



United States Department of the Interior
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
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Washington, D.C. 20240

(2410)

To: Regional Concession Chiefs

From: Chief, Commercial Services Program /s/ *Jo A. Pendry (original signature on file)*

Subject: Process for Assessing Services and Handling Charges Incurred as Part of Concession Evaluations

NPS park concession program employees or other park staff may use concessioner services, such as eating at the concessioner's restaurant or going on a concession tour, as part of the concessioner evaluation process. Guidance regarding how to handle these practices is provided in this memorandum.

Managing Concessioner Charges Incurred During the Evaluation

Charges incurred by NPS park personnel when they use concessioner services to assess them as part of the evaluation process are legitimate business expenses. Park personnel should be reimbursed for such expenses. Park personnel must be charged for these services by the concessioner. Acceptance of free service or discounted services beyond those available to the public is inappropriate as it could be perceived to affect the impartiality of the Service in executing its oversight responsibilities.

The park concession staff should work with the Superintendent to plan and budget for such concession service assessments. These activities should be approved in advance. The frequency such service assessments should be based on professional judgment and should be reasonable in

light of the operating conditions of the concessioner, such as length of operating season and number of services provided. This frequency is commonly the same as that of periodic evaluations. It may be inappropriate to sample some services such as lodging, multi-day tours, or other expensive services where the cost to the government would outweigh the benefit gained from the exercise. In some cases, due to cost or logistical considerations for the particular service, testing of the service may not be possible every year.

Park staff should work with park administrative staff to arrange how to pay for these assessment expenses using their NPS integrated charge card. Reimbursement through government check to repay use of personal funds should not be done as this method of reimbursement is being discontinued.

Depending on the type of concession service being assessed, the charges may be centrally or individually billed by the charge card company. To be reimbursed, any individually billed charges must be reclassified to be centrally billed. This can be accomplished by the park or regional Agency/Organization Program Coordinator (AOPC). If the changes are for travel-type services, such as a meal, they may be automatically coded as travel costs. These should be recoded so they are properly accounted for as business expenses and do not impact the park travel ceiling. The AOPC should also be able to help with these details.

Documenting the Evaluation

Whether conducted by park concession staff or other park personnel, the assessment of services as part of the evaluation must be conducted in a professional manner and provide complete and objective information to support the evaluation. NPS staff members conducting the assessment should be briefed on what is expected and how to complete the exercise. The results of the assessment should be documented in writing and become part of the concessioner evaluation file. Parks are encouraged to develop a form which can be used to guide such assessments.

Distribution and Further Information

Please distribute this memo to concession specialists and other appropriate personnel within your region.

If you have any additional questions, you may contact Kurt Rausch, Contract Management Team Lead, at (202)513-7202.