

## DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

GENERAL SERVICES  
ADMINISTRATIONNATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND  
SPACE ADMINISTRATION

## 48 CFR Parts 14, 15, and 52

[FAR Case 97-030]

RIN 9000-AI25

Federal Acquisition Regulation;  
Conforming Late Offer Treatment

**AGENCIES:** Department of Defense (DoD), General Services Administration (GSA), and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

**ACTION:** Proposed rule with request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** The Civilian Agency Acquisition Council and the Defense Acquisition Regulations Council are proposing to amend the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) to align guidance regarding receipt of late offers for commercial, sealed bid, and negotiated acquisitions.

**DATES:** Comments should be submitted on or before March 29, 1999 to be considered in the formulation of a final rule.

**ADDRESSES:** Interested parties should submit written comments to: General Services Administration, FAR Secretariat (MVR), Attn: Laurie Duarte, 1800 F Street, NW, Room 4035, Washington, DC 20405.

E-mail comments submitted over Internet should be addressed to: farcase.97-030@gsa.gov.

Please cite FAR case 97-030 in all correspondence related to this case.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** The FAR Secretariat, Room 4035, GS Building, Washington, DC 20405, (202) 501-4755, for information pertaining to status or publication schedules. For clarification of content, contact Mr. Ralph DeStefano, Procurement Analyst, at (202) 501-1958. Please cite FAR case 97-030.

## SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

## A. Background

This proposed rule amends the FAR to provide a single standard for receipt of late offers under commercial, sealed bid, and negotiated acquisitions. The proposed rule amends paragraph (f) of the clause at FAR 52.212-1, Instructions to Offerors—Commercial Items, to permit consideration of late offers if the Government mishandled the offer. This proposed rule also amends guidance on

receipt of late offers in FAR sections 14.304 and 15.208 and associated FAR solicitation provisions 52.214-7, Late Submissions, Modifications, and Withdrawals of Bids; 52.214-23, Late Submissions, Modifications, and Withdrawals of Technical Proposals under Two-Step Bidding; and paragraph (c)(3) of the solicitation provision at 52.215-1, Instruction to Offerors—Competitive Acquisitions, to align the guidance for sealed bids and negotiated acquisitions. Solicitation provision 52.214-32, Late Submissions, Modifications, and Withdrawals of Bids (Overseas) and 52.214-33, Late Submissions, Modifications, and Withdrawals of Technical Proposals under Two-Step Sealed Bidding (Overseas) are deleted, as the revisions to 52.214-7 and 52.214-23 eliminate the need for a separate provision.

This regulatory action was not subject to Office of Management and Budget review under Executive Order 12866, dated September 30, 1993, and is not a major rule under 5 U.S.C. 804.

## B. Regulatory Flexibility Act

This proposed rule is not expected to have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities within the meaning of the Regulatory Flexibility Act, 5 U.S.C. 601, *et seq.*, because the rule will affect when an offer is considered late, and, although no statistics regarding the number of late proposals exist, we expect that less than 1 percent of the offers will be received late. Under the rule, late offers, including late offers under commercial acquisitions will not be penalized for Government mishandling. An Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis has, therefore, not been performed. Comments from small entities concerning the affected FAR subpart will be considered in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 610 of the Act. Such comments must be submitted separately and should cite 5 U.S.C. 601, *et seq.* (FAR case 97-030), in correspondence.

## C. Paperwork Reduction Act

The Paperwork Reduction Act does not apply because the proposed changes to the FAR do not impose information collection requirements that require the approval of the Office of Management and Budget under 44 U.S.C. 3501, *et seq.*

## List of Subjects in 48 CFR Parts 14, 15, and 52

Government procurement.

Dated: January 22, 1999.

**Edward C. Loeb,**

*Director, Federal Acquisition Policy Division.*

Therefore, it is proposed that 48 CFR Parts 14, 15, and 52 be amended as set forth below:

1. The authority citation for 48 CFR Parts 14, 15, and 52 continues to read as follows:

**Authority:** 40 U.S.C. 486(c); 10 U.S.C. chapter 137; and 42 U.S.C. 2473(c).

## PART 14—SEALED BIDDING

2. Section 14.201-6 is amended by revising paragraph (c)(3); by removing paragraph (c)(4); by revising paragraph (r); by removing paragraph (v); and by redesignating paragraphs (w) through (y) as (v) through (x), respectively.

The revised text reads as follows:

## 14.201-6 Solicitation provisions.

\* \* \* \* \*

(c) \* \* \*

(3) 52.214-7, Late Submissions, Modifications, and Withdrawals of Bids.

\* \* \* \* \*

(r) The contracting officer shall insert the provision at 52.214-23, Late Submissions, Modifications, and Withdrawals of Technical Proposals under Two-Step Sealed Bidding, in solicitations for technical proposals in step one of two-step sealed bidding.

\* \* \* \* \*

3. Section 14.304 is revised to read as follows:

## 14.304 Submission, modification, and withdrawal of bids.

(a) Bidders are responsible for submitting bids, and any modifications or withdrawals, so as to reach the Government office designated in the invitation for bid (IFB) by the time specified in the IFB. They may use any transmission method authorized by the IFB (*i.e.*, regular mail, electronic commerce, or facsimile). If no time is specified in the IFB, the time for receipt is 4:30 p.m., local time, for the designated Government office on the date that bids are due.

(b)(1) Any bid, modification, or withdrawal of a bid received at the Government office designated in the IFB after the exact time specified for receipt of bids is "late" and will not be considered unless it is received before award is made, the contracting officer determines that accepting the late bid would not unduly delay the acquisition, and—

(i) If it was transmitted through an electronic commerce method authorized by the IFB, it was received at the initial point of entry to the Government infrastructure not later than 5:00 p.m.

one working day prior to the date specified for receipt of bids; or

(ii) There is acceptable evidence to establish that it was received at the Government installation designated for receipt of bids and was under the Government's control prior to the time set for receipt of bids.

(2) However, a late modification of an otherwise successful bid, that makes its terms more favorable to the Government, will be considered at any time it is received and may be accepted.

(c) Acceptable evidence to establish the time of receipt at the Government installation includes the time/date stamp of that installation on the bid wrapper, other documentary evidence of receipt maintained by the installation, or oral testimony or statements of Government personnel.

(d) If an emergency or unanticipated event interrupts normal Government processes so that bids cannot be received at the Government office designated for receipt of bids by the exact time specified in the IFB, and urgent Government requirements preclude amendment of the bid opening date, the time specified for receipt of bids will be deemed to be extended to the same time of day specified in the IFB on the first work day on which normal Government processes resume.

(e) Bids may be withdrawn by written notice received at any time before the exact time set for receipt of bids. If the IFB authorizes facsimile bids, bids may be withdrawn via facsimile received at any time before the exact time set for receipt of bids, subject to the conditions specified in the provision at 52.214-31, Facsimile Bids. A bid may be withdrawn in person by a bidder or its authorized representative if, before the exact time set for receipt of bids, the identity of the person requesting withdrawal is established and the person signs a receipt for the bid. Upon withdrawal of an electronically transmitted bid, the data received shall not be viewed and, where practicable, shall be purged from primary and backup data storage systems.

(f) The contracting officer shall promptly notify any bidder if its bid, modification, or withdrawal, was received late, and shall inform the bidder whether its bid will be considered, unless contract award is imminent and the notices prescribed in 14.409 would suffice.

(g) Late bids and modifications that are not considered shall be held unopened, unless opened for identification, until after award and then retained with other unsuccessful bids. However, any bid bond or guarantee shall be returned.

(h) The following shall, if available, be included in the contract files for each late bid, modification, or withdrawal:

(1) The date and hour of receipt.

(2) A statement, with supporting rationale, regarding whether the bid was considered for award.

(3) The envelope, wrapper, or other evidence of the date of receipt.

#### **PART 15—CONTRACTING BY NEGOTIATION**

4. Section 15.208 is revised to read as follows:

##### **15.208 Submission, modification, revision, and withdrawal of proposals.**

(a) Offerors are responsible for submitting proposals, and any revisions, and modifications, or withdrawals, so as to reach the Government office designated in the solicitation by the time specified in the solicitation. Offerors may use any transmission method authorized by the solicitation (*i.e.*, regular mail, electronic commerce, or facsimile). If no time is specified in the solicitation, the time for receipt is 4:30 p.m., local time, for the designated Government office on the date that proposals are due.

(b)(1) Any proposals, modification, revision, or withdrawal that is received at the designated Government office after the exact time specified for receipt of proposals is "late" and will not be considered unless it is received before award is made, the contracting officer determines that accepting the late proposal would not unduly delay the acquisition and—

(i) If it was transmitted through an electronic commerce method authorized by the solicitation, it was received at the initial point of entry to the Government infrastructure not later than 5:00 p.m. one working day prior to the date specified for receipt of proposals; or

(ii) There is acceptable evidence to establish that it was received at the Government installation designated for receipt of proposals and was under the Government's control prior to the time set for receipt of proposals; or

(iii) It was the only proposal received.

(2) However, a late modification of an otherwise successful proposal, that makes its terms more favorable to the Government, will be considered at any time it is received and may be accepted.

(c) Acceptable evidence to establish the time of receipt at the Government installation includes the time/date stamp of that installation on the proposal wrapper, other documentary evidence of receipt maintained by the installation, or oral testimony or statements of Government personnel.

(d) If an emergency or unanticipated event interrupts normal Government processes so that proposals cannot be received at the Government office designated for receipt of proposals by the exact time specified in the solicitation, and urgent Government requirements preclude amendment of the solicitation closing date, the time specified for receipt of proposals will be deemed to be extended to the same time of day specified in the solicitation on the first work day on which normal Government processes resume.

(e) Proposals may be withdrawn by written notice at any time before award. Oral proposals in response to oral solicitations may be withdrawn orally. The contracting officer shall document the contract file when oral withdrawals are made. One copy of withdrawn proposals should be retained in the contract file (see 4.803(a)(10)). Extra copies of the withdrawn proposals may be destroyed or returned to the offeror at the offeror's request. Where practicable, electronically transmitted proposals that are withdrawn shall be purged from primary and backup data storage systems after a copy is made for the file. Extremely bulky proposals shall only be returned at the offeror's request and expense.

(f) The contracting officer shall promptly notify any offeror if its proposal, modification, or revision was received late, and shall inform the offeror whether its proposal will be considered, unless contract award is imminent and the notice prescribed in 15.503(b) would suffice.

(g) Late proposals and modifications that are not considered shall be held unopened, unless opened for identification, until after award and then retained with other unsuccessful proposals.

(h) The following shall, if available, be included in the contracting office files for each late proposal, modification, revision, or withdrawal:

(1) The date and hour of receipt.

(2) A statement regarding whether the proposal was considered for award, with supporting rationale.

(3) The envelope, wrapper, or other evidence of date of receipt.

#### **PART 52—SOLICITATION PROVISIONS AND CONTRACT CLAUSES**

5. Section 52.212-1 is amended by revising the date of the clause and paragraph (f) to read as follows:

##### **52.212-1 Instructions to Offerors—Commercial Items.**

\* \* \* \* \*

Instructions to Offerors—Commercial Items  
(Date)

\* \* \* \* \*

(f) *Late submissions, modifications, revisions, and withdrawals of offers.* (1) Offerors are responsible for submitting offers, and any modifications, revisions, or withdrawals, so as to reach the Government office designated in the solicitation by the time specified in the solicitation. If no time is specified in the solicitation, the time for receipt is 4:30 p.m., local time, for the designated Government office on the date that offers or revisions are due.

(2)(i) Any offer, modification, revision, or withdrawal of an offer received at the Government office designated in the solicitation after the exact time specified for receipt of offers is "late" and will not be considered unless it is received before award is made, the contracting officer determines that accepting the late offer would not unduly delay the acquisition, and—

(A) If it was transmitted through an electronic commerce method authorized by the solicitation, it was received at the initial point of entry to the Government infrastructure not later than 5:00 p.m. one working day prior to the date specified for receipt of offers; or

(B) There is acceptable evidence to establish that it was received at the Government installation designated for receipt of offers and was under the Government's control prior to the time set for receipt of offers; or

(C) If this solicitation is a request for proposals, it was the only proposal received.

(ii) However, a late modification of an otherwise successful offer, that makes its terms more favorable to the Government, will be considered at any time it is received and may be accepted.

(3) Acceptable evidence to establish the time of receipt at the Government installation includes the time/date stamp of that installation on the offer wrapper, other documentary evidence of receipt maintained by the installation, or oral testimony or statements of Government personnel.

(4) If an emergency or unanticipated event interrupts normal Government processes so that offers cannot be received at the Government office designated for receipt of offers by the exact time specified in the solicitation, and urgent Government requirements preclude amendment of the solicitation or other notice of an extension of the closing date, the time specified for receipt of offers will be deemed to be extended to the same time of day specified in the solicitation on the first work day on which normal Government processes resume.

(5) Offers may be withdrawn by written notice received at any time before the exact time set for receipt of offers. Oral offers in response to oral solicitations may be withdrawn orally. The contracting officer shall document the contract file when such oral withdrawals are made. If the solicitation authorizes facsimile offers, offers may be withdrawn via facsimile received at any time before the exact time set for receipt of offers, subject to the conditions specified in the solicitation concerning facsimile offers. An offer may be withdrawn in person by an

offeror or its authorized representative if, before the exact time set for receipt of offers, the identity of the person requesting withdrawal is established and the person signs a receipt for the offer.

\* \* \* \* \*

6. Section 52.214-7 is amended by revising the provision to read as follows:

**52.214-7 Late Submissions, Modifications, and Withdrawals of Bids.**

\* \* \* \* \*

**Late Submissions, Modifications, and Withdrawals of Bids (Date)**

(a) Bidders are responsible for submitting bids, and any modifications or withdrawals, so as to reach the Government office designated in the invitation for bids (IFB) by the time specified in the IFB. If no time is specified in the IFB, the time for receipt is 4:30 p.m., local time, for the designated Government office on the date that bids are due.

(b)(1) Any bid, modification or withdrawal received at the Government office designated in the IFB after the exact time specified for receipt of bids is "late" and will not be considered unless it is received before award is made, the Contracting Officer determines that accepting the late bid would not unduly delay the acquisition, and—

(i) If it was transmitted through an electronic commerce method authorized by the IFB, it was received at the initial point of entry to the Government infrastructure not later than 5:00 p.m. one working day prior to the date specified for receipt of bids; or

(ii) There is acceptable evidence to establish that it was received at the Government installation designated for receipt of bids and was under the Government's control prior to the time set for receipt of bids.

(2) However, a late modification of an otherwise successful bid that makes its terms more favorable to the Government, will be considered at any time it is received and may be accepted.

(c) Acceptable evidence to establish the time of receipt at the Government installation includes the time/date stamp of that installation on the bid wrapper, other documentary evidence of receipt maintained by the installation, or oral testimony or statements of Government personnel.

(d) If an emergency or unanticipated event interrupts normal Government processes so that bids cannot be received at the Government office designated for receipt of bids by the exact time specified in the IFB and urgent Government requirements preclude amendment of the IFB, the time specified for receipt of bids will be deemed to be extended to the same time of day specified in the solicitation on the first work day on which normal Government processes resume.

(e) Bids may be withdrawn by written notice received at any time before the exact time set for receipt of bids. If the IFB authorizes facsimile bids, bids may be withdrawn via facsimile received at any time before the exact time set for receipt of bids, subject to the conditions specified in the provision at 52.214-31, Facsimile Bids. A bid

may be withdrawn in person by a bidder or its authorized representative if, before the exact time set for receipt of bids, the identity of the person requesting withdrawal is established and the person signs a receipt for the bid.

(End of provision)

7. Section 52.214-23 is amended by the revising the section heading and the provision to read as follows:

**52.214-23 Late Submissions, Modifications, Revisions, and Withdrawals of Technical Proposals under Two-Step Sealed Bidding.**

\* \* \* \* \*

**Late Submissions, Modifications, Revisions, and Withdrawals of Technical Proposals Under Two-Step Sealed Bidding (Date)**

(a) Bidders are responsible for submitting technical proposals, and any modifications or revisions, so as to reach the Government office designated in the request for technical proposals by the time specified in the invitation for bids (IFB). If no time is specified in the IFB, the time for receipt is 4:30 p.m., local time, for the designated Government office on the date that bids or revisions are due.

(b)(1) Any technical proposal under step one of two-step sealed bidding or modification or revision or withdrawal of such proposal received at the Government office designated in the request for technical proposals after the exact time specified for receipt will not be considered unless the Contracting Officer determines that accepting the late technical proposal would not unduly delay the acquisition; and—

(i) If it was transmitted through an electronic commerce method authorized by the request for technical proposals, it was received at the initial point of entry to the Government infrastructure not later than 5:00 p.m. one working day prior to the date specified for receipt of proposals; or

(ii) There is acceptable evidence to establish that it was received at the Government installation designated for receipt of offers and was under the Government's control prior to the time set for receipt; or

(iii) It is the only proposal received and it is negotiated under Part 15 of the Federal Acquisition Regulation.

(2) However, a late modification of an otherwise successful proposal that makes its terms more favorable to the Government will be considered at any time it is received and may be accepted.

(c) Acceptable evidence to establish the time of receipt at the Government installation includes the time/date stamp of that installation on the technical proposal wrapper, other documentary evidence of receipt maintained by the installation, or oral testimony or statements of Government personnel.

(d) If an emergency or unanticipated event interrupts normal Government processes so that technical proposals cannot be received at the Government office designated for receipt of technical proposals by the exact time specified in the request for technical

proposals, and urgent Government requirements preclude amendment of the request for technical proposals, the time specified for receipt of technical proposals will be deemed to be extended to the same time of day specified in the request for technical proposals on the first work day on which normal Government processes resume.

(e) Technical proposals may be withdrawn by written notice received at any time before the exact time set for receipt of technical proposals. If the request for technical proposals authorizes facsimile technical proposals, they may be withdrawn via facsimile received at any time before the exact time set for receipt of proposals, subject to the conditions specified in the provision at 52.214-31, Facsimile Bids. A technical proposal may be withdrawn in person by a bidder or its authorized representative if, before the exact time set for receipt of technical proposals, the identity of the person requesting withdrawal is established and the person signs a receipt for the technical proposal.

(End of provision)

**52.214-32 and 52.214-33 [Reserved]**

8. Sections 52.214-32 and 52.214-33 are removed and reserved.

9. Section 52.215-1 is amended by revising the date of the provision and paragraph (c)(3) to read as follows:

**52.215-1 Instructions to Offerors—Competitive Acquisition.**

\* \* \* \* \*

**Instructions to Offerors—Competitive Acquisition (Date)**

\* \* \* \* \*

(c) \* \* \*

(3) *Submission, modification, revision, and withdrawal of proposals.* (i) Offerors are responsible for submitting proposals, and any modifications, revisions, or withdrawals, so as to reach the Government office designated in the solicitation by the time specified in the solicitation. If no time is specified in the solicitation, the time for receipt is 4:30 p.m., local time, for the designated Government office on the date that proposal or revision is due.

(ii)(A) Any proposal, modification, revision, or withdrawal received at the Government office designated in the solicitation after the exact time specified for receipt of offers is “late” and will not be considered unless it is received before award is made, the Contracting Officer determines that accepting the late offer would not unduly delay the acquisition, and—

(1) If it was transmitted through an electronic commerce method authorized by the solicitation, it was received at the initial point of entry to the Government infrastructure not later than 5:00 p.m. one working day prior to the date specified for receipt of proposals; or

(2) There is acceptable evidence to establish that it was received at the Government installation designated for receipt of offers and was under the Government’s control prior to the time set for receipt of offers; or

(3) It is the only proposal received.

(B) However, a late modification of an otherwise successful proposal that makes its

terms more favorable to the Government, will be considered at any time it is received and may be accepted.

(iii) Acceptable evidence to establish the time of receipt at the Government installation includes the time/date stamp of that installation on the proposal wrapper, other documentary evidence of receipt maintained by the installation, or oral testimony or statements of Government personnel.

(iv) If an emergency or unanticipated event interrupts normal Government processes so that proposals cannot be received at the office designated for receipt of proposals by the exact time specified in the solicitation, and urgent Government requirements preclude amendment of the solicitation, the time specified for receipt of proposals will be deemed to be extended to the same time of day specified in the solicitation on the first work day on which normal Government processes resume.

(v) Proposals may be withdrawn by written notice received at any time before award. Oral proposals in response to oral solicitations may be withdrawn orally. If the solicitation authorizes facsimile proposals, proposals may be withdrawn via facsimile received at any time before award, subject to the conditions specified in the provision at 52.215-5, Facsimile Proposals. Proposals may be withdrawn in person by an offeror or an authorized representative, if the identity of the person requesting withdrawal is established and the person signs a receipt for the proposal before award.

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[FR Doc. 99-1861 Filed 1-26-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6820-EP-P