

# GSA Fact Sheet #4: *The Dreaded Regulations*

## Understanding the FAR and GSAM

### A Quick Guide to General Services Administration Contracts

Compliments of QualityU : GSA Contract Specialists

## A Survival Guide

### What are the regulations?

This is the “red tape” we love so well. There are many different regulations. You should be aware of all regulations that relate to your proposal or potential contract.

For this survival guide, let’s talk about the granddaddy of all regulations: the “Federal Acquisition Regulations” (FAR). We’ll also look at the General Services Administration Acquisition Manual (GSAM) and why they are important to you.

### Why are the regulations important?

Good question, glad you asked!

OK, let’s make it simple:

*You can lose your business or go to jail if you do not follow the regulations.*

Here’s how it works:

Most all solicitations, including GSA Schedules, refer to parts of the FAR and other regulations. In federal solicitations the references (citations) are mostly found in “Section I – Contract Clauses”. GSA Schedules also list citations to the FAR and the GSAM.

What you should do:

Download the regulation and take the time to look at the citations. You do not need to print it! The regulations are in “PDF” files (you need the free Adobe Reader to see and search PDF files). Open the PDF file and do a search on the citation. Read the citation. Most require no action, but you need to be aware of its content.

### How do I use the regulations?

1. Download the regulations (in PDF format) that relate to your proposal. If in doubt about which regulations apply, call the government point of contact listed on the solicitation.
2. You do not need to print the regulations. Just “search” them for each of the the citations listed in the solicitation.

Let’s use the current GSA IT Services (Schedule 70, refresh 17) as an example. In Section C.2 it lists the citations to the FAR. For example, one clause cited is “52.203-3 GRATUITIES”. Open the downloaded PDF file and search on “52.203-3”. There you can read the citation.

Now we’ll look at the GSAM using the Schedule 70 as an example. In section C.3 it lists citations to the GSAM. For example, one clause is “552.203-71 RESTRICTION ON ADVERTISING”. Open the downloaded PDF file and search on “552.203-71”. There you can read the citation.

We know what you are thinking... this is a big pain! Right. No doubt about it, but it is what you need to do to protect yourself.

### How can I obtain the regulations?

One of the best sites to locate all federal regulations is the “FARSite” Contracting Laboratory at Hill Air Force Base in Utah at <http://farsite.hill.af.mil/>.

For the GSAM go to:  
<http://www.acqnet.gov/GSAM/qsam.html>

For the free Adobe Reader, go to:  
[www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com).

[www.QualityU.com](http://www.QualityU.com)

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