GENERAL ORDER 100.26

Procurement Policy

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES BUREAU

Issue Date: **October 08, 2020**
Revision Date: **May 03, 2021**

APPLICABILITY

All Career and Volunteer Uniformed and Non-Uniformed Personnel

POLICY

This General Order shall establish policy and procedure for the procurement of goods and services in the Department of Fire and Rescue Services (Department) for purchases made using County tax dollars, including any funds granted under Howard County Code Section 17-103. All County employees and volunteer corporate members who spend County monies hold a public trust; their conduct must meet the highest of ethical standards. Cardholders, the Departmental Coordinator, and Approving Officials must read and be familiar with the requirements of all referenced documents, as well as any applicable internal agency procedures. All purchases shall be in accordance with established federal, state, and local laws, and existing County Policy.

DEFINITIONS

- **Approving Official** – The Fire Chief or designee who reviews each cardholder's monthly purchases to ensure that they are in accordance with policies and procedures. The Approving Official enforces the provisions of the P-Card program for the Department, and initiates administrative or disciplinary action for misuse of the card or funds.

- **P-Card** (Purchasing Card) – Credit card designed to provide departments and agencies of County government flexibility in making small purchases quickly, and to significantly reduce paperwork and processing time. A P-Card is a credit card issued to Howard County Government employees. Each P-Card has a single transaction limit and a monthly limit. Personal credit is not affected by use of the P-Card and it is not linked to cardholder social security numbers in any way. The P-Card program is governed by Howard County Policy and Procedure 300.4: Procurement Card Purchases, Howard County Code Section 4.116: *Procurement card transactions*, and the Howard County Purchasing Manual (Section F, Part 2).

- **Purchase Request** – A paper or electronic form that must be used for requests to purchase goods and services made using County tax dollars, including any funds granted under Howard County Code Section 17-103. There are currently two approved purchase request forms, see Attachments A and B.

- **Systems, Applications and Products (SAP)** –. SAP is the software program used as the financial management system for the County**.**

- **Departmental Coordinator** – The liaison between the cardholders in a County department and the P-Card Program Administrator in the Office of Procurement and Contract Administration. The Coordinator requests new accounts and limit increases, reconciles charges, and helps cardholders with disputed purchases, credits, or billing errors.

- **P-Card Program Administrator or Program Administrator** – Positions within the Office of Procurement and Contract Administration that serve as the primary contact for Departmental Coordinators and cardholders and is the liaison with the provider. The Program Administrator issues cards, provides training, reviews transactions, monitors disputes, and conducts audits for fraud and billing errors for cards issued to employees of Howard County Government. The P-Card Program Administrator is not authorized to conduct audits for volunteer corporations.

PROCEDURES

GENERAL:

Any purchase of goods or services using County tax dollars, including any funds granted under Howard County Code Section 17-103, shall be initiated with a Departmental Purchase Request form, which can be found on the Department intranet under the Forms section. These Purchase Request forms shall be completed accurately and approved at the required level prior to making the purchase. Except under emergency conditions, bureau chiefs or budget managers shall identify and document the existing funding source to be used for each purchase on the Purchase Request form prior to the purchase being made. Emergency purchases where a Purchase Request is not approved prior to the purchase must also include justification as to why the purchase was made outside of the normal process.

Whenever it is practical to do so, supplies and services shall be purchased through contracts. Overall, the County benefits from quantity discounts, fewer purchasing transactions, and reduced paperwork. A list of County contracts can be found on the Howard County Office of Purchasing internet site: https://www.howardcountymd.gov/purchasing. If it is not practical to utilize a County contract, a purchaser must provide detailed information justifying why the County contract cannot be used.

Purchases made within the state of Maryland shall be exempt from Maryland sales tax by utilizing the County Tax Exempt ID number. The Tax-Exempt ID number can be found on the front of the P-Card.

All contracts shall be signed on behalf of the County by the County Executive or designee and approved for form and legal sufficiency by the County Solicitor. No County employee or volunteer member of the Department shall sign any proposal, contract, or agreement on behalf of the County.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

All suppliers and County employees involved in the purchasing process shall be governed by the provisions of the Howard County Charter and Howard County Code regarding conflict of interest. No supplier shall offer a gratuity to an official or employee of the County. No official or employee of the County shall accept or solicit a gratuity.

PURCHASING THRESHOLDS:

- Purchases up to $9,999 may use P-Card.
- Purchases from $10,000 up to $29,999 cumulative in a 12-month period, may use the Informal bid process; refer to the Purchasing Code of Howard County.

- Purchases greater than $30,000 cumulative in a 12-month period, requires Formal bid procedures; refer to Purchasing Code of Howard County.

P-CARD PURCHASES:

The P-Card program is governed by Policy and Procedure 300.4: Procurement Card Purchases, Howard County Code Section 4.116: *Procurement card transactions*, the Howard County Purchasing Manual (Section F, Part 2), and this General Order. This General Order provides clarification on proper use of the P-Card for cardholders, Departmental Coordinators, and Approving Officials. Department Heads are responsible for ensuring that P-Card transactions comply with County policies and procedures.

Purchases being made on a County issued P-Card shall be requested on the appropriate Purchase Request form. All documentation for purchases on a County P-Card shall be sent to the Departmental Coordinator through the respective bureau Administrative Aide or Assistant. This documentation shall be sent as soon as possible, as to not cause undue delay in processing the monthly P-Card statements.

DOCUMENTATION:

Signed and approved Purchase Requests, receipts, detailed invoices, and other associated supporting documentation shall be scanned and stored in SAP regardless if it is a P-Card purchase or a shopping cart.

PURCHASE LIMITS APPLICABLE TO PURCHASES MADE WITH COUNTY TAX DOLLARS, INCLUDING ANY FUNDS GRANTED UNDER HOWARD COUNTY CODE SECTION 17.103:

- Corporate Volunteer Limits
  - Purchases under $1,200 (single or cart) shall be authorized by a volunteer chief officer for items purchased for the volunteer corporation.
  - Purchases under $2,500 (single or cart) shall have the written approval of the respective volunteer Fire Chief, through the chain of command.
  - Purchases greater than $2,500 (single or cart) shall have the written approval of the Volunteer Fire Chief and appropriate Department Deputy Chief through the chain of command.

- Career Station and Bureau Limits
  - $1,200 (single or cart) shall be authorized by the company Captain for items purchased from the station budget only.
  - Purchases under $2,500 (single or cart), not associated with a station budget, shall have the written approval of the respective bureau chief, through the chain of command.
  - Purchases greater than $2,500 (single or cart) shall have the written approval of the respective bureau chief and Deputy Chief through the chain of command.

RECEIPT OF PURCHASED ITEMS:

Items received from the vendor must be checked in as received. Verification of receipt shall be sent to the Departmental Coordinator through the respective bureau Administrative Aide or Assistant within three business days.

PROHIBITED ITEMS:

The purchase of certain items are prohibited by County policy, but exceptions may be allowed in some cases. To confirm all rules are followed, purchasers should discuss a planned purchase with the Departmental Coordinator in coordination with the Program Administrator **BEFORE** making a purchase in order to understand what rules are applicable, obtain and include any required written permissions, and

ensure all purchase documentation is complete.

Examples of generally prohibited purchases with County tax dollars, including those made with any funds granted under Howard County Code Section 17.103:

- Items and services for personal use.
- Food for employee or corporate volunteer consumption.
- Alcoholic beverages.
- Vehicle rentals.
- IT equipment, including hardware, software and peripherals (includes cell phones).
- Gifts for employees.
- Assets (any single item with a price of $10,000 or more).
- Inventory Items.
- Flower arrangements.
- Standing desks and related items.
- Local purchase of gasoline.
- Payment of traffic tickets/fines.
- Items from eBay.
- Rental/lease of buildings.
- Modifications to County vehicles.

REFERENCES

- Howard County Code Section 4.116, *Procurement card transactions.*
- Howard County Policy and Procedure 300.4: Procurement Card Purchases.
- Howard County Purchasing Manual.
- PDQ Card Program User's Guide.

SUMMARY OF DOCUMENT CHANGES

New General Order

FORMS/ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A: Purchase request five or fewer items.
- Attachment B: Purchase request six or greater items.

APPROVED

William Anuszewski, Fire EMS Chief
Office of the Fire Chief

Author:

Vincent Baker, Assistant Chief
Administrative Services Bureau

Attachment A

PURCHASE REQUEST

Department of Fire and Rescue Services

Howard County, Maryland

A

REQUESTED BY		APPROVAL SIGNATURES		DATE
Date		Station OIC		
Name		Co. Captain		
Station	(Select One)	Battalion CF|Vol. Chief Officer		
Bureau	(Select One)	Bureau CF|Vol. Chief/President		
		Deputy Chief		

B

TYPE of PURCHASE (X)		VENDOR INFORMATION		
	Firefighting Equipment	Name:		
	Janitorial Supplies	Address:		
	Office Supplies	City:	State:	ZIP:
	Medical Supplies	Phone:	Website:	
	Data Processing Equipment	Fax:	E-Mail:	
	Food Purchases			
	Other (Specify):			

C

Business Area	(Select One)	**GL**	
Grant #		**AEL Code**	
Sam.gov Verified?	**No**	**Yes**	If yes, please attach proof.

D

QTY	ITEM DESCRIPTION/JUSTIFICATION	PRICE EA.	PRICE
			$ 0.00
			$ 0.00
			$ 0.00
			$ 0.00
			$ 0.00
		TOTAL	$ 0.00

Attachment B

PURCHASE REQUEST

Department of Fire and Rescue Services

Howard County, Maryland

A

REQUESTED BY		APPROVAL SIGNATURES		DATE
Date		Station OIC		
Name		Co. Captain		
Station	(Select One)	Battalion CF|Vol. Chief Officer		
Bureau	(Select One)	Bureau CF|Vol. Chief/President		
		Deputy Chief		

B

TYPE of PURCHASE (X)		VENDOR INFORMATION		
	Firefighting Equipment	Name:		
	Janitorial Supplies	Address:		
	Office Supplies	City:	State:	ZIP:
	Medical Supplies	Phone:	Website:	
	Data Processing Equipment	Fax:	E-Mail:	
	Food Purchases			
	Other (Specify):			

C

Business Area	(Select One)	**GL**	
Grant #		**AEL Code**	
Sam.gov Verified?	**No**	**Yes**	If yes, please attach proof.

D

QTY	ITEM DESCRIPTION/JUSTIFICATION	PRICE EA.	PRICE
			$ 0.00
			$ 0.00
			$ 0.00
			$ 0.00
			$ 0.00
		Page 1 Total	$ 0.00

Page 2 Total $ 0.00

Grand Total $ 0.00

Attachment B

PURCHASE REQUEST

Department of Fire and Rescue Services

Howard County, Maryland

D - Continued

QTY	ITEM DESCRIPTION/JUSTIFICATION	PRICE EA.	PRICE
			$ 0.00
			$ 0.00
			$ 0.00
			$ 0.00
			$ 0.00
			$ 0.00
			$ 0.00
			$ 0.00
			$ 0.00
			$ 0.00
			$ 0.00
			$ 0.00
			$ 0.00
			$ 0.00
			$ 0.00
			$ 0.00
		Page 2 Total	$ 0.00