

## Hoover Dam Commercial Use Authorization Program Frequently Asked Questions

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### **What is a CUA?**

A commercial use authorization (CUA) allows an individual, group, company, or other for-profit entity to conduct commercial activities and provide specific visitor services at Hoover Dam. Reclamation issues CUAs to manage a wide-range of commercial visitor services, including road-based commercial tours. Other activities which would require a CUA include professional photography and filming, guided hiking and backpacking, trail runs and marathon events, bike tours, kayak and raft trips, and weddings.

### **Why does Reclamation require CUAs?**

The requirement is in 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 429.3 - It is illegal to conduct business on Reclamation lands, facilities or water bodies without a use authorization. Additionally, 43 CFR 429.1 requires Reclamation to collect application and use fees and to recover administrative costs. CUA use fees stay at Hoover Dam and are used to recover program costs, including repair and maintenance of facilities.

Reclamation has historically issued use authorizations for special events conducted at its facilities and is implementing the CUA program for Road-Based Tour Operations to bring Hoover Dam operations into compliance with regulations.

### **Do I need a CUA?**

*\*\*You may not conduct commercial activities at Hoover Dam without a valid CUA.\*\**

A CUA is required if you provide any goods, activities, services, agreements, or other function for members, clients, or the public that:

- take place at least in part on lands, waterbodies or facilities managed by Reclamation,
- use Reclamation resources, and
- result in compensation, monetary gain, benefit, or profit.

### **How does Reclamation define a road-based commercial tour operator?**

Road-based commercial tours are one or more persons traveling by vehicle on an improved roadway on an itinerary that a company or individual has packaged and priced for leisure/recreational purposes.

## **Who needs to acquire the road-based commercial tour CUA — the tour operator or the chartered motorcoach company?**

The responsibility for obtaining a road-based commercial tour CUA will fall on the company that packaged, priced, and sold the tour. A chartered motorcoach company does not need a road-based commercial tour CUA if the tour company paying for charter service determines the origin, destination, and scheduling of the trip. A charter company advertising tours to Hoover Dam, however, meets the definition of road-based commercial tour and must have a road-based commercial tour CUA.

**Example:** World Water Conference is holding its annual session in Las Vegas and wants to schedule a tour to Hoover Dam. They have chartered a bus to shuttle the visitors to the Dam; they will include a Powerplant Tour ticket in the package. Their itinerary cost includes transportation to the dam and the Powerplant Tour ticket. World Water Conference needs to apply for a CUA (\$300 one time or annual fee), and they would be responsible for the use fees for the visitors under their pre-packaged itinerary (\$5 per person on each bus), but the bus company would not be a CUA.

## **Does Reclamation differentiate commercial from non-commercial and educational visitor groups?**

Yes, non-commercial educational groups do not need to obtain a road-based commercial tour CUA. However, commercial entities who provide guided, for-profit tours to educational groups are subject to the CUA requirement.

## **If I pay at the gate, do I get to park for free in the garage?**

Operations in the Hoover Dam parking garage will not change as a result of the CUA Program. Tour buses utilizing the Hoover Dam garage will pay the published rates.

## **What about Taxi and Rideshare companies?**

Taxi and ride-share companies such as Uber and Lyft are considered transporters. The road-based tour CUA program doesn't apply to transporters.

## **Do you accept inter-park passes?**

Inter-park passes are not accepted at Hoover Dam.

## How do I apply for a CUA?

Applications and associated information, including any additional documentation requirements, are available here or at Hoover Dam. We recommend you get your complete application in as early as possible to ensure you can provide uninterrupted tour operations at Hoover Dam. Commercial operators without a CUA for Hoover Dam will not be granted entry.

## What fees do I need to pay?

- **Application Fee** - \$100 per application, as set by 43 CFR 429.
- **Administrative Cost Recovery** - \$200 per application. Administrative Costs include all costs incurred by Reclamation in processing your application and all costs associated with evaluating, issuing, monitoring, and terminating your use authorization on Reclamation land, facilities, and waterbodies.
- **Use Fee** - \$5 per person per entry. Use Fees are the amount due to Reclamation for the use of Federal land, facilities, or waterbodies under our jurisdiction or control. Use fees are distinct and separate from application fees and administrative costs.

## How are the CUA fees used?

100% of CUA fees stay at Hoover Dam and are used to recover day-to-day road-based commercial tour management and monitoring costs. Reclamation will adjust the Use Fee periodically to account for increased costs including inflation, or as regulation requires.

## How will I pay my CUA Fees?

You will submit your application and management fees when you apply for your CUA. These fees are submitted through Pay.gov.

You will pay your use fees at the Hoover Dam CUA Station through an account you establish with Hoover Dam's Parking and Ticketing contractor. After you've been approved for a CUA at Hoover Dam, you will be provided with the approved number of CUA passes for your organization. Payments may be submitted via cash, credit card or electronic payments (e.g., PayPal, Apple Pay, Android Pay, etc.).

When your tour vehicles enter Hoover Dam, the driver will present your organization's CUA identifier, which includes a passenger count. You will be charged at the gate.

## What am I responsible for after I get my CUA?

All CUA holders must comply with the Terms and Conditions of the Hoover Dam CUA. Lack of compliance can result in consequences ranging from increased management fees for your organization up to and including revocation of your CUA. For more info on Terms & Conditions and consequences, see the Hoover Dam Commercial Use Authorization Handbook.

## **When are CUA Renewals due?**

Your CUA is good for one year from the date of issuance. Renewal reminders will be sent out to each current permit holder 90 days prior to the due date. Annual Road-Based Tour CUAs will not be prorated.

## **How do road-based tours impact Hoover Dam?**

About 32,000 tour vehicles visit Hoover Dam each year. These vehicles are affiliated with commercial entities in the business of selling a variety of guided tour options. These vehicles bring about 800,000 visitors to Hoover Dam each year; these visitors utilize Hoover Dam facilities, and add to Hoover Dam's operation and maintenance costs.

Operations and maintenance costs associated with these tours include items like: parking lot and road maintenance, restrooms and other infrastructure maintenance and repair, daily cleaning and trash removal, and security and policing of facilities.

## **What are the benefits of CUAs?**

Hoover's goal is to create a sustainable program providing a high quality visitor experience. Implementing the CUA program benefits the visiting public by ensuring all operators are licensed, insured and follow the same code of conduct.

## **What is the purpose of use fees?**

Hoover Dam's visitor facilities include the Dam, all surrounding Reclamation property, portions of the Colorado River, a portion of Lake Mead, Memorial Bridge Plaza, and the road that brings people in and out of the Hoover Dam visitor area. Hoover's facilities require regular maintenance and refurbishment. Use fees will recover costs associated with the operation and maintenance of the visitor facilities.

## **Aren't I already paying for the maintenance of Hoover Dam through my tax dollars?**

Hoover Dam's authorizing public law, the Boulder Canyon Project Act, requires the dam to be financially self-sufficient. Hoover Dam's budget is approved and funded by organizations that have power contracts with Hoover Dam. These power customers have historically significantly subsidized the cost of Hoover Dam's visitor services.

## **I already pay use fees for Lake Mead National Recreation Area - why do I need to pay for access to Hoover Dam? Aren't they the same thing?**

Lake Mead National Recreation Area is operated by the National Park Service. Hoover Dam is owned and operated by the Bureau of Reclamation. They are two different facilities, each with their own set of expenses and regulations. Hoover Dam's Road-Based Tour CUA Program is

consistent with the Lake Mead National Recreation Area Program and the updated National Park Service Commercial Use Program in effect October 1, 2019.

### **Why is there so much red tape? Can't we streamline processes?**

Hoover Dam and the National Park Service are exploring a joint permit to streamline the application process, reduce permitting costs for tour operators, and improve the efficiency of the Government. Each facility (Hoover Dam and Lake Mead National Recreation Area) will collect their own Use Fees. Hoover Dam Commercial Use Fees will be retained in the Colorado River Dam Fund, as required by regulation.

### **When does the program go into effect?**

Effective October 1, 2019 - we will begin collecting Application and Administration cost recovery fees. We will begin collecting Use Fees on April 5, 2020.

### **How is the Administration Cost Recovery Fee Determined?**

The Administration Fee is set by 43 CFR 429. Administrative costs means all costs incurred by Reclamation in processing a commercial use authorization application and all costs associated with evaluating, issuing, monitoring, and terminating commercial use authorizations on Reclamation land, facilities, and waterbodies. Administrative costs are distinct and separate from application and Use Fees and typically include, but are not limited to:

- Determining the Use Fee;
- Evaluating and documenting environmental and cultural resources compliance;
- Performing applicable engineering reviews;
- Preparation of the use authorization; and
- Personnel and indirect costs directly associated with these actions.

Applicants may request a breakdown of these costs.

### **What if I don't have a CUA?**

- Your bus will stop at the checkpoint and receive the standard security inspection, then proceed to the CUA station.
- A Hoover representative will verify the number of passengers on the bus.
- You'll be billed the total of the application, administrative cost recovery, and use fees (\$300 + \$5 per person) for any bus entering Hoover Dam until you've applied for a CUA (or 7 days passes).
- Payments may be submitted via credit card or electronic payments (e.g., PayPal, Apple Pay, Android Pay, etc.).
- The bus can elect to not pay the fees and leave Hoover Dam.
- The tour operator can opt to complete the CUA application at their convenience.

***For more information contact us at HooverCUA@usbr.gov or 702-494-2106.***