



Comptroller General  
of the United States  
Washington, D.C. 20548

## Decision

Matter of: Coastal Government Services, Inc.

File: B-270883

Date: January 23, 1996

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### DECISION

Coastal Government Services, Inc. protests the award of a contract to NP Medical Group, Inc. under request for proposals No. 600-004-96, issued by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

We dismiss the protest as untimely because it was filed more than 14 calendar days after the protester knew, or should have known, of the basis for its protest.

Our Bid Protest Regulations contain strict rules requiring timely submission of protests. Under these rules, protests not based upon alleged improprieties in a solicitation must be filed no later than 14 calendar days after the protester knew, or should have known, of the basis for protest, whichever is earlier. Section 21.2(a)(2), 60 Fed. Reg. 40,737, 40,740 (Aug. 10, 1995) (to be codified at 4 C.F.R. § 21.2(a)(2)). Here, Coastal learned on December 1, 1995, that it had been eliminated from the competitive range. On December 18, it learned that the VA had awarded the contract to NP Medical at a higher price than that proposed by Coastal, which, according to Coastal, prompted this protest. Coastal's protest was not filed with our Office until January 11, 1996, more than 14 calendar days later. While the protester argues that it did not receive the written award notification until later, the oral notice was sufficient to start the 14-day time period running; written notification is not required. Swafford Indus., B-238055, Mar. 12, 1990, 90-1 CPD ¶ 268.

Our timeliness rules reflect the dual requirements of giving parties a fair opportunity to present their cases and resolving protests expeditiously without unduly disrupting or delaying the procurement process. Air Inc.-Request for Recon., B-238220.2, Jan. 20, 1990, 90-1 CPD ¶ 129. In order to prevent those rules from becoming meaningless, exceptions are strictly construed and rarely used. Id.

The protest is dismissed.

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