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47 CFR Ch. I (10–1–22 Edition)

The license fees for affiliated channels used in determining the highest implicit fee shall reflect the prevailing company prices offered in the marketplace to third parties. If a prevailing company price does not exist, the license fee for that programming shall be priced at the programmer's cost or the fair market value, whichever is lower. The highest implicit fee shall be based on contracts in effect in the previous calendar year. The implicit fee for a contracted service may not include fees, stated or implied, for services other than the provision of channel capacity (e.g., billing and collection, marketing, or studio services). Any subscriber revenue received by a cable operator for an a la carte leased access service shall be passed through to the leased access programmer.

(h)(1) Cable system operators shall provide prospective leased access programmers with the following information within 30 calendar days of the date on which a bona fide request for leased access information is made, provided that the programmer has remitted any application fee that the cable system operator requires up to a maximum of \$100 per system-specific bona fide request:

- (i) How much of the operator's leased access set-aside capacity is available;
- (ii) A complete schedule of the operator's full-time leased access rates;
- (iii) Rates associated with technical and studio costs; and
- (iv) If specifically requested, a sample leased access contract.

(2) Operators of systems subject to small system relief shall provide the information required in paragraph (h)(1) of this section within 45 calendar days of a bona fide request from a prospective leased access programmer. For these purposes, systems subject to small system relief are systems that either:

- (i) Qualify as small systems under § 76.901(c) and are owned by a small cable company as defined under § 76.901(e); or

- (ii) Have been granted special relief.

(3) Bona fide requests, as used in this section, are defined as requests from potential leased access programmers that have provided the following information:

- (i) The desired length of a contract term;

- (ii) The anticipated commencement date for carriage; and

- (iii) The nature of the programming,

(4) All requests for leased access must be made in writing and must specify the date on which the request was sent to the operator.

(5) Operators shall maintain, for Commission inspection, sufficient supporting documentation to justify the scheduled rates, including supporting contracts, calculations of the implicit fees, and justifications for all adjustments.

(6) Cable system operators shall disclose on their own websites, or through alternate means if they do not have their own websites, a contact name or title, telephone number, and email address for the person responsible for responding to requests for information about leased access channels.

(i) Cable operators are permitted to negotiate rates below the maximum rates permitted in paragraphs (c) through (g) of this section.

[78 FR 20256, Apr. 4, 2013, as amended at 84 FR 28768, June 20, 2019; 85 FR 51367, Aug. 20, 2020]

§ 76.971 Commercial leased access terms and conditions.

(a)(1) Cable operators shall place leased access programmers that request access to a tier actually used by most subscribers on any tier that has a subscriber penetration of more than 50 percent, unless there are technical or other compelling reasons for denying access to such tiers.

(2) Cable operators shall be permitted to make reasonable selections when placing leased access channels at specific channel locations. The Commission will evaluate disputes involving channel placement on a case-by-case basis and will consider any evidence that an operator has acted unreasonably in this regard.

(3) On systems with available leased access capacity sufficient to satisfy current leased access demand, cable operators shall be required to accommodate as expeditiously as possible all leased access requests for programming that is not obscene or indecent. On systems with insufficient available leased

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access capacity to satisfy current leased access demand, cable operators shall be permitted to select from among leased access programmers using objective, content-neutral criteria.

(b) Cable operators may not apply programming production standards to leased access that are any higher than those applied to public, educational and governmental access channels.

(c) Cable operators are required to provide unaffiliated leased access users the minimal level of technical support necessary for users to present their material on the air, and may not unreasonably refuse to cooperate with a leased access user in order to prevent that user from obtaining channel capacity. Leased access users must reimburse operators for the reasonable cost of any technical support actually provided by the operator that is beyond that provided for non-leased access programmers on the system. A cable operator may charge leased access programmers for the use of technical equipment that is provided at no charge for public, educational and governmental access programming, provided that the operator's franchise agreement requires it to provide the equipment and does not preclude such use, and the equipment is not being used for any other non-leased access programming. Cable operators that are required to purchase technical equipment in order to accommodate a leased access programmer shall have the option of either requiring the leased access programmer to pay the full purchase price of the equipment, or purchasing the equipment and leasing it to the leased access programmer at a reasonable rate. Leased access programmers that are required to pay the full purchase price of additional equipment shall have all rights of ownership associated with the equipment under applicable state and local law.

(d) Cable operators may require reasonable security deposits or other assurances from users who are unable to prepay in full for access to leased commercial channels. Cable operators may impose reasonable insurance requirements on leased access programmers. Cable operators shall bear the burden of proof in establishing reasonableness.

(e) Cable operators may not set terms and conditions for commercial leased access use based on content, *except*:

(1) To the limited extent necessary to establish a reasonable price for the commercial use of designated channel capacity by an unaffiliated person; or

(2) To comply with 47 U.S.C. 532 (h), (j) and § 76.701.

(f)(1) A cable operator shall provide billing and collection services for commercial leased access cable programmers, unless the operator demonstrates the existence of third party billing and collection services which in terms of cost and accessibility, offer leased access programmers an alternative substantially equivalent to that offered to comparable non-leased access programmers.

(2) If an operator can make the showing required in paragraph (f)(1) of this section, it must, to the extent technically feasible make available data necessary to enable a third party to bill and collect for the leased access user.

(g) Cable operators shall not unreasonably limit the length of leased access contracts. The termination provisions of leased access contracts shall be commercially reasonable and may not allow operators to terminate leased access contracts without a reasonable basis.

(h) Cable operators may not prohibit the resale of leased access capacity to persons unaffiliated with the operator, but may provide in their leased access contracts that any sublessees will be subject to the non-price terms and conditions that apply to the initial lessee, and that, if the capacity is resold, the rate for the capacity shall be the maximum permissible rate.

[58 FR 29753, May 21, 1993, as amended at 61 FR 16401, Apr. 15, 1996; 62 FR 11381, Mar. 12, 1997; 84 FR 28769, June 20, 2019]

§ 76.975 Commercial leased access dispute resolution.

(a) Any person aggrieved by the failure or refusal of a cable operator to make commercial channel capacity available in accordance with the provisions of Title VI of the Communications Act may bring an action in the district court of the United States for the Judicial district in which the cable