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# PART 927—PATENTS, DATA, AND COPYRIGHTS

Authority: Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2168, 2182, 2201); Federal Nonnuclear Energy Research and Development Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5908); Department of Energy National Security and Military Applications of Nuclear Energy Authorization Act of 1987 (42 U.S.C. 7261a.); Department of Energy Organization Act (42 U.S.C. 7101 ); National Nuclear Security Administration Act (50 U.S.C. 4201 )

Source: 49 FR 12004, Mar. 28, 1984, unless otherwise noted.

**Parent topic:** SUBCHAPTER E—GENERAL CONTRACTING REQUIREMENTS

# Subpart 927.2—Patents

Source: 60 FR 11815, Mar. 2, 1995, unless otherwise noted.

## 927.201 Authorization and consent.

## 927.201-1 General.

For the purposes of this subpart, “research and development (R&D)” includes “research, development, and demonstration.” In certain contracting situations, such as those involving research, development, or demonstration projects, consideration should be given to the impact of third party-owned patents covering technology that may be incorporated in the project if the patents may ultimately affect widespread commercial use of the project results. In such situations, Patent Counsel shall be consulted to determine what modifications, if any, are to be made to the utilization of the Patent and Copyright Infringement Liability and Patent Indemnity provisions or clauses or what other action might be deemed appropriate.

## 927.202 Royalties.

The clause at 952.227-9, Refund of Royalties, obligates the contractor to inform DOE of the payment of royalties pertaining to the use of intellectual property, either patent or data related, in the performance of the contract. This information may result in identification of instances in which the Government already has a license for itself or others acting in its behalf or the right to sublicense others. Also, there may be pending antitrust actions or challenges to the validity of a patent or the proprietary nature of the data, or the contractor may be able to gain unrestricted access to the same data through other sources. In such situations the contractor may avoid the payment of a royalty in its entirety or may be charged a reduced royalty.

## 927.202-5 Solicitation provisions and contract clause.

The contracting officer shall insert the clause at 952.227-9, Refund of Royalties, in solicitations and contracts for experimental, research, developmental, or demonstration work or other solicitations and contracts in which the contracting officer believes royalties will have to be paid by the contractor or a subcontractor of any tier.

### 927.203 Security requirements for patent applications containing classified subject matter.

### 927.203-1 General.

Unauthorized disclosure of classified subject matter, whether in a patent application or resulting from the issuance of a patent, may be a violation of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended, other laws relating to espionage and national security, and provisions of the proposed contract pertaining to disclosure of information.

## Subpart 927.3—Patent Rights Under Government Contracts

### 927.302 Policy.

(a) *Introduction.*

(1) A primary mission of the Department of Energy (DOE) is to conduct research, development, and demonstration leading to the ultimate commercialization of efficient sources of energy. To accomplish this mission, DOE must work in cooperation with industry in the development of new energy sources and achieve the ultimate goal of widespread commercial utilization of those energy sources in the shortest practicable time. To this end, Congress has provided DOE with the authority to invoke an array of incentives to secure the commercialization of new technologies developed for DOE. One such important incentive is provided by the patent system.

(2) Another primary mission of DOE is to manage the Nation's nuclear weapons programs and other classified programs, where research and development procurements are directed toward processes and equipment not available to the public. To support DOE programs for bringing private industry into these and other special programs to the maximum extent permitted by national security and policy considerations, the technology developed in these programs should be made available for use in the particular fields of interest and under controlled conditions by properly cleared industrial and scientific research institutions. To ensure such availability and control, the granting of waivers in these programs may be more limited, either by the imposition of field of use restrictions or national security measures, than in other DOE programs.

(b) *Government right to receive title.* Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 2182 and 5908, DOE takes title to all inventions conceived or first actually reduced to practice in the course of or under contracts with large, for-profit companies, foreign organizations, and other entities that are not beneficiaries of 35 U.S.C. 200 *et seq.* Regulations dealing with Department's authority to waive its title to subject inventions, including the relevant statutory objectives, exist at 10 CFR part 784. Pursuant to that section, DOE may waive the Government's patent rights in appropriate situations at the time of contracting to encourage industrial participation, foster commercial utilization and competition, and make the benefits of DOE activities widely available to the public. In addition to considering the waiver of patent rights at the time of contracting, DOE will also consider the incentive of a waiver of patent rights upon the reporting of an identified invention when requested by such entities or by the employee-inventor with the permission of the contractor. These requests can be made whether or not a waiver request was made at the time of contracting. Waivers for identified inventions will be granted where it is determined that the patent waiver will be a meaningful incentive to achieving the

development and ultimate commercial utilization of inventions. Where DOE grants a waiver of the Government's patent rights, either at the time of contracting or after an invention is made, certain minimum rights and obligations will be required by DOE to protect the public interest.

## 927.302-70 Additional policy.

(a) In this section and 927.303, *background patent* means a U.S. patent covering an invention or discovery that is not a subject invention (as defined at 35 U.S.C. 201(e)) and that is owned or controlled by the Contractor at any time through the completion of the contract:

(1) Which the Contractor, but not the Government, has the right to license to others without obligation to pay royalties thereon; and

(2) Infringement of which cannot reasonably be avoided upon the practice of any specific process, method, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter (including relatively minor modifications thereof) which is a subject of the research, development, or demonstration work performed under this contract.

(b) Except for contracts with organizations that are beneficiaries of Public Law 96-517, the United States, as represented by DOE, shall normally acquire title in and to any invention or discovery conceived or first actually reduced to practice in the course of or under the contract, allowing the contractor to retain a nonexclusive, revocable, paid-up license in the invention and the right to request permission to file an application for a patent and retain title to any ensuing patent in any foreign country in which DOE does not elect to secure patent rights. DOE may approve the request if it determines that such approval would be in the national interest. The contractor's nonexclusive license may be revoked or modified by DOE only to the extent necessary to achieve expeditious practical application of the invention pursuant to any application for and the grant of an exclusive license in the invention to another party.

(c) Normally, contracts will not include background patent and background data provisions. Under special circumstances, however, to provide heightened assurance of commercialization, a provision providing for a right to require licensing to third parties of background inventions, limited rights data or restricted computer software may be included (*see* 927.303(d)(5)). Inclusion of such a provision will be done only with the written concurrence of the DOE program official setting forth the need for such assurance. A contract may include the right to license the Government and third-party contractors for special Government purposes when future availability of the technology would also benefit the Government. The scope of any such background patent or data licensing is subject to negotiation.

(d) The Assistant General Counsel for Technology Transfer and Intellectual Property shall:

(1) Determine whether reported inventions are subject inventions under the patent rights clause of the contract;

(2) Determine whether and where patent protection will be obtained on inventions;

(3) Represent DOE before domestic and foreign patent offices;

(4) Accept assignments and instruments confirmatory of the Government's rights to inventions; and

(5) Represent DOE in patent, trademark, technical data, copyright, and other intellectual property

matters not specifically reserved to the Head of the Agency or designee under this part.

## 927.303 Contract clauses.

(a)

(1) Insert a patent rights clause in all solicitations and contracts for experimental, research, developmental, or demonstration work as prescribed in this section.

(2) [Reserved]

(3) [Reserved]

(4) For M&O contracts, certain decontamination and decommissioning activities and the building and/or operation of other DOE facilities, see subpart 970.27.

(d) The Contracting Officer shall use the clause at 952.227-13, Patent Rights—Ownership by the Government, except for—

(1) *Contracts for construction work or architect-engineer services.* When the services can be expected to involve only "standard types of construction" such as involving previously developed equipment, methods, and processes as described in FAR 27.303(a)(3), the Contracting Officer shall not include a patent clause;

(2) *Contracts with domestic small business firms or nonprofit organizations (see FAR 27.301).* In such cases, the Contracting Officer shall use the clause at 37 CFR 401.14, Standard Patent Rights, and Alternate I of 952.227-11 that includes the agency implementing regulations specific for DOE, suitably modified to identify the parties, in all contracts, at any tier, for experimental, developmental, demonstration or research work to be performed by a small business firm or domestic nonprofit organization, unless the work is subject to an Exceptional Circumstances Determination by DOE or another exception (see 37 CFR 401.3(a)). If the Determination of Exceptional Circumstances under the Bayh-Dole Act to Further Promote Domestic Manufacture of DOE Science and Energy Technologies executed by DOE on June 7, 2021 (S&E DEC) or any other Determination of Exceptional Circumstances under the Bayh-Dole Act (DEC) is applicable, the Contracting Officer shall include the clause at 37 CFR 401.14 and Alternate II of 952.227-11;

(3) *Waivers of rights.* In cases where DOE grants an advance waiver or waives its rights in an identified invention pursuant to 10 CFR part 784, Contracting Officers shall consult with patent counsel on appropriate clauses;

(4) *Contracts for the design, construction, operation, or management (or the integration of a collection of contracts for the same purpose) of a Government-owned research, development, demonstration or production facility.* In such cases, the Government must be accorded certain rights, applicable to further use of the facility by or on behalf of the Government after contract termination or completion. For such contracts, the Contracting Officer shall include Alternate II with the clause at 952.227-13;

(5) *Background patent rights.* For contracts involving DOE background patent rights, the Contracting Officer shall use Alternate I to the clause at 952.227-13. Alternate I may be modified with the concurrence of Patent Counsel in order to reflect the equities of the contracting parties in particular situations; or

(6) *U.S. Competitiveness.* If the funding program is subject to the S&E DEC, then the Contracting Officer shall use Alternate II to the clause at 952.227-13 when Patent Counsel has determined that the S&E DEC applies to the Contractor's funding and should be included in the contract.

### 927.304 Procedures.

Where the contract contains the clause at 37 CFR 401.14 and the contractor does not elect to retain title to a subject invention, DOE may consider and, after consultation with the contractor, grant requests for retention of rights by the inventor subject to the provisions of 35 U.S.C. 200 *et seq.* This section supplements FAR 27.304-1(c).

### 927.370 [Reserved]

## Subpart 927.4—Rights in Data and Copyrights

### 927.400 Scope of subpart.

This subpart sets forth DOE's policy, procedures, and instructions for contract clauses with respect to the acquisition and use of technical data and copyrights in contracts or subcontracts entered into, with or for the benefit of the Government.

### 927.401 Definitions.

*Technical data* means data (other than computer software) of a scientific or technical nature. Technical data does not include computer software, but does include manuals and instructional materials and technical data formatted as a computer database (see appendix A to subpart D of 2 CFR part 910).

### 927.402 Policy.

The technical data and scientific and technical information (STI) policies are directed toward achieving the following objectives:

(a) Making the benefits of the energy research, development and demonstration programs of DOE widely available to the public in the shortest practicable time;

(b) Promoting the commercial utilization of the technology developed under DOE programs;

(c) Encouraging participation by private persons in DOE energy research, development, and demonstration programs; and

(d) Fostering competition and preventing undue market concentration or the creation or maintenance of other situations inconsistent with the antitrust laws.

## 927.404-70 Rights in technical data in subcontracts.

(a) Prime contractors and higher-tier subcontractors, in meeting their obligations with respect to contract data, must obtain from their subcontractors the rights in, access to, and delivery of such data on behalf of the Government. Accordingly, subject to the policy set forth in this subpart and subject to the approval of the Contracting Officer, where required, prime contractors or higher-tier subcontractors must select appropriate technical data provisions for their subcontracts.

(1) In many, but not all instances, use of the clause at FAR 52.227-14, Rights in Data—General, as supplemented pursuant to this subpart, in a subcontract will provide for sufficient Government rights in and access to technical data. The inspection rights afforded in Alternate V to the clause at FAR 52.227-14 normally should be obtained only in first-tier subcontracts for research, development, or demonstration work or the furnishing of supplies for which there are substantial technical data requirements as reflected in the prime contract.

(2) If a subcontractor refuses to accept technical data provisions affording rights in and access to technical data on behalf of the Government, the Contractor shall so inform the Contracting Officer in writing and not proceed with the subcontract award without written authorization of the Contracting Officer.

(3) In prime contracts or higher-tier subcontracts that contain the clause at FAR 52.227-16, Additional Data Requirements, the Contractor or higher-tier subcontractor must determine whether inclusion of such clause in a subcontract is required to satisfy technical data requirements of the prime contract or higher-tier subcontract.

(b) As is the case for DOE in its determination of technical data requirements, the clause at FAR 52.227-16, Additional Data Requirements, should not be used at any subcontracting tier where the technical data requirements are fully known. Normally, the clause will be used only in subcontracts having as a purpose the conduct of research, development, or demonstration work. Prime contractors and higher-tier subcontractors shall not use their power to award subcontracts as economic leverage to acquire rights in the subcontractor's limited rights data or restricted computer software for their private use, and they shall not acquire rights to limited rights data or restricted computer software on behalf of the Government for standard commercial items without the prior approval of Patent Counsel.

## 927.404-71 Statutory programs.

Occasionally, Congress enacts legislation that authorizes or requires the Department to protect from public disclosure specific data first produced in the performance of the contract. Examples of such programs are “the Metals Initiative” and section 3001(d) of the Energy Policy Act. In such cases DOE Patent Counsel is responsible for providing the appropriate contractual provisions for protecting the data in accordance with the statute. Generally, such clauses will be based upon the clause at FAR 52.227-14, Rights in Data-General, with appropriate modifications to define and protect the “protected data” in accordance with the applicable statute. When contracts under such statutes are to be awarded, contracting officers must acquire from Patent Counsel the appropriate contractual provisions. Additionally, the contracting officer must consult with DOE program personnel and Patent Counsel to identify data first produced in the performance of the contract that will be recognized by the parties as protected data and what data will be made available to the public notwithstanding the statutory authority to withhold the data from public dissemination.

## 927.406 Acquisition of data.

## 927.406-4 Acquisition and use of technical data.

To meet the objectives stated in 927.402, DOE has extensive technical data needs.

(a) Section 982 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (EPAct 2005, 42 U.S.C. 16352) mandates that the Secretary of Energy, through the Office of Scientific and Technical Information, shall maintain within the Department publicly available collections of STI resulting from research, development, demonstration, and commercial-applications activities supported by DOE.

(b) Section 105 of the DOE Energy Research and Innovation Act (Pub. L. 115-246) further mandates that DOE establish and maintain a public database populated with information on unclassified research and development projects, as well as relevant literature and patents.

(c) The legal rights in technical data acquired by the Government through DOE contracts, other than management and operating (M&O) contracts (*see* 970.2704), or contracts involving the production of data necessary for DOE sites/facilities management or operations, are set forth in the clause at FAR 52.227-14, Rights in Data—General, as supplemented in accordance with this subpart. However, those clauses do not obtain for the Government delivery of any data whatsoever. Rather, known technical data delivery requirements shall be set forth as part of the contract. For Research and Development contracting, requirements for results (conveyed as STI) are addressed in 935.010 and should be set forth in the contract.

(d) Contracting Officers shall contact Patent Counsel assisting their contracting activity or the Assistant General Counsel for Technology Transfer and Intellectual Property for assistance in selecting, negotiating, or approving appropriate data and copyright clauses in accordance with the procedures set forth in this subpart and FAR subpart 27.4. In particular, Contracting Officers shall seek the advice of Patent Counsel regarding any situation not in conformance with this subpart, including the inclusion or modification of alternate paragraphs of the clause at FAR 52.227-14, as supplemented pursuant to this subpart, the exclusion of specific items from that clause, the exclusion of the clause at FAR 52.227-16, Additional Data Requirements, and the inclusion of any special provisions in a particular contract. Deviations shall follow the requirements in FAR subpart 1.4 and subpart 901.4.

(e) Contractors are required by Alternate VIII of the clause at 952.227-14, as supplemented pursuant to this subpart, to acquire permission from DOE Patent Counsel to assert copyright in any data including computer software first produced in the performance of the contract. This requirement reflects DOE's established software distribution program, and DOE's statutory dissemination obligations. When a contractor requests permission to assert copyright, Patent Counsel shall predicate its decision on the considerations reflected in paragraph (e) of the clause at 970.5227-2, Rights in Data—Technology Transfer.

(f) In many situations the achievement of DOE's objectives would be frustrated if the Government, at time of award, did not obtain on behalf of responsible third parties and itself limited license rights in and to limited rights data or restricted computer software, or both. Such rights are necessary for the practice of subject inventions or data first produced or delivered under the contract. When the contract is for research, development, or demonstration, Contracting Officers should consult with program officials and Patent Counsel to determine whether such rights should be acquired. No such rights should be obtained from a small business or non-profit organization, unless similar rights in

background inventions of such organizations have been authorized in accordance with 35 U.S.C. 202(f). In all cases when the Contractor has agreed to include a provision assuring commercial availability of background patents, consideration should be given to securing for the Government and responsible third parties at reasonable royalties and under appropriate restrictions, co-extensive license rights for data, which are limited rights data and restricted computer software.

## 927.408 Cosponsored research and development activities.

Because of the Department of Energy's statutory duties to disseminate data first produced under its contracts for research, development, and demonstration, the provisions of FAR 27.408 do not apply to cosponsored or cost shared contracts.

## 927.409 Solicitation provisions and contract clauses.

(a) The contracting officer shall insert the clause at FAR 52.227-14, Rights in Data-General, and supplement it with Alternates I and V of FAR 52.227-14 and Alternate VIII of FAR 952.227-14, Rights in Data-General, in solicitations and contracts if it is contemplated that data will be produced, furnished, or acquired under the contract. Generally, a contract should contain only one data rights clause. However, where more than one is needed as prescribed in paragraph (b) of this section, the contact should distinguish the portion of contract performance to which each pertains.

(b)

(1) However, the rights in data in specific situations will be treated as described, where the contract is—

(i) For the production of special works of the type set forth in FAR 27.405-1, the Patent Counsel shall insert the clause at FAR 52.227-17, Rights in Data-Special Works, including Alternate I. The clause at FAR 52.227-14, Rights in Data-General, may be included in the contract and made applicable to data other than special works, as appropriate (see paragraph (e) of FAR 27.409);

(ii) For the acquisition of existing data works, as described in FAR 27.405-2 (see paragraph (f) of FAR 27.409);

(iii) To be performed outside the United States, its possessions, and Puerto Rico, in which case agencies may prescribe different clauses (see paragraph (i) of FAR 27.409);

(iv) For architect-engineer services or construction work, in which case the Patent Counsel shall utilize the clause at FAR 52.227-17, Rights in Data-Special Works, including Alternate I;

(v) A Small Business Innovation Research contract (see paragraph (h) of FAR 27.409);

(vi) For management and operation of a DOE facility (see 970.2704) or other contracts involving the production of data necessary for the management or operation of DOE facilities or a DOE site, certain decontamination and decommissioning activities, or the building and/or operation of other DOE facilities, after consultation with Patent Counsel (see 927.402-1(b));

(vii) Awarded pursuant to a statute expressly providing authority for the protection of data first produced thereunder from disclosure or dissemination. (see 927.404-70);

(viii) For basic or applied research with educational institutions (other than those in which software is specified for delivery unless the software will be released as open source software or other special circumstances exist), the Patent Counsel may use the clause at FAR 52.227-14 with its Alternate IV instead of Alternate VIII of the clause at FAR 952.227-14, Rights in Data-General;

(ix)

(A) Requiring license rights that are deemed necessary, the Patent Counsel should supplement the clause at FAR 52.227-14, Rights in Data—General, with Alternate VI, as provided at 952.227-14, Rights in Data—General, which will normally be sufficient to cover limited rights data and restricted computer software for items and processes used in the contract and necessary to ensure widespread commercial use or practical utilization of a subject of the contract. The phrase "subject of the contract" in Alternate VI is intended to limit licensing to the fields of technology specifically contemplated under the contract; the phrase may be replaced by a more specific statement of the fields of technology intended to be covered in the manner described in the clause at 952.227-13, Patent Rights—Ownership by the Government.

(B) Where limited rights data and restricted computer software are the main purpose or basic technology of the research, development, or demonstration effort of the contract (rather than subcomponents, products, or processes ancillary to the contract effort), the limitations in paragraphs (k)

(*1*) through (4) of Alternate VI of the clause at 952.227-14 should be supplemented or deleted. Paragraph (k) of Alternate VI further provides that limited rights data or restricted computer software may be specified in the contract as being excluded from or not subject to the licensing requirements. This exclusion is implemented by limiting the applicability of the provisions of paragraph (k) of Alternate VI to only those classes or categories of limited rights data and restricted computer software determined essential for licensing. Although contractor licensing may be required under paragraph (k) of Alternate VI, the final resolution of questions regarding the scope of such licenses and the terms thereof, including provisions for confidentiality, and reasonable royalties, is left to the negotiation between the contractor and the Contracting Officer; or

(x) Where the contractor has access to certain categories of DOE-owned Category C-24 restricted data, as set forth in 10 CFR part 725, Alternate VII of 952.227-14, Rights in Data-General, shall be used. DOE has reserved the right to receive reasonable compensation for the use of its inventions and discoveries, including its related data and technology. In addition, in any other types of contracting situations in which the contractor may be given access to restricted data owned by DOE, appropriate limitations on the use of such data must be specified.

(d) The contracting officer shall insert the clause at FAR 52.227-16, Additional Data Requirements, in solicitations and contracts involving experimental, developmental, research, or demonstration work (other than basic or applied research to be performed solely by a university or college where the contract amount will be $500,000 or less.) See FAR 27.406-2. Patent Counsel may use the clause at FAR 52.227-16, Additional Data Requirements, along with the clause at FAR 52.227-14, Rights in Data—General, to require the contractor to furnish additional technical data, in instances where technical data requirements were not known at the time of award. There is, however, a built-in limitation on the kind of technical data that a contractor may be required to deliver under either the contract or the Additional Data Requirements clause. This limitation is in the withholding provision of paragraph (g) of FAR 52.227-14, Rights in Data—General, which provides that the contractor need not furnish limited rights data or restricted computer software. Unless Alternate II or III to the clause at FAR 52.227-14 is used, the Additional Data Rights clause is specifically intended that the contractor may withhold limited rights data or restricted computer software even though a

requirement for technical data specified in the contract or called for delivery (pursuant to the clause at FAR 52.227-16) would otherwise require the delivery of such data.

(m) Contracting officers shall incorporate the solicitation provision at FAR 52.227-23, Rights to Proposal Data (Technical), in all requests for proposals.

(n) Contracting officers shall include the solicitation provision at 952.227-84 in all solicitations involving research, developmental, or demonstration work.

## Subpart 927.70 [Reserved]