

Research Vessel Operators'
Committee

October, 2004

Uniformity of Fees
Charged to Science

Framing the Problem:

- Significant costs are incurred mobilizing science—especially in out-ports.
- Agent fees often run into tens of thousands of dollars...and arrive months later.
- It's unfair to science: they don't know what to expect (and the grant may end before the bills arrive).
- It's unfair to us...and our funding agencies.

Question 1: Mobilization Costs

- Examples: hired cranes, forklifts, stevedoring services, warehouse staging.
- In home port: 2 charge science (one provisionally.) 10 responses say “no.”
- In out ports: 9 charge science. 2 do not pass on these charges.

Question 2: Port Calls Exclusively for Science

- Examples: changing out science party in the middle of a leg—with no ship logistics. Includes pilots, line-handlers, agent, customs clearance in/out, etc.
- Responding yes (charged to science party):
8. Responding no: 2.

Question 3: Foreign Observer Costs (Travel, Etc.)

- When operating in the EEZ of foreign nations for science, these charges are passed to the P.I....
- Yes: 8 respondents.
- No: 2 respondents.

Question 4: Marine Mammal EIS Preparation and Observers.

- For seismic work—a major new requirement, with substantial costs attached.
- Charged to science: 7 yes (many respondents have not yet faced this issue.)
- Not-charged to science: 1.

Question 5: Unusual Mobilization Ship Mods

- Examples: ARDENT and similar projects that require welders, large shore cranes, electricians, anchor handling gear, etc.
- Yes, charge to science: 6
- No, not charged to science: 4

Question 6: Damage to the Ship

- The case of the spilled liquid nitrogen (see Fred Jones.)
- Charged to science: 4. (Some said it hasn't happened yet, but it should be charged.)
- Not charged to science: 4 (several said “normal wear and tear” are part of the cost of operating one of these ships.)

Question 7: Agent Bills Specific to Science Party

- Examples: airport pickups, customs / immigration, parts runs, taxis, clearing science containers into or out of the country, truck fees, etc.
- Yes, charge to science: 8
- No, not charged to science: 1

Question 8: Other Tacked on Agent Fees

- Examples: telex or phone charges with scientists while making arrangements for services, clearing inbound shipments through customs, percentage of agent fee.
- Yes, charge to science: 8
- No, don't charge: 0

Where Do We Go From Here?

- This survey was NOT scientific.
- Remember: funding agencies (the taxpayers) pay in either case.
- If a consensus is reached that we should pay a specific charge, we need to know all the implications arising from each science party's cruise plan, BEFORE we write our ship ops proposals. Is this possible?

...And Furthermore

- If science programs have to pay for these things, then the P.I.s must know this up front, before they write their proposals.
- We must educate our ‘customers’ as to their responsibilities—and inform them that agent bills will likely show up 6 months later.

The Roadmap

- I'll re-do this in better language, with accompanying charts.
- You will get to review it and comment
- Send the final summary to the council through the RVOC chair.
- Council achieves consensus with Agencies
- Uniform rules posted on UNOLS website

Thank You!

R/V Thomas G. Thompson

