

Acquisition Practices Directorate
Standardization Program Division
5203 Leesburg Pike, Suite 1403
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Sep 14, 1995

MEMORANDUM FOR 88 LOG/LGMEP, ATTN: MR. NICK LONGINOW

SUBJECT: Guidance on Procurement Document Types

I'm writing in response to your memorandum dated 23 August 1995. You asked for guidance on when to use a commercial item description (CID) versus a Military Performance specification ("MIL-PRF" per MIL-STD-961D) to describe a modified commercial product. First, I want to emphasize that as long as you are describing the item in performance terms you are achieving the primary goal of specification reform.

Commercial item descriptions are a form of performance specification used to describe both commercial and modified commercial items, regardless of whether the item is a motorcycle or a cassette tape. The point at which military driven modifications make a commercial item a military unique item is a judgment call, and there is no numerical limit on the number of military-unique characteristics which may be included. However, I can offer some considerations to help you make the decision.

If the item in question will be made by the same manufacturers who supply to the commercial market, or if the modifications are similar to the type of modifications made for commercial customers, you could consider the item modified commercial, and use a CID to procure it. If the modifications result in the loss of competition from all or most commercial suppliers, a significant price increase, or the loss of commercial support, you should consider the item military unique, and use a performance specification (MIL-PRF) to procure it.

In addition to CIDs and MIL-PRFs to procure items, you should also consider non-Government standards per the attached memorandum. You should also be aware that, if you classify the item as commercial, it can be bought using the simplified acquisition regulations for commercial items that will be implemented this year through the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR Part 12), which is a distinct advantage.

Your question was a good one. I have taken the liberty of posting the answer to our Defense Standardization Program Home Page, so that it may be available for others with the same question. I hope these thoughts help. Feel free to call my staff point of contact, Ms. Christine Metz, at 703-681-9340 or DSN 761-9340 for further information, or to discuss a specific case.

/signed/

Andrew C. Certo
Chief,
Standardization Program Division

Attachment