



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Region One

200 East Broadway
P.O. Box 7669
Missoula, MT 59807

File Code: 6300/5100
Route To:

Date: October 28, 2008

Subject: Preseason Incident Agreements (formerly Emergency Equipment Rental Agreements - EERA)

To: Northern Region Incident Vendors

Thank you for your interest in doing business with the Northern Rockies Coordinating Group (NRCG). Vendors in the Northern Rockies play a key role in our fire management mission. Therefore, we are providing you with valuable information pertaining to preseason incident agreements that are sponsored by the Forest Service. If you do not participate and do not have plans to participate in these types of agreements, you may disregard this letter.

This fall, the Forest Service will be implementing the Virtual Incident Procurement (VIPR) system. VIPR will replace the Equipment and Training Inventory System (EaTIS). VIPR enables electronic management of preseason incident procurement information, including: enabling electronic submission of offers, automating award using electronic signatures, and creating dispatch priority lists. Additional information and training that explains system use will be provided at a later date. You can obtain current information on VIPR from the VIPR website: <http://www.fs.fed.us/business/incident/vipr.php>.

Over the next three years, all Forest Service preseason agreements will be created, modified, and stored in VIPR. VIPR requires that vendors have access to a computer and an email address, a DUNS number, an IRS Taxpayer Identification Number, register in CCR, register with the Contractor Performance System, and obtain a Level 2 eAuthentication account (see below).

In 2009, vendors with the following equipment will be required to use VIPR: water handling equipment (e.g. engines, water tenders, skidgine*, super skidgine*, pumper cat*, soft track*), clerical support units, fallers, GIS units, mechanic with service truck, mobile laundry, refrigerated trailers, and tents. *Vendors for skidgines, super skidgines, pumper cats, and soft tracks please fill in attached sheet and return to me immediately.

Also in 2009, new Forest Service pre-season agreements for the following non-competed categories will also use VIPR: ambulance, chainsaw/small equipment repair, chipper, mobile sleeper, modular office, pack strings and vehicle with driver.

VIPR requirements do not affect other Northern Rockies solicitations completed by BLM (potable water tender and gray water truck) and Montana DNRC (handwash stations, rental vehicles, portable toilets, and communication trailers).

In 2010 and 2011, additional Forest Service preseason agreements are scheduled to be created, modified, and stored in VIPR. Therefore, the requirements described below apply now to vendors with equipment that will be entered into VIPR for the 2009 fire season, and will apply to other vendors in the fall / winter of 2009 or 2010.

VIPR will include rigorous system security in order to protect your information. In an effort to address these concerns we are requesting the absolute minimum information necessary to execute and manage an agreement. For example, you will not be asked to provide your taxpayer identification number (TIN or SSN). Also, the Forest Service will require a secure user account through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Level 2 eAuthentication system. Only the individual(s) from your company who *sign* the preseason incident agreement(s) must obtain a Level 2 eAuthentication account. The Level 2 credentials go beyond simply applying for an account online because it ensures that your identity is verified in-person, and by doing so, helps prevent identity theft or fraud.



The Forest Service has prepared numerous resources to assist vendors in obtaining a Level 2 eAuthentication account. Please use either of the following website: Forest Service Incident Procurement (IP) website: <http://www.fs.fed.us/business/incident/eauth.php>.

Depending on whether you've used the USDA eAuthentication system before, there are different processes that you must follow to obtain a Level 2 account. Please read the descriptions below to determine which eAuthentication resource to use:

- If you have never used the USDA eAuthentication application before, use the training guide called "Creating a New eAuthentication Account."
- If you have a Level 1* eAuthentication account (e.g. the accounts used for EaTIS, use the training guide called "Upgrading an Existing Level 1 Account."
- If you have a Level 2* eAuthentication account (e.g. to access another USDA system), no action is required. USDA Level 2 eAuthentication accounts are universal, and work with many systems at a variety of USDA agencies.

*If you have an eAuthentication account, but are unsure of whether its Level 1 or Level 2, consider whether you visited a USDA Service Center to have your account activated. If you did not visit a Service Center to have your account activated, your account is Level 1. You will need to upgrade it to Level 2 to use VIPR.

Vendors who are creating a new account or upgrading an existing account will need to visit a USDA Service Center Local Registration Authority (LRA) to have their identity verified after completing the online requirements for eAuthentication. A list of USDA Service Center LRA locations is provided on the Forest Service Incident Procurement website provided above. Additional information on the LRA role and the requirements for verification of your identity are included in the training guides. Please note that you must call the LRA to make an appointment prior to visiting the office to present your identification.

Once you have completed the activities described in the applicable training guide, your Level 2 account will be activated and you will be authorized to access VIPR. We are notifying you of this requirement in advance of when you will need to access VIPR to provide you with maximum flexibility to plan and accomplish the important step of obtaining your Level 2 account. We encourage vendors who will use VIPR in 2009 to obtain your Level 2 account by January 9, 2009.

Contractor Performance System (CPS). Beginning in 2008, performance evaluations for incident vendors are being entered into the National Institutes of Health (NIH) CPS. This performance information will be used in past performance evaluations for future procurements, and to monitor performance throughout the agreement year. Vendors must register in CPS at <http://cps.od.nih.gov/>. Once at the site, click on the "Contractor Information" tab; then click on "CPS Contractor Registration" to complete the registration. Registering will enable you to review and respond to your performance evaluations. Vendors who participated in the 2008 fire season should register in CPS by December 19, 2008.

Thank you for your assistance and support during this time of transition. Our business relationship with you is very important. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns at 406-329-3333.

DEBBY Y. WESSELIUS
Contracting Specialist

cc: PTAC - MT & ID
Enclosure: Vendors of Skidgine, Super Skidgine, Pumper Cat, Soft Track Only

ATTENTION: HEAVY EQUIPMENT WITH WATER VENDORS

VENDORS For: SKIDGINE, SUPER SKIDGINE, PUMPER CAT AND SOFT TRACK

VIPR awards and annual renewal of multi year agreements require the ability to communicate via the internet through an e-mail address. The third year of agreements awarded under AG-0343-S-07-9004; Northern Rockies Heavy Equipment with Water, will be accomplished utilizing VIPR.

Please fill out the following information and return to the listed addresses or FAX number by November 14, 2008.

Vendor Name (as stated on agreement): _____

Agreement Number: AG-034-C-07- _____ **(4 digits)**

Email address: _____

Note: A free e-mail address can be obtained at any of the following web-sites: hotmail.com, yahoo.com, or gmail.com. **Any e-mail address may be used**, but it is suggested to use the same e-mail address for registering in the required sites listed in the attached letter; such as: CCR, ORCA, CPS, and eAuthentication.

Please return form to Deborah Wesselius at:

FAX: 406-329-3682

Address:
USDA Forest Service, Regional Office
Attn Deborah Wesselius
200 E. Broadway
Missoula, MT 59802

E-Mail: r1_r0_eera@fs.fed.us