

Best Purchasing Practices

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I'll just run down to the store; I have to have it now

For office and instructional supplies, it rarely makes sense to allow employees to go to the store, pick up an item, and be reimbursed. Modern just-in-time contracts provide for next-day delivery on tens of thousands of items. Many employees just do not know their options.

Employees who go to the store, not only pay retail prices -- sometimes more twice what they should -- but they also lose productivity and impose high accounting costs on the system. In addition, they can put the agency at risk of violating bid laws. However, the option of buying from a contract with next-day delivery guarantees bid protection and lowers total cost of ownership.

When it does make sense to go to the store -- say, in the case where a part is needed for a leaking pipe -- it still pays to have a contract in place and to route employees to a designated retail store where discounted prices are in place or a rebate program has been designed.

Check your employee reimbursements to see if retail buying is a problem is at your agency.

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