Pay for Proposal FAQs

1. Why is BNSF changing the current proposal system?
BNSF is creating the Pay-for-Proposal system to keep in line with industry standards. The system is designed to help encourage the submission of accurate dimensional data at the time of pre-clearance request and aid in reducing the turn time for responses to clearance.

2. What benefit will I, the shipper, realize by paying for a proposal?
Once the system is in full operation, we anticipate turn time for clearance requests will be greatly reduced.

3. What will the charge be for requesting a pre-clearance?
The charge will be $1,000 per request. However, if the request results in an actual load moving on the BNSF within one (1) year of an approved pre-clearance, the shipper is eligible to receive a full refund.

4. What forms of payment will BNSF accept?
Customers who have credit established with BNSF have the option of being billed or using credit cards (Visa or MasterCard) as forms of payment at the time of pre-clearance submission. Customers without credit with BNSF will be required to pay with a credit card.

5. How many proposals will I receive per payment?
The proposal is good for only one origin/destination pair.

6. How many revisions can I make to each proposal?
For $1,000, the shipper will be able to submit the initial pre-clearance request and may make any number of changes, excluding the origin/destination and shipper name, while still in a 'Submitted' status. Once in "Working" status, the shipper will be able to make two additional changes to length, width, height, and weight. Any changes beyond these will require a new clearance proposal and a new charge of $1,000.

7. What happens if my credit card is declined?
If the credit card is declined, the submission will not be completed and the shipper will be notified.

8. How will regrets be handled in a pay-for-proposal system?
If a shipment is unable to be cleared, acceptable cleared dimensions will be provided for the shipper to attempt to meet the defined window.

9. How do I apply for my refund?
If your shipment meets the defined criteria for a refund, you will need to follow two key steps to ensure you receive your refund: 1) Enter your pre-clearance proposal number on the waybill prior to the shipment; 2) Initiate your refund request through eCash tool within 90 days for submitting your waybill.

9A . Where do I find the eCash tool?
The eCash invoice system can be accessed through our online customer portal. After logging in, you'll find the eCash link under the "Finance" header. If you don't see the eCash link, you will need to click on the "Request Access" link in the upper-left corner of the page.

10. In what form will I receive my refund?
Refunds will be either through electronic deposit to the shipper's bank account or check. Refunds will not be issued to the credit card.

11. How quickly will my refund be processed?
Refunds will be processed within 15 days of receipt.

12. How many refund requests can I make per proposal?
Only one (1) refund is allowed per proposal.

13. Will BNSF charge for interline proposals?
Yes. BNSF will charge for interline proposals originating on the BNSF but continue to pre-clear through to final rail destination with our connecting carriers.

14. How long is my Dimensional Clearance Request valid with BNSF?
Dimensional pre-clearances are valid up to one year from the date of approval.

15. What if my proposal doesn't become a load within 365 days from the date of request?
If the pre-clearance does not result in a load within one (1) year of the approved date, a new pre-clearance request must be submitted and subject to the charge of $1,000.

16. Will the Dimensional Clearance Request form change?
No. There are no changes to the clearance request form itself but the 'Estimated Ship Date' will now be a required field.

17. Will the Dimensional Equipment Request form change?
The equipment request form will remain unchanged. BNSF will continue to require a valid pre-clearance for an equipment order to be filled.

18. How will a refund be handled if someone else pays the freight?
The party who submitted the request is the party that requests and receives the refund.

19. Can I trace the status of my refund using BNSF eTools?
All pre-clearance refunds will be handled through the e-Cash system. Status updates can be viewed from the List Invoice screen of eCash.

20. How will BNSF handle refunds when the shipper requests to transfer clearance information from one party to another?
The requestor of the pre-clearance is responsible for the refund.

21. Am I still charged if my dimensional shipment is not able to clear?
Yes. However, acceptable cleared dimensions will be provided for the shipper to attempt to meet the defined window. If the shipper is able to meet these defined clearance and a load results, the shipper will be eligible for the refund.

22. Will I have to pay each time I ship using my approved clearance?
No. The $1,000 fee is for the initial clearance and an unlimited number of loads may be shipped on the clearance provided there are no changes in weight, dimensions, origin or destination.

23. What happens to my refund if I cancel my credit card used to submit payment to BNSF?
Refunds are made via electronic deposit or check. Refunds are not posted to the credit card and, therefore, will not be affected if the card is closed. However, if the credit card is canceled before payment is received, then services will not be rendered and therefore a refund will not be available.

24. Will I be required to pay for Dimensional Clearance Requests originating on other railroads?
Interline clearance requests are submitted with the originating rail carrier. The clearance request is subject to each individual railroad's terms and conditions for movement.

25. When is payment due for my Dimensional Clearance Request form?
Payment is required at the time the clearance is requested.

26. Will all of my previously submitted clearance requests be lost?
No. All clearance requests will be converted to the new system and do not have to be re-entered.