



**THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER**

**INTERNAL CONTROL AND ACCOUNTABILITY DIRECTIVES**

**DIRECTIVE #2: COST REIMBURSABLE CONTRACT  
PAYMENT REQUEST AUDITS**

**INTRODUCTION**

This Directive provides rules to which agency audit staff must adhere for auditing payment requests issued against cost reimbursable contracts. Agencies must ensure that audits of payment requests are conducted in accordance with the Directive's requirements prior to approving requests for payment under such contracts.

The Directive summarizes the cost accounting principles applicable to cost reimbursable contracts, provides techniques for assessing the allowability of direct and indirect costs presented for payment, and offers specific audit steps and procedures for conducting audits of payment requests.

Cost reimbursable contracts generally provide for the recovery of indirect costs and profit by applying either an overhead multiplier or a fixed fee markup to direct costs. The audit of indirect costs, particularly when an interim multiplier is used, is an area that requires close attention. Consequently, the Directive places significant emphasis on this subject.

This Directive is issued pursuant to the authority of the Office of the Comptroller as provided in Chapter 5, Section 93 of the [\*New York City Charter\*](#). The provisions of this Directive must be reflected in requests for proposals, bid documentation, and contracts. Specific language that should be included in all agency contracts with cost reimbursable provisions is provided in Section 6.

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## 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

### 1.1 *Effective Date*

This Directive is effective immediately and supersedes the previous one dated May 13, 1998.

### 1.2 *Assistance*

Questions or comments concerning this Directive should be addressed via [Technical and Professional Standards Unit Email](mailto:directives@comptroller.nyc.gov) (directives@comptroller.nyc.gov); by telephone at: (212) 669-3675; or by mail to: The Office of the Comptroller, Attention: Technical & Professional Standards Unit, Bureau of Accountancy, David N. Dinkins Municipal Building, One Centre Street, Room 200 South, New York, NY 10007.

### 1.3 *Comptroller's Internal Control and Accountability Directives*

An inventory of existing [Comptroller's Internal Control and Accountability Directives](#) is available on the [Comptroller's Website](#).

## 2. AUDIT FUNCTION OVERVIEW

The payment request auditing function, as discussed in this Directive, refers to the review, verification and authorization of all direct and indirect costs due and payable under contracts with cost reimbursement provisions. Although cost reimbursable contracts are most frequently used by the City of New York for construction, engineering consultant, and architectural design services, they are occasionally used in other situations.

The payment request audit is an agency's final detailed review of the payment request. Such audits are performed after all required authorization signatures have been obtained, and prior to the agency's submission of the payment requests to the City's Financial Management System ("FMS Accounting") for payment.

Agencies must ensure that audits of payment requests are conducted by properly trained staff. In addition, to ensure the integrity of the audit function, the auditors must be independent of the purchasing, receiving, and payment request preparation functions, and cannot be part of the agency's payment authorization process.

If an audit reveals what appears to be potential fraud, the auditor must follow the reporting requirements in Mayoral Executive Order 16, Section 4.d., and "Investigations," dated July 26, 1978.

### 2.1 *Audit Planning and Organization*

To ensure that payment request audits are conducted as efficiently and effectively as possible, they must be adequately planned and organized. Advance audit preparation and planning steps include:

- The identification of the audit's basic objectives and most likely potential problem areas.

- A review of the cost accounting principles applicable to cost reimbursable contracts.
- The identification and review of City Charter and Administrative Code provisions, Procurement Policy Board Rules (PPB Rules) and Comptroller's Directives applicable to the audit.
- A review of the reports and/or work papers from prior or related audits and the identification of the work of other auditors that may be relied upon.
- A review of the contract's terms and conditions. Contract review is discussed in Section 4.1.

## ***2.2 General Audit Objectives***

Payment request audit programs must be designed to achieve the following general objectives:

- To verify that the request for payment is appropriate in all respects.
- To ensure that the amount of the payment requested is appropriate for the work or services provided.
- To determine that the contractor has complied with the terms and conditions of the contract that are applicable to the payment requested.
- To verify that the payment request has been properly authorized by the appropriate agency personnel.
- To ensure that the payment complies with the provisions of this Directive and all other appropriate rules and regulations.

## ***2.3 Contractual Provisions for Indirect Costs***

Indirect costs and profit are generally reimbursed in accordance with agreed upon cost formulas that employ either an overhead multiplier (customarily used with consulting type contracts) or a fixed fee percentage (customarily used with construction contracts). Agencies must use different indirect cost audit procedures depending on the method used by the contractor to bill for these costs as set forth in the contract agreement. Sections 4.5 and 4.6 contain detailed audit procedures for indirect costs, and Section 4.7 contains detailed audit procedures for profit.

Contracts with interim overhead multipliers stipulate an agreed upon percentage that is applied to direct labor to approximate reimbursable indirect costs and profit for progress payment purposes. The multiplier is used to recover a proportionate amount of indirect costs and profit on each interim payment. An audit of the interim multiplier(s) should be performed to establish the actual yearly overhead multiplier(s). The timing of the audit, however, does not necessarily have to be at the end of each year, but at a time that does

not adversely affect timely payment or cause excessive over-payment for the services rendered. Upon completion of the contract the actual indirect costs incurred must be audited to establish the actual overhead multiplier(s). Any difference between the amounts paid to the contractor based on the application of the interim multiplier(s) and the actual overhead multiplier(s) determined by audit are adjusted in the final payment.

Contracts with fixed fee indirect cost provisions use a contractually specified fixed rate that is applied to direct costs to determine the amount of indirect costs and profit that will be paid. In such contracts the underlying overhead costs are not audited unless otherwise required by contract.

Contract overhead multiplier findings determined by agency audit, including backup information, shall be filed with the Comptroller's Chief Engineer within 30 days after the final report is released. Such findings shall be available to other agencies that would otherwise be required to perform an overhead multiplier analysis on the same contractor. These findings may be adopted by other agencies, thereby eliminating duplicative work.

## ***2.4 Computing the Overhead Multiplier***

The overhead multiplier is a factor that, when applied to direct labor billings,<sup>1</sup> calculates the total direct labor, indirect costs and profit payable to the contractor.

The overhead multiplier is computed as follows:

- The sum of the contractor's allowable overhead costs and general and administrative expenses is divided by the direct labor for the same period. The quotient is the Overhead Rate.
- The Overhead Rate is added to the integer one (1), representing the direct labor costs billed for the contract, to yield the Overhead Factor.
- To allow for profit, the Overhead Factor is multiplied by one (1) plus the agreed profit percentage (i.e., where the profit is 10 percent, the Overhead Factor is multiplied by 1.1.). The product is the Overhead Multiplier.

## **3. COST ACCOUNTING PRINCIPLES - GENERAL**

This section discusses cost accounting standards and their application to cost reimbursable contract payment request audits.

### ***3.1 Direct Costs Defined***

Direct costs are those costs that are specifically incurred for, and can be expressly identified with, a particular contract or function. Examples of direct costs include labor,

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<sup>1</sup> The premium portion of the overtime direct labor billings is not subject to overhead or profit. Further, the premium portion is not part of the direct technical labor base and should be classified as a separate account in the general ledger labor section.

materials and supplies, certain clerical and secretarial salaries, telephone, and travel, where the service or consumption is directly connected to an individual, job, or contract.

### **3.2 *Indirect Costs Defined***

Indirect costs, also called overhead or overhead burden, are any other costs that cannot be readily classified as direct costs. For consistency, this Directive uses the term "indirect costs" when referring to these costs. Indirect costs usually cannot be directly related to a specific contract or project, because they are incurred for common or joint objectives which, nevertheless, are necessary for the satisfactory performance of a contract.

Examples of indirect costs include home office expenses such as rent, electricity, depreciation and insurance where the service or consumption is not directly connected to an individual, job or contract.

### **3.3 *Allowable Costs***

All costs submitted for payment may not be allowable for reimbursement. Certain categories of costs and excess costs must be disallowed because they do not meet the criteria for allowability described in this section, or otherwise fail to comply with this Directive.

Only the following may be included in allowable costs:

- Direct costs incident to the performance of a contract.
- Allocable indirect costs.
- Any costs specifically allowed by the contract agreement.
- The contractor's profit.

To be considered an allowable cost, an expenditure, whether direct or indirect, must meet the following criteria:

- It must provide a tangible benefit to the City or the project.
- It must be reasonable.
- If an indirect cost, it must be allocable to the contract under the standards, limitations, or exclusions provided in the contract and/or this Directive.
- It must be treated consistently under generally accepted accounting principles.<sup>2</sup>
- It must otherwise comply with the provisions set forth in this Directive.

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<sup>2</sup> See Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), which rests on a set of fundamental principles and assumptions, including revenue, expense, matching cost, and objectivity principles; and continuity, unit-of-measure, and separate entity assumptions.

Other rules or contract provisions that are more restrictive than this Directive's criteria, or not otherwise addressed by this Directive, may apply.

The allowability tests are discussed in greater detail in the following sections.

### 3.3.1 Tangible Benefit Test

To be allowable, expenditures must provide the City of New York a tangible benefit. Examples of indirect costs that do not meet the tangible benefit test include (i) technical labor costs for personnel without or between assignments, and (ii) parent company or local office costs for activities that provide no tangible value to the City or the specific project. An example of direct costs that do not meet the tangible benefit test includes idle or standby personnel and equipment unless otherwise provided for in the contract.

### 3.3.2 Reasonableness Test

To be allowable, a cost must be reasonable. A cost is considered reasonable if, in its nature or amount, it does not exceed that which would be incurred by an ordinarily prudent person in the conduct of a competitive business.

The following must be considered in determining reasonableness:

- Is the cost generally recognized as ordinary and necessary for the conduct of the contractor's business?
- Is the cost necessary to comply with the requirements or restraints in the contract's terms and specifications?
- Are there significant deviations from the contractor's established practices which might unjustifiably increase the cost?

### 3.3.3 Allocability of Indirect Costs

Certain indirect costs may be considered allowable expenditures if they can be properly allocated to the contract under audit. The cost allocation method must follow generally accepted cost accounting principles as appropriate for the contract.

Tests for proper allocation include:

- The cost is beneficial to both the contract and other business activities of the contractor and can be distributed between the contract under audit and the contractor's other business activities in a reasonable ratio.
- The cost is necessary to the overall operation of the contractor's business and can be distributed to the contract by a generally accepted formula or method.
- The cost is incurred specifically for the contract, in which case the auditor must determine whether it should be classified as a direct or indirect cost.

### 3.3.4 Consistency of Accounting Treatment Test

To be allowable, expenditure must be treated consistently under generally accepted accounting principles from period to period. Changes in accounting principles can result in significant fluctuations in the amounts contractors claim for direct costs, overhead, profits, losses and other financial statement elements, and consequently could impact the amount to be reimbursed under the contract. An intentional manipulation of, or erroneous change in, accounting treatment could result in excessive reimbursement to the contractor.

Typical examples of changes in accounting principles that could impact cost reimbursement include the change from a straight line depreciation method to an accelerated method, and changes in the method of valuing and accounting for inventories.

A change in accounting principles may not result in a disallowance if the newly adopted principle is a generally accepted accounting principle, the method of accounting for the effect of the change is in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles, and the contractor's justification for the change is reasonable. Excess costs resulting from accounting changes that do not meet these conditions must be disallowed.

## 4. AUDIT STEPS AND PROCEDURES

This section describes specific audit steps and procedures that agencies must incorporate, as appropriate, in developing audit programs for cost reimbursable contract payment requests. The auditor's basic responsibility is to determine whether the contractor has complied with the provisions of the contract, this Directive, and other appropriate rules and regulations. Because audit procedures will vary depending on the specifics of the contract and the payment under audit, agency audit staff must use their professional judgment, consistent with the provisions of this Directive, to determine the nature and extent of the audit procedures necessary.

### 4.1 *Contract Review*

The proper audit of payment requests requires that the auditor develop a working knowledge of the contract and its payment provisions to gain an understanding of the contract's general terms, any unusual terms, and to learn of any potential audit issues. Audit procedures must be adjusted depending on the nature of the contract and its specific terms and conditions. The auditor should prepare a checklist of all contract provisions requiring verification or further follow-up. Some key contract provisions, of particular importance to the auditor, include:

#### 4.1.1 Not to Exceed Clauses

Many cost reimbursable contracts include an amount that is specified as the maximum to be paid. If a contract is written with such a "not to exceed" clause,



audit procedures must include verification that the agency has established a satisfactory payment control system that ensures that all payments made under the contract are properly recorded and that subsequent payments, in the aggregate, do not surpass the contract's not to exceed amount.

#### 4.1.2 Allowable/Unallowable Costs Clause

Many cost reimbursable contracts specifically identify all or certain costs that are allowable and/or unallowable. The auditor must ensure that only those costs stipulated as allowable in the contract are reimbursed.

#### 4.1.3 Overhead Multiplier Clause

Cost reimbursable consultant contracts may contain provisions for the use of an interim overhead cost multiplier to charge indirect costs on interim payments. The multiplier is typically applied to direct technical salary costs to cover employee fringe benefits, a pro-rata share of general and administrative expenses, and the consultant's profit. Interim overhead multipliers require a final audit at the completion of the contract to determine the actual overhead multiplier.

#### 4.1.4 Special Provisions

Contracts may contain provisions pursuant to government regulations (e.g. Code of Federal Regulations) associated with grants/funding for the contract. The auditor must be aware of and pay particular attention to compliance with such provisions, as well as ensure that all necessary record keeping is maintained.

### **4.2 *Interim Payments***

Interim or progress payments may be authorized periodically during the term of a contract. When auditing interim payments it must be verified that sufficient progress has been made by the contractor to warrant the payment requested and the cumulative payments to date.

### **4.3 *Comptroller's Directive #7***

In addition to complying with the provisions of this Directive, audits of all cost reimbursable construction, and engineering and architectural service contracts must also be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Comptroller's [Directive #7–Audit of Requests for Payment Received Under Contracts for Construction, Equipment, and Construction-Related Services](#).

### **4.4 *Audit of Direct Cost Elements***

The audit of direct costs requires the measurement and verification of wages and salaries, equipment charges, materials and supplies, travel expenses and other costs that were incurred specifically for the contract or that otherwise meet the definition of direct costs.

#### 4.4.1 Direct Wages and Salaries

Audit procedures for direct wages and salaries include:

- Reviewing the adequacy of internal controls over payroll activities, e.g., the adequacy of separation of duties for personnel, timekeeping, payroll computation, payroll preparation and payroll distribution.
- Verifying that the wages and salaries charged to the contract are for employees who are actually working on the contract by conducting a physical check of personnel being charged to the job.
- Determining that time tickets, distribution records, payrolls, checks, personnel actions, and other related documents are signed and/or approved by duly authorized contractor personnel.
- Examining personnel records to verify authority for employment and rates used, special qualification(s)/licensing requirement(s), etc., required by the contract.
- Ascertaining that the number of hours constituting a day's work, overtime, wage and salary rates and classifications are approved by the agency employee responsible for coordination of the contract, and are in accordance with contract terms.
- Checking hours and rates billed to the basic time records, distribution records and payrolls, in addition to checking the labor distribution summary for total hours worked during the payroll period.
- Verifying that the labor costs claimed are properly classified as direct labor.
- Verifying all computations, extensions and footings. This includes comparing the total dollar amount of payroll with the total dollar amount of the labor distribution summary and tracing posting of direct labor (for both contract and other work) to the general ledger and/or subsidiary ledger accounts.
- Selectively examining cancelled paper checks or electronic payment checks to verify that payments have been made by the contractor and to ensure that direct salary costs include only those hours for which the employee was actually paid and exclude any unpaid hours which may have been charged to the job.

- Unless otherwise stated in contracts with overhead multipliers, principals<sup>3</sup> taking specific technical assignments should be paid at the commensurate salary corresponding to the technical assignment. The principal's effort (labor hours x hourly rate) shall be computed with overhead less profit.
- Unless otherwise stated in the contract, technical personnel rates may be increased yearly for multiple year contracts limited by the percentage found in the Engineer Pay Index of the US Bureau of Labor Statistics- Employment Cost Index for Professional Specialty and Technical Workers- Wages and Salaries.
- Identifying unclaimed wages and verifying they were properly handled.

#### 4.4.2 Direct Materials and Supplies

Audit procedures for direct materials and supplies include the review of material and supply requests to determine that:

- The contractor's procurement procedures have proper internal controls. Audit steps include checking contract terms for specific Contracting Officer's approval requirements and verifying the justification for the payment request.
- Competitive bidding was used if required by the contract, that the purchases were actually made from the lowest bidder, or were otherwise reasonable.
- The price, quantity, and description of items procured are accurate and mathematically correct and all source documentation supporting the purchase (from purchase requisition to receipt and payment for purchases) is verified.
- Materials delivered directly to the worksite do not include overhead type materials.
- Account codings are correct, that accurate postings are made to cost distribution records, and that cost distribution records are properly controlled by general ledger accounts.
- An internal system has been set up to control credits to contract costs.

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<sup>3</sup> Principals are defined as those individuals in a firm who possess legal responsibility for its management. They may be owners, corporate officers, associates or partners. With respect to a corporation, a principal is further defined as that person(s) who owns ten (10) percent or more of the voting stock.

#### 4.4.3 Materials Withdrawn From Contractor's Stores

Audit procedures for materials drawn from contractor's stores include:

- Comparing representative contractor invoices that include items charged to stores, with the store's records to determine the accuracy of quantity and price postings.
- Examining a number of job material requests to determine that:
  - Requests have been posted to the store's records.
  - Requests are authorized and receipt of materials is confirmed against shipping documents and acknowledged in writing by responsible personnel.
  - Pricing is consistently applied using first-in/first-out, average costing or other generally accepted inventory costing method.
  - Quantities are not in excess of requirements.
  - Items are correctly listed and summary totals are correct.
  - The accounting distribution is proper.
  - The total distribution is approved by a responsible executive.
  - The computations are accurate.
  - Items similar to those charged directly from purchase invoices are not a duplication of costs.
  - Materials charged from stores directly to a contract do not include overhead type materials.

#### 4.4.4 Equipment

Unless otherwise specified in the contract, for allowable costs connected with contractor owned construction equipment, refer to Mayor's Office of Construction and Comptroller's Joint Directive: [Cost Allowance for Contractor-Owned Equipment](#), dated March 1, 1999, as amended.

#### 4.4.5 Travel Expenses

Travel expenses charged directly to the contract must be audited to ensure compliance with contract terms and to establish that they are reasonable.

The audit of travel expense includes:

- Determining that the purpose of the travel is acceptable under the contract's terms and the expenses charged are reasonable.
- Reviewing the original travel expense submissions and supporting documentation to verify employee's name, purpose of trip, travel start and

end points, dates of departure and arrival, mode and class (if applicable) of transportation, compliance with contract terms for expenses or per diem rates, executive authorization, employee's receipt if paid in cash, or check number if paid by check.

- Verifying that the travel expense accountings are accurately computed.
- Verification that payments have been made by the contractor by selective examination of cancelled checks and/or receipts.
- Tracing the charges to the general ledger and/or job cost ledgers.
- Verifying conformance with the Comptroller's [Directive #6 – Travel, Meals, Lodging, and Miscellaneous Expenses](#).

#### **4.5 Audit of Indirect Costs - General**

Agency auditors must take the following minimal audit steps for any payment request for reimbursement of indirect costs, regardless of whether the cost is based on an interim multiplier or a fixed rate.

- Verification that the rate used, whether multiplier or fixed, is consistent with the rate specified in the contract.
- Verification that the rate is applied to the correct direct cost base.
- Verification that the computation is accurate.

#### **4.6 Audit of Indirect Costs - Consultant Type Contracts**

The audit procedures in this section apply primarily to audits of consultant type contracts with interim overhead multipliers. Descriptions of specific unallowable indirect cost elements are provided in Section 5.0 Unallowable Indirect Costs.

##### **4.6.1 Audit Procedures to Determine the Overhead Multiplier**

- Review the contract provisions relating to use of an overhead multiplier as the basis for payment of interim charges.
- Review the current NYC guidelines for the maximum salary rate allowed for principals.
- For the period under review, obtain the following, if available:
  - Audit of the Multiplier Rate issued by an independent CPA firm or agency of New York State or New York City. Note whether the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) - Federal Acquisitions and Regulations (FAR)<sup>4</sup> was followed.

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<sup>4</sup> The FAR is codified at 48 CFR Part 31

- Audited Financial Statements or certified financial reports indicating the Consultant's expenses.
- Chart of Accounts with descriptions.
- Review the Chart of Accounts to understand the nature of each account.
- Determine if the Audited Multiplier Rate (from the CPA firm or the NYS/NYC agency) takes into account applicable Federal/State/City Directives, particularly this Directive 2 regarding allowable and unallowable costs.
- Make appropriate adjustments.
- Compute the actual Overhead Multiplier following Section 2.4 of this Directive.
- Compare the actual Overhead Multiplier with the interim multiplier previously applied to the Direct Technical Labor Costs and determine overpayment or underpayment.

The audit of indirect costs requires verification of the appropriateness of the indirect costs, that the costs were actually incurred, that they were subsequently accumulated in logical and homogeneous pools, and that they were allocated accurately.

The auditor must verify that specific cost elements are not charged twice; as a direct expense and again as an overhead expense component. Where the contractor's policy is to charge items ordinarily treated as overhead directly to contracts, the auditor must make sufficient tests to be satisfied that the contractor has not duplicated either direct or indirect costs by double charging, once as a direct charge and again through the allocation of overhead and/or profit.

#### 4.6.2 Indirect Cost Pools

An indirect cost pool is defined by the Cost Accounting Standards Board as, "a grouping of incurred costs identified with two or more objectives but not identified specifically with any final cost objective." Cost pools are established for the purpose of eventual cost allocation.

Indirect costs must be accumulated into logical overhead cost groupings or pools in the contractor's accounting records, such as general and administrative expense or manufacturing overhead, and must be distributed using a base that (i) is common to all the costs, and, (ii) reasonably reflects the benefits provided by the indirect costs.

Auditors must examine costs accumulated in a pool to verify the similarity of the indirect costs accumulated in that pool to ensure no distortion when the costs are allocated to the contract.

#### 4.6.3 Indirect Cost Proration Bases

Contractors use a variety of proration bases to allocate indirect costs. Auditors should be aware that contractors will often sacrifice a higher degree of accuracy because of the greater effort required. Consequently, whenever indirect costs are allocated, the auditor must be satisfied that the base used to determine the allocation rate does not produce distorted results. Any distribution method that results in an equitable distribution of costs is acceptable.

- Direct Labor Dollar Base

When this method is used, the auditor must:

- Reconcile that portion of the direct labor base allocated to the contract to the total labor costs accumulated under all contracts.
- Determine that no inequities exist as a result of using a direct labor dollar base. For example, the use of direct labor dollars as a base for prorating indirect costs is acceptable provided that a disproportionate amount of the contractor's more highly paid employees are not assigned to the contract under review.

- Other Proration Bases

If a base other than direct labor dollars is used for prorating indirect costs, the auditor must design appropriate tests to verify the accuracy, equity and propriety for the use of such base.

- Comparison/Discussion of Proration Bases

The relative merits of some commonly used proration bases follow:

- Direct Labor Hours. Some indirect costs such as indirect labor and the consumption of supplies are most closely related to the input of direct labor hours.

The direct labor hours devoted to specific projects is often used for correlating indirect costs with the project or contract. The amount of indirect costs applied to any given contract may be dependent on the amount of time devoted to an operation.

- Chronological Time. Many indirect costs are more closely related to the passage of time than to any other factor. Fixed costs such as depreciation, rent, taxes, and insurance, for examples, all relate to a given time period.

- Direct Labor Dollars. If labor rates are nearly uniform for every work task, the use of a labor-dollar base to apply overhead provides the same result as using direct-labor hours. This is the most widely used proration base.
- Machine Hours. Machine time is often a better measure of indirect costs than direct labor hours, since depreciation, property taxes, consumption of supplies, and indirect labor are frequently more closely related to machinery utilization than to direct labor usage.

In theory, machine time is the most accurate base for applying indirect costs; however, it is rarely used because of the added clerical cost and the difficulty of computing machine time for individual jobs.

#### ***4.7 Audit of Contractor's Profit***

Audits of contractor's profit must verify that the amount paid for profit does not exceed the amount stipulated in the contract.

The allowable profit is usually expressed as a percentage of the sum of direct and indirect costs, however, it may also be established as an agreed upon fixed amount. The audit of profit requires:

- The verification of the cost base upon which profit is computed. Cost bases must be adjusted for any disallowances resulting from the audits of direct and indirect costs before the profit rate is applied.
- Verification that the rate used is consistent with the rate specified in the contract and that the computation is accurate.
- For interim payments, verification that the profit is proportional to the percentage of contract completion both in terms of percent of work completed and percent of dollars expended. The auditor must compute both and ensure that payment for interim profit is limited to the lower amount.

#### ***4.8 Reliance on the Contractor's Financial Statements and Supplemental Cost Schedules***

Auditors may choose to rely on financial statements, supplemental cost schedules and/or other work prepared by the contractor's independent auditors. Auditors must limit their reliance on the work of the contractor's auditors, however, to only that work where credibility and objectivity are:

- Assured by the independent auditor's opinion, and
- Supported by, and consistent with, business records kept in the normal course of the contractor's business.



Contractors may supplement their independently audited financial statements with schedules that redefine complex indirect cost categories. When agency auditors deem it necessary to rely on such supplemental schedules, these schedules must be independently audited by the contractor's auditor. The scope of the independent auditor's report should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Confirmation that each supplemental schedule is consistent with, and reconcilable to, the year-end account(s) from which it has been derived.
- Confirmation that general business development expenditures have been identified and disallowed.
- Confirmation that any bonus and/or pension allowances are supported by business records and contracts that demonstrate that a company-wide plan is available to all employees on an equitable basis.

## **5. UNALLOWABLE INDIRECT COSTS**

When conducting audits of indirect costs auditors must carefully review indirect costs to ensure that inappropriate costs have not been claimed for reimbursement. This section provides procedures for making allowability determinations for a variety of common indirect costs. Allowability determinations for other costs, not discussed in this section, must be made based on the criteria outlined in Section 3.3 of this Directive.

### ***5.1 Generally Unallowable Indirect Costs***

The following is a partial listing of common indirect costs which are generally not allowable. These costs may, however, be allowable under the conditions discussed in the individual sections below, or if explicitly permitted by the terms of the contract.

#### **5.1.1 Advertising Costs**

Advertising costs, including magazine, newspaper, radio and television, direct mail, trade paper, outdoor signs, dealer cards, window displays, convention expenses, exhibits, and free goods and samples are generally not allowable.

Advertising costs may be allowable when incurred solely for a specific contract performance requirement. Examples include the recruitment of personnel for a specific contract purpose, the procurement of scarce or unique parts required for performance under the contract, and the disposal of scrap or surplus material acquired under the contract.

#### **5.1.2 Bid and Proposal Costs**

Bid and proposal costs from past accounting periods are not allowable in the current period. Bid and proposal costs from the current accounting period are allowable to the extent reasonable, which include: proposal preparation, estimating and submittals; oral presentations; negotiations; and pre-award meetings.

#### 5.1.3 Profit Sharing and Other Distributions

Dividend payments, bonuses, or other distributions of profit to stockholders, partners, or sole proprietors are generally not allowable. Bonuses, pensions, profit sharing, employee stock purchase and stock option plans, similar employee benefit plans and other employee incentive programs may be allowable, provided the distributions are formalized, equitable to all employees, and determined objectively.

#### 5.1.4 Excess Compensation

Compensation for professional services must be limited to that which a reasonable person would pay in a similar circumstance. Any compensation that exceeds reasonable standards is not allowable. For executives or employees, compensation may include wages, salary, bonuses, incentive compensation, deferred compensation, fringe benefits and employer contributions to defined contribution plans for the fiscal year, whether paid, earned, or otherwise accruing, as recorded in the consultant's cost accounting records for the fiscal year.

To determine the reasonableness of executive compensation, nationally published compensation surveys should be utilized and matched in terms of revenue, industry, geographic location, and other relevant factors. The American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Uniform Audit & Accounting Guide Section 7<sup>5</sup> provides guidance pertaining to determining compensation reasonableness. Caps for executive compensation should follow current AASHTO guidelines.

#### 5.1.5 Travel Expenses

Travel expenses, such as meals, lodging, transportation and gratuities are not allowable except when they are incurred primarily to obtain technical information or expertise or to obtain training that will improve production efficiency, quality or capacity. Procedures for acceptable levels of travel expenditures are set forth in Comptroller's Internal Control and Accountability Directive #6, Travel, Meals, Lodging and Miscellaneous Agency Expenses.

#### 5.1.6 Bonding Costs

Employee bonding costs are not allowable unless reasonable and specifically required under the terms of the contract or incurred in accordance with sound and consistent business practices.

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<sup>5</sup> This audit guide stipulates that "the engineering consultant is responsible for preparing an analysis to support the reasonableness of claimed compensation costs in accordance with FAR 31.205-6".

## **5.2 *Unallowable Indirect Costs***

The following is a partial listing of common indirect costs which are never allowable under any circumstances. Agencies must not enter into contracts providing for reimbursement of these costs.

### **5.2.1 Bad Debt Expense**

Bad debts resulting from actual or estimated losses due to the uncollectability of customer accounts or other claims, including any related legal or collection costs.

### **5.2.2 Losses from Other Contracts**

Losses of any kind from the vendor's other contracts.

### **5.2.3 Special Compensation Plans**

Costs related to establishing employee stock purchase and stock option plans or any other employee incentive program.

### **5.2.4 Contributions and Donations**

Contributions and donations of any kind.

### **5.2.5 Entertainment Costs**

Entertainment costs of any kind including cost for employee social events and alcoholic beverages.

### **5.2.6 Fines and Penalties**

Fines and penalties levied as a result of violations or the failure to comply with Federal, State or local regulations.

### **5.2.7 Borrowing and Financing Costs**

Interest on borrowing, bond discounts, financing and refinancing costs, legal and professional fees in connection with prospectus preparation, and the preparation and issuance costs for stock rights.

### **5.2.8 Organization Costs**

Organization and reorganization costs incurred in connection with planning or establishing the organization, including the costs of mergers, acquisitions or capital sourcing. Such unallowable organizational expenditures include, but are not limited to, incorporation fees, costs of attorneys, accountants, brokers, promoters, organizers, management consultants, and investment counselors, whether or not employees of the contractor.

### **5.2.9 Business Development Expense**

Charges for general business development expenses such as promotional activities, advertising, gifts or souvenirs, public relations, lobbying, or any expenditures intended to generate new business. This does not include bid, estimating or proposal costs. Agencies must note that the City's requirements for these expenses

are more restrictive than counterpart federal guidelines which may allow business development expenses for federal cost reimbursement purposes.

#### 5.2.10 Other Unallowable Indirect Costs

The cost of officers' life insurance, legal expenses on lost liability suits, and federal, state, and local income taxes.

### 6. AUDIT PROVISION FOR CONTRACTS

The following term should be included in all agency contracts with cost reimbursable provisions:

*All requisitions presented for payment hereunder and the books, records and accounts upon which said requisitions are based are subject to audit and revision by (agency name) and by the Comptroller of the City of New York pursuant to the powers and responsibilities conferred upon said Agency and said Comptroller by any law, including but not limited to, the [New York City Charter](#) and the [Administrative Code of the City of New York](#), as well as all orders and regulations promulgated pursuant thereto, including the [Comptroller's Internal Control and Accountability Directives](#). See the [Comptroller's Website](#).*

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