemming from or related to delegations of the Secretary's contracting authority (e.g., management controls and approvals specified in subpart 837.2 will not apply to contract actions under the contract authority of the Inspector General).

[49 FR 12583, Mar. 29, 1984, as amended at 50 FR 791, Jan. 7, 1985; 54 FR 31964, Aug. 3, 1989; 61 FR 11586, Mar. 21, 1996; 63 FR 69218, Dec. 16, 1998]

801.690 VA Contracting Officer Certification Program.

The policy and procedures for the VA-wide Contracting Officer Certification Program (COCP) are established in this section and subsections.

[52 FR 24010, June 26, 1987]

801.690-1 Definitions.

(a) *Head of the Contracting Activity (HCA)* means an individual who has overall responsibility for managing the procurement program assigned to the activity. HCA designations are prescribed in VAAR 802.100. The HCA has the authority to appoint contracting officers with authority to conduct procurements of up to and including \$25,000 or the maximum order limitation for orders placed against established contracts, and terminate such appointments.

(b) *Recommending official* means an individual who is authorized by VAAR 801.690 and its subsections to recommend to a designating official that an individual be appointed as a contracting officer.

(c) *Designating official* means an individual who is authorized to appoint and terminate contracting officers.

(d) *Contracting Officer Certification Board (COCB)* means the group of Department officials, listed in VAAR 801.690-3(c), that evaluates and recommends to the designating official individuals as contracting officers at the Intermediate and Senior levels of authority, which levels are described in VAAR 801.690-2(c).

(e) *Contracting Officer Certification Program (COCP)* means a program designated by Department management for the selection, appointment, and termination of appointment of contracting officers. Training, experience, education, performance, and conduct are the objective criteria reviewed prior to appointment as contracting officer.

(f) *Qualifications* means an employee's record of training, experience, education, performance, and conduct which are reviewed prior to designation as contracting officer. These "qualifications" are not identical, supplemental, or related to the position qualification requirements published by the Office of Personnel Management in Handbook X-118.

(g) *Appointment* means the delegation of authority to any employee to enter into, administer or terminate contracts, and make related determinations and findings. Appointment provisions are identified in 801.690-5.

(h) *Certification* means an evaluation that the candidate has the experience, education and training to perform properly the duties of a contracting officer.

(i) *Selection* means that an employee has been appointed or certified as a contracting officer. The "selection" process is not identical, supplemental or related to any process whereby an employee is placed into a position by any competitive action (merit promotion) or noncompetitive action (reassignment, reinstatement). Selection provisions are identified in 801.690-4.

(j) *Termination* means the revocation of contracting authority of a contracting officer by the designating official. Termination provisions are identified in 801.690-6.