



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
2 NAVY ANNEX
WASHINGTON, DC 20380-1775

MCO 7300.22A
RFR-50
11 Feb 04

MARINE CORPS ORDER 7300.22A

From: Commandant of the Marine Corps
To: Distribution List

Subj: CONTROLLING CONFERENCE COSTS

Encl: (1) ASN (FM&C) memo of Apr 18, 2003
(2) Sample Request Format
(3) Cost Element Worksheet

1. Situation. Provide guidance for controlling conference costs to effectively and efficiently use Marine Corps resources.

2. Cancellation. MCO 7300.22.

3. Mission. Marine Corps commanders are to exercise strict fiscal responsibility in the planning and conducting of Marine Corps-sponsored conferences.

4. Execution

a. Commander's Intent and Concept of Operations

(1) Commander's Intent

(a) Financial responsibility for planning and conducting Marine Corps-sponsored conferences lies with the conference's sponsoring commander or sponsoring staff agency head. It is imperative that the conference-sponsoring officials exercise good stewardship of Marine Corps resources by ensuring that conference costs are minimized, best value is obtained by the Government, and that attendee conference travel expenses stay within normal per diem rates.

(b) Enclosure (1) prohibits a DON activity from collecting attendee conference fees to offset the cost of the conference, or to reimburse or supplement the appropriation from which the conference is funded unless specifically authorized by

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statute. A DON activity may not authorize the use of appropriated funds to pay for an employee's food and light refreshments, except as part of the employee's travel subsistence allowance for those in a travel status. However, a DON activity may reimburse a traveler for a conference fee that is charged by a non-DON conference sponsor.

(c) For purposes of this Order, a conference is defined as any meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium, or other event that requires attendee travel (temporary duty travel) with the exception of technical and administrative site visits to Government installations. The term also applies to training activities when:

1. the announced purpose of a conference is educational or instructional;

2. more than half of the time is scheduled for a planned, organized exchange of information between presenters and audience;

3. the training is based on a planned, prepared, and coordinated program, course, curriculum, subject, system, or routine of instruction or education in fields which will improve individual and organizational performance, and assist in achieving agency mission and performance goals; or

4. development benefits will be derived through the employee's attendance.

(2) Concept of Operations. To carry out this policy, effective immediately:

(a) Marine Corps commanders and Headquarters Marine Corps (HQMC) staff agency heads shall closely review requests by their staffs and subordinate organizations to hold/sponsor conferences. At a minimum, commanders and HQMC staff agency heads should;

1. consider whether the conference is necessary for the effective accomplishment of the organization's mission;

2. evaluate/analyze cost differentials between various conference alternatives and alternative sites;

3. limit attendance to the minimum number of individuals required for mission accomplishment; and

4. ensure that approved conferences are held at locations not requiring either "actual expense authorizations" exceeding standard per diem rates, or an additional conference lodging allowance.

(b) The authority for approval of Marine Corps-sponsored conferences with projected total costs of under \$100,000 (exclusive of personnel/salary costs) and less than 125 attendees is delegated to: COMMARFORPAC; COMMARFORLANT; CG MCCDC, COMMARFORRES, COMMARCORLOGCOM, COMMARFOREUR, COMMARFORSOUTH, COMMARFORNORTH, COMMARFORSTRAT, CG MCRD PI, CG MCRD SD, CG MCRC, CG TECOM, CG MAGTFTC/MCAGCC, and to HQMC staff principals. These commands may further delegate approval authority in writing to their respective major subordinate commands (MSC) and activities. HQMC staff principals may delegate approval authority to the HQMC Division Director level. Conferences of this size proposed by commands or activities not included in (or subordinate to) one of the commanders listed above must be approved by a general officer or a civilian senior executive service member in their chain of command.

(c) Marine Corps conferences that are projected to cost \$100,000 or more (exclusive of personnel/salary costs), or are expected to have 125 attendees or more, regardless of cost, must have prior approval from the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps (ACMC). The Fiscal Director of the Marine Corps, Programs and Resources Department, HQMC will serve as the action official for processing these requests to the ACMC for review and approval. Requests for approval of such conferences should be addressed to the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps via the Director, Fiscal Division (RFR), Programs and Resources Department, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, Washington, DC 20380-1775. Requests for ACMC approval must include conference documentation outlined in paragraph 5 below, and must be received by CMC (RFR) no later than 45 days prior to proposed conference start date. Naval message or standard naval letters are the preferred methods for transmittal of conference approval requests. Enclosure (2) contains a sample request format.

5. Administration

a. Conference Justification. Commands must be able to justify the following:

- (1) the necessity for their Marine Corps-sponsored conferences,
- (2) their choice of available conference alternatives,
- (3) their choice of conference sites/facilities, and
- (4) their efforts to limit conference attendance.

In addition, Marine Corps participation in conferences sponsored by organizations other than the Marine Corps should be reviewed by each Marine Corps command participating to limit their command's attendance to the minimal effective level. These decisions are expected to be consistent with mission accomplishment and good stewardship of public funds.

b. Definition of Conference Costs. Conference costs include all appropriated and nonappropriated fund costs paid by the Marine Corps for Marine Corps-sponsored conferences. These costs include, but are not limited to, those elements identified in the worksheet contained at enclosure (3).

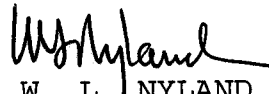
c. Site Considerations. Determination of appropriate conference sites should consider both geographical location and specific facility selected. Use of Government locations and Government facilities are strongly encouraged (when and where available) when determining locations and facilities for conferences. High cost or resort locations and premium cost facilities should be avoided. This Headquarters recognizes that resort locations often offer attractive "per attendee" costs, but care should be taken that the resort "attraction" does not result in increased attendance and consequently increase the total cost to the Government. For conferences involving 30 or more attendees in a temporary duty travel status, a minimum of 3 sites should be considered and decision documentation must be developed and maintained, regardless of total projected conference cost. Required documentation will include a cost analysis for each alternative conference option considered and an explanation of other decision factors.

d. Documentation. Conference planning and cost documentation, including both pre-conference cost estimates and actual conference costs incurred, must be retained by the conference sponsor for inspection by cognizant auditors, inspectors, or other management authorities for a period of three years.

6. Command and Signal

a. Signal. This Order is effective the date signed.

b. Command. This Order is applicable to the Marine Corps Total Force.



W. L. NYLAND

Assistant Commandant of the
Marine Corps

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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
(FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND COMPTROLLER)
1050 NAVY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20350-1050

APR 18 2003

MEMORANDUM FOR DISTRIBUTION

Subj: CLARIFICATION OF USE OF APPROPRIATED FUNDS TO PROCURE
LIGHT REFRESHMENTS

Ref: (a) CompGen Decision B-288266 of 27 Jan 03
(b) OASN(FM&C) Memo 7150 FMB-56 of 31 May 00
(c) JFTR U2550
(d) JTR U4950
(e) CompGen Decision B-223319 of 21 July 1986
(f) SECNAV Memos of 8 Jan 02
(g) OPNAVINST 5050.24F of 20 Jun 02
(h) Marine Corps Order 7300.22

By reference (a), the Comptroller General (CompGen) published a decision on the use of appropriated funds to pay for light refreshments at conferences, which supercedes the guidance provided in references (b) through (d). The decision states that the General Services Administration (GSA) does not have the authority to authorize agencies to use appropriated funds to pay for an employee's food and light refreshments, except as part of the employee's travel subsistence allowance for those who are in a travel status. While serving light refreshments to conference attendees might be a common business practice in private industry, the expenditure of public funds must be anchored in existing law, not the practices and conventions of the private sector. Effective immediately, appropriated funds are not authorized to pay for light refreshments at conferences.

The GAO decision does not change the rules for the use of appropriated funds to pay for food under other authorities, such as those relating to training (5 USC 4109 for civilians and 10 USC 2013 for uniformed personnel) under the circumstances discussed in reference (a), and receptions for awards made under the provisions of 5 USC 4503, as discussed in reference (e). Activities should be diligent in ensuring the authorities are not misused, as improper use of appropriated funds could lead to a potential Antideficiency Act violation. Also, because the GSA's Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) forms the basis for the guidance contained in references (c) and (d), it is important to ensure activities under your cognizance are expeditiously informed of this change.

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Additionally, activities should ensure that DON conferences are officially approved consistent with the requirements delineated in references (f) through (h). Activities are reminded that, absent affirmative statutory authority, conference fees may not be collected and used to offset the cost of the conference or to reimburse or supplement the appropriation from which the conference is funded.

My point of contact is Mr. Louis P. Calabro, Jr., FMB-51, who can be reached on (703) 693-6586, or by e-mail at calabro.louis@hq.navy.mil.

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DIONEL M. AVILES
Assistant Director, Navy
(Financial Management and Comptroller)

ENCLOSURE (1)

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SAMPLE REQUEST FORMAT

MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

Via: Director, Fiscal Division, Programs and Resources
Department (Code RFR)

Subj: CONTROLLING CONFERENCE COSTS

Ref: (a) MCO 7300.22A

Encl: (1) Required Supporting Documentation

1. Description & Justification. This paragraph is used to provide a description of the conference/event and provide justification.

2. Location. This paragraph is used to describe the recommended conference site.

3. Participants & Total Cost. This paragraph is used to report the number of participants as well as the total estimated cost to include an explanation of the key elements driving the total cost.

4. Point of Contact. Name, telephone number, and email address of a point of contact for the request.

ENCLOSURE (2)

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COST ELEMENT WORKSHEET

Conference costs include all appropriated and nonappropriated fund costs paid by the Marine Corps whether paid directly or reimbursed to attendees. These costs include, but are not limited to the following:

Attendee travel/per diem costs:

- Travel to & from conference location
(includes Military Air)
- Ground transportation
(rental car, taxi, etc.)
- Per Diem

Speaker fees:

Meeting room:

Audiovisual:

Printing:

Equipment:

Communication costs:
(includes telephone & computer access)

Other conference related costs:

TOTAL

Total number of attendees:

Other decisional factors:

ENCLOSURE (3)