



Comptroller General  
of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20548

## Decision

**Matter of:** Mechanical Service & Systems, Inc.

**File:** B-241567

**Date:** October 26, 1990

J. Thomas Bowen, Esq., for the protester.  
James Vickers, Esq., and John Brosnan, Esq., Office of the  
General Counsel, GAO, participated in the preparation of the  
decision.

### DIGEST

Bid was properly rejected where its total price was low but  
the sum of all the priced line items was not low. A bid must  
be rejected where it is susceptible of being interpreted as  
offering either of two prices and only one price is low.

### DECISION

Mechanical Service & Systems, Inc. (MSS) protests the  
rejection of its bid submitted in response to invitation for  
bids (IFB) No. DAAC89-90-B-0158, issued by the Army for  
furnishing and installing a replacement heating system in  
Building 1005 at Toole Army Depot, Utah. MSS contends that  
the Army improperly rejected its bid.

We dismiss the protest without obtaining an agency report from  
the Army since it is clear that the protest does not state a  
valid basis of protest. See Bid Protest Regulations,  
4 C.F.R. § 21.3(m) (1990).

The bid schedule in the IFB contained 12 line items which  
included such work as removing existing piping and asbestos  
insulation, installing the replacement system and furnishing  
spare drive belts, a pressure meter and a flow hood. Beside  
each of the line items were blanks for the insertion of unit  
and extended prices. At the bottom of the bid schedule there  
was a blank for the total bid price to be inserted.

MSS' bid listed a total price of \$251,769. However, when the  
line items were totaled, the amount was \$254,179, a difference  
of \$2,410, which was the total amount MSS had inserted for  
line items 0001AG, 0001AH and 0001AJ. These three line items  
represented the spare drive belts, pressure meter and flow  
hood, respectively.

On August 30, 1990, the contracting officer pointed out the difference in the two prices and requested MSS to verify its bid. MSS replied that its intended bid price was \$251,769 and that it had inserted a price next to the above listed line items for clarification and identification purposes only and did not intend to include those prices in its total bid price.

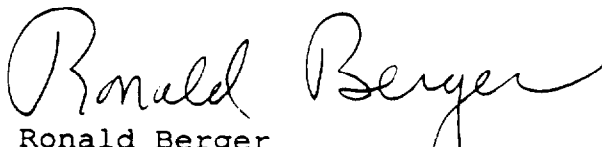
On September 18, the contracting officer rejected MSS' bid because it could be interpreted as offering either of two prices, only one of which would be the low bid submitted. Under these circumstances the agency pointed out that MSS' bid was not subject to correction because it would displace the \$252,272 bid submitted by O&M Plumbing and Heating Company.

MSS contends that its bid should be accepted because it verified that its bid price was in fact \$251,769 and did not request that it be corrected.

Where a bid is reasonably susceptible of being interpreted as offering either one of two prices shown on its face and only one of the prices is low, that bid must be rejected notwithstanding whether the bidder has claimed a mistake. Grove Roofing, Inc., B-233747, Feb. 23, 1989, 89-1 CPD ¶ 196.

Here, the bid itself shows two prices, one of which is obtained by adding the line item bids and the other contained in the space provided for the total price. Only the price inserted as the total is low. While MSS states it only inserted the three line item prices for clarification, we do not see the bid schedule as asking for prices which are not to be included in the total bid. Since it is impossible to ascertain which of the two bid prices MSS intended from the bid itself (without explanation from the bidder) and the sum of all the line items, \$254,179, is not the low bid, the contracting officer properly rejected it. See Virginia Beach Air Conditioning Corp., B-237172, Jan. 19, 1990, 90-1 CPD ¶ 78.

The protest is dismissed.

  
Ronald Berger  
Associate General Counsel