



Department of General Services

Procurement Division

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**TO: Purchasing Authority Contacts (PACs)
Procurement and Contracting Officers (PCOs)
Small Business Advocates**

**RE: Fraudulent activity aimed at State of California agencies and vendor/bidder
community**

The California Department of General Services (DGS) has recently been made aware of several fraudulent orders that have been placed with different vendors throughout the state. Unauthorized users have been impersonating State of California employees to place fraudulent orders in a variety of ways, including the following:

- Using State of California employee names/phones on a fake Purchase Order (PO).
- Altering the Ship-To address; often to an address that is not a state facility.
- Calling vendors directly, impersonating a State of California employee representing a department and attempting to place an order.
- Establishing a 916 area code number to use on a PO and then answering as if it were a "state department" when called.
- Calling vendors typically used by the state and ordering equipment typically used by the state; particularly those under \$10,000.

In light of these activities, DGS Procurement Division has communicated with vendors and bidders to be diligent and exercise best practices to ensure their security.

Please consider advising your business contacts to do the following:

1. Check the origin of any PO. Confirm the order is being sent from an official State of California email, viable address, or fax number. Do not assume an email is legitimate even if it has what appears to be an official State of California suffix such as: "firstname.lastname@department.ca.gov".
2. If in doubt, vendors should request a supervisor's name and contact information and contact the supervisor to validate the PO.
3. All items shipped should be addressed to a viable State of California department location (NOT a P.O. Box, storage facility, etc.).
4. Vendors should consider utilizing an internet mapping search tool that can provide an image of the business and thus verify a legitimate address and association to a State of California entity.

A helpful tool that provides access to government information is the California Online Directory (COLD). The directory includes state employee information, state agency information, and a State Government Organization Chart, as well as a keyword search:

- [Access the California Online Directory here](#)
- <https://cold.govops.ca.gov/>

DGS recommends that all businesses who deal with the state take precautions to ensure any orders received from the state are legitimate and valid.

We want to encourage state agencies to share this information with vendors and bidders and ask that you report any suspected fraudulent activity to the appropriate authorities. DGS has created a webpage (link below) with resources to assist the vendor community and prevent vendors from falling victim to these scams.

DGS remains committed to keeping affected parties informed and continues to exercise vigilance in order to address this issue.

- [For more information, please visit our fraud alert webpage here](#)
- <http://www.dgs.ca.gov/pd/Home/FRAUDALERT.aspx>