

Consolidated VA Acquisition and Logistics Conference Call

11:00 am Eastern – June 25, 2008

Call-In Number: 1-800-767-1750 (Access #: 15958)
VACO – Room 742

Moderator: Robert McKenna

Logistics Policy Issues

1. Equipment Bar Code Label – (J. Teal)
 - Necessity and Importance
 - Labels are Affixed Denoting Locations
2. Report of Survey Timelines – (N. Gonzalez)
3. AEMS/MERS Requirements – (V. Boyett)
4. Repetitive/Common Deficiencies – (C. Joseph)
5. Logistics Transformation Study Update – (C. Joseph)

Acquisition Policy Issues

1. Tentative June 2008 Direct Delivery Consolidation Timeline
(F. LaGrone)
2. VA National Contract Awarded for Standard Manual Wheelchairs
(T. Richards)
3. New System Available to Thwart Morbid Obesity
(P. Skalman)

Next:

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Wednesday – July 23, 2008, (11:00 – 12:00)
Same Call-In Number and Access Code***

The Necessity and Importance of the Equipment Bar Code Label

Why is the bar code label required and why is it important? Have you ever asked yourself these questions? The equipment bar code label denotes that the item has been properly accounted for in AEMS/MERS (and if capitalized, accounted for in FMS), has had a proper incoming inspection requested and/or performed, and is available for scanning when inventory is due. The label is a source of information concerning the warranty, EIL/service it is assigned to, acquisition cost, and other pertinent information that may be pulled up in AEMS/MERS by using the bar code assigned number (and we all know this assigned number as the EE#). The proper utilization of the equipment bar code label is essential in the performance of good inventory management practices. It is also an item that will be looked for by auditors when conducting their inspections, and the lack of a bar code label will tell the auditor a wealth of information as to whether or not the facility is doing their job. So, please ensure that you or your property specialist is affixing a bar code label to each and every piece of new equipment, and that you are ensuring that equipment already in use has a label affixed as well.

(Jim Teal)

Ensuring Bar Code Labels are Affixed Denoting Locations

There recently has been some discussion out in the field facilities as to who owns the responsibility for placing bar code labels on door jams, etc., for the purpose of keeping the space file accurate. The space file is controlled by Engineering or Facilities Management personnel; consequently, it stands to reason that this responsibility of placing bar code labels for the purposes of identifying locations is the responsibility of the same people that control the space file. The property management people have the designated responsibility of ensuring that all personal property at a facility is bar coded and accounted for in AEMS/MERS. Just as this is their charge, Engineering has a distinct similar charge of making sure that real property is accounted for and part of this mandate is ensuring that all individual spaces connected to real property have been properly identified. Please ensure that all locations at your facility have been accurately and properly labeled. This will provide a comfort level to all users of the space file that the information contained there is correct. It will also go along way to comply with the GAO recommendations regarding the IT audit findings issued in April 2007, and will assist IT in making sure that locations of IT equipment are updated as required.

(Jim Teal)

This same Narrative will be presented on the Engineering Conference Call

Information Letter (IL) 049-08-05, "Timeline for Report of Survey Process."

On May 16, 2008, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Acquisition and Logistics signed an IL requiring VA field logisticians to take immediate implementation actions. The IL establishes reporting procedures and actions when missing or damaged property is reported by VA employees. The IL was collaborated between OA&L and the Veterans Health Administration, Prosthetics Chief, Clinical Logistics Office. The IL addresses noted deficiencies by the General Accountability Office, which stated that VA did not have delineated time frames for the Report of Survey process. Some of the critical highlights of the IL include;

- **Clarifies that the approving official may not be any grade lower than the Associate Director or equivalent**
- **establishes 8 working day time frame for the approving official to approve the ROS assignment and return the ROS to the AO for action**
- **Establishes 3 working day time frame (from date of discovery) to complete VA Form 1393 (Uniform Offense Report) and VA Form 1217 (Report of Survey) between VA police and the responsible individual**
- **clarifies that the AO will assign a ROS official for items below \$5000 and a ROS board for items above \$5000 (within 5 working days)**
- **establishes 3 working day time frame for AO to brief the assigned surveying official or board on their role in the ROS process**
- **establishes a 10 working day time frame for ROS official or board members to conduct their survey and submit the signed and completed report to the AO**
- **establishes that the AO has 7 working days to forward ROS recommendations/findings to the approving official**
- **establishes 60 day period for the completion of each ROS process, unless there is an ongoing law enforcement activity requiring additional time**
- **For additional clarification on this IL please visit <http://www1.va.gov/oamm/bf/other/ils/il08-05.pdf>**

In addition to the IL, VA Notice 049-08-02, titled "Timeline for Report of Survey Process," has been signed and will be posted on the OA&L website within the next couple of days. The IL provides interim guidance until the VA Notice is posted.

(Nelson A. Gonzalez)

AEMS/MERS Requirements

Recent General Accountability Office (GAO) audits revealed several problem areas relating to data that should be maintained in AEMS/MERS, including a finding of 59% of items having a blank serial number at one health care system. Data consistency issues, physical security vulnerabilities, incomplete records, missing items, and insufficient recordkeeping for the disposal process were also among the problems identified.

Due to these findings, a reminder of the importance of maintaining complete and accurate records in AEMS/MERS cannot be over-emphasized. Complete and accurate information in AEMS/MERS provides Logistics personnel the ability to better identify, track, and monitor equipment items in a timely manner as well as ensuring a correct physical inventory. Accurate databases and inventories could diminish or even eliminate problems which have been identified in recent audits/reviews.

Virginia Boyett

Repetitive/Common Deficiencies

After review of audit reports from MQAS, OIG, and GAO, it has been noted that there are some facilities with repetitive deficiencies reported. Once an audit has been completed and the report presented, the facility must develop an action plan not only to correct the deficiencies, but also to prevent/reduce the possibility of future occurrences.

Some common deficiencies noted during these audits are:

- AEMS/MERS records not completely filled out
- Delegation Memos – either outdated or non-existent
 Delegation of Authority (Accountable Officer)
 Equipment Inventory Listing (EILs) Officials
- Industrial Equipment Certifications – out dated or non-existent
 (Good for 3 yrs)
- Equipment Turned-In – In warehouse/storage for long periods and no identifying paperwork attached. Many facilities no longer have the space to hold this excess equipment, that is why it is important to follow all the proper reporting procedures so that this equipment may be removed from you facility in a timely manner. All equipment held for excess must be properly tagged with copy of the Turn-In attached for easy identification. It is recommended that a logbook be maintained, the logbook should contain the identification of the item, storage location, date of turn-in, and the date and method of final disposal.
 If you need an access code to Federal Equipment Disposal System (FEDS), please send an e-mail to JamesTeal@va.gov.

(C. Joseph)

Logistics Transformation Study

The Office of Acquisition and Logistics (OA&L) would like to thank all the facilities that participated in the data gathering and interview process of the Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC) study on logistics in the VA. Information provided is being used to evaluate current processes and formulate some recommendations for a more efficient and effective supply chain management for the VA.

Currently, PwC is reviewing the data, benchmarking, and preparing several reports that will be reviewed and commented on by management staff of the VA, VHA, NCA, VBA. OA&L will keep you informed as additional progress is made.

(C. Joseph)

Tentative June 2008 Direct Delivery Consolidation Timeline

Customer requisitions for the March 2008 consolidated bulk buy were due into Direct Delivery on June 2nd. All requisition benchmarks received will be posted to equipment vendors on June 16th. Vendor offers will be due into Direct Delivery by July 21st and will be forwarded to VISN Chief Logistic Officers for evaluation and selection by July 23rd. All customer selections with justifications will be due into Direct Delivery by August 13th and all delivery orders are anticipated to be awarded and issued on or before September 17th.

Although not preferred and cautiously granted, schedule adjustments may occur for legitimate requests made by customer, vendor and/or the National Acquisition Center. Whenever an adjustment occurs, Peggy Thames (VACO/10F) will be promptly provided a revised timeline schedule for dissemination to field activities.

(Francine LaGrone)

Question: Will there be a September 2008 Consolidation?

Answer: Yes, the tentative schedule has been sent to Peggy Thames (VACO) for further dissemination to CLO and NCM's.

VA National Contract Awarded for Standard Manual Wheelchairs

Under VA's National Standardization Program, national contract VA797-P-0115 was awarded on June 3, 2008 to Invacare Corporation for standard manual wheelchairs. Invacare is a large business and major supplier of wheelchairs and other mobility devices. The five year value of this contract is estimated at \$26,007,750 (\$5,201,550 annually). The contract will be effective July 17, 2008 for one year, with four one-year option periods. Standard manual wheelchairs are ordered primarily by Prosthetics and Sensory Aids Services for patient home use and by Clinical Logistics Offices for patient use within VA facilities.

(Tim Richards)

New System Available to Thwart Morbid Obesity

The Federal Supply Schedule (FSS) Service recently made an award under the Medical Equipment and Supplies FSS to Allergan USA for a silicone implant system that helps combat morbid obesity. The LAP-BAND System is a long-term implantable device intended to induce weight loss by limiting food consumption. The system is surgically implanted using a laparoscopic or open procedure and creates a restricted opening and a small gastric pouch to limit consumption. This award is under FSS contract number V797P-4107B and is effective July 1, 2008, through June 30, 2013.

(Paul Skalman)

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