
Procure-to-Pay Capability Summary

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SUBJECT: Commercial Item Determination

BACKGROUND: Since the mid-1990s, the law¹ has directed a preference for the government to procure commercial items – those items that are customarily used by the general public or by non-governmental entities for purposes other than governmental purposes and that can be purchased by the general public (see FAR 2.101 for the full definition of a commercial item). This allows the government to take advantage of the technological advances and the rapid pace of innovation in private industry, and can also lead to more consistent quality, wider supply with an expanded supplier base, and improved cost competition. Pursuant to a directive in the 2013 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), the Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) established a cadre of experts to assist with commercial acquisition: the Commercial Item Group (CIG). Procurement Contracting Officers (PCO) may make Commercial Item Determinations (CID) or ask the CIG to perform an assessment. The first step in commercial item acquisition is the “determination”, whether or not the item is commercial, if commercial items are available in the marketplace, or whether they’ve already been assessed and determined to be commercial. To assist with this challenge, DoD has established a database to store all CIDs.

POLICY: Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) Part 12 implements and encourages the federal government’s preference for acquisition of commercial items as required by U.S. law. Defense FAR Supplement Procedures, Guidance, and Information (DFARS PGI) section 212.102 provides procedures on commercial item determination and procurement and instructions on how to use the DoD Commercial Item Database.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE: The 2016 National Defense Authorization Act established the requirement for a centralized database for commercial determinations. This was initially kept by DCMA on a public facing site as a list in the Excel format, but has recently been deployed as a searchable database and in PIEE. It currently contains data on more than 18,000 parts and stores and displays Commercial Item Determinations by PCO and CIG Contracting Officers. The CID database is at PIEE (<https://wawf.eb.mil/piee-landing/>) under the Electronic Data Access application. Contracting Officers and Specialists with PIEE accounts automatically have access to the database; other users may request access. More information on using the database is posted at the Procurement Toolbox (<https://dodprocurementtoolbox.com/site-pages/commercial-item-determination-cid>).

IMPACT: Access to commercial items and practices brings significant benefit to DoD including: integration of new technology; greater product availability and reliability; reduced acquisition cycle times; lower life cycle costs; increased competition and an expanded pool of innovative and non-traditional contractors that seek to do business with the DoD.

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¹ [41 U.S.C. 1906](#), [1907](#), and [3307](#) and [10 U.S.C. 2375-2377](#)