

## 2019 Northern Rockies Pre-proposal Meetings Q&A

**Are you worried about losing vendors not soliciting for tents?** No. We haven't solicited for last 3 yrs. and have been able to get tents we need. Several teams prefer trailers to tents also reducing the need.

**If you have been registered in SAM for 10-12 yrs. Do you still have to do notarized letter to SAM?** Yes.  
**Do you need to send notarized letter every year?** Not unless you change business administrator.

**When contract engines were hired on pre-position orders for 2019 was it severity pay or full rate?**  
Full day's pay.

**What is that the policy for dispatch to call a vendor? Are they required to call every number listed?**  
They call the primary number listed. Some may call all numbers listed. No requirements beyond making one call.

**Have new company with new piece of equipment, with no current award what are options?**  
For equipment not on an agreement the Vendor Source List Memo available at this meeting as handout and also available on website.

Fill out and submit.

[https://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/dispatch/equipment\\_supplies/agree-contract/contractor\\_updates/R1\\_Equipment\\_Vendor\\_Letter\\_Final.pdf](https://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/dispatch/equipment_supplies/agree-contract/contractor_updates/R1_Equipment_Vendor_Letter_Final.pdf)

**Do you send in the Pre-Award inspection with this form?** No. Pre-Use Inspection occurs at time of hire per fire order. No Pre-award inspection required on EERA equipment.

**Can we add new equipment?** No. You cannot add to a current agreement

**Equipment upgrades can be done at any time as long as you have a current agreement?**  
Correct. Like for like or better.

**I am upgrading which entails changing T6 to T5 engine. I have T6 engine agreement. Can that be changed to a Type 5 engine?** No. that would be different typing. Award was for T6.

**Are we going to be able to see the link for MT-DNRC solicitations on NRCG website?**  
Yes and will be available on the State website.

**What does eMACS stand for?** Montana Acquisition and Contracting System e=Electronic & is MT System.

**Does state of MT require certificate of workman's comp to be submitted?** Yes or exemption.

**What does PTAC stand for?** PTAC=Procurement Technical Assistance Center.

**BLM-Office Trailers-Is this pre solicitation that is out now?** It is for sources sought. Looking for how many are interested and depending interest may or may not put out solicitation.

**Foot valves-some pumps have built in foot valves already in them, does that count for requirement for Aquatic & Invasive Species requirements?** No. You must have a foot valve at the end of draft hose.

**What if foot valve leaks on my water tender?** You will need to repair or replace.

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**What is a Novation?** Novation is the purchase of entire entity. Company buys another company and everything associated with that company.

**How many searches for drugs/alcohol were done for 2019?** Unknown.

**If piece of equipment is not on VIPR agreement and eligible for EERA does it need an MOU inspection?**  
No. If there is a need for that resource it will be inspected by Government at the time of hire.

**We have already have inspection. Is it good for extension?** You don't need an MOU inspection for the extension. Once water handling solicitation is open you will need it.

**Are Inspections on hold for the new equipment-water handling?**

Inspection opened in October 2018 & will close prior to the next award, as noted in the solicitation.

We cannot tell you-you can or can't inspect. That's a business relationship between the vendor and you as an MOU inspector.

**Water Handling-Inspection reports have been sent in over last 3 months, what will you do with them?**

They will be honored once we get the water handling solicitation out.

**Can we just wait till the fall to get inspection for water handling?** When the solicitation comes out it will list the deadline when inspections due. Watch the NRCG website & for VIPR notices.

**We don't need any inspections or anything for the modification or the rollovers?**

No Inspection required.

**What is time line for extension for modification?** Anticipate opening next week 2-19-19.

Rollovers will be open 30 days for those currently under agreement.

Extension modification for expiring water handling agreements will be open 30 days. Need to respond or agreement will expire on the listed date.

**If Government Furlough continues will contractors get paid if they go out on a fire?** There would be no money-no budget. An option could be to accept an order knowing the pay may be delayed.

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### USFS Idaho and Montana VIPR Medical Agreement Extension Q&A Session Notes

- **Current Agreements** – The current Forest Service Washington Office guidance is to extend all VIPR agreements that are expiring this spring/summer to ensure that the region has adequate resources to cover the 2019 fire season. Most of the medical agreements will expire in June, and the current plan is to extend the current agreements out to December 31, 2019.
- **2019 Solicitations** – There is currently no national plan for moving forward with the 2019 solicitations this spring. With that being said, the solicitation planning is still ongoing and the plan could change at any time. I will make sure to inform all the current vendors if we are given different direction on the 2019 solicitations.
- **Extension Modifications** – In order to extend the current agreements, an extension modification will be issued through the VPR system. Vendors with a current agreement **MUST** go in to VIPR and acknowledge (electronically sign) the modification in order to have their agreements extended prior to the modification closing date. The extension modification is only to extend the agreements, and any price, dispatch center location change, and/or price negotiations will take place through a rollover modification tentatively scheduled to be issued later this spring (see below). Vendors will most likely have a 30 days to respond to the extension modification in VIPR once it is issued. I believe the extension modifications are scheduled to be posted next week, but I will make sure and send an email out to everyone when those extensions are posted.
- **Rollover Modifications** – A rollover modification will most likely follow the extension modification and will be the modification where you can change your personnel rosters, dispatch locations, and/or negotiate pricing. My tentative plan is to release this modification later this spring when folks will have a better idea of their rosters and plans moving forward for the 2019 season. This modification will also need to be acknowledged in the VIPR system in order for your resources to be posted to the DPL.
- **New resources or Additional DPL Positions** – Vendors will not be able to add DPL slots to the extended agreements. For example, if you had 20 line paramedic DPL slots last year, those same slots will be extended, but you will not be able to add more. You can add as many folks as you would like to your rosters, or add additional ambulances to your pool of ambulances, but you will not be able to increase the number of DPL slots that you hold in VIPR. Additionally, no new vendors will be added to the extended agreements.
- **Fireline Verifications** – During the past two VIPR EMS cycles we required vendors to submit their line medics MOU holder verified fireline qualifications to us for vetting prior to rostering those medics or awarding those DPL slots. This year we are not requiring that those be vetted by us prior to posting DPL positions or rostering of personnel. The line medics will still need to have their fireline quals verified through a MOU holder, and carry that verification with them, but you don't have to have that verification done or sent to me until the medic receives their first dispatch. Please see Section D.16.1 in the current Montana and Idaho agreements for MOU verified fireline qualification requirements. I would advise that folks get as much through the MOU verifiers in the spring as possible though as they tend to be tough to track down once there is smoke in the air.

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- **Medical Qualifications** – You will still need to send me medical licenses and/or proof of Idaho limited recognition for folks that you would like rostered under your agreements (Idaho and/or Montana) prior to the rosters being finalized. Most likely the due date for this proof of medical licensure (and any other required submittals) will be sometime in May and will correspond with the rollover modification. I will be providing more guidance on this as soon as I know the full Washington Office plan for this spring.
- **Medical Direction** – You will need to submit updated proof of medical direction by the same due date mentioned above. This would be the same thing you submitted during the original solicitation, just updated for 2019.
- **Changes in Specifications or process** – There are currently no plans to make any changes to specifications or processes found in the current agreement. If for some reason we do find something that needs to be changed, we would most likely add that change to the rollover modification.

#### Written Questions Received prior to Meetings

- **Concern that Fire Departments have a higher priority over private contractors.** Per Tim Murphy's meeting on 2/1/19 with Mike Degrosky, Chair of the NRCG Board, Mike reaffirmed there is no interest to change the dispatch priority in NR. Government resources will be dispatched ahead of contract resources once a fire exceeds Initial Attack.
- **Out of Geographic Area Engines in Northern Rockies ( e.g. Claim Florida).** On 8/12/18 NRCC reported no engines available in ROSS within the NR and NRCC started placing outstanding orders to Boise NICC based on needs. The only out of NRGAs engines received were:
  - 1) 8/14-31/18 Florida Wildlands Fire Service T-6 for Surprise fire in Id
  - 8/18-25/18 NM Blacktimber Wildlands Services T-6 for Wigwam in Mt
  - 8/15-22 NM Yaboy Fire T-6 for Wigwam
  - The approve ROSS orders were shared at the Missoula & Billings pre-proposal meetingsPer ROSS prior to 8/14 no out of NRGAs private engines were under hire for fires in the NR. NR did have at least 2 Federal Govt. engines assigned under severity of fires from Florida from National Park Service & Fish & Wildlife Service. In addition Wildfire Defense Systems confirmed they had no Florida engines in the NW USA in August.
- **Were Australian and / or New Zealand Firefighters brought into the USA?** NICC brought in approximately 60 Fire Managers from Australia & New Zealand per International Agreement to fill overhead assignments in Ca, Or & WA. Due to unavailable overhead in the USA. These managers were not utilized as firefighters.
- **Why does NRCG require 3 signatures on Engine verifications?** Region 1 USFS was directed Region 1 Legal staff (OGC) & USFS law Enforcement that employee, employer & verifier needed to sign all engine verifications. NRCG Board concurred with this direction.
- **What act should be taken if a resource is perceived to be passed over in a dispatch?** In a timely manners vendor should call host dispatch to voice questions & gather the dispatch centers explanation.

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- **Does NRCG put Contract resources on “Lock Down”?**  
NRCG cannot and doesn't hold contract resources. This has been reaffirmed with NRCC, NRCG Operations & the NRCG Board of Directors. If NRCG Operations feels we are drawing down contract resources they can request Local Units to put resources under severity vs assign outside the NRCG. This was done on 3 occasions in 2018.
- **Is it the intention of Region 1 and/or nationally that there will be no three year contracts up for bid this year, as of June, 2019?**  
As of today, it is the intention of Region 1 to comply with the WO direction that the scheduled 2019 solicitations are not supported.
- **Is it the intention of Region 1 (or on a national basis) that the Forest Service will just extend the current existing three year contracts for an additional year?**  
Region 1 will offer a modification to all vendors who have an expiring agreement to extend their agreement to December 31, 2019.
- **If extending the three year contract into another year (four years), does the Forest Service intend on including cost of living increases of 4% per year – thus, at least 12% above the 2016 bid and acceptance price?**  
In compliance with FAR 13.303-6, the Contracting Officer annually considers market conditions when determining a fair and reasonable rate. A rollover modification is issued annually at a minimum to allow business information corrections and the opportunity to change the host dispatch center.
- **If not extending the contracts, does the Forest Service intend in 2019 on writing incident Blanket Purchase Agreements or other Emergency Agreement, for each contractor?**  
-Incident Blanket Purchase Agreements (IBPA) are the product of the competitive process.  
-Emergency Equipment Rental Agreements (EERA) are entered into as needed in direct support of an incident and are generally considered incident specific, i.e. they expire upon the release of the resource from the incident.
- **If it is the intention of the Forest Service to use Incident Blanket Purchase Agreements or Emergency Agreements in 2019, will “Best Value” be observed?**  
-The term Best Value is really incomplete; in contract terms it is “Best Value Tradeoffs”. Best value tradeoffs is an analysis tool used to weigh proposal costs and benefits and award a contract to the offer that will provide the “best value” to the government.  
-The IBPA basis of award is stated in Section B and includes; reasonable price, operationally (technically) acceptable, low/unknown performance risk. Any attributes listed are considered in the dispatch process, not award.

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- **If it is the intention of the Forest Service to use Incident Blanket Purchase Agreements or Emergency Agreements in 2019, will the Forest Service allow contractors to change Regions? If there is no contract, then why couldn't a contractor change Regions?**  
It is the intention of the Forest Service to comply with D.6.1 DISPATCH PRIORITY, stating "Each host dispatch center will give dispatch priority to the resource offering the greatest advantage (See D.6.2) before all other private resources not under agreement with the following exceptions:" VIPR awarded resources have priority. If VIPR awarded resources are exhausted procurement will attempt to fill via EERA with the closest forces that are available. For resources not currently on agreement, there is no jurisdictional limitation.
- **How are new pieces of equipment and new contractors to be treated in 2019, with regard to their expectation to contract with the Forest Service?**  
The Forest Service maintains a data base of resources that are currently not under agreement. While not mandatory, this data base has proven to be a valuable tool in filling orders for resources such as miscellaneous logging equipment, vehicle with drivers, and logistical equipment. A letter and forms are updated annually and available to the public wishing to provide incident support. This letter is posted on the NRCG website.
- **If efforts could be made to allow MOU Equipment Inspectors for Region 1, to inspect equipment from private contractors within Region 1, to have their equipment inspected, and forward the inspection reports to the contracting officer in Region 4?**
- Each Region is responsible to set up an inspection/acceptance process they can support considering regional need, capability, and agency direction. Region 1 has a fairly significant vendor base; the process we require is based on agency capacity and NRCG BOD direction. Region 4 inspection/acceptance process would be set up based on their individual regional requirement and capacity.
- **Please explain the novation process, if I want to buy out another company's equipment and transfer an existing agreement to myself. I currently am not under agreement.**  
-A novation of a VIPR agreement can occur at any time, it entails the complete transfer of an agreement from one company to another. The purchasing company must meet the same award criteria in Section B that the original awarded company had to meet.
- **Any suggestions on where I can find a good example of a Drug and Alcohol Policy?**  
A Google search using the term "Sample Workplace Drug and Alcohol Policy" brought up several samples that might help you develop your own company policy.
- **How does bid price factor in with advantage points?**  
The award evaluation factors are listed in B.3 and include specification compliance, reasonable rate, and performance risk. If the government has identified additional criteria for an individual resource it considers advantageous, D.6.2 RANKING OF AWARDED RESOURCES FOR DISPATCH PRIORITY will list the criteria it has identified and the points awarded. This clause also identifies how these attributes are considered when establishing dispatch priority. If not additional criteria are identified for a resource, lowest price awarded will be ranked highest on the dispatch list.