

BLM Solicited Fire Equipment Q&As - DRAFT

1	Q1	What is VIPR?
1	A1	<p>Virtual Incident Procurement System (VIPR) – VIPR is a web-based acquisition application which allows: vendors to submit offers and sign preseason agreements. Inspectors to certify that equipment requirements have been met. Contracting Officers to issue competitive solicitations, award, and administer preseason agreements for the life of the agreement, usually a 3 year period. Dispatchers to receive dispatch priority lists.</p> <p>Additional information can be found at http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/aqm/incident/vipr or http://www.fs.fed.us/business/incident/vipr.php</p>
	Q2	Is BLM using VIPR?
	A2	No, the Department of Interior has chosen not to utilize VIPR but to utilize the congressionally mandated off the shelf software Prism, which is used for all BLM Acquisitions.
1	Q3	What is the difference between I-BPA and EERA?
1	A3	<p>I-BPAs are new to the fire program, these are what will be used for pre-season solicitations</p> <p>EERAs are what has historically been used for all fire equipment (solicited and not). EERAs will be used for incident only sign-ups and pre-season sign-ups of equipment that is projected for out year solicitations.</p>
1	Q3	What is CPS
1	A3	<p>Contractor Performance System (CPS), The FS uses CPS for contractor performance evaluations under both I-BPAs and EERAs. Use of the system will provide a standardized method for evaluating and collecting performance information. It is required for use by all USDA agencies and is available government-wide to facilitate interagency operations. Fire and Aviation Management is responsible for completing evaluations for all contract equipment at an incident, specifically the position who supervises the equipment at the incident. AQM will ensure information is entered into CPS. The new form is in the cache and filed at http://www.fs.fed.us/business/incident/eera.php</p>
	Q4	How will BLM track vendor performance?
	A4	

	Q5	What is the program used to determine best value?
	A5	BLM - A technical proposal advisory committee will meet to determine best value and develop the Dispatch Priority List (DPL) – TPEC FS – uses a CBA Choosing By Advantage Software
	Q6	Can BLM issue EERAs?
	A6	Yes, BLM can continue to issue EERAs Pre-season EERAs should only be issued under an EERA if it is under the solicitation plan is not slated to be solicited for the current fire season. Incident Only EERAs – yes BLM can issue incident only EERAs utilizing Geographic Chapter 20 rates if identified or as negotiated by the warranted personnel.
	Q7	Is the BLM following the FS equipment solicitation plan?
	A7	Yes, in an effort to maintain interagency cohesion and reduce the amount of confusion within the dispatch centers and frustration on our vendors it is in our best interest to move forward as an interagency partner.
	Q8	Where can I find the National Equipment Solicitation Plan?
	A7	http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/aqm/incident/eera/competitive_solicitation_plan.php
	Q9	What does BLM do if the equipment is not under the solicitation plan?
	A1	BLM should work with their interagency partners to determine if there is a need from an interagency perspective and work with the appropriate personnel to establish specifications.
	Q10	Do we have to use national specifications for equipment solicited?
	A10	Yes; one of the rationales for utilizing standards specifications is to reduce the amount of confusion in the field with finance, logistics and operations personnel who are managing the equipment in the field.
	Q11	At what level can a fire solicitation be done (district/state/NOC)?
	A11	Each individual call must be within the local units warrant authority, warrants must have service contract act authority.
	Q12	Do Dispatchers use VIPR?
	A12	No, this is strictly an AQM program used by the FS.
	Q13	Why do we have to solicit for fire equipment?
	A13	Required by FAR
	Q14	Should we coordinate with our interagency partners on who will handle solicitations?

A14	Yes, we need to ensure consistency and that only one agency within a geographic area puts forward the solicitation.
Q15	Can we use FS VIPR agreements?
A15	Yes
Q16	Can we make payments from FS agreements (I-BPAs & EERAs)?
A16	Yes
Q17	Do BLM vendors who put a bid forward have to E-Authenticate
A17	No BLM does not utilize this system
Q18	Does BLM use I-BPAs?
A18	Yes, form SF-1449, BLM requires both the government and the vendor sign the document
Q19	Who can order off of an I-BPA and EERA?
A19	Dispatch, FSC, BUYT or anyone identified on the BPA
Q20	When do you use Priority Dispatch processes?
A20	Large Fires; Priority Dispatch is not intended for initial attack or demobilization
Q21	Where do the copies of EERAs and I-BPAs get stored?
A21	They should go to the servicing dispatch center. Any changes and modifications should be sent to the servicing dispatch centers as well. Documents should also be placed on an external website
Q22	Can a vendor choose which dispatch center they want to be dispatched from?
A22	This is allowed under the standard specifications
Q23	How will BLM generate Best Value Priority Dispatch Lists?
A23	Manual evaluation of criteria provided
Q2	Who determines what we solicit for and how many?
A24	Geographic business committees should coordinate with operations and dispatch personnel to determine the need within the geographic area
Q25	Is BLM doing "Non-Competed" Agreements?
A25	Only when necessary – this will be determined by the user
Q26	What is a "Non-Competed" Agreement?
A26	Standard specifications are established for equipment that is used on incidents but does not have a large number of vendors to compete.
Q27	How will BLM manage contractor performance ratings?
A27	Hard copy files for now. Past Performance Information Retrieval System (PPIRS) in the future. The PPIRS system allows the vendor to add comments on their evaluations.

		Questions regarding PPIRS can be found at http://www.ppirs.gov
	Q28	Are contractor past performance ratings part of the award process?
	A28	Yes through the TPEC process
	Q29	Does every vendor receive an I-BPA?
	A29	No – awards can be made for vendors who will offer a best value to the government (price reasonableness determination)
	Q30	Can vendors from a specific area travel outside their dispatch area?
	A30	Yes, vendors can be dispatched both locally and out of area. This is managed by the dispatch centers.
	Q31	What is a Dispatch Priority List (DPL)
	A31	List which identifies the order in which equipment will be dispatched within the local dispatch area.