

Purchasing Agent (GS-7)

Major Duties

A Purchasing Agent (GS-7) buys special purpose items like machine parts, office equipment, computer equipment, and equipment used to perform special tasks. The job also requires searching markets outside the local area for supplies. Other duties that a Forest Service Purchasing Agent has include;

- Arranging for special services from outside vendors for things like engineering and design services, repairing buildings, building roads and airstrips, hiring people to do research, etc.
- Writing special clauses related to product specifications, testing, inspection, acceptance, shipping, and special handling to adapt contracts.
- Receiving and reviewing requests to purchase materials or service (purchase requisitions).
- Resolving problems with purchasing requisitions by talking things over with the person making the request to purchase materials or services.
- Placing orders to purchase materials or services.
- Making sure that contractors deliver exactly what was ordered.

A person at this level may also supervise other employees. This can require monitoring employee performance, conducting performance appraisals, developing budgets, coordinating staff efforts, etc.

A Typical Day

Barry's day is booked solid. He'll be lucky to squeeze in a 15 minute coffee break, let alone lunch. He needs to spend most of the morning reviewing purchase requisitions and contacting outside vendors to see if they want to bid on the jobs.

One purchase requisition is for 250 heavy duty winches to be used on Forest Service trucks. Barry intends to contact at least three different companies to get the best price on the winches.

Another purchase requisition is for printing 50,000 copies of a Forest Service Brochure on fire safety in the forests. Barry wants to give the specifications for printing the brochure to at least five print shops for them to bid on, but first he must contact the Forest Service employee who wrote the purchase requisition to get more information on the product.

Barry plans to spend the entire afternoon reviewing existing purchase requisitions and summarizing the progress that each outside vendor is making on completing their projects for the Forest Service. He expects to find some problems, and is prepared to spend most of the following day resolving conflicts that may arise.

Purchasing Agent

Career Sheet #21

Page 2

Knowledge and Education

A college degree is not required to be a Purchasing Agent (GS-7). However, a degree or formal education in the following subjects is helpful

- Procurement Principles and Process
- Contract Law
- Negotiation Techniques
- Interviewing
- Business Courses (accounting, finance, personnel)
- Math

Career Path

Here are some jobs that lead to becoming a Purchasing Agent (GS-7)

- **Purchasing Agent (GS-4)** – This person has limited authority to purchase supplies and services from outside vendors for Forest Service use. This person reviews purchase requisitions for supplies and equipment, and makes sure approvals, stock numbers, and costs are noted before the purchase is made. This person also
 - Preparing written requests for price quotations.
 - Comparing and evaluates quotations from different vendors.
 - Maintaining Purchase Arrangement files.
- **Purchasing Agent (GS-5)** – this person's duties include;
 - Analyzing purchase requisitions for completeness and accuracy.
 - Resolving problems with purchase requisitions by contacting appropriate people.
 - Preparing requests for price quotations.
 - Meeting with representatives of outside suppliers to discuss needs, concerns, etc.
 - Contacting potential suppliers to obtain price quotations.