

PUBLIC CONTRACT CODE

SECTION 22300

22300. (a) Provisions shall be included in any invitation for bid and in any contract documents to permit the substitution of securities for any moneys withheld by a public agency to ensure performance under a contract, provided that substitution of securities provisions shall not be required in contracts in which there will be financing provided by the Farmers Home Administration of the United States Department of Agriculture pursuant to the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. Sec. 1921 et seq.), and where federal regulations or policies, or both, do not allow the substitution of securities. At the request and expense of the contractor, securities equivalent to the amount withheld shall be deposited with the public agency, or with a state or federally chartered bank in California as the escrow agent, who shall then pay those moneys to the contractor. Upon satisfactory completion of the contract, the securities shall be returned to the contractor.

(b) Alternatively, the contractor may request and the owner shall make payment of retentions earned directly to the escrow agent at the expense of the contractor. At the expense of the contractor, the contractor may direct the investment of the payments into securities and the contractor shall receive the interest earned on the investments upon the same terms provided for in this section for securities deposited by the contractor. Upon satisfactory completion of the contract, the contractor shall receive from the escrow agent all securities, interest, and payments received by the escrow agent from the owner, pursuant to the terms of this section. The contractor shall pay to each subcontractor, not later than 20 days of receipt of the payment, the respective amount of interest earned, net of costs attributed to retention withheld from each subcontractor, on the amount of retention withheld to insure the performance of the contractor.

(c) Securities eligible for investment under this section shall include those listed in Section 16430 of the Government Code, bank or savings and loan certificates of deposit, interest bearing demand deposit accounts, standby letters of credit, or any other security mutually agreed to by the contractor and the public agency.

The contractor shall be the beneficial owner of any securities substituted for moneys withheld and shall receive any interest thereon.

Failure to include these provisions in bid and contract documents shall void any provisions for performance retentions in a public agency contract.

For purposes of this section, the term "public agency" shall include, but shall not be limited to, chartered cities.

(d) The Legislature hereby declares that the provisions of this section are of statewide concern and are necessary to encourage full participation by contractors in public contract procedures.

(e) The escrow agreement used hereunder shall be null, void, and unenforceable unless it is substantially similar to the following form:

ESCROW AGREEMENT FOR SECURITY DEPOSITS IN LIEU OF RETENTION

This Escrow Agreement is made and entered into by and between _____ whose address is _____

CONTRACTOR CAN POST SECURITIES IN LIEU OF RETENTION OR HAVE RETENTION PAID INTO AN ESCROW ACCOUNT.

IF SPEC DOESN'T PROVIDE FOR ESCROW NO RETENTION CAN BE MADE.

FORM OF ESCROW AGREEMENT

_____ hereinafter called "Owner,"
 _____ whose address is _____
 _____ hereinafter called "Contractor"
 _____ and
 _____ whose address is _____
 _____ hereinafter called "Escrow Agent."

For the consideration hereinafter set forth, the Owner, Contractor, and Escrow Agent agree as follows:

(1) Pursuant to Section 22300 of the Public Contract Code of the State of California, Contractor has the option to deposit securities with Escrow Agent as a substitute for retention earnings required to be withheld by Owner pursuant to the Construction Contract entered into between the Owner and Contractor for _____ in the amount of _____ dated _____ (hereinafter referred to as the "Contract"). Alternatively, on written request of the Contractor, the Owner shall make payments of the retention earnings directly to the escrow agent.

When the Contractor deposits the securities as a substitute for Contract earnings, the Escrow Agent shall notify the Owner within 10 days of the deposit. The market value of the securities at the time of the substitution shall be at least equal to the cash amount then required to be withheld as retention under the terms of the Contract between the Owner and Contractor. Securities shall be held in the name of _____, and shall designate the Contractor as the beneficial owner.

(2) The Owner shall make progress payments to the Contractor for those funds which otherwise would be withheld from progress payments pursuant to the Contract provisions, provided that the Escrow Agent holds securities in the form and amount specified above.

(3) When the Owner makes payment of retentions earned directly to the Escrow Agent, the Escrow Agent shall hold them for the benefit of the Contractor until the time that the escrow created under this contract is terminated. The Contractor may direct the investment of the payments into securities. All terms and conditions of this agreement and the rights and responsibilities of the parties shall be equally applicable and binding when the Owner pays the Escrow Agent directly.

(4) Contractor shall be responsible for paying all fees for the expenses incurred by Escrow Agent in administering the Escrow Account and all expenses of the Owner. These expenses and payment terms shall be determined by the Owner, Contractor, and Escrow Agent.

(5) The interest earned on the securities or the money market accounts held in escrow and all interest earned on that interest shall be for the sole account of Contractor and shall be subject to withdrawal by Contractor at any time and from time to time without notice to the Owner.

(6) Contractor shall have the right to withdraw all or any part of the principal in the Escrow Account only by written notice to Escrow Agent accompanied by written authorization from the Owner to the Escrow Agent that Owner consents to the withdrawal of the amount sought to be withdrawn by Contractor.

(7) The Owner shall have a right to draw upon the securities in the event of default by the Contractor. Upon seven days' written notice to the Escrow Agent from the owner of the default, the Escrow Agent shall immediately convert the securities to cash and shall distribute the cash as instructed by the Owner.

(8) Upon receipt of written notification from the Owner certifying that the Contract is final and complete, and that the Contractor has complied with all requirements and procedures applicable to the Contract, Escrow Agent shall release to Contractor all securities and interest on deposit less escrow fees and charges of the Escrow Account. The escrow shall be closed immediately upon disbursement of all moneys and securities on deposit and payments of fees and charges.

FORM OF
 ESCROW
 AGREEMENT

(9) Escrow Agent shall rely on the written notifications from the Owner and the Contractor pursuant to Sections (5) to (8), inclusive, of this agreement and the Owner and Contractor shall hold Escrow Agent harmless from Escrow Agent's release and disbursement of the securities and interest as set forth above.

(10) The names of the persons who are authorized to give written notice or to receive written notice on behalf of the Owner and on behalf of Contractor in connection with the foregoing, and exemplars of their respective signatures are as follows:

FORM OF
ESCROW
AGREEMENT

On behalf of Owner:

On behalf of Contractor:

Title

Title

Name

Name

Signature

Signature

Address

Address

On behalf of Escrow Agent:

Title

Name

Signature

Address

At the time the Escrow Account is opened, the Owner and Contractor shall deliver to the Escrow Agent a fully executed counterpart of this Agreement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have executed this Agreement by their proper officers on the date first set forth above.

Owner

Contractor

Title

Title

Name

Name

Signature

Signature