

## Guide on How to Write Bid Specifications

Specifications provide a precise description of the critical features a supply or service must have to satisfy a need. A specification should be written from the general to the specific. Good procurement practice and Montana law require that specifications not be unduly restrictive (Ref. Mont. Code Ann. § 18-4-234). Restrictive specifications may limit competition and in the end, do not promote the overall economy for the purposes intended. The following outline should be used as a guideline:

1. **Common Title of Supply or Service:** Begin a specification by listing the common name of the product or service sought: "compact sedan," for example, or "photocopier maintenance." Do not list a specific brand name in the title.
2. **Purpose/Use for Supply or Service:** State the intended purpose for which the item will be used. For example, a lawn tractor specification might state: "suitable for daily use (4-6 hours) on a 7-acre complex with several 20 degree slopes." Vendors must know the intended use to assist in determining the specific **supply to bid**.
3. **Description of Supply or Service:** List all the critical features the supply must perform or have to meet your requirements. Use a specification that indicates the necessary **performance** requirements of the end supply or service, or a design specification that details how a product is engineered, if you have a specific physical requirement for the product. However, it is difficult to draft design specifications without being restrictive and limiting competition. A combination of performance and design requirements is often the most ideal specification. Identify the minimum requirements, but make sure the stated minimums will result in a product that will satisfy the needs. If there **are brand name-or-equal** products that are of the appropriate quality level, list several of the acceptable brand names and model numbers. Be careful to not imply that only a certain brand name will be acceptable, unless compatibility is an issue.
4. **List Special Requirements:** Describe any special conditions that the product or vendor must perform. Warranty, service, parts, and training requirements must be included.
5. **Unusual Conditions:** Describe any unusual conditions, such as compatibility, fiscal year funding source, etc.
6. **Delivery Date:** Indicate a specific delivery date, if required. If a delivery time is not specified, it will generally be 30 days after issuance of a purchase order.
7. **Delivery Location:** Be specific about delivery location and any special delivery requirements. Bids must state that supplies are to be shipped F.O.B. Destination – Freight Prepaid, meaning that the title of the supplies remains with the vendor until the supplies are unloaded at the final destination. When supplies are purchased F.O.B. Destination – Freight Prepaid, the vendor is responsible for damage to the supplies while they are in transit and also responsible for filing freight claims if damages are incurred.
8. **Contact Person:** List the name, address, and phone number of the person who should be contacted if questions arise.