



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
Defense Contract Management Agency

## INSTRUCTION

### First Article and Production Lot Testing

Quality Assurance Directorate  
OPR: DCMA-QA

DCMA-INST 302  
December 17, 2013

*Validated Current with Administrative Changes, January 12, 2015*

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**NOTE:** The purpose of this policy update is to meet the new Agency **policy format** requirements.

- The Applicability paragraph changed to add details on DCMA International and Special Programs
- Chapters 1 and 2 and the Glossary were added IAW the new policy format
- Chapter 2 addresses the use of engineering assistance associated with performing FAT/PLT
- Chapter 3 Procedures remain without substantive changes except adding 3.13, Records Management

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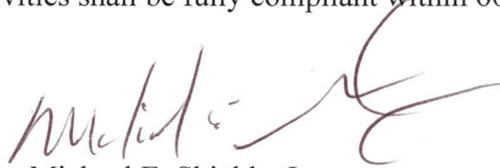
**1. PURPOSE.** This Instruction:

- a. Cancels and replaces DCMA Instruction (DCMA-INST) 302, “First Article and Production Lot Testing” (Reference (a)).
- b. Establishes updated policy, assigns roles and responsibilities, and provides procedures for DCMA quality assurance (QA) personnel to plan for and execute Government Contract Quality Assurance (GCQA) surveillance on First Article Testing (FAT) and Production Lot Testing (PLT) requirements.
- c. Is established in accordance with (IAW) DoD Directive 5105.64, “Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA)” (Reference (b)); DCMA-INST 501, “Policy Publications Program” (Reference (c), and all references listed.

**2. APPLICABILITY.** This Instruction applies to all DCMA activities performing FAT/PLT GCQA surveillance functions unless higher-level regulations, policy, guidance, waiver, or agreements take precedence; e.g., DCMA International and Special Programs. For classified contracts with security requirements, exceptions to this Instruction shall be IAW supplemental instructions maintained by the Special Programs Directorate.

**3. MANAGERS’ INTERNAL CONTROL PROGRAM.** This Instruction is subject to evaluation and testing IAW DCMA-INST 710, “Managers’ Internal Control Program (MICP)” (Reference (d)). The process flowchart ~~is located at Appendix A~~ *and key controls are located on the Resource Page of this Instruction.*

4. **RELEASABILITY – UNLIMITED.** This Instruction is approved for public release.
5. **PLAS CODES.** Process 085A - SQA - Surveillance - Customer Requirements  
Process 085C - SQA - Surveillance - Risk Handling Methods
6. **POLICY RESOURCE WEB PAGE.** <https://home.dcma.mil/policy/302r>
7. **EFFECTIVE DATE.** By the order of the Director, DCMA, this Instruction is effective December 17, 2013, and all applicable activities shall be fully compliant within 60 days from this date.



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## REFERENCES

- (a) DCMA-INST 302, "First Article and Production Lot Testing," June 2012 (hereby canceled)
- (b) DoD Directive 5105.64, "Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA)," January 10, 2013
- (c) DCMA-INST 501, "Policy Publications Program," ~~October 1, 2013~~ **May 12, 2014**
- (d) DCMA-INST 710, "Managers' Internal Control Program," ~~September 19, 2012~~ **April 21, 2014**
- (e) DCMA-INST 309, "**Government Contract Quality Assurance (GCQA)** Surveillance Planning," ~~February 1, 2012~~ **June 3, 2014**
- (f) DCMA-INST 318, "QA Development," ~~October 1, 2010~~ **August 18, 2014**
- (g) DCMA-INST 325, "Contract Technical Review ~~—QA,~~" ~~May 24, 2012~~ **January 23, 2014**
- (h) DCMA-INST 327, "Postaward Orientation Conference – QA," ~~April 26, 2013~~ **April 10, 2014**
- (i) Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 52, Subpart 52.209-3, "First Article Approval-Contractor Testing"
- (j) Defense Logistics Acquisition Directive (DLAD), Subpart 9.3, Clause 52.209-9017, "First Article - Contractor Test-Additional Requirements"
- (k) FAR 52, Subpart 52.209-4, "First Article Approval – Government Testing"
- (l) DLAD, Subpart 9.3, Clause 52.209-9018, "First Article - Government Test-Additional Requirements"
- (m) DLAD, Subpart 52.2, Clause 52.246-9086, "Production Lot Testing (PLT)-Contractor"
- (n) DLAD, Subpart 52.2, Clause 52.246-9085, "Production Lot Testing (PLT)-Government"
- (o) DCMA-INST 324, "Product Examination ~~—QA,~~" ~~July 26, 2013~~ **August 25, 2014**
- (p) DCMA-INST 316, "Delegate Surveillance - Quality Assurance," September ~~1,~~ 2010
- (q) DCMA-INST 1201, "Corrective Action Process," September 23, 2013
- (r) FAR, Part 9, Subpart 9.307, "Government Administration Procedures"
- (s) DCMA-INST 809, "Records Management," May ~~1,~~ 2011

## CHAPTER 1

### POLICY

**1.1. POLICY.** It is DCMA policy that:

1.1.1. FAT/PLT surveillance plans must be established IAW DCMA-INST 309, “*Government Contract Quality Assurance (GCQA) Surveillance Planning*” (Reference (e)) to ensure the necessary inspections, tests and documentation are accomplished to verify all product characteristics conform to drawings and/or specifications and the contractor furnishes a product that meets all contract requirements for acceptance.

1.1.2. Any deviation/waiver requests to this Instruction must be processed IAW DCMA-INST 501 (Reference (c)).

## CHAPTER 2

### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

#### 2.1. FIRST LEVEL SUPERVISOR (FLS). The FLS must:

2.1.1. In accordance with DCMA-INST 318, “QA Development” (Reference (f)), ensure QA personnel possess the necessary competencies to perform the tasks defined in this Instruction as related to the assigned facility, contract, or product.

2.1.2. Review QA personnel requests for technical assistance and provide necessary support.

#### 2.2. QUALITY ASSURANCE (QA) PERSONNEL. QA personnel:

2.2.1. Must perform a contract technical review (CTR) IAW DCMA-INST 325, “Contract Technical Review ~~–QA~~” (Reference (g)) and identify FAT/PLT contractual requirements.

2.2.2. Determine the need for technical assistance or resources to perform the necessary FAT/PLT functions and make the request in writing to the FLS.

2.2.3. Must conduct a post award orientation conference (PAOC) IAW DCMA-INST 327, “Postaward Orientation Conference – QA” (Reference (h)) for conditions specified in paragraph 3.3.1.

2.2.4. Must develop and document a FAT/PLT surveillance plan IAW DCMA-INST 309, (Reference (e)).

2.2.5. If applicable, the prime QA personnel notifies the contractually defined additional place of performance QA personnel that a FAT/PLT requirement is part of the contract.

2.2.6. May request QA engineer assistance (QAE) or other engineer’s assistance, with appropriate competencies and skillsets, when complex or technical issues arise during the FAT/PLT process.

## CHAPTER 3

### PROCEDURES

**3.1. PERFORM CONTRACT TECHNICAL REVIEW (CTR).** During contract technical review, QA personnel must identify the contractual FAT/PLT requirements.

3.1.1. FAT requirements may appear in contracts as the following two methods:

3.1.1.1. Contractor Testing. IAW FAR 52, Subpart 52.209-3, “First Article Approval-Contractor Testing” (Reference (i)), the contractor is required to perform the actual testing and submit a test report to the procuring contracting officer (PCO) after routing through DCMA QA personnel. **NOTE:** Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) Contractor FAT contracts may also specify Defense Logistics Acquisition Directive (DLAD) Subpart 9.3, Clause 52.209-9017, “First Article - Contractor Test - Additional Requirement,” (Reference (j)).

3.1.1.2. Government Testing. IAW FAR 52, Subpart 52.209-4, “First Article Approval-Government Testing” (Reference (k)), the Government is required to perform the actual testing to verify the product conforms to specification. **NOTE:** DLA Government FAT contracts may also specify DLAD Subpart 9.3, Clause 52.209-9018, “First Article - Government Test - Additional Requirements” (Reference (l)).

3.1.2. A Contractor PLT or Government PLT requirement may be stated in the contract.

3.1.2.1. DLA Contractor PLT contracts may also specify DLAD Subpart 52.2, Clause 52.246-9086, “Production Lot Testing (PLT) – Contractor” (Reference (m)) requirements.

3.1.2.2. DLA Government PLT contracts may also specify DLAD Subpart 52.2, Clause 52.246-9085, “Production Lot Testing (PLT) – Government” (Reference (n)) requirements.

3.1.3. Within the contract, FAT/PLT requirements may be invoked by several different methods including but not limited to the following:

- Contract Line Item Number
- DD Form 1423, Contract Data Requirements List
- Supplemental Quality Assurance Provision
- Statement of Work or Drawing

3.1.4. Further instructions/guidance concerning DCMA QA personnel responsibilities may be provided through various customer communications including, but not limited to, a Quality Assurance Letter of Instruction (QALI).

### **3.2. DETERMINE NEED FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.**

3.2.1. When QA personnel determine additional technical assistance or resources are required to perform the necessary FAT/PLT functions, a request in writing to the FLS must be accomplished and include a copy of the request with the QA PAOC documentation file.

3.2.2. The FLS must review the QA personnel request for assistance and provide necessary support.

3.2.3. When the FAT/PLT requirement includes testing of software embedded in the end item or system, or stand-alone software products, QA personnel must ensure a DCMA certified software professional is contacted for technical assistance.

### **3.3. CONDUCT QA POSTAWARD ORIENTATION CONFERENCE (PAOC).**

3.3.1. QA personnel must conduct a PAOC IAW DCMA-INST 327 (Reference (h)) for the following conditions that apply for either Contractor or Government FAT/PLT requirements:

- A contractor is performing a FAT/PLT for the first time
- When extended time has passed since the last FAT/PLT was performed by the contractor
- When FAT/PLT requirements change per the contract
- When FAT/PLT related contractor technical, quality, or documentation deficiencies are being noted by QA personnel or reported from either the lab conducting the testing or the procuring activity
- When the contractor has significant personnel changes that may affect manufacturing and/or testing processes

3.3.2. As a minimum, DCMA QA personnel must review and discuss the following criteria:

- Specific first article/production lot contractual requirements
- Any inspections or tests to be performed by the contractor and/or DCMA at subcontractor locations
- GCQA inspection hold points
- Required plans or reports

3.3.3. A QA PAOC may not be required when repetitive contracts or orders with FAT/PLT requirements are issued to the same contractor or the contractor is already performing satisfactorily on identical items.

**3.4. DEVELOP FAT/PLT GCQA SURVEILLANCE PLAN.** QA personnel must develop and document a plan for performing surveillance of the contractually required FAT/PLT IAW DCMA-INST 309 (Reference (e)). The following procedural steps may be used to assist with developing the surveillance plan.

3.4.1. Contractor or Government Testing. As required by the contract, the plan must:

3.4.1.1. Ensure the contract specified number of FAT/PLT exhibits are available for testing.

3.4.1.2. Ensure the contract specified number of PLT samples are randomly selected for test/inspection (as applicable). See random number generator tool located on the Resource Web page of this Instruction.

3.4.1.3. Ensure inspections for any characteristics identified or other activities requested by a QALI are accomplished and documented (see paragraph 3.10.2.).

3.4.1.4. Verify the contractor's inspection/test records and test report clearly demonstrate the product(s) conformance to technical specifications.

3.4.1.5. Ensure required records or reports are sent to the approval authority.

3.4.1.6. Verify the manufacturing processes, materials, and facilities used to produce the FAT product are the same as those used to produce production quantities IAW FAR, Part 52, Subpart 52.209-3 (Reference (i)) and FAR, Part 52, Subpart 52.209-4 (Reference (k)), Alternate 1, paragraph I, respectively).

3.4.2. Specific to Contractor Testing. As required by the contract, the plan must:

3.4.2.1. Verify the contractor's inspection of critical or major product characteristics or processes identified in the FAT/PLT report by independently inspecting or witnessing the contractor's inspection or testing of these characteristics or processes. This includes characteristics or processes performed at subcontractor facilities.

3.4.2.2. If FAT/PLT sampling is authorized in the contract, perform sample product examination of all other (non-critical or non-major) product characteristics or processes to the degree necessary to establish confidence of product conformance to technical specifications.

3.4.3. Specific to Government Testing. As required by the contract, the plan must:

3.4.3.1. Ensure any additionally required documentation (e.g., material certifications, process operations sheets, inspection method sheets, copies of drawings, and any other pertinent documentation) are included with the exhibit(s) designated for testing.

3.4.3.2. Verify the packaging exterior is clearly marked (as applicable) as a: "First Article Test (FAT)" or "Production Lot Test (PLT)" EXHIBIT(S), DO NOT POST TO STOCK; DO NOT PUT INTO SUPPLY."

**3.5. DETERMINE NEED FOR GCQA INSPECTION HOLD POINTS.** During GCQA surveillance planning, QA personnel must prudently evaluate and determine if there is a requirement for inspection hold points at the various manufacturing process sequence locations

IAW DCMA-INST 324, “Product Examination ~~—QA~~” (Reference (o)). Hold points ensure Government inspections are not inadvertently overlooked or bypassed by the contractor.

**3.6. NOTIFY CONTRACTOR OF GCQA INSPECTION HOLD POINTS.** Where QA personnel determine GCQA inspection hold points are necessary, the contractor must be notified in writing detailing the requirement in a manner where contractor receipt and acknowledgement is verifiable.

**3.7. DETERMINE NEED FOR GCQA AT SUBCONTRACTOR LEVEL.** Where surveillance for critical or major product characteristics/processes, as developed IAW paragraph 3.4.2.1., can only be performed at a subcontractor’s facility, a request for subcontract GCQA surveillance from prime QA personnel must be sent to the appropriate DCMA office performing QA surveillance activities at the subcontractor IAW DCMA-INST 316, “Delegate Surveillance - QA” (Reference (p)). Such requests must be supported and the results documented and returned to the prime QA personnel in a timely manner.

**3.8. EXECUTE FAT/PLT GCQA SURVEILLANCE PLAN.** QA personnel must execute surveillance IAW the FAT/PLT surveillance plan.

3.8.1. Surveillance results must be documented IAW DCMA-INST 309 (Reference (e)), and paragraph 3.10.

3.8.2. Actual product inspected or witnessed by QA personnel must be clearly identified to the approval authority IAW DCMA-INST 324 (Reference (o)), for product inspection or witnessing specifics.

3.8.3. Contractual nonconformances identified by QA personnel must result in the appropriate level Corrective Action Request (CAR) IAW DCMA-INST 1201, “Corrective Action Process” (Reference (q)).

**3.9. NOTIFY PROCURING CONTRACTING OFFICER (PCO) OF ANY NONCONFORMANCE(S), OR WAIVER REQUEST(S) AND REQUEST INSTRUCTIONS.**

3.9.1. QA personnel must notify the PCO of the following circumstances:

3.9.1.1. Any identified nonconformance of the FAT/PLT unit.

3.9.1.2. Any waiver request by the contractor (with appropriate QA personnel recommendation for the waiver) and request instructions from the PCO as to how to proceed with the FAT/PLT requirement.

3.9.2. QA personnel must ensure waiver requests are processed and approved by the PCO prior to shipment of production units.

**3.10. QA PERSONNEL PREPARE FAT/PLT RESULTS.** QA personnel should use a DD Form 1222, "Request for and Results of Test" (located on the Resource Web page of this Instruction), or cover letter to include with the contractor's FAT/PLT report and/or to report the results of the inspection of the first article/production lot units. The DD Form 1222 or cover letter should be separate from and in addition to any contractor reports. QA personnel must include the following minimum information:

3.10.1. A list of names, activities, and telephone numbers of individuals providing technical assistance to QA personnel and other Government personnel witnessing or participating in the FAT/PLT.

3.10.2. A statement identifying the characteristics actually inspected or witnessed by the Government. Alternatively, QA personnel may attach copies of the inspection results if these forms clearly identify the characteristics actually inspected or witnessed by the Government.

3.10.3. A detailed description of any nonconformances in the FAT/PLT units or test results or departures from the contractually specified FAT/PLT procedures (if applicable).

3.10.4. A statement identifying by name, title, activity, and telephone number of the ACO or PCO authorizing the shipment of nonconforming FAT/PLT units or test reports (if applicable).

3.10.5. A recommendation for approval or disapproval when the contract requires contractor conducted FAT/PLT. Disapproval must always be recommended whenever any nonconformity in the FAT/PLT units or deviation from the FAT/PLT procedure is observed.

**3.11. NOTIFY ADMINISTRATIVE CONTRACTING OFFICER (ACO) OF FAT/PLT UNIT SHIPMENT.**

3.11.1. Immediately before shipment of a FAT/PLT unit or test report, QA personnel must request the ACO provide the receiving activity with the notice and advice required IAW FAR, Part 9, Subpart 9.307, "Government Administration Procedures" (Reference (r)).

3.11.2. QA personnel must not authorize the contractor to ship FAT/PLT units or test reports containing known or suspected nonconformances, unless specifically directed in writing to do so by the ACO or the PCO.

3.11.3. QA personnel must immediately notify the ACO and PCO if the contractor has or intends to ship nonconforming FAT/PLT units.

**3.12. FAT/PLT APPROVAL.**

3.12.1. When the PCO retains FAT/PLT approval, conditional approval, or disapproval authority, formal notification to the contractor must be signed by the PCO.

3.12.1.1. When FAT/PLT approval, conditional approval, or disapproval is received from other than the PCO (i.e., the technical activity), QA personnel must forward a copy to the

appropriate ACO for their coordination with the PCO. Formal notice to the contractor must be signed by the PCO or ACO.

3.12.1.2. When the PCO delegates FAT/PLT approval, conditional approval, or disapproval authority to the ACO, formal notification to the contractor must be signed by the ACO.

3.12.2. Approved FAT units sometimes serve as a manufacturing standard for production units, but only when specifically stated in the contract. When this occurs, the FAT unit may be useful in evaluating the adequacy of production units with respect to technical requirements. The approval of a nonconforming FAT unit must not be construed as authorization to accept production items containing any nonconformance with the contract requirements.

3.12.2.1. Most contracts require FAT/PLT units to be manufactured using the same facilities, manufacturing processes, methods, and materials as the production units. When this or similar requirements are included in the contract, and QA personnel observe any changes that may reasonably be expected to affect product quality, QA personnel must immediately advise the PCO and ACO of the circumstances. QA personnel must issue a CAR IAW DCMA-INST 1201 (Reference (q)), if warranted, and withhold formal acceptance pending further direction from the PCO.

3.12.2.2. Before accepting and/or authorizing shipment of any production quantities, QA personnel must verify and document that the contractor's corrective action(s) resulting from the FAT/PLT were implemented and any deficiencies noted in letters of conditional approval were corrected.

**3.13. RECORDS MANAGEMENT.** Records of FAT/PLT surveillance actions must be maintained IAW DCMA-INST 809, "Records Management" (Reference (s)). Records may include but are not limited to:

- DD Form 1222
- PAOC records and any other supporting documents related to FAT/PLT surveillance
- FAT/PLT Approval, Disapproval, or Conditional Approval Letters

## **GLOSSARY**

### **ACRONYMS**

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| ACO       | administrative contracting officer      |
| CTR       | contract technical review               |
| DCMA-INST | DCMA Instruction                        |
| FAR       | Federal Acquisition Regulation          |
| FAT       | first article testing                   |
| FLS       | first level supervisor                  |
| GCQA      | government contract quality assurance   |
| IAW       | in accordance with                      |
| PAOC      | postaward orientation conference        |
| PCO       | procuring contracting officer           |
| PLAS      | performance labor accounting system     |
| PLT       | production lot testing                  |
| QA        | quality assurance                       |
| QALI      | quality assurance letter of instruction |