



# National Ambulance Service (NAS) (All Divisions)

# **Policy for Purchasing Goods & Service**

Document reference number	NASPO33	Document developed by	Emily Mahon, Section Officer April 2007
Revision number	4	Document approved by	Director of the NAS
Approval date	28 <sup>th</sup> April 2010	Responsibility for implementation	Each CAO/AOM
Revision date	31 <sup>st</sup> December 2019	Responsibility for review and audit	Nas Headquarters

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#### 1.0 POLICY STATEMENT:

- 1.1 It is the policy of the National Ambulance Service (NAS) that a systematic, controlled and auditable approach be operated inrelation to the purchasing of goods and services. This is to ensure that the control of expenditure by the NAS is transparent and correct.
- 1.2 This document complies with the HSE National Financial Regulations, October 2014 (NFR). The subsequent records created will be subject to random inspection by the HSE Internal AuditDept.
- 1.3 This policy must be used in conjunction with the NFR.

#### 2.0 PURPOSE

2.1 This document is designed to give an overview of all procedures and practices recommended by the NFR and should be used by all staff within the NAS when purchasing and processing goods and services.

#### 3.0 SCOPE

3.1 This policy applies to all NAS staff who are authorised to raise requisitions and orders, check, validate and authorise invoices and payment vouchers and determine the awarding of contracts for goods and services.

#### 4.0 LEGISLATION/OTHER RELATED POLICIES

- National Financial Regulations, Oct 2014
- NPPPU Government Procurement Policy Guidelines 2004
- Health Service Procurement Policy (updated January 2006)
- Prompt Payment Legislation (1997 Act & SI388 dated 2002)
- Freedom of Information Act 2014
- EU Tendering Legislation
- Health Act 2007

#### **5.0** GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

- A. Budget Holder The Assistant National Director, National Ambulance Service or a nominee appointed by he/she to be responsible for the budget for his/her area of responsibility.
- B. Authorised Officer An individual who has been delegated responsibility for signing Purchase Orders or Payment Vouchers bythe Budget Holder.
- C. GDN Goods Delivery Note

#### 6.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 6.1 The HSE is placing an emphasis on achieving a more open and accountable public service. One of the most important contributors to this process is to have an effective system of budgetary control in place with appropriately defined responsibilities.
- 6.2 Responsibilities can be defined under the following headings:

#### 6.2.1 STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITY

- A. The Prompt Payment Legislation (1997 Act & SI388 dated 2002) requires all public bodies to ensure creditors are paid on time and imposes financial penalties for those public bodies that fail to comply with the legislative provisions contained therein.
- B. The provisions contained in the Health Act 2004 also outline specific responsibilities. These statutory requirements place anonus of responsibility on the HSE to provide for the accountable and responsible expenditure of public funds.
- C. This duty has been strengthened by the introduction of the Freedom of Information Act 2014, which allows the public access to records of expenditure and also obliges the HSE togive reasons for financial decisions.
- D. National Public Procurement Policy Unit, Government Procurement guidelines 2004 requires all public bodies to ensure they have mettendering guidelines.

# 6.2.2 BUDGET HOLDER AND AUTHORISED OFFICER ACCOUNTABILITYAND RESPONSIBILITY

Ultimately, the National Assistant Director, National Ambulance Service is the budget holder and is fully responsible and accountable for the control and expenditure of his or her budget. The Assistant National Director, National Ambulance Service can delegate budgetary responsibility to any Manager who he/she deems appropriate.

The Budget Holder or other Authorised Officer is responsible for:

- A. Ensuring the service operates a systematic and regulated approach which complies with the NFR.
- B. Ensuring that staff are aware of, and apply the NFR to purchasing of goods and services.
- C. Familiarising themselves with relevant services and the NFR.
- D. Demonstrating full accountability and probity as well as thehighest ethical standards in respect of the public funds expended nthe purchasing process.

- E. Consistently applying high standards with respect to evidencing and recording of receiving of good/services and custody of goods.
- F. Ensuring that policies and procedures are adopted and adhered toin routine daily activities within each location
- G. It is the responsibility of all Budget Holders, Authorised Officers, managers and staff to ensure that the day-to-day operations and procedures of the organisation comply with the NFR.
- H. If the Budget Holder or Authorised Officer is unable to comply withthe NFR due to circumstances outside of their control, they must ensure a written explanation is submitted to Ambulance Headquarters. This explanation must be made available to HSEInternal Audit if requested.

#### 6.2.3 INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

- A. All Budget Holders, Authorised Officers, Managers and staff have a direct responsibility to be proactive in ensuring that they are aware of, understand and comply with the NFR.
- B. Persistent and negligent failure to comply with the NFR is a very serious matter for any HSE employee and may lead to disciplinary proceedings.
- C. The Section Officer or other designated person is responsible for the control, monitoring and reporting of all processes relating to the financial management of resources in addition to keeping the authorised Budget Holder e.g. a Chief Ambulance Officer, apprised of all related matters.
- D. If an individual is unable to comply with the NFR due to circumstances outside of their control, they must ensure a written explanation is submitted to the Budget Holder immediate

#### 6.2.4 STAFF - GENERAL RESPONSIBILITY

- A. Each member of staff has similar responsibilities to the manager/supervisor in respect of themselves with regard to:
  - Compliance with regulations
  - Being personally proactive about his/her own awareness, understanding, knowledge, training and development in orderto ensure this compliance.
- B. Appropriate Segregation of Duties is a key element of any financial control framework. In the context of the purchasing process the following requirements are mandatory:
  - At some point between the initial identification of need and theissue of a purchase order or contract at least one other staff member in addition to the final decision maker must be involved in the process.
  - There must be evidence by signatures appearing on purchasing documents e.g. requisition, purchase orders.

#### 7.0 PROCEDURES

#### 7.1 ORDERING PROCEDURE

#### 7.1.1 ALL ORDERS

- 1. An official purchase order will only be issued when Ambulance Service Headquarters is in possession of:
- A. A properly completed and authorised requisition that has been submitted for a non-stock item.
- B. Notification from a Supervisor or Authorised Officer that stores held stock levels require replenishment.
- C. However, in extreme emergency situations, this may not be possible and the procedure in Section 7.1.3 should be applied.

#### 7.1.2 ORDER FORMS

- 1. HSE Purchase Orders are controlled stationery. Only an Authorised Officer can sign official purchase orders and permitordering of goods or services.
- 2. The top copy will be sent to the supplier, the second copy to the Finance Department and the third copy held at Ambulance ServiceHeadquarters for audit purposes. Purchase orders must indicate that the goods are ordered in accordance with the NFR. All ordersmust show a purchase order number.
- 3. Only Approved Suppliers should be used. If a non-approved supplier is used a record should be made of the reasons for inviting a tender or quote from that supplier and not one on the approved list.
- 4. The Authorised Officer at the appropriate level with responsibility for the relevant Division, must sign all purchase orders beforedispatch.
- 5. Purchase orders must not be processed without a full description of the goods including part numbers, if known, so that no ambiguity occurs that could incur additional expense in returninggoods.
- 6. For financial purposes, the cost code attributable to the expenditure incurred must be shown on the order. A purchase order should not be raised where there is no cost code available.
- 7. The Authorised Officer must ensure that there is adequate budgetto meet the planned expenditure. Formal confirmation of available funds and approval to spend must be obtained prior to issuing a purchase order or contract to provide goods or services
- 8. When completed, the Authorised Officer will raise a purchase orderand fax or, if no fax is available, post the top copy to the supplier.
- 9. The second copy will be sent to the Finance Department and the third copy held at Ambulance Service Headquarters for audit purposes. The purchase order is then placed in a pending file (This is used to progress chase orders.)

#### 7.1.3 EMERGENCY ORDERS

- 1. Occasionally an order may need to be raised very quickly and cannot afford to wait for a requisition to reach the Ambulance Service Headquarters and a purchase order issued.
- 2. In these circumstances the Authorised Officer will follow the order up immediately by post, fax or email so that the conditions attached to the order are displayed to the supplier.
- 3. Although it is recognised that occasionally it will be necessary topurchase goods at short notice, this must not become an everyday occurrence. The Section Officer or other designated person willmonitor the number of purchase orders issued in this manner.

#### 7.1.4 AUTHORISED LIMITS

Orders are not permitted by any Authorised Officer that exceeds amounts which prior approval is required as laid down in the National *Financial Regulations*, *October 2014*. These limits are as follows:

Grade	Non Routine	Routine
	Expenditure	Expenditure
///	-	-
IV	-	€5,000
V	-	€10,000
VI	€10,000	€25,000
VII	€20,000	€50,000
VIII	€40,000	€100,000
General Manager	€70,000	€250,000
LHO Manager	€100,000	€500,000
AssistantNationalDirector	€500,000	€2,500,000

#### Examples of Routin Expenditure:

- Budget for pay awards
- Repairs/Servicing of equipment
- Normal maintenance
- Normal stock

#### Examples of Non Routine Expenditure:

- Provision of new service
- Purchase of equipment
- Construction/ Refurbishment
- Expenditure which creates an asset or significantly enhances the value or economic life of an existing asset.

#### **7.1.5 UNIFORM**

 A Points Form for requisitioning purposes will be sent to all requisitioning locations with uniformed staff. Uniform is now ordered directly from the contracted supplier and therefore minimal ordering will be made by any Ambulance Service Headquarters. In those cases the same ordering procedure is used as for all other goods.

#### 7.1.6 CONTROLLED DRUGS

Controlled Drugs should be ordered in accordance with Procedure –AMBOE002 – Requisition and Storage of Controlled Drugs.

#### 7.1.7 SELECTION OF SUPPLIERS

- 1. It is accepted that any supplier on a HSE Purchasing and SupplyContract is an approved supplier, as those suppliers have beentested.
- 2. Any supplier selected from the tendering process, automatically becomes an approved supplier for the length of the contract.
- 3. All new suppliers should be requested for certain financial detailsto set up the registration process within the Finance Department. All suppliers registered will form the basis of an approved supplierlist.
- 4. From the approved list Authorised Officers can monitor the suppliers performance against what was originally specified.
- 5. Failure to continually meet the original specification could result in their removal from the approved list.
- 6. A supplier is selected on the basis of the Most EconomicallyAdvantageous Tender (MEAT) or Lowest Price Tender. Othercriteria in addition to price are considered as part of the evaluation process e.g. technical assistance and merit, after sales service, environmental concerns.
- 7. All contracts greater than €25,000 will require input from a Purchasing Professional who should co-ordinate the procurement process including qualification/assessment, procurement of supplies/service and commercial analysis as well as negotiations.
- 8. Wherever possible, to minimise paperwork, Authorised Officers willenter into contracts where a large numbers of orders may be raised with preferred suppliers on a call off basis as long as the requirements above are demonstrated.
- 9. When sourcing for suppliers to carry out work, the following minimum quotations are required:

• Up to €250 Minimum of one quotation

€250-5,000 Minimum of two written Quotations
 €5,000-€50,000 Minimum of three written quotations
 €50.000-€211.000 Minimum of five sealed tenders

• €50,000-€5,278,000 (Works only) Minimum of five sealedtenders to be sought

#### 7.1.8 EQUIPMENT FOR EVALUATION PURPOSES

- 1. The evaluation of equipment on an ad-hoc basis raises risks to the Service in terms of the financial implications and possible litigation.
- 2. Therefore, no equipment must be ordered by any Ambulance Service Headquarters for evaluation purposes unless the conditions laid out in Policy OQR030 Management of Medical Devices and Equipment has been complied.

#### 7.1.9 NEW EQUIPMENT

There will also be developments in equipment and associated technologies. Authorised Officers should be mindful of three areas whenordering new equipment or consumable items. These are:

- 1. Does the purchase of the goods compromise the strategy of the NAS to standardise equipment and consumables throughout the Service's Divisions.
- 2. Has there been a risk assessment on the goods prior to ordering.
- 3. Has the equipment been formally evaluated by a competentOfficer.

#### 7.2 RECEIVING GOODS

#### **7.2.1 CONTEXT**

- 1. This procedure has been developed to facilitate a common approach to goods received at each NAS facility.
- 2. No Authorised Officer can both make the decision to issue a purchase order or contract and also sign off on the receipt of goods or services.
- 3. There must be a clear separation of duties between purchase ordering and receiving.
- 4. Although it is expected that a Supervisor or Authorised Officerother than the one who has ordered the goods will receive goods, the operation of the NAS is such that at times the Supervisor or Authorised Officer who has ordered the goods may be required toreceive the same goods. This must be kept to an absolute minimum to enable adequate segregation of duties to be employed. In the event of this happening, the Supervisor or Authorised Officer must notify the Section Officer or other designated person immediately so that this can be officially recorded at Ambulance Headquarters.
- 5. It is essential that all staff who sign off on receipt of goods orservices is fully aware of the meaning of that action as they will be held accountable for same.
- 6. Managers cannot have sole sign off on receipt of goods or services that are intended primarily for his or her own day to day use.

- 7. Responsibility rests with the relevant budget holder to ensure appropriate receiving procedures are in place to enable compliancewith the NFR.
- 8. The receipt/receiving arrangements put in place must be formally reviewed and updated at least annually and the output of these reviews must be held available for future audit.

#### 7.2.2 NOTIFICATION OF GOODS DELIVERED

- 1. When goods are ordered through the Procurement Dept. or external supplier, the relevant Supplies Officer will produce a Goods Delivery Note (GDN).
- 2. This GDN will be sent with the delivery to the receiving NAS facility to document the contents of the delivery and act as a checking document that goods arrived are consistent with those ordered.
- 3. The GDN for all goods delivered on foot of a purchase order must accompany the invoice and completed voucher to the FinanceDepartment to pass, with the minimum of delay, the invoice forpayment.

#### 7.2.3 GOODS RECEIVED POINT

- 1. A thorough inspection must be carried out on delivery of goods. Atthe point of delivery all goods in must be checked against theaccompanying GDN before confirmation of receipt takes place.
- 2. Checks must be made to ensure that the goods are destined for the Service, the goods have been delivered to the correct delivery point and if the materials are hazardous in any way and need special handling.
- 3. On confirmation of the receipt of the correct goods as described, deliveries should be unloaded and placed in the stores area for checking. Any discrepancies found in the number of cartons /packages / tote boxes should be noted on the GDN.
- 4. The Supervisor or Authorised Officer or a member of his/her staff should check off the delivery against the GDN noting any bestbefore dates, Lot or Batch numbers where appropriate.
- Any damaged or wrongly supplied items must be placed in a designated area for return to the supplier or disposal as agreed with the supplier. These must be noted on the GDN for action by the Supervisor or Authorised Officer.
- 6. The Supervisor or Authorised Officer or other designated personreceiving the goods must sign the GDN in full. After checking, goods will be moved to their designated location within the storearea.
- 7. A copy of the relevant GDN should be filed in the 'Goods In File'. Ifno GDN is found in the file when required, the Supervisor or Authorised Officer should refer to the Supplies Officer to confirm the details (e.g. order numbers) on the delivery note.

- 8. Required sign off of receipt of goods or services
  - Up to €5,000 must be approved by Grade III
  - Up to €25,000 must be approved by Grade IV
  - Above €25,000 must involve at least two managers one ofwhom must be at Grade V or above

#### 7.2.4 DISCREPANCIES

- Should any discrepancies be found, the supplier should be notified immediately and agreement reached as to whether the Supervisor or Authorised Officer is willing to receive a short order or the shortfall is still required.
- 2. All conversations with the supplier or his carrier regarding this matter should be noted on the relevant GDN as a record.
- 3. If further goods are expected the GDN should be placed in an incomplete order file to await completion of the order.

#### 7.2.5 DAMAGED OR WRONGLY DELIVERED GOODS

- Should any damaged or wrongly delivered goods be received, the supplier should be notified immediately and agreement reached as to whether the Supervisor or Authorised Officer is willing to receive a short order, the process necessary to get the damaged or wrongly delivered goods returned and arrange for the requireditems to be supplied.
- All messages or conversations with the supplier or his carrierregarding this matter should be noted on the relevant GDN as arecord. On occasions, any agreements reached may need to beput in writing and a copy of the letter attached to the GDN.
- 3. If further goods are expected the GDN should then be placed in an incomplete order file to await further deliveries to complete theorder.

#### 7.2.6 NOTIFICATION OF GOODS RECEIVED TO FINANCE DEPARTMENT

- 1. A copy of the GDN should be forwarded to Ambulance Service Headquarters, and a copy of that copy attached to the Purchase Order and Payment Voucher and sent to the Finance Department.
- 2. The Ambulance Service Headquarters copy should be filed with the purchase order to provide an auditable record of order and delivery.

#### 7.2.7 PART DELIVERIES

- 1. If a part delivery is received, the GDN should be completed accordingly and the delivery note attached.
- 2. The GDN should then be placed in an incomplete order file to awaitfurther deliveries to complete the order. When the order is complete, the GDN should be actioned as in Section 7.2.6 above.
- 3. A copy of the GDN, with part delivery noted should be sent to the Ambulance Service Headquarters in case the supplier does partinvoice.

#### 7.2.8 GOODS BEING RETURNED FOR DISPOSAL

1. Any goods being returned should be marked accordingly and placed in the area allocated to disposal items and appropriately recorded.

#### 7.3 AUTHORISATION OF INVOICES

- 7.3.1 The HSE has an obligation to pay its trade creditors within 30 daysof receipt of goods or the invoice (whichever is the later) in accordance with Prompt Payments Legislation (1997 Act & SI388dated 2002).
- 7.3.2 It is of paramount importance that the Service can demonstrate a high degree of compliance in this area.

#### 7.4 THE PROCESS

- 7.4.1 The invoice authorisation and payment is the final element of the purchasing chain from requisition to the goods being ready to use.
- 7.4.2 If purchase orders and GDN's have been processed in accordancewith the relevant Sections 5.1 & 5.2 (i.e. Ordering of Goods and Receiving of Goods), the invoice should be paid automatically by the Finance Department if there is no discrepancy between the values shown on the order and the quantities shown on the GDN.
- 7.4.3 Where either document has not been received by the Finance Department, the invoice will be sent back to Ambulance ServiceHeadquarters.

#### 7.5 INVOICE AUTHORISATION PROCESS

#### 7.5.1 INVOICE CHECKING

- 1. A member of the administration team will check the invoice to determine if there is any difference in values or quantities displayed against the purchase order and GDN.
- 2. If an invoice is correct in every detail, then a member of the administration team will direct the invoice and completed checkedpayment voucher to an Authorised Officer for signing.
- 3. Only an Authorised Officer who did not sign the purchases order or GDN can sign the payment voucher.
- 4. The Authorised Officer will check the details against the originalpurchase order records and initial the invoice accordingly with the cost code that is attributable to that purchase.

#### 7.5.2 INVOICES NOT CORRECT

- 1. For all invoices where Ambulance Service Headquarters holds incomplete records or there is a difference in values or quantities displayed, a member of the administration team will direct the invoice to an Authorising Officer for checking.
- 2. If an invoice is not correct in any detail, the appropriate Authorising Officer with responsibility for that area must take upthe matter with the supplier to arrange for the necessary credit.
- 3. If this is the case, s/he should notify administrative staff that theinvoice is under query. Only when the relevant credits have been received should the invoice(s) and the credit note(s) be sent toadministration for processing.

#### 7.5.3 INVOICE AUTHORISATION

1. Only an Authorising Officer will sanction invoices that are for payment within the limits of their financial authority.

#### 7.5.4 PREPAYMENT

1. No invoice should be authorised for payment until the Service has been received and checked and considered satisfactory by the Authorised Officer who placed the original order.

#### 7.5.5 TIMESCALES

- 1. To meet the requirements of the Prompt Payments Legislation, (Act 1997 & SI388 dated 2002), strict timescales need to be metto ensure that adequate performance against the deadlines is met.
- 2. The relevant Authorising Officer should check and approve invoices directed to their attention within 5 days of receipt.
- 3. Administration should process payment vouchers for verification within 7 days.
- 4. Should any event exist that makes the meeting of these targets not practicable the Finance Department should be notified accordingly.

#### 7.5.6 MOBILE PHONE BILLS/BLACKBERRY ENABLED DEVICES

1. A copy of the individual invoice for each phone must be sent to the staff member. The staff member must identify and calculate the value of private calls made and sign the invoice and return to administration for payment.

#### 8.0 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- 8.1 This Policy will be circulated electronically to all Officers, all Supervisors and Staff
- 8.2 This Policy will be placed in hardcopy in each Division's Policy Manual in each Ambulance Station and Ambulance Control Centrefor ease of retrieval and reference
- 8.3 Each CAO will ensure that the Officer responsible for updatingPolicy Manuals will return the Confirmation Form to NAS Headquarters to confirm document circulation to all staff.

#### 9.0 REVISION AND AUDIT

- 9.1 This policy will be formally reviewed when necessary following changes in procedures and/or legislation or a relevant event.
- 9.2 The Senior Ambulance Management Team has the responsibility for ensuring the regular review and updating of this policy.
- 9.3 Revisions, amendments or alterations to the policy can only be implemented after consideration and approval by the Assistant National Director, following appropriate consideration of guidance from the Finance and Procurement Directorates
- 9.4 The Senior Ambulance Management Team will monitor Divisional and National compliance with this policy on an ongoing basis.

#### **Revision History:**

(This captures any changes that are made to a SOP when it has been revised. This may be placed at the back or close to the front of the document according to local preference.)

No	Revision No	Date	Section Amended	Approved by
1	4	03/01/2017	Sections: 1.2, 4.0, 6.2.1, 7.1.4, NFR Act changed to 2014, FOI Act Changed to 2014, Health Act updated to 2007	NAS HQ

#### 10.0 APPENDICES

Appendix I – Document Control Forms 1-3

# 11.0 Signatures of Approval

National Applications Coming Discrete

National Ambulance Service Director On Behalf of the National Ambulance Service

Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2017

Monte Donke

#### **Document Control No. 1 (to be attached to Master Copy)**

#### NASPO33 Purchasing Goods & Services

**Reviewer:** The purpose of this statement is to ensure that a Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline (PPPG) proposed for implementation in the HSE is circulated to a peer reviewer (internal or external), in advance of approval of the PPPG. You are asked to sign this form to confirm to the committee developing this Policy or Procedure or Protocol or Guideline that you have reviewed and agreed the content and recommend the approval of the following Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline:

### Title of Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline:

#### NASPO33 Purchasing Goods & Services

I acknowledge the following:

- I have been provided with a copy of the Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline described above.
- I have read Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline document.
- I agree with the Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline and recommend its approval by the committee developing the PPPG.

Name	Signature (Block Capitals)	Date	

Please return this completed form to:
Name:
Niamh Murphy
Contact Details:
Corporate Office

**National Ambulance Service** 

Rivers Building Tallaght Cross Dublin 24

email niamhf.murphy1@hse.ie

#### **Document Control No. 2 (to be attached to Master Copy)**

# Key Stakeholders Review of Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guidance Reviewer Statement

**Reviewer:** The purpose of this statement is to ensure that a Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline (PPPG) proposed for implementation in the HSE is circulated to Managers of Employees who have a stake in the PPPG, in advance of approval of the PPPG. You are asked to sign this form to confirm to the committee developing this Policy or Procedure or Protocol or Guideline that you have seen and agree to the following Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline:

#### **Title of Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline:**

#### **NASPO33 Purchasing Goods & Services**

I acknowledge the following:

- I have been provided with a copy of the Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline described above.
- I have read Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline document.
- I agree with the Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline and recommend its approval by the committee developing the PPPG.

Name	Signature (Block Capitals)	Date	

Please return this completed form to:
Name:
Niamh Murphy
Contact Details:
Corporate Office

**National Ambulance Service** 

Rivers Building Tallaght Cross Dublin 24

email niamhf.murphy1@hse.ie

# **Document Control No. 3 Signature Sheet:**

(to be attached to Master Copy)

# Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline:

# **NASPO33 Purchasing Goods & Services**

I have read, understand and agree to adhere to the attached Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline:

Print Name	Signature	Area of Work	Date