

GSA ORDER

Subject: General Services Administration Acquisition Manual; GSAM Case 2021-G515, Emergency Acquisitions Procedures

1. Purpose.

This order transmits a revision to the General Services Administration Acquisition Manual (GSAM) to—

- Revise section 501.601, General, for purposes of addressing the requirements surrounding Head of the Contracting Authority (HCA) contracting officer designation and warrant authority;
- Create part 518, Emergency Acquisitions, for purposes of providing supplemental policies and information related to emergency acquisitions as provided in FAR part 18; and
- Revise other sections within subpart 501.6 as well as section 502.101 to make updates related to the revisions made in support of emergency acquisitions and HCA authority.

2. Background.

GSA conducts routine reviews of the GSAM. The review indicated a need to supplement FAR part 18, Emergency Acquisitions, as well as address HCA warranty authority. The revision creates a new GSAM part, specifically GSAM part 518, Emergency Acquisitions. This new GSAM part provides supplemental policy to FAR part 18; identifies additional acquisition flexibilities available for emergency acquisitions; provides policy on obtaining acquisition support for emergency acquisitions; and identifies resources that are available when conducting emergency acquisitions. This revision also establishes the policy on HCA contracting officer designation and warrant authority as well as makes other necessary edits to support these revisions.

Additional information about emergency acquisitions is available on the Emergency Acquisition topic page located within the GSA Acquisition Portal at <http://insite.gsa.gov/acquisitionportal>; and GSA's Emergency Response website at <https://www.gsa.gov/governmentwide-initiatives/emergency-response>.

3. Effective date. February 14, 2025

4. Explanation of changes.

This amendment includes only non-regulatory changes to the GSAM. For full text changes of the amendment see Attachment A, GSAM Text Line-In/Line-Out.

This amendment revises the language of the GSAM, as summarized below:

501.601 General is revised as follows—

- Paragraph (b). The header text of this paragraph is revised to read *Contracting and other Acquisition Officials*. This revision reflects the fact that paragraph (b) includes roles and responsibilities for officials other than contracting officials (e.g., Acquisition Career Navigators).
- Paragraph (b)(1). This paragraph is revised as follows:
 - Add a header text (i.e., *Head of the contracting activity (HCA)*) for purposes of consistency (i.e., header text is provided for other paragraphs e.g., (b)(2) and (b)(3) within this section).
 - Move the existing content within paragraph (b)(1) to a newly created paragraph (b)(1)(i). This revision is necessary in order to accommodate the requirements for HCA contracting officer designation and warrant authority that are being added to paragraph (b)(1) of this section.
 - Add a header text (i.e., *General*) to the newly created paragraph (b)(1)(i).
 - Replace the text Head of the Contracting Activity with HCA (see paragraph (b)(1)(i)). This revision reflects the fact that the term HCA was spelled out earlier in this section.
 - Add paragraph (b)(1)(ii) for purposes of addressing HCA contracting officer designation and warrant authority requirements.
- Paragraph (b)(2). The header text of this paragraph is revised to read *HCA responsibilities*. This revision better reflects the purpose of this paragraph, which is to describe HCA responsibilities.

501.603-1 General is revised to—

- Revise paragraph (a) Definitions to add the following text “As used in this subsection” to clarify that the definitions identified in this subsection are specific to this subsection.
- Add paragraph (d)(3)(i)(D) for purposes of identifying the GSA SPE authority to authorize changes in warrant level thresholds. Warrant level thresholds are identified in 501.603-1(d)(5)(iv)).

501.603-2 Selection is revised to—

- Revise the header text for paragraph (d)(5) to read *Senior unlimited acquisition warrants* as only the first word requires capitalization, unless otherwise necessary (e.g., the header includes a term that requires capitalization).
- Remove text from paragraph (d)(5)(iv) regarding purchases for domestic and national security emergencies under 501.603-3(d). Information about emergency acquisitions is being moved to the newly created part 518.
- Revise the header text for paragraph (d)(6) to read *Additional guidance on warrant requirements* as only the first word requires capitalization, unless otherwise necessary.

501.603-3 Appointment is revised as follows—

- Replace the text “interim appointment” with “temporary appointment” as the interim appointments has been replaced by temporary appointments;

- Revise paragraph (b)(1) in its entirety. This revision brings the GSAM into conformance with existing requirements (i.e., interim appointments have been replaced by temporary appointments).
- Revise the header text for paragraph (c) to read *Applicability of warrant authority* as only the first word requires capitalization, unless otherwise necessary.
- Remove paragraph (d) in its entirety as information about emergency acquisitions is being moved to the newly created part 518; and
- Renumber paragraph (e) as paragraph (d) as a result of the aforementioned deletion of paragraph (d).

501.603-4 Termination is revised to replace the text “an interim” with “a temporary” as interim warrants have been replaced by temporary warrants.

502.101 Definitions is revised to include a definition for the GSA Chief Acquisition Officer (CAO) and to provide a hyperlink to the internal website where the GSA CAO is identified.

518—Reserved is revised in its entirety. The revision renames the part as 518—Emergency Acquisitions. The newly created part provides supplemental policy to FAR part 18 and identifies additional acquisition flexibilities available for emergency acquisitions. These additional acquisition flexibilities are not exempt from the requirements and limitations set forth in FAR part 3. Lastly, the new part provides policy on obtaining acquisition support for emergency acquisitions and identifies resources that are available when conducting emergency acquisitions.

5. Cancellations.

Acquisition Letter MV-11-07 is hereby canceled in its entirety.

6. Point of contact.

For clarification of content contact the GSA Acquisition Policy Division at gsarpolicy@gsa.gov. Information about GSA warrants and other acquisition workforce career requirements is available on the GSA Acquisition Career Management page on the GSA Acquisition Portal at <https://insite.gsagov/acquisitionportal>.

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ATTACHMENT A
GSAM Case 2020-G515
GSAM Text, Line-In/Line-Out

GSAM Baseline: Change 195 effective 1/17/2025

- Additions to baseline made by rule are indicated by **[bold text in brackets]**
 - Deletions to baseline made by rule are indicated by ~~strikethroughs~~
 - Five asterisks (*****) indicate that there are no revisions between the preceding and following sections
 - Three asterisks (***) indicate that there are no revisions between the material shown within a subsection
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Part 501—General Services Administration Acquisition Regulation System

Subpart 501.6—Career Development, Contracting Authority, and Responsibilities

501.601 General.

(b) *Contracting [and other Acquisition]Officials.*

(1) **[Head of the contracting activity (HCA). (i) General.]**~~The Head of the Contracting Activity (HCA)~~**[HCA]** is ultimately responsible for managing all aspects of their respective contracting activity. Additional roles are identified throughout the FAR and GSAM to support HCAs in their responsibilities, including the Contracting Director, Contracting Activity Advocate for Competition,~~[]~~ and Acquisition Career Navigator (ACN), and Acquisition Subject Matter Experts (A-SMEs) in key acquisition areas such as small business, labor, sustainability, and cybersecurity. The HCA may also designate a Contracting Executive by making the appointment in writing and transmitting a copy to the Senior Procurement Executive. Additional resources for HCAs, Contracting Executives, Contracting Directors, Advocates for and A-SMEs can be found on the Acquisition Contacts and Offices page on the GSA Acquisition Portal at <https://insite.gsagov/acquisitionportal>.

[(ii) Contracting officer designation and authority. HCAs are designated contracting officers with senior level warrants by virtue of their position. The SPE may suspend or terminate an HCA's contracting officer authority (see 501.603-4(a)) or take any other action deemed necessary (e.g., change their warrant level).

(A) Limitation. If the HCA has not satisfied all of the requirements to hold a senior level warrant, HCAs will only use their contracting officer authority in exceptional circumstances. Due to this limited scope, the requirements of 501.603-1(b) and (c), 501.603-2, and 501.603-3 do not apply. When an HCA uses their authority as a contracting officer pursuant to this

limitation they must write a memo-to-file to document the exceptional circumstances supporting such use. A copy of the memo-to-file must be submitted to the SPE at spe.request@gsa.gov within 5 days of use.

(B) *Exception.* Paragraph (b)(1)(ii)(A) of this section does not apply to HCAs who obtain and maintain a permanent or a temporary warrant as described in 501.603-3.]

(2) HCA[*HCA responsibilities*]. A summary of HCA responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

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* * * * *

501.603 Selection, appointment, and termination of appointment for contracting officers.

501.603-1 General.

(a) *Definitions.* [As used in this subsection:]

* * *

(d) *Contracting Officer Warrant Program (COWP).* * * *

* * *

(3) *Responsibilities.*

(i) GSA's SPE:

(A) Establishes the policies, procedures, and requirements that govern COWP.

(B) Approves/disapproves in writing, any deviations, waivers or exemptions from any of the COWP requirements.

(C) Minimum standards for GSA warrants are identified on the Acquisition Career Management pages on the GSA Acquisition Portal at <https://insite.gsa.gov/acquisitionportal>.

[(D) Authorizes changes in warrant level thresholds (see paragraph (d)(5)(iv) of this subsection).]

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501.603-2 Selection.

* * *

(d) *Evaluation of candidates for contracting officer warrants.* All GSA warrants are valid across the agency and may be transferred pursuant to the organization's delegated procurement authority. The supervisor may, but is not required to, conduct a new COWB.

(1) *Experience requirements.* * * *

* * *

(5) *Senior U[u]nlimited A[a]cquisition W[w]arrants.*

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(iv) *Exemptions.* Candidates for senior unlimited non-acquisition warrants (i.e., leasing, real property disposal, personal property disposal, and fleet sales) are exempt from the requirement to obtain two credentials. ~~This requirement does not~~

~~apply to warrants issued to make purchases for domestic and national security emergencies under 501.603-3(d).~~ All other requirements (e.g., certification, training, experience, and education) must be satisfied before a warrant can be issued.

(6) ~~Additional Guidance on Warrant Requirements.~~ Additional guidance on warrant requirements is provided on the GSA Acquisition Career Management page on the GSA Acquisition Portal at <https://insite.gsa.gov/acquisitionportal>.

501.603-3 Appointment.

* * *

(b) *Types of appointments.* Candidates are nominated for either an interim ~~interim~~ **[a temporary]** or permanent appointment.

~~(1) Interim appointments. Interim appointments are for a specified period of time. Personnel who hold interim warrants must complete all training required for a permanent warrant within 1 year of the interim appointment. Personnel who hold interim warrants above the simplified level must complete all training and formal education required for a permanent warrant within 3 years of the interim appointment.~~ **[(1) Temporary appointments. Temporary appointments are for a specified period of time and are issued in support of an emergency or for a specific project. Candidates for a temporary warrant must satisfy all training, education, experience, certification, and continuous learning requirements to obtain and maintain the warrant.]**

(2) *Permanent appointments.* A permanent appointment may be made when a candidate meets all requirements for experience, education, and training at the time the appointment is made.

(c) *Applicability of Warrant Authority.*

* * *

~~(d) Authority to make purchases for domestic and national security emergencies.~~

~~(1) A contracting officer may enter into contracts on behalf of a GSA organization different from the organization specified in their Certificate of Appointment in response to a contingency operation, defense or recovery from certain attacks, major disaster declarations as defined in FAR 18 and other domestic or national security emergencies.~~

~~(2) The Office of the Chief Acquisition Officer (OCAO) or HCA may grant higher contracting authority during emergencies for Basic, Simplified and Intermediate warrants.~~

~~(3) The OCAO or HCA may appoint contracting officers with authority limited to entering into contracts required to respond to domestic or national security emergencies. This will provide GSA a cadre of emergency contracting officers who can instantly respond to emergencies if necessary. For warrants issued as a direct result of an emergency, the OCAO or HCA must have reasonable assurance that~~

~~the employee is eligible to be warranted if the nature of the emergency precludes submission of otherwise required documentation for the warrant (see 501.603-3(b)).~~

~~(e)~~**[(d)]** *Record maintenance and disposal.*

* * *

501.603-4 Termination.

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(b) At any time, an HCA may terminate an appointment, change a permanent warrant to an ~~interim~~**[a temporary]** warrant, reduce the warrant level, or refuse to accept a warrant from another contracting activity.

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Part 502— Definitions of Words and Terms

Subpart 502.1— Definitions

502.101 Definitions.

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“Acquisition Workforce (AWF)” means individuals who perform various acquisition-related functions to support the accomplishment of an agency's mission. Acquisition, pursuant to 41 U.S.C. 403, includes, among traditional contracting functions, requirements definition, measurement of contract performance, and technical and management direction. Membership in the AWF may be on a full-time, part-time, or occasional basis.

* * *

[Chief Acquisition Officer (CAO) has the meaning as defined in FAR 2.101 and is identified on the GSA Acquisition Portal at <https://insite.gsa.gov/acquisitionportal>.]

“Contracting Activity Advocate for Competition” means an individual designated in writing by the Head of the Contracting Activity to execute the duties and responsibilities as prescribed by FAR 6.502. Advocates for competition are identified on the GSA Acquisition Portal at <https://insite.gsa.gov/acquisitionportal>.

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Part 518—~~Reserved~~**[Emergency Acquisitions]**

518.000 Scope of part.

This part includes—

(a) Supplemental policy to FAR part 18;

(b) Identification of additional acquisition flexibilities available for emergency acquisitions. These additional acquisition flexibilities are not exempt from the requirements and limitations set forth in FAR part 3;

(c) Policy on obtaining acquisition support for emergency acquisitions;
and

(b) Resources that are available to the acquisition workforce to support emergency acquisitions.

518.001 Resources.

The following provide information about emergency acquisitions:

(a) Emergency Acquisitions topic page located within the GSA Acquisition Portal at <http://insite.gsa.gov/acquisitionportal>; and

(b) GSA's Emergency Response website at <https://www.gsa.gov/governmentwide-initiatives/emergency-response>.

Subpart 518.1—Available Acquisition Flexibilities

518.101 General.

FAR subpart 18.1 and the GSAM include many acquisition flexibilities that are available to contracting officers and other acquisition personnel when certain conditions are met. These acquisition flexibilities do not require an emergency declaration or designation of contingency operation.

518.170 Additional acquisition flexibilities.

(a) *Waiver of contracting officer certification.* The Senior Procurement Executive (SPE) may waive the requirement for obtaining contracting officer certification (see 501.603-1(b)(2)).

(b) *Deviations, waivers, and exemptions from Contracting Officer Warrant Program (COWP) requirements.* The SPE may approve deviations, waivers, and exemptions from any of the COWP requirements (see 501.603-1(d)(3)(i)(B)).

(c) *Changes in warrant level thresholds.* The SPE may authorize changes in warrant level thresholds (see 501.603-1(d)(3)(i)(D)).

(d) *Waiver of Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) certification.* The SPE may waive the requirements for FAC-COR certifications (see 501.604(d)).

(e) *Waiver of Program and Project Managers (P/PM) certification.* The SPE may waive the requirements for FAC-P/PM and FAC-P/PM-IT certification (see 501.671(d)).

(f) *Procurement authority delegation waivers.* The SPE may waive the requirement for a delegation of procurement authority to be able to place orders under a GSA multi-agency contract or GSA Governmentwide acquisition contract.

(g) *Temporary appointments.* HCAs may request temporary appointments in accordance with 501.603-3(b)(1). For additional information about temporary appointments refer to the Acquisition Career Management page on the GSA Acquisition Portal at <https://insite.gsa.gov/acquisitionportal>.

518.171 Additional sources.

In addition to the contracts identified in FAR 18.105, the following sources should also be considered:

(a) GSA's Disaster Relief & Pandemic Products Program aisle available on GSA Advantage at <https://www.gsaadvantage.gov>.

(b) GSA's Emergency Acquisition Basic Ordering Agreements available at <https://www.gsa.gov/governmentwide-initiatives/emergency-response>.

Subpart 518.2—Emergency Acquisition Flexibilities

518.270 SPE authority.

The SPE is delegated the authority to make the head of the agency determinations described in FAR subpart 18.2 (see 502.101), including increasing procurement thresholds.

518.271 Request and notification.

(a) *Request.* Requests to use any of the emergency flexibilities described in FAR subpart 18.2 shall be submitted to the SPE at spe.request@gsa.gov.

Requests shall include, at a minimum—

(1) A description of the support to be provided (e.g., there has been an emergency declaration in the HCA's area and they need to provide acquisition support); and

(2) Any other important information.

(b) *Notification.* The SPE will notify the acquisition workforce when use of any of the emergency flexibilities provided in FAR subpart 18.2 is authorized. Notification may be done through the issuance of a SPE memorandum or other method deemed appropriate by the SPE.

518.272 Requirements.

(a) *Duration of emergency acquisition flexibilities.* Unless otherwise stated in the SPE notification or revoked earlier, emergency acquisition flexibilities authorized by the SPE are automatically rescinded once the effective period of the emergency has ended.

(b) *Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS) reporting.* When reporting an emergency acquisition contract action within FPDS, contracting officers must choose the appropriate data entry selection available under the Emergency Acquisitions FPDS data field (e.g., selection "C" is used when supporting a presidential issued emergency declaration or a major disaster declaration). Contracting officers also must also include the name of the emergency (e.g., Hurricane Milton) as the first words in the Description of Requirement FPDS data field. The text to be used for the name of the emergency will be included in the SPE notification.

Subpart 518.70—Emergency Acquisition Support

518.7001 Definitions.

As used in this subpart—

Emergency Coordinators (EC) means individuals within GSA who are designated to be responsible for preparedness, response, and recovery phases of incident management. The Office of Mission Assurance (OMA) Associate Administrator is the primary EC for GSA. Additionally, each Head of Service and Staff Office (HSSO) must appoint an EC to handle emergency documents, update their HSSO, and liaise with OMA (see GSA Orders ADM 2430.1A, The U.S. General Services Administration Continuity Program and ADM 2430.3: The U.S. General Services Administration Emergency Management Program or successor orders).

Requesting Head of the Contracting Activity (HCA) means the HCA requesting emergency acquisition support.

Servicing HCA means the HCA providing emergency acquisition support.

518.7002 General.

HCA's, in conjunction with EC's, may obtain emergency acquisition support (e.g., contract award, contract administration) from across GSA.

518.7003 Requesting HCA responsibilities.

The requesting HCA is responsible for the following:

(a) Determining, in conjunction with EC's, the need for emergency acquisition support. Requesting HCA's should look within their own Service-line (e.g., FAS, PBS, OAS) before reaching outside their respective Service-line.

(b) Requesting needed acquisition support from the servicing HCA. The request shall include, at a minimum, the following:

- (1) Time commitment and duration needed.
- (2) Description of the acquisition support needed;
- (3) Number and type of acquisition personnel (e.g., contracting officer); and
- (4) Other key details (e.g., rotation, location requirements).

(c) Overseeing the acquisition personnel provided by the servicing HCA. Requesting HCA's retain contracting oversight over any contracting officer who is supplied by a Servicing HCA.

(d) Ensuring there is documented oversight and internal control processes of contract activities to support emergency acquisitions.

518.7004 Servicing HCA responsibilities.

The Servicing HCA is responsible for the following:

(a) Providing acquisition support for the agreed upon period of time to the Requesting HCA and ensuring volunteers understand that they will report to the Requesting HCA.

(b) Ensuring the acquisition personnel have the necessary certifications and expertise to support the Requesting HCA.

(c) Ensuring the acquisition personnel have knowledge and understanding of emergency acquisition policies under FAR part 18, FAR subpart 26.2, Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) Emergency Acquisitions Guide, and OMA 2400.2, Events Requiring Notification to the GSA Emergency Operations Center.]

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