

level of DoD contract awards to SDBs achieved in fiscal year 1999.

DATES: Effective Date: February 24, 1999.

Applicability Date: This suspension applies to all solicitations issued during the period from February 24, 1999, to February 23, 2000.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Susan Schneider, PDUSD (A&T), Director of Defense Procurement, Defense Acquisition Regulations Council, 3060, Defense Pentagon, Washington, DC 20301-30962, telephone (703) 602-0131.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Pursuant to the authority granted in 10 U.S.C. 2323(e), DoD has previously granted SDBs a 10 percent price preference in certain acquisitions. This price preference was initially implemented in the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement, Subpart 219.70. Beginning October 1, 1998, the price preference program was removed from the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement and was implemented, in revised form, for all agencies subject to the Federal Acquisition Regulation in Subpart 19.11 of that regulation.

Section 801 of the Strom Thurmond National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999 (Public Law 105-261) amended 10 U.S.C. 2323(e)(3) to prohibit DoD from granting such a price preference for a 1-year period following a fiscal year in which DoD achieved the 5 percent goal for contract awards established in 10 U.S.C. 2323(a). Since, in fiscal year 1998, DoD exceeded this 5 percent goal, use of this price preference in DoD acquisitions must be suspended for a 1-year period.

Michele P. Peterson,
Executive Editor, Defense Acquisition
Regulations Council.

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Army

Proposed Implementation of the Defense Table of Official Distances (DTOD) in the DoD Freight Program

AGENCY: Military Traffic Management Command, DoD.

ACTION: Final notice (policy statement).

SUMMARY: The Department of Defense (DoD) has decided as a matter of procurement policy and internal agency procedure to change the distance calculation source for payment and audit under DoD freight program.

Beginning on the effective date set forth below, the DoD will use the DTOD for computing highway distances for freight shipments, hazardous material shipments, and overweight/overdimensional shipments. Carriers and providers participating in the DoD freight program must agree to be bound by the DTOD distance calculation for payment and audit purposes in all procurements using mileage-based rates. This policy decision is in furtherance of DoD's goal to use a single integrated, electronic distance calculation source for its travel entitlement, passenger traffic, personal property, and freight programs.

EFFECTIVE DATE: April 1, 1999.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Ed Dickerson (703) 681-6870 or Ms. Patty Maloney (703) 681-6586, Military Traffic Management Command, ATTN: MTTM-O, Room 108, 5611 Columbia Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-5050.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

1. Background

In furtherance of DoD's goal of making its transportation programs, including travel entitlement, passenger traffic, personal property, and freight, more standard, economical and efficient, the DoD Comptroller tasked MTMC to find a commercially available, integrated, automated distance calculation source capable of supporting all DoD transportation and travel related requirements. After an extensive proof-of-concept and market analysis phase, MTMC contracted for delivery and installation of a commercial-off-the-shelf distance calculation system adaptable to DoD transportation and entitlement programs. The DTOD, commercially known as PC*MILER by ALK Associates, Inc., will become the DoD standard, automated source for surface vehicular distance information worldwide. A notice of proposed implementation of DTOD in the DoD freight transportation program was published in the **Federal Register**, vol. 63, no. 178, pages 49338-49339, Tuesday, September 15, 1998. In response to this notice, 14 comments were received; of which 10 were from freight carriers, three from carrier associations, and one from Rand McNally. The comments and responses are as follows:

Comment: ALK's PC*MILER is a cost-effective database and would benefit small businesses.

Response: MTMC is aware that DTOD's commercial counterpart, ALK's PC*MILER, is currently used successfully in the commercial sector by shippers and carriers of various sizes

and business objectives. MTMC believes that DTOD can be fully integrated with existing commercial transportation systems and can be used by DoD shippers and carriers with equal success.

Comment: The cost to purchase and maintain a separate distance calculation product for DoD shipments is too high.

Response: MTMC is aware of the economic impact implementation of DTOD may have on freight carriers, particularly small businesses. Therefore, MTMC did not mandate that carriers purchase and maintain DTOD in order to participate in the DoD freight program. Instead, MTMC only requires that participating carriers agree to be bound by DTOD mileage for payment and audit purposes. MTMC believes that carriers may choose to adapt to the DTOD implementation in a variety of ways, to include:

(1) Carriers not purchasing DTOD may rely on the payment process to identify the distance used for payment; (2) Carriers may subscribe to the DTOD-compliant commercial product (PC*MILER) through the Internet for an estimated \$375 per 500 lookups; (3) Carriers may purchase and install ALK's PC*MILER in a manner best suited to their own business strategies and computer operations; (4) Carriers may explore the possibility of acquiring hard copy versions of PC*MILER; (5) Carriers may rely on the comparison of variances between Rand McNally's Milemaker and ALK's PC*MILER distances for the 124 busiest traffic lanes. Copies of the comparison are available on request. Additionally, MTMC is exploring automated methods of annotating all GBL's to reflect the DTOD distance.

Comment: Serving the commercial market and participating in the DoD freight program will require carriers to purchase and maintain two different systems—one for DoD and another for commercial customers.

Response: MTMC does not require carriers to purchase PC*MILER and maintain two different distance systems. Carriers may continue to use the mileage software they are currently using. However, for DoD shipments, payment and audit will be based on the DTOD distance calculations. Carriers will have the options listed in the first comment or other options suited to each carrier's business strategy/business relationship and market situation.

Comment: DTOD is a DoD-unique product and not the commercial standard in the freight industry.

Response: DTOD is a commercial product and is, therefore, consistent with commercial business practices. DTOD is based on ALK's PC*MILER,

which is a commercial-off-the-shelf product modified to include DoD standards point of location codes (SPLC) and several locations within CONUS and overseas. Use of DTOD will move DoD closer to a single, automated, and widely used commercial standard for all its various transportation programs. DTOD and PC*MILER will be subject to the same version control process and will feature delivery systems compatible with current commercial usage for like products.

Comment: Carrier information systems use AS400 and Unix operating systems. It is not clear whether DTOD will run on these larger systems.

Response: DoD has chosen to use a Windows NT operating system.

However, carriers are free to license a PC*MILER version that will run on an operating system of their choice. ALK currently has versions of PC*MILER for AS400 and Unix operating systems.

Comment: Many small businesses do not have updated computer capability or do not use computers.

Response: MTMC realizes that all carriers do not operate their businesses in the same way. However, current and future business practices are centered on the use of computers in one way or another. As the business process changes to embrace principles of electronic commerce (e.g., electronic data interchange and electronic funds transfer), MTMC is anxious to capitalize on the economies and efficiencies those changes represent. MTMC is confident that commercial shippers and transportation providers are moving in the same direction.

Comment: PC*MILER is unproven in industry and lacks version control.

Response: Currently, over 9500 shippers and carriers in commercial transportation are using PC*MILER. The DTOD project office, in conjunction with the software vendor, will maintain precise versions control of the distance software to ensure all parties (finance centers, audit agencies, shippers, and carriers) have the same version of DTOD/PC*MILER at the same time.

Comment: DoD's proposed implementation of DTOD in its freight program violates the Regulatory Flexibility Act by failing to include an initial regulatory flexibility analysis.

Response: DoD's decision to adopt and implement a single, integrated mileage calculation source is a procurement policy decision that is directly related to the basis DoD will use to pay for commercial transportation services. The decision and steps taken to implement DTOD in DoD's freight program relate to public contracts and are exempt from the Regulatory

Flexibility Act, 5 U.S.C. 601-612. This policy decision to implement a single distance calculation source for internal agency travel entitlement and procurement purposes is not considered rule making within the meaning of the Administrative Procedure Act or the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

2. Regulatory Flexibility Act

Implementation of this policy change in DoD's freight program involves public contracts and is designed to standardize distance calculation in the payment and audit process. This change is not considered rule making within the meaning of the Administrative Procedures Act or the Regulatory Flexibility Act, 5 U.S.C. 601-612.

3. Paperwork Reduction Act

The Paperwork Reduction Act, 44 U.S.C. 3051, et seq., does not apply because no information collection reporting or records keeping responsibilities are imposed on offerors, contractors, or members of the public.

David E. Cook,

Col, USAF, Director, JTMO.

[FR Doc. 99-2325 Filed 1-29-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Web-Based Education Commission; Notice of Establishment

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary, Education.

ACTION: Notice of Establishment of the Web-Based Education Commission.

SUMMARY: The Secretary of Education announces his intention to establish the Web-Based Education Commission under the authority of the Higher Education Act of 1998 (Pub. L. 105-244) and the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Pub. L. 92-463; 5 U.S.C.A. Appendix 2).

PURPOSE: The Secretary has determined that the establishment of the Web-Based Education Commission is necessary and in the public interest in connection with the performance of duties imposed on the Department by law. This Commission is required to conduct a thorough study to assess the educational software available in retail markets for secondary and postsecondary students who choose to use such software. The Commission will hold public hearings throughout the United States to produce this study. The Commission will issue a final report to the President and Congress, not later than six months after the first meeting. This report shall contain a detailed statement of the

findings and conclusions together with its recommendations. The recommendations shall address what legislation and administrative actions they consider appropriate; and what they regard as the appropriate Federal role in determining the quality of the educational software products. The Commission shall consist of Fourteen members, appointed by the President, Secretary, and Congress, who have expertise in the Internet technology industry, in accreditation, establishing statewide curricula, and establishing information technology networks pertaining to education curricula.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL: Maureen McLaughlin, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy, Planning, and Innovation, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC 20202 Telephone: (202) 205-2987.

Dated: January 26, 1999.

Richard W. Riley,

Secretary of Education.

[FR Doc. 99-2332 Filed 1-29-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-M

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation

Date and Time: Thursday, March 4, 1999, 9:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.

Place: The Latham Hotel, 3000 M Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, (202) 726-5000. The meeting site is accessible to individuals with disabilities. An individual with a disability who will need an accommodation to participate in the meeting (e.g., interpreting service, assistive listening device, or materials in an alternate format) should notify the contact person listed in this notice at least two weeks before the scheduled meeting date. Although the Department will attempt to meet a request received after that date, the requested accommodations may not be available because of insufficient time to arrange them.

Status:

Parts of this meeting will be open to the public.

Parts of this meeting will be closed to the public.

Matters to be Considered: The standard of accreditation applied to medical schools by several foreign countries and the comparability of those standards to the standards of accreditation applied to United States medical schools. Discussions of the standards of accreditation will be held in sessions open to the public. Discussions that focus on specific