

Telephone (202) 874-6850

February 3, 2006

**SPECIAL INFORMATIONAL NOTICE TO ALL BOND-APPROVING  
(CONTRACTING) OFFICERS**

**Important Information Regarding the Use of Individual Sureties on Federal Bonds**

Subchapter E, Part 28 of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) provides guidance as to the acceptability of sureties and other security for Federal bonds. Acceptable security on Federal bonds include, but are not limited to, both corporate and individual sureties. FAR § 28.201. Acceptable corporate sureties must appear on the Department of Treasury's Circular 570. Treasury's Financial Management Service, Surety Bond Branch (FMS), publishes Department Circular 570 in the Federal Register.

Contracting officers determine the acceptability of individual sureties and ensure that the individual surety's pledged assets are sufficient to cover the bond obligation in accordance with the guidance outlined in the FAR § 28.203.

Although FMS is not substantively responsible for approving individual sureties, we believe it prudent to issue this Special Informational Notice on a FYI basis to Agency Bond-Approving (Contracting) Officers who do have that responsibility under the FAR.

Recently, FMS has been made aware of instances where **individual sureties are listing corporate debenture notes and other questionable assets on their "Affidavit of Individual Surety"**, Standard Form 28. In some instances, the individual sureties used a form other than the Standard Form 28 as their affidavit. **FAR § 28.203(b) specifically requires the use of the Standard Form 28.** In addition, FAR § 28.203-2(a) states that **"the Government will accept only cash, readily marketable assets, or irrevocable letters of credit from a federally insured financial institution from individual sureties to satisfy the underlying bond obligations."**

FAR § 28.203-2(b) includes **examples of acceptable assets**, such as:

- cash, or certificates of deposit, or other cash equivalents with a federally insured financial institution
- United State Government securities
- stocks and bonds actively traded on a national U.S. security exchange
- real property owned fee simple by the surety subject to certain conditions (refer to FAR 28.203-2(b)(4))
- irrevocable letters of credit issued by a federally insured financial institution in the name of the contracting agency and which identify the agency and solicitation or contract number.

Furthermore, FAR § 28.203-2(c) lists **unacceptable assets**, but indicates that the list is not all-inclusive. The following are listed as unacceptable assets:

- notes or account receivable
- foreign securities

- real property located outside the United States, its territories or possessions
- real property used as the principal residence of the surety
- real property owned concurrently
- life estates, leasehold estates, or future interest in real property
- personal property except as listed in FAR 28.203-2(b)
- stocks and bonds of the individual surety in a controlled, affiliated or closely held concern of the offeror/contractor
- corporate assets
- speculative assets
- letters of credit except as provided in FAR 28.203(b)(5)

The FAR also requires that the Government be given a security interest in any acceptable assets pledged by an individual surety. FAR § 28.203-1(a).

Prior to acceptance of an individual surety, FAR guidelines require contracting officers to obtain the opinion of their legal counsel as to the adequacy of the documentation pledging assets. FAR § 28.203(f).

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact this office at the above number.

Sincerely,

**/Signed/ Rose Miller**

Rose Miller  
Manager  
Surety Bond Branch