
Types Of Item Descriptions

Drawings/Specifications/Standards

The specifications contain descriptions of the technical and other requirements established for the supplies or services the Government is procuring. There are three basic types of specifications. In practice, it is rare to find specifications that fit completely into one of these categories, as most specifications contain a combination of requirements. These requirements are:

- Performance specifications—contain performance characteristics desired for the item.

Examples:

- The radio must operate over a 40-mile radius.
- The floor must be free of stains, spots, and streaks.
- Design specifications—contain precise measurements, tolerances, materials, in-process and finished-product tests, quality control and inspection requirements, and other detailed information for manufactured items. The information furnished is sufficiently detailed to ensure that all items manufactured to the specifications are the same.

Example: Detailed manufacturing drawings.

- Purchase order descriptions—the specifications identify the item by a brand name with the optional use of an “or equal” statement to allow competition.

Specifications may also be a narrative description of what the output should look like when it is completed. This is true for many janitorial contracts.

Specifications are comprehensive descriptions of the technical requirements for material, equipment, and services. In addition to its specifications, DoD uses standards that establish the engineering and technical limitations and applications of items, materials, processes, methods, and engineering practices. Standards are used to ensure maximum uniformity in materials and equipment and to foster interchangeability of parts used in these products. Standards may be separately stated in a description of a need, but frequently they are also included in military specifications. Though use of Military specifications and standards continues within DoD, there is an emphasis on maximizing the utilization of commercial specifications and standards whenever practicable.

The Department of Defense Single Stock Point for Military Specifications, Standards and Related Publications. <http://www.dodssp.daps.mil/>

Types Of Item Descriptions, Continued

DODSSP

The Department of Defense Single Stock Point (DODSSP) was created to centralize the control, distribution, and access to the extensive collection of Military Specifications, Standards, and related standardization documents either prepared by or adopted by the DoD. The responsibilities of the DODSSP in regard to Military Specifications, Standards, and related standardization documents and publications comprising the collection include

- electronic document storage
- indexing
- cataloging
- maintenance
- publish-on-demand
- distribution, and
- sale.

There are nine document categories in the DODSSP Collection. They are:

- Military / Performance / Detail Specifications
- Military Standards
- DoD-adopted Non-Government / Industry Specifications and Standards
- Federal Specifications and Standards / Commercial Item Descriptions
- Data Item Descriptions
- Military Handbooks
- Qualified Products/Manufacturer's Lists (QPLs/QMLs)
- USAF / USN Aeronautical Standards / Design Standards
- USAF Specifications Bulletins

Although the DODSSP Active Collection contains over 40,000 line items, not all documents specified in Government procurements are included (e.g., engineering drawings, some Departmental documents, and the majority of all non-Government/Industry Standards).

Technical Data Packages (TDPs) are comprised of the engineering design and manufacturing drawings related to the items found in DoD solicitations. Some solicitations have associated technical data packages. Go to the appropriate Tech Data Site <http://dodbusopps.com/egov/techdata.asp> area to find technical documents that may be associated with your specific solicitations.

Types Of Item Descriptions, Continued

Automated Bidsets Interface Web Server (ABIWeb)

The ABIWeb Server is a system that allows Engineering Data Lists (EDLs) and digitized drawings for open procurements to be electronically retrieved by the public. The ABIWeb Server allows the identification and retrieval of drawing lists and digitized drawings for solicitations currently open at DLA Supply Centers. Drawings that are not in electronic format, are classified, or have restrictions on dissemination will not be available from ABIWeb. <http://abiweb.dscpl.dla.mil/abi/>

Defense Standardization Program Web Site, www.dsp.dla.mil all Government and Industry customers now have immediate, free access to Defense specifications and standards. Users simply click on 'SPECS and STDS', and they are led to a DTIC document search screen, on which they enter the document information (e.g., number or title). The 'hits' are then displayed, and the user selects the desired document. If it's a Defense Spec or Std, the ASSIST-Enterprise screen is then displayed, allowing the user to click on the selected document's icon. The user then views a full text version of the document in Adobe PDF, which can be downloaded and printed. Your local library could also be a source for specifications.

Government Industry Data Mart

Through the GIDM, you have access to The Central Contractor Registration system which is a repository of all companies and agencies registered to do business with the Department of Defense. The Universal Directory of Commercial Items (UDCI) is a global catalog of items based on Commercial bar code (Universal Product Code (UPC) or European Article Number (EAN). The U.S./Canada Joint Certification Program System assists in the identification of companies that have been assigned a Certification Number under the Joint Certification Program. The Business Identification Number Cross-reference System (BINCS) identifies foreign and domestic government/commercial contractors, manufacturers and suppliers. The Government Industry Reference Data Edit and Review (GIRDER) program works with Government manufacturers and suppliers to maintain the correct relationship between the CAGE code, manufacturer part number and National Stock Number. <http://www.gidm.dlis.dla.mil/>

Qualified Products List/Qualified Manufacturers List (FAR Subpart 9.201)

Qualification is a process whereby a manufacturer demonstrates that his/her products, processes or materials will meet the specified military performance quality and reliability requirements.

The Qualified Products List (QPL) lists specific part numbers that the manufacturer has demonstrated a capability to manufacture reliably and in compliance with his or her own internal requirements and the military specifications.

Qualified Bidders List (QBL) means a list of bidders who have had their products examined and tested and who have satisfied all applicable qualification requirements for that product or have otherwise satisfied all applicable qualification requirements.

Qualified Manufacturers List (QML) means a list of manufacturers who have had their products examined and tested and who have satisfied all applicable qualification requirements for that product. The QML lists the processes and materials each manufacturer has demonstrated a capability to manufacture reliably and in compliance with the manufacturer's requirements and the military specifications. Many different qualified products can be produced using the QML listed processes and materials.

Types Of Item Descriptions, Continued

Qualified Products Lists, Qualified Manufacturers Lists, and Qualified Bidders Lists (FAR Subpart 9.203)

- (a) Qualification and listing in a QPL, QML, or QBL is the process by which products are obtained from manufacturers or distributors, examined and tested for compliance with specification requirements, or manufacturers or potential offerors, are provided an opportunity to demonstrate their abilities to meet the standards specified for qualification. The names of successful products, manufacturers, or potential offerors are included on lists evidencing their status. Generally, qualification is performed in advance and independently of any specific acquisition action. After qualification, the products, manufacturers, or potential offerors are included in a Federal or Military QPL, QML, or QBL.

- (b) Specifications requiring a qualified product are included in the following publications:
 - (1) GSA Index of Federal Specifications, Standards and Commercial Item Descriptions, FPMR 101-2

 - (2) Department of Defense Index of Specifications and Standards.

- (c) Instructions concerning qualification procedures are included in the following publications:
 - (1) Federal Standardization Manual, FSPM-0001.

 - (2) Defense Standardization Manual 4120.24-M, Appendix 2, as amended by Military Standards 961 and 962.

The GSA Index of Federal Specifications, Standards and Commercial Item Descriptions, FPMR 101-29.1, and the Federal Standardization Manual, FSPM-0001 may be obtained from the addressee in FAR Subpart 11.201(d)(1):

General Services Administration
Federal Supply Service
Specifications Section
Suite 8100
470 L'Enfant Plaza, SW
Washington, DC 20407
Telephone (202) 619-8925.

The Department of Defense Index of Specifications and Standards, and the Defense Standardization Manual 4120.24-M, Appendix 2, as amended by Military Standards 961 and 962, may be obtained from the addressee in FAR Subpart 11.201(d)(2):

Department of Defense Single Stock Point (DoDSSP)
Building 4, Section D
700 Robbins Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19111-5094
Telephone (215) 697-2667/2179

Types Of Item Descriptions, Continued

Critical Safety Items (CSIs)

A Critical Safety Item means a part, assembly, installation, or production system with one or more critical characteristics that, if not conforming to the design data or quality requirements, would result in an unsafe condition that could cause loss of, or serious damage to, the end item or major components, loss of control, or serious injury or death to personnel.

DLA, working with the Military Services, has focused more attention on items critical to military safety, particularly aviation. In order to improve the management of CSI, DLA issued new guidance on December 5, 2001, to contracting personnel, to clarify that awards for CSI items can only be made to firms identified in the Acquisition Item Description (AID). The AID identifies those firms that have received prior source approval from the cognizant Military Service's Engineering Support Activity (ESA). The requiring Military Service defines or specifies the technical requirements of the item being procured and maintains the accuracy of the AID.

First Article Testing (FAR Subpart 9.3)

Certain items, due to their critical nature, require a first article approval prior to production. First article testing ensures that the contractor can furnish a product that conforms to all contract requirements for acceptance.

First Article Testing may be used when

- (a) The contractor has not previously furnished the product to the Government;
- (b) The contractor previously furnished the product to the Government, but—
 - 1. There have been subsequent changes in processes or specifications;
 - 2. Production has been discontinued for an extended period of time; or
 - 3. The product acquired under a previous contract developed a problem during its life;
- (c) The product is described by a performance specification; or
- (d) It is essential to have an approved first article to serve as a manufacturing standard.

You will see specific instructions in Section B, Supplies or Services and Prices/Costs, along with the specific contract clause in Section I of the solicitation for testing requirements. Testing, to be performed by either the Government or the Contractor, will be specified by the clause. For example:

52.209-3 First Article Approval—Contractor Testing

- (a) The contractor shall test 2 unit(s) of lot/item 9999-00-999-9999 (the NSN) as specified in this contract. At least 30 calendar days before the beginning of first article tests, the contractor shall notify the Contracting Officer, in writing, of the time and location of the testing so that the Government may witness the tests.

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First Article Testing (FAR Subpart 9.3), continued

- (b) The contractor shall submit the first article test report within 60 calendar days from the date of this contract to DSCR-J Post Award Branch, 8000 Jefferson Davis Highway... (address of the Government activity to receive the report) marked 'First Article Test Report: Contract No., Lot/Item No 9999-00-999-9999'. Within 30 calendar days after DSCR receives the test report, the Contracting Officer shall notify the contractor, in writing, of the conditional approval, approval, or disapproval of the first article.

If contractor testing is cited, the vendor is required to price the cost of first article *separate* from the cost of the production lot, under an additive line item. The total cost of the production lot and the first article charge are combined for evaluation of price for award.

Contracts requiring first article are bilateral and the Vendor risks termination for default if his/her product fails to pass. Vendors should not manufacture production lots until first article is approved. Any action to do so is at the risk of the Vendor and may *not* be reimbursed by the Government if the product fails first article and the contract is cancelled.