

**40A:11-19. Liquidated damages; void provisions as to contractor's remedies**

Any contract made pursuant to P.L.1971, c.198 (C.40A:11-1 et seq.) may include liquidated damages for the violation of any of the terms and conditions thereof or the failure to perform said contract in accordance with its terms and conditions, or the terms and conditions of P.L.1971, c.198 (C.40A:11-1 et seq.). Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, it shall be void, unenforceable and against public policy for a provision in a contract entered into under P.L.1971, c.198 (C.40A:11-1 et seq.) to limit a contractor's remedy for the contracting unit's negligence, bad faith, active interference, tortious conduct, or other reasons un contemplated by the parties that delay the contractor's performance, to giving the contractor an extension of time for performance under the contract. For the purposes of this section, "contractor" means a person, his assignees or legal representatives with whom a contract with a contracting unit is made.

L.1971, c. 198, s. 19; amended 1999, c. 440, s. 28; 2001, c. 206, s. 1.

**40A:11-20. Certificate of bidder showing ability to perform contract**

There may be required from any bidder submitting a bid on public work to any contracting unit, duly advertised for in accordance with law, a certificate showing that he owns, leases, or controls all the necessary equipment required by the plans, specifications and advertisements under which bids are asked for and if the bidder is not the actual owner or lessee of any such equipment, his certificate shall state the source from which the equipment will be obtained, and shall be accompanied by a certificate from the owner or person in control of the equipment definitely granting to the bidder the control of the equipment required during such time as may be necessary for the completion of that portion of the contract for which it is necessary.

L.1971, c. 198, s. 20, eff. July 1, 1971.

**40A:11-21. Guarantee to be furnished with bid**

A person bidding on a contract for the erection, alteration or repair of a public building, structure, facility or other improvement to real property, the total price of which exceeds \$100,000, shall furnish a guarantee as provided for herein. A contracting unit may provide that a person bidding on any other contract, advertised in accordance with law, shall furnish a guarantee as provided for herein. The guarantee shall be payable to the contracting unit so that if the contract is awarded to the bidder, the bidder will enter into a contract therefor and will furnish any performance bond or other security required as a guarantee or indemnification. The guarantee shall be in the amount of 10% of the bid, but not in excess of \$20,000.00, except as otherwise provided herein, and may be given, at the option of the bidder, by certified check, cashier's check or bid bond. In the event that any law or regulation of the United States imposes any condition upon the awarding of a monetary grant to any contracting unit, which condition requires the depositing of a guarantee in an amount other than 10% of the bid or in excess of \$20,000.00 the provisions of this section shall not apply and the requirements of the law or regulation of the United States shall govern.

L.1971, c. 198, s. 21; amended 1974, c. 189; 1999, c. 39, s. 3; 1999, c. 440, s. 29.

**40A:11-22. Surety company certificate**

a. A person bidding on a contract for the erection, alteration or repair of a building, structure, facility or other improvement to real property, the total price of which exceeds \$100,000, shall furnish a certificate from a surety company, as provided for herein. A contracting unit may provide that a person bidding on any other contract shall furnish a certificate from a surety company, as provided for herein.

b. When a surety company bond is required in the advertisement or specifications for a contract, every contracting unit shall require from any bidder submitting a bid in accordance with plans,

specifications and advertisements, as provided for by law, a certificate from a surety company stating that it will provide the contractor with a bond in such sum as is required in the advertisement or in the specifications.

This certificate shall be obtained for a bond—

- (1) For the faithful performance of all provisions of the specifications or for all matters which may be contained in the notice to bidders, relating to the performance of the contract, and
- (2) If any be required, for a guarantee bond for the faithful performance of the contract provisions relating to the repair and maintenance of any work, project or facility and its appurtenances and keeping the same in good and serviceable condition during the term of the bond as provided for in the notice to bidders or in the specifications, or
- (3) In such other form as may be provided in the notice to bidders or in the specifications.

If a bidder desires to offer the bond of an individual instead of that of a surety company, the bidder shall submit with the bid a certificate signed by such individual similar to that required of a surety company.

The contracting unit may reject any such bid if it is not satisfied with the sufficiency of the individual surety offered.

L.1971, c. 198, s. 22; amended 1999, c. 39, s. 4; 1999, c. 440, s. 30.

#### **40A:11-23. Advertisements for bids; bids: general requirements**

a. All advertisements for bids shall be published in an official newspaper of the contracting unit sufficiently in advance of the date fixed for receiving the bids to promote competitive bidding, but in no event less than 10 days prior to such date; except that all advertisements for bids on contracts for the collection and disposal of municipal solid waste shall be published in an official newspaper of the contracting unit circulating in the county or municipality, and in at least one newspaper of general circulation published in the State, sufficiently in advance of the date fixed for receiving the bids to promote competitive bidding, but not less than 60 days prior to that date. For all contracts, the date fixed for receiving the bids shall not fall on a Monday, or any day directly following a State or federal holiday.

b. The advertisement shall designate the manner of submitting and the method of receiving the bids and the time and place at which the bids will be received. If the published specifications provide for receipt of bids by mail, those bids which are mailed to the contracting unit shall be sealed and shall only be opened for examination at such time and place as all bids received are unsealed and announced. At such time and place the contracting agent of the contracting unit shall publicly receive the bids, and thereupon immediately proceed to unseal them and publicly announce the contents, which announcement shall be made in the presence of any parties bidding or their agents, who are then and there present, and shall also make proper record of the prices and terms, upon the minutes of the governing body, if the award is to be made by the governing body of the contracting unit, or in a book kept for that purpose, if the award is to be made by other than the governing body, and in such latter case it shall be reported to the governing body of the contracting unit for its action thereon, when such action thereon is required. No bids shall be received after the time designated in the advertisement.

c. Notice of revisions or addenda to advertisements or bid documents shall be provided as follows:

- 1) For all contracts except those for construction work and municipal solid waste collection and disposal service, notice shall be published no later than seven days, Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays excepted, prior to the date for acceptance of bids, in an official newspaper of the contracting unit and be provided to any person who has submitted a bid or who has received a

bid package, in one of the following ways: i) in writing by certified mail or ii) by certified facsimile transmission, meaning that the sender's facsimile machine produces a receipt showing date and time of transmission and that the transmission was successful or iii) by a delivery service that provides certification of delivery to the sender.

2) For all contracts for construction work, notice shall be provided no later than seven days, Saturdays, Sundays, or holidays excepted, prior to the date for acceptance of bids, to any person who has submitted a bid or who has received a bid package in any of the following ways: i) in writing by certified mail or ii) by certified facsimile transmission, meaning that the sender's facsimile machine produces a receipt showing date and time of transmission and that the transmission was successful or iii) by a delivery service that provides certification of delivery to the sender.

3) For municipal solid waste collection and disposal contracts, notice shall be published in an official newspaper of the contracting unit and in at least one newspaper of general circulation published in the State no later than seven days, Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays excepted, prior to the date for acceptance of bids.

d. Failure of the contracting unit to advertise for the receipt of bids or to provide proper notification of revisions or addenda to advertisements or bid documents related to bids as prescribed by this section shall prevent the contracting unit from accepting the bids and require the readvertisement for bids pursuant to subsection a. of this section. Failure to obtain a receipt when good faith notice is sent or delivered to the address or telephone facsimile number on file with the contracting unit shall not be considered failure by the contracting unit to provide notice.

L.1971, c. 198, s. 23; amended 1975, c. 353, s. 13; 1983, c. 174; 1985, c. 429; 1991, c. 381, s. 50; 1997, c. 243. 1999, c. 440, s. 31; 2005, c. 191, s. 5; 2007, c. 4, s. 1.

#### **40A:11-23.1. Plans, specifications, bid proposal documents; required contents**

All plans, specifications and bid proposal documents for the erection, alteration, or repair of a building, structure, facility or other improvement to real property, the total price of which exceeds the amount set forth in, or the amount calculated by the Governor pursuant to, section 3 of P.L.1971, c.198 (C.40A:11-3), shall include:

a. a document for the bidder to acknowledge the bidder's receipt of any notice or revisions or addenda to the advertisement or bid documents; and

b. a form listing those documentary and informational forms, certifications, and other documents that the contracting agent requires each bidder to submit with the bid. The form shall list each of the items to be submitted with the bid proposal and a place for the bidder to indicate, by initialing each entry, that the bidder has included those required items with the completed bid proposal. Each bidder shall complete this form and submit it with the bid proposal in addition to those documentary and informational forms, certifications, and other documents that are listed on the form; and

c. a statement indicating whether uniformed law enforcement officers will be required for the project. The statement shall include a line item allowance, which shall be a good faith effort on the part of the contracting unit, to reasonably estimate the total cost of traffic control personnel, vehicles, equipment, administrative, or any other costs associated with additional traffic control requirements required by the contracting unit, or any other public entity affected by the project, above and beyond the bidder's traffic control personnel, vehicles, equipment, and administrative costs. The individuals responsible for the assignment of uniformed law enforcement officers for any municipalities affected by a

project shall be required to determine where traffic safety control is needed for a project, and calculate the number and placement of all necessary personnel, equipment, and the costs associated with these, including hourly rates, and submit this information to the contracting unit.

The contracting unit shall not be responsible for additional traffic control costs beyond the number of working days specified in the construction contract in accordance with section 17 of P.L.1971, c.198 (C.40A:11-17), when such a delay is caused by the contractor and liquidated damages have been assessed.

The statement prescribed under this subsection shall not be required if the contracting unit will provide for the direct payment of uniformed law enforcement officers and any additional costs directly associated with the provision of those officers; and

d. at the option of the contracting unit, specified alternate proposals in addition to a base specification. When the contracting unit specifies alternate proposals, the determination of which bidder's response to a request for bids offers the lowest price shall be made on the basis of the price of: (i) the base specification plus the price of any selected specified alternate proposals; or (ii) a choice of specified alternative proposals within the limit of funds that may be made available for a project. If a contracting unit provides for more than one specified alternate proposal, the contracting unit shall specify in the bid specification the criteria or ranked order by which specified alternate proposals shall be selected and included in the award of the contract by the governing body, provided that this requirement shall only apply to a project with a total estimated cost, including specified alternate proposals, of greater than \$500,000. The aggregate dollar value of accepted specified alternative proposals shall not exceed 50 percent of the base bid. If a contracting unit is found in a court of law to have chosen specific alternative proposals in a manner intended to award a contract to a specific vendor, the bids shall be voided, the contracting unit shall rebid the project, and a plaintiff who prevails in any proceeding shall be entitled to a reasonable attorney's fee.

For the purposes of this subsection:

"Specified alternate proposal" means a requirement of the bid specification for bidders to submit prices for reduced, modified or supplemental work in addition to the base proposal which may include, but not be limited to, a change in project scope or the use of alternative materials or methods of construction;

"Base specification" means the plans and specifications for the erection, alteration or repair of the building, structure, facility or other improvement to real property that are required to be met by all bidders without exception; and

e. in the case of a project that includes the removal of soil from the site, disclosure of any documentation relative to the known soil conditions at the site including, but not limited to, any test results specifying the level of contamination, if any, of the soil that has been found at the site of the project, or if a project is located on a site with historical or suspected contamination, a line item allowance or minimum unit price line item for soil testing and contaminated soil disposal, which shall be a good faith effort on the part of the contracting unit to reasonably estimate the total cost of testing the soil and disposing of it.

L.1999, c.39, s.1; amended 2006, c.9; 2009, c.292; 2012, c.72, s.1.

**40A:11-23.1a. Approval of change order under certain circumstances.**

In the case of a project for the erection, alteration, or repair of a building, structure, facility or other improvement to real property, the total price of which exceeds the amount set forth in, or the amount calculated by the Governor pursuant to, section 3 of P.L.1971, c.198 (C.40A:11-3), that does not have historical or suspected soil contamination, or for which the plans, specifications and bid proposal documents for the project do not include a line item allowance or minimum unit price line item for soil testing and contaminated soil disposal pursuant to subsection e. of section 1 of P.L.1999, c.39 (C.40A:11-23.1), and contaminated soil from the site cannot be disposed of pursuant to the plans, specifications and bid proposal documents due to the contaminated soil being found to be different from the type or quality originally disclosed, the contracting unit shall approve, consistent with and subject to the "Local Public Contracts Law," P.L.1971, c.198 (C.40A:11-1 et seq.), and any rules or regulations adopted pursuant thereto, a change order to reimburse the contractor for the additional reasonable costs, as determined by the contracting unit, required to test and dispose of the contaminated soil.

**40A:11-23.2. Required mandatory items for bid plans, specification**

When required by the bid plans and specifications, the following requirements shall be considered mandatory items to be submitted at the time specified by the contracting unit for the receipt of the bids; the failure to submit any one of the mandatory items shall be deemed a fatal defect that shall render the bid proposal unresponsive and that cannot be cured by the governing body:

- a. A guarantee to accompany the bid pursuant to section 21 of P.L.1971, c.198 (C.40A:11-21);
- b. A certificate from a surety company pursuant to section 22 of P.L.1971, c.198 (C.40A:11-22);
- c. A statement of corporate ownership pursuant to section 1 of P.L.1977, c.33 (C.52:25-24.2);
- d. A listing of subcontractors pursuant to section 16 of P.L.1971, c.198 (C.40A:11-16);
- e. A document provided by the contracting agent in the bid plans, specifications, or bid proposal documents for the bidder to acknowledge the bidder's receipt of any notice or revisions or addenda to the advertisement or bid documents; and
- f. (Deleted by amendment, P.L.2009, c.315.)

L.1999, c. 39, s. 2; amended 2004, c. 57, s. 1.

**40A:11-23.3. Withdrawal of public works bid**

a. In the case of a bidding process for a public works contract, a bidder may request withdrawal of a bid, due to a mistake on the part of the bidder, within five business days after a bid opening. As used in this section, "mistake" shall have the same meaning as provided in paragraph 42 of section 2 of P.L.1971, c.198 (C.40A:11-2).

b. To request the withdrawal of a public works bid, a bidder shall submit a request for withdrawal in writing by certified or registered mail to the address to which the bid was submitted. The request shall be effective upon mailing. The request shall include evidence, including any pertinent documents, demonstrating that a mistake was made and was of so great a consequence that:

- (1) the enforcement of the contract, if actually made, would be unconscionable;
- (2) the mistake relates to a material feature of the bid;
- (3) the mistake occurred notwithstanding the fact that the bidder exercised reasonable care in preparation of the bid; and

(4) the bidder making the mistake is able to get relief by way of withdrawing the bid without serious prejudice to the contracting unit, except for the loss of the bargain to the contracting unit.

c. A purchasing agent qualified pursuant to subsection b. of section 9 of P.L.1971, c.198 (C.40A:11-9), or legal counsel for the contracting unit, or the chief administrative officer of the contracting unit, shall review the request for bid withdrawal. No later than the next meeting of the governing body of the contracting unit following receipt of the withdrawal request, the individual responsible for reviewing the request shall make a recommendation to the governing body of the contracting unit concerning the disposition of the request. The governing body of the contracting unit shall act upon the request to withdraw the bid no later than at its next regular meeting.

d. The purchasing agent, legal counsel, or chief administrative officer responsible for reviewing the request pursuant to subsection b. of this section, shall act in good faith in reviewing the request and in making a recommendation to the governing body concerning the disposition of a request to withdraw a bid.

e. A contracting unit whose governing body grants a request to withdraw a bid shall return the bid guarantee to the bidder. Once the decision to approve the withdrawal is made, the contracting unit shall continue the award process with the remaining bids.

f. If a bidder withdraws a bid, the bidder shall be disqualified from future bidding on the same project, including whenever all bids are rejected pursuant to section 21 of P.L.1999, c.440 (C.40A:11-13.2).

L.2010, c.108, s.3.

#### **40A:11-23.4. "Bulletin NJ"**

a. The Division of Local Government Services in the Department of Community Affairs, in consultation with the Office of Information Technology, shall design, develop, and maintain a single, searchable Internet database, to be known as "Bulletin NJ," that contains and displays information on requests for proposals and other government procurement opportunities published by a contracting unit or a board of education, as defined by N.J.S.18A:18A-2.

b. Each entry in the Internet database shall include information as required pursuant to rules and regulations adopted by the Division of Local Government Services.

c. In addition to the requirements specified in subsection a. of this section, the Internet database shall:

- (1) be accessible from the Division of Local Government Services Internet website;
- (2) display all of the information required by subsection b. of this section;
- (3) be searchable by the name of the contracting unit or board of education publishing the request for proposals;
- (4) be reviewed and updated at least once per month or more frequently as new information becomes available or changes are necessary; and

(5) provide an opportunity for the public to submit input and feedback concerning the utility of the Internet database and recommendations for its improvement.

d. All contracting units and boards of education, as defined by N.J.S.18A:18A-2, are directed to submit information as required pursuant to rules and regulations adopted by the Division of Local Government Services.

e. Nothing in this section shall require the disclosure of information deemed confidential by State or federal law.

f. Nothing in this section shall be interpreted to invalidate or otherwise impact an otherwise valid contract entered in to pursuant to the "Local Public Contracts Law," P.L.1971, c.198 (C.40A:11-1 et seq.) or the "Public School Contracts Law," N.J.S.18A:18A-1 et seq.

L.2011, c.71, s.1.

#### **40A:11-23.5. Rules, regulations**

The Division of Local Government Services in the Department of Community Affairs shall adopt, pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), rules and regulations to effectuate the purposes of this act (L.2011,c.71; c.40A:11-23.4)

L.2011, c.71, s.2.

#### **40A:11-24. Time for making awards; deposits returned**

a. The contracting unit shall award the contract or reject all bids within such time as may be specified in the invitation to bid, but in no case more than 60 days, except that the bids of any bidders who consent thereto may, at the request of the contracting unit, be held for consideration for such longer period as may be agreed. All bid security, except the security of the three apparent lowest responsible bidders, shall be returned, unless otherwise requested by the bidder, within 10 days after the opening of the bids, Sundays and holidays excepted, and the bids of such bidders shall be considered as withdrawn. Within three days, Sundays and holidays excepted, after the awarding and signing of the contract and the approval of the contractor's performance bond, the bid security of the remaining unsuccessful bidders shall be returned to them.

b. The contract shall be signed by all parties within the time limit set forth in the specifications, which shall not exceed 21 days, Sundays and holidays excepted, after the making of the award; provided, however, that all parties to the contract may agree to extend the limit set forth in the specifications beyond the 21 day limit required in this subsection. The contractor, upon written request to the contracting unit, is entitled to receive, within seven days of the request, an authorization to proceed pursuant to the terms of the contract on the date set forth in the contract for work to commence, or, if no date is set forth in the contract, upon receipt of authorization. If for any reason the contract is not awarded and the bidders have paid for or paid a deposit for the plans and specifications to the contracting unit, the payment or deposit shall immediately be returned to the bidders when the plans and specifications are returned in reasonable condition within 90 days of notice that the contract has not been awarded.

L.1971, c. 198, s. 24; amended by L. 1975, c. 353, s. 14; 1977, c. 53, s. 8; 1983, c. 175; 1987, c. 48, s. 2.

#### **40A:11-25. General power to provide qualification for bidders**

The governing body of any contracting unit may establish reasonable regulations appropriate for controlling the qualifications of prospective bidders upon contracts to be awarded on behalf of the contracting unit, by the class or category of goods or services to be provided or performed, which may fix the qualifications required according to the financial ability and experience of the bidders and the capital and equipment available to them pertinent to and reasonably related to the class or category of goods or services to be provided or performed in the performance of any such contract, and may require each bidder to furnish a statement thereof; and if such governing body is not satisfied with the qualifications of any bidder as founded upon such statement, it may refuse to furnish the bidder with any plans or specifications for any public contract or consider any bid made by the bidder for any contract.