



City of Tacoma

## Questions and Answers

### Water Treatment Chemical Supply for 2023 RFB Specification No. TW22-0313F

All interested parties had the opportunity to submit questions in writing by email to Tisha Rico, Senior Buyer by 3:00 P.M. PST, October 6, 2022. The answers to the questions received are provided below and posted to the City's website at [www.TacomaPurchasing.org](http://www.TacomaPurchasing.org). Navigate to [Current Contracting Opportunities / Supplies Solicitations](#), and then click *Questions and Answers* for this Specification. This information IS NOT considered an addendum. Respondents should consider this information when submitting their proposals.

**Question 1: What is the current price for caustic (Both 50% and dilute)?**

Answer 1: The current prices for sodium hydroxide are \$725/dry ton for 50-percent and \$925/dry ton for 25-percent.

**Question 2: What was the actual consumption of caustic by the City of Tacoma in the past 12 months?**

Answer 2: For 50-percent sodium hydroxide, Tacoma Water purchased 1030 dry tons in 2021 and 980 dry tons in 2020. Approximately 640 dry tons of 50-percent sodium hydroxide have been purchased in 2022 to date.

Usage of 25-percent sodium hydroxide varies each year based on Tacoma Water's needs for groundwater sources. For 25-percent sodium hydroxide, Tacoma Water purchased 58 dry tons in 2021 and 5 dry tons in 2020. Approximately 11 dry tons of 25-percent sodium hydroxide have been purchased in 2022 to date.

**Question 3: What is the line item plus Sales Tax on the pricing sheet? This was not requested in the previous bids. What % should we be using to calculate the tax or give directions what should be included for this tax amount?**

Answer 3: Tacoma Water's two previous chemical bids were advertised separately by individual chemical, while the current bid posting includes all chemicals within the same Request for Bids. Therefore, the Price Proposal Form does look different than last year's. The Price Proposal Form has separate sections for the chemicals that Washington State does not require sales tax for (Items 1 – 4) and the chemicals that it does require sales tax for (Items 5 – 6). The line items would be completed as follows:

- "Subtotal (Items 5 – 6)" = The total for aluminum sulfate plus the total for aluminum chlorohydrate BEFORE tax.
- "Sales Tax (Items 5 – 6) at 8.7%" = 8.7% of the previous subtotal line.
- "(Items 5 -6 plus Sales Tax)" = The sum of the previous two lines: add "Subtotal (Items 5 – 6)" plus "Sales Tax (Items 5 – 6) at 8.7%". Will equal the total for aluminum sulfate plus the total for aluminum chlorohydrate AFTER tax.



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- “TOTAL (Items 1 – 6 plus Sales Tax)” = “Subtotal (Items 1 – 4)” plus “(Items 5 – 6 plus Sales Tax)”.

Note that unit prices and totals before tax for each individual chemical will be used to determine award for each line item.

**Question 4:** I noticed that the bid document is different from previous years, there are few items that are missing on this year’s document. For example, Co-op language, W/MBE & Business License requirements. Please confirm if these items will apply in this year’s bid.

**Answer 4:** In the past, the City of Tacoma Standard Terms and Conditions were attached within the Request for Bids document itself. The City of Tacoma now references the Standard Terms and Conditions with a link contained in Section 12 of the specification. Please review the City of Tacoma Standard Terms and Conditions at this link: [Standard Terms and Conditions](#).

**Question 5:** Your HFSA specification calls for a 23-26% material, but we have a naturally-produced NSF grade material that is 46% strength. Would this be a suitable replacement, pending testing and approval by the City of Tacoma, if we were to bid 225 Tons (half of the 450 requested)? Product sheets can be provided upon request.

**Answer 5:** This contract requires fluorosilicic acid that is between 23 and 26 percent  $\text{H}_2\text{SiF}_6$  by weight. Tacoma Water’s feed equipment and control programming are not configured for higher-strength alternatives. You are welcome to provide product information to Tacoma Water in the future for informational purposes.

**Question 6:** Does the City prefer 12% or 15% Sodium Hypochlorite? We can source as 12%, 15% or 16% but if we are bidding on price alone in the tender it would be uneconomical for us to bid 12% even if 16% would save the City money over the course of the year through significantly reduced freight charges. Can you please give us clarification on how to bid this product to provide Tacoma the best value?

**Answer 6:** Sodium hypochlorite is awarded based on price per gallon of product. This contract requires sodium hypochlorite containing between 12 and 15 percent sodium hypochlorite ( $\text{NaOCl}$ ) by weight. As long as the product being bid meets the specification requirements, it is the bidder’s decision on which product to bid. Historically, typical deliveries are approximately 13 to 13.5 percent sodium hypochlorite. You are welcome to provide product information to Tacoma Water in the future to increase awareness of opportunities for reducing sodium hypochlorite costs or increasing sodium hypochlorite supply options.



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**Question 7:** While Aluminum Sulphate and ACH are products we supply, we believe jar testing may identify another coagulant will work better than both chemicals in a more economical fashion. Is there an option to come to site and jar test alternate products to improve plant performance? These new coagulants also have the potential to significantly reduce, even potentially eliminate, your sodium hydroxide consumption due to their unique chemical makeup. So we would like some guidance on how to bid these portions of the tender, because our coagulant selection could potentially save the City almost \$1,000,000 a year in chemical savings but currently there is no way of expressing that in the bid documents.

**Answer 7:** For this contract, Tacoma water is specifically bidding aluminum sulfate and aluminum chlorohydrate products; substitutions are not allowed. Switching coagulants requires significant evaluation and testing, as well as consultation with drinking water regulators. You are welcome to contact Tacoma Water in the future to share product information and coordinate jar testing; however, any consideration of alternative coagulants is expected to be a lengthy process.