



DLA Supply Chain Alliance Conference & Exhibition



TESTING

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Abstract

- The Government requires various testing and validation methods to ensure material meet required specifications.
- Testing is achieved through various methods to include First Article, Production Lot, and Product Verification.
- Engage industry and other stakeholders in a high-level discussion of the government testing process.
- To facilitate a more robust discussion, the panel will dedicate a significant portion of session for questions and answers.



Government Testing Definition

- **Government First Article Testing:** (FATG) This test is to **show manufacturer capability** and is completed at a Government Test Lab with witnessed Origin Inspection by a qualified Government Defense Contract Management Agency Quality Assurance Representative (DCMA QAR)
- **Government Production Lot Testing:** (PLTG) This Test indicates the manufacturer's ability to **create a consistent product within prescribed tolerances (quality)**. This is done at a Government Test Lab with witnessed Origin Inspection by a qualified Government Defense Contract Management Agency Quality Assurance Representative (DCMA QAR).



Contractor Testing Definition

- **Contractor First Article Testing:** (FATC) This test is to show manufacturer capability and is completed at the Manufacturer's Facility and witnessed by a qualified Government Defense Contract Management Agency Quality Assurance Representative (DCMA QAR)
- **Contractor Production Lot Testing:** (PLTC) This Test indicates the manufacturer's ability to create a consistent product within prescribed tolerances (quality). This is done in the Manufacturer's Facility and witnessed by a qualified Government Defense Contract Management Agency Quality Assurance Representative (DCMA QAR).



Common Cause of Delay Government Testing

Missing or Inadequate Documentation: First Article Program Manager's (FATPM) will communicate with MFG's to expedite obtaining missing TDP Technical Data or MFG certification package data, as requested

Common missing elements in FAT Containers:

- Sample(s)
- Paper Versions of contract copy & MODS
- RFV's
- COMBO type WAWF w/DCMA Origin Inspection Endorsement
- Paper version of any EO/ECN's (if applicable)
- COQ/COQC's (if applicable)
- Process Operations Sheets
- Quality Inspection Records
- Process & Material Certifications
- Document's that demonstrate manufacturing processes



Common Cause of Delay Government Testing

- **Insufficient Sample Quantity:** FATPM's will communicate with MFG's to verify quantity shortages/overages and make recommendations for corrective action and possible contract modifications
- **Duplicate First Article Submissions for the Same Vendor/NSN:** FATPM's screen Lab work-in-process (WIP) Lists to identify parent/child relationship duplicates and orchestrate returns with recommendations for child contract waivers following parent approvals
- **First Article Re-submission without a Contracted Authority (Mods):** FATPM encounter First Article Test (FAT) re-submissions without PAA authorization. Re-submission negotiations needs to occur with appropriate modification, before sample is sent back to the Lab. FATPM coordination for obtaining the required modification necessary to allow testing to progress. Return is necessary without a re-submission Modification.
- **All Resubmittals (Government or Contractor) shall be submitted to: **DLA Aviation Only** DLATesting@dla.mil**



Post-Test FATG / PLTG Sample Returns

FAR 52-209-4

Contract language has been updated for test sample(s) return to the MFG:

- At its discretion, the Government may return FAT units to the contractor at no cost to the Government. The contractor shall submit the return address and pre-paid return label or shipping account for payment. In accordance with FAR 52.209-4 Sample Returns on Government Testing.



Contractor Testing Report Submission

Package Should Include:

- Material and Process Certifications
- Dimensional/Visual Inspection Reports
- Signed/Inspected DD250 and/or DD1222 from government representative (i.e., DCMA, unless otherwise specified on contract/delivery order)
- Unless a Government Fit Check is required, FAT/PLT exhibits are **NOT** to be shipped to DLA (or any other government facility) for review

Only the test report is submitted to (DLA Avation Only):

DLATesting@dla.mil



Resubmission/Rebuttal Process

Upon notification that a FAT/PLT/PVT failed:

- The testing team Contract Administrator will provide a notification letter to the vendor
 - Request that return information (address/shipping account details) for the samples be provided within **7 business days** on the vendor notification letter. This allows the vendor to review the samples and possibly rebut the initial findings.
- Vendor has total of **45 days** to notify DLA after notification of failure of intent to resubmit



Vendor Rebuttal Process (Rebuttal Letter)

- If a vendor wishes to rebut the findings of a FAT/PLT/PVT:
 - Submit an official rebuttal letter on company letterhead to the Contract Administrator that sent the official vendor notification letter of test results
 - On rebuttal letter: Provide all technical and/or picture evidence as to why the findings are being challenged so it can be provided to the ESA for review
 - The Contract Administrator may then issue a resubmission modification to authorize the resubmission, revise the delivery schedule, and address the cost to resubmit

Re-submission without a Contracted Authority Modification will result in sample returns



Product Verification Testing

Product Verification Testing (PVT) reasons:

- Product has past quality problems (item)
- Contractor has past quality problems
- Performance specs (supplier base)
- Industrial base past performance has been unacceptable or has experienced major problems (processes)
- Complex or sensitive production/manufacturing set ups are required (processes)
- Emerging technology mandating significant changes in production manufacturing (processes)
- First-time buys
- Critical Safety Items (CSIs)
- No other Quality verification testing (FAT/PLT) is specified in the award

Note: PVT language is imbedded in the Clause portion (**FAR Clause 52.246-2**) of all DLA Aviation contracts. Not actionable or invoked until negative quality issues appear (PQDR's). Allows DLA to stop, investigate, adjust, and continue.



Continued Product Assurance Branch Improvement Initiatives

- **Reduction of First Article Testing**
 - Increased use of alternative testing
 - Use of source qualifications prior to solicitation MFG to ESA direct via Tech Data Package (TDP) Source Qualification Statement (SQS)
 - Increased use of Production Lot Testing (PLT) vs First Article Testing (FAT)
 - Improvements to the Testing Waiver Process (enforce Parent/Child Relationship concepts)
- **Changes to the sample processing for delivery and return**
 - DAAN 09_07 Page 2 and/or FAR 52-209-4. A pre-paid return postage label in the box supplied by the MFG will evoke return of the Approved/Conditional sample(s).
- **Increased accuracy for testing completion and notification times (FAT Tracker)**

Air Force Materiel Command

USAF Testing Overview



Mr. Zach Pickard
HQ AFMC/A4/10-EN
May 3, 2023



Disclaimer



The content of this presentation is provided as a reference for contracts with the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) or the United States Air Force (USAF) and should not be taken as direction on any active or future contracts with either entity.

Questions or requests for changes to contracts should always be directed towards the appropriate contracting official or contract administrator.

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USAF Testing Policy



- **FAR Subpart 9.3, *First Article Testing and Approval***
 - Drives USAF requirements
- **AFMCI23-110, *Post-Award Part Verification and Approval***
 - Available on ePubs
- **AFMC260, *First Article Requirements***
 - Included with Technical Data Package(TDP)/Contract

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USAF Testing Options



- **FAT – First Article Testing**
 - More on this in a moment
 - Demonstrate manufacturer capability
- **PPA – Production Part Approval**
 - Also referred to as Production Lot Testing (PLT)
 - Indicates ability to be consistent
 - Refer to SAE AS9145
- **Specialized Inspection/Testing**
 - May Include Fit/Form/Function (FFF)

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USAF Testing Waivers



- **AFMC260 Form may also include options for waiving requirements**
 - Coordinate through Contracting
 - Before you provide a bid is preferred
 - After contract award is still acceptable

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USAF Testing Procedures



■ Four USAF Lab locations

- Hill AFB
- Warner-Robins AFB
- Tinker AFB
- Wright-Patterson AFB

■ Checked & Received into lab tracking system

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USAF Testing Procedures



- **Check part/information received**
 - Missing/damaged parts
 - All Paperwork (where applicable)
 - Contract/Mods
 - Request for Variations/Waivers
 - WAWF/DCMA Inspection Endorsement
 - Certificate of Conformance (CoC)
 - Material/Processing Certifications
 - Supplier Inspection records (AS9102 or similar)

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USAF Testing Procedures



- **Paperwork is checked by First Article Manager**
 - Correct materials used
 - Correct processing completed
- **Component is checked by Lab Technicians**
 - Trained/qualified (recurring) personnel
 - Equipment is regularly certified

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USAF Testing Procedures



- **Inspection report provided to Engineering Support Authority (ESA) for final review**
 - In some instances, ESA is only involved if discrepancies are found
- **Final Approval/Disapproval is at the discretion of the ESA**
- **Notification routed back through DLA/Contracting**

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Key Take-Aways on Testing



- **ESAs are responsible for Safety/Airworthiness**
 - FAT typically required on complex or critical items
- **FAT may be waived for suppliers which have:**
 - Successfully manufactured the component
 - Successfully manufactured similar components
 - Done so recently without changes to facility/processing
- **Each test site may have slight variations in process**
- **DON'T make assumptions, ASK the contracting officer/administrator**

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