

**Administration of U.S. Certified Accounting Authorities in Maritime Mobile  
and Maritime Mobile-Satellite Radio Services, FCC Forms 44 and 45**

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT**

**A. Justification.**

1. Title 47 CFR Part 3 establishes rules related to the administration of accounting authorities.
  - (a) The rules are required to ensure adherence to international telecommunications settlement procedures.
  - (b) The collection requirements provide information necessary for the FCC to determine whether an applicant is qualified to act as an accounting authority.

***Background:***

The FCC has standards for accounting authorities in the maritime mobile and maritime-satellite radio services.<sup>1</sup> The Commission will use the Information to determine eligibility of applicants for certification as an accounting authority, to monitor activity, to insure compliance, and to identify accounting authorities to the International Telecommunications Union. Respondents are entities seeking certification or those already certified to be accounting authorities.

47 CFR § 3.10 requires applicants to meet the requirements and conditions contained in the Part 3 rules in order to be certified as an accounting authority.

- (a) No individual or other entity, including accounting authorities approved by other administrations, may act as an United States accounting authority and settle accounts of U.S. licensed vessels in the maritime mobile or maritime mobile-satellite services without a certification from the FCC.
- (b) Accounting authorities with interim certification as of the effective date of this rule must submit to the application process discussed in 47 CFR § 3.20. These accounting authorities will be “grandfathered” into this process, *i.e.*, granted permanent certification provided they demonstrate their eligibility and present a proper application.
- (c) Applicants must provide formal financial statements or documentation proving all assets, liabilities, income, and expenses.
- (d) Applicants must also provide any additional information that the Commission deems necessary.

Applicants must offer their services to any member of the public making a reasonable request therefore, without undue discrimination against any customer or class of customer, and fees charged from providing such services shall be reasonable and non-discriminatory.

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<sup>1</sup> On July 13, 1999, the FCC adopted a *Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, In the Matter of 1998 Biennial Regulatory Review—Review of Accounts Settlement in the Maritime Mobile and Maritime Mobile-Satellite Radio Services and Withdrawal of the Commission as an Accounting Authority in the Maritime Mobile and Maritime Mobile-Satellite Radio Services, IB Docket No. 98-96, FCC 99-150, in which the Commission proposed to withdraw the FCC from its role as a nationwide clearinghouse for settling accounts for maritime mobile, maritime satellite, aircraft, and handheld terminal radio services. However, this proposal was never finalized, and the FCC continues to assume its role as a nationwide clearinghouse.

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- (a) The FCC will waive this requirement for applicants who settle their own accounts only and are eligible to be “grandfathered” during the initial application period.
- (b) Should the need for additional accounting authorities be proven, accounting authorities will be required, however, to offer their services to the public or relinquish their certification.

47 CFR § 3.28 details the reasons for denial of accounting authority privileges.

47 CFR § 3.29 states that the Commission will publish the name of an applicant in a Public Notice before granting certification and will invite informal public comment on the qualifications of the applicant from any interested parties.

- (a) The FCC will publish a Public Notice listing the names and addresses of all newly certified accounting authorities.
- (b) The FCC will also notify the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) within 30 days of any changes to its approved list of accounting authorities.

47 CFR § 3.50 requires accounting authorities to maintain, for the purpose of compliance with these rules, all settlement records for a period of at least seven (7) years following settlement of an account with a foreign administration or agent.

47 CFR § 3.51 states that the FCC must be notified immediately should any accounting authority plan to relinquish its certification or cease to perform settlements as authorized.

- (a) Additionally, the Commission must be advised in advance of any proposed transfer of control of an accounting authority’s firm or organization, by any means, to another entity.
- (b) The applicant must certify acceptance of all accounts and must furnish a list of the accounts to the Commission at the time of application.

47 CFR § 3.52 requires accounting authorities to maintain procedures for resolving complaints and/or inquiries from its contractual customers (vessels for which it performs settlements), the FCC, the ITU, and foreign administrations or their agents.

- (a) These procedures must be available to the Commission upon request.
- (b) If an account is in dispute, the Commission will determine the amount due the foreign administration, recognized operating agency or accounting authority and may direct the accounting authority to pay the accounts to a foreign administration.
- (c) If the accounting authority does not pay the disputed accounts within a reasonable timeframe, the Commission may take action to levy a forfeiture, cancel the AAIC<sup>2</sup> privilege and/or to revoke any operating authority or licenses held by that accounting authority, *see* 47 CFR § 3.72.

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<sup>2</sup> AAIC is the Accounting authority identification code (AAIC).

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47 CFR § 3.53 requires an accounting authority to inform the FCC immediately should it receive notice from any source that a foreign administration or facility is refusing or plans to refuse legitimate public correspondence to or from any U.S. registered vessel.

47 CFR § 3.54 requires that the Commission be notified in writing within 15 days of any change in address of an accounting authority.

The FCC Forms 44 and 45 were modified to include the FCC Registration Number (FRN).

In addition, the Commission received blanket OMB approval to add the FRN to all of our application forms as they have come up for expiration.<sup>3</sup>

The statutory authorities for this collection of information are Sections 4(i), 4(j), 11, 201-205, and 303(r) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, 47 U.S.C. 154(i), 154(j), 161, 201-205, and 303(r).

2. The Commission will use the data in this information collection:
  - (a) to determine the eligibility of applicants for certification as accounting authorities,
  - (b) to monitor settlement activities to ensure compliance, and
  - (c) to identify accounting authorities to the International Telecommunications Union for disclosure in their List of Ship Stations Report.
3. The Commission believes that most accounting authority respondents will prepare their applications for certification manually.

At present, the Commission has no plans to implement mandatory electronic filing for this collection. The Commission does not wish to restrict respondents' methods for providing the necessary data, and will accept applications that include diskettes and/or electronic mail formats.

The Commission also makes the application forms available on the FCC Internet website at [www.fcc.forms](http://www.fcc.forms).

4. The Commission does not impose any similar information collection requirements on the public.
5. In conformance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Commission has made a diligent effort to minimize the burden on all respondents, including small businesses. The Commission has limited the information collection requirements to those that are necessary for evaluating and processing the certification applications and to ensure compliance with the accounting regulations for maritime mobile and maritime mobile-satellite radio services.
6. 47 CFR § 3.72 sets forth the reasons for further enforcement action.
  - (a) This action may include forfeiture, suspension, or cancellation of an accounting authority certification, if the Commission determines that the public interest requires such.

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<sup>3</sup> See OMB Control Number 3060-0728.

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- (b) Establishment of this collection will help to minimize the U.S. Government's liability for failure by an accounting authority to perform the settlement process satisfactorily.
  - (c) Failure to pay foreign countries or agents amounts that are due them can result in a denial of communications between U.S. licensed ships, possibly affecting commercial enterprises and/or U.S. security.
7. As noted above, 47 CFR § 3.50 requires accounting authorities to maintain, for the purpose of compliance with these rules, all settlement records for a period of at least seven (7) years following settlement of an account with a foreign administration or agent.
- (a) The purpose of this requirement is to be in a position to audit the financial records of registered accounting authorities.
  - (b) General guidelines recommend that businesses retain certain financial records for at least seven years for audit purposes.
- Otherwise, the Commission is not aware of any circumstances that would create any information collection requirements not consistent with the PRA's general requirements under 5 CFR § 1320.5.
8. The Commission initiated a 60 day public comment period with publication of a Notice in the *Federal Register* on January 26, 2009, 74 FR 4436. The Commission received no comments in response to publication of this Notice.
9. Respondents will not receive any payments or gifts.
10. Under 47 CFR § 3.62, applicants should comply with 47 CFR § 0.459 of FCC Rules when requesting confidentiality since the Commission does not offer confidentiality automatically.
11. This information collection does not address any issues of a sensitive nature.
12. The Commission makes the following estimates:
- (a) The administration may certify only 25 accounting authorities.
  - (b) At present, there are 21 accounting authorities that have "permanent status."
  - (c) There are four (4) accounting authority vacancies.

**Total Number of Respondents:** 25 respondents

21 certified authorities + 4 authority vacancies = 25 accounting authorities

**Total Number of Responses Annually:** 150 responses

25 accounting authorities x 1 Form 44 certification application/annum = 25 responses/annum

25 accounting authorities x 1 Form 45 settlement report/annum = 25 responses/annum

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25 accounting authorities x 2 semi-annual collections/annum = 50 responses/annum

Reporting requirements: 25 + 25 + 50 = 100 responses/annum

Recordkeeping: 25 accounting authorities x 1 recordkeeping = 25 recordkeeping requirements

3<sup>rd</sup> party disclosure: 25 accounting authorities x 1 3<sup>rd</sup> party disclosure = 25 3<sup>rd</sup> party disclosures

Total: 100 + 25 + 25 = 150 responses/annum

(d) The Commission estimates that the average burden on each Form 44 certification applicant is three (3) hours:

25 accounting authorities x 3 hours/application = 75 hours

(e) There are 25 (annual) estimated Form 45 settlement activity reports.

(f) The Commission estimates that the settlement activity requires one (1) hour:

25 collections x 1 hour/collection activity/year = 25 hours

(g) There are 50 semi-annual collections for inventory changes—each accounting authority submits two reports/annum.

(h) The Commission estimates that an inventory change requires one (1) hour:

50 semi-annual collections x 1 hour/semi-annual collections = 50 hours

**Total Annual Hourly Burden:** 75 hours + 25 hours + 50 hours = **150 hours**

The Commission believes that of this total annual hourly burden:

(a) reporting component requires 90% (0.90):

25 hours x 0.90 = 135 hours

(b) recordkeeping 5% (0.05); and

25 hours x 0.05 = 7.5 hours

(c) 3<sup>rd</sup> party disclosure 5% (0.05):

25 hours x 0.05 = 7.5 hours

Total: 135 + 7.5 + 7.5 = 150 hours

(i) The Commission estimates that respondents will perform all these activities using “in house” accounting and audit staff, equivalent to a GS-13/Step 5 (\$47.36/hour) in the Federal GS Salary Schedule plus 30% overhead.

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**Total "In House" Staff Costs: \$9,236.06**

150 hours x \$47.36/hour = \$7,104.66  
 30% overhead = \$2,131.40  
 Total: \$9,236.06

13. The Commission notes that the accounting authorities are required to submit formal financial statements to the FCC along with their annual Form 45 submission. We believe that these accounting authorities will choose to have an independent auditing firm prepare the financial statements.

(a) Total annualized capital/startup costs: None

(b) Total annual costs (O&M): None

The Commission believes that the independent auditing firms will charge their customers approximately \$150.00/hour to prepare the annual financial statements. We also believe that it requires approximately 100 hours to review the firm's financial records and prepare the statements.

25 accounting authorities x 1 set of financial statements/authority x \$150.00/hour x 100 hours = \$375,000

(c) Total annualized cost requested: **\$375,000**

14. The Commission uses two different staff to review these occasional, semi-annual, and annual certification applications and settlement reports:

Financial specialist/accountant, GS-13/Step 5 (\$47.36/hour) plus 30% overhead:

(a) We estimate that reviewing the Form 44 certification applications requires two (2) hours:

25 applications x 2 hours/review x \$47.365/hour = \$2,368.22  
 30% overhead = \$ 710.47  
 Total: \$3,078.69

(b) We estimate that reviewing the annual Form 45 settlement activity reports requires two (2) hours:

25 applications x 2 hours/review x \$47.365/hour = \$94.73  
 30% overhead = \$28.42  
 Total: \$123.15

Financial specialist/accountant, GS-12/Step 5 (\$40.31/hour) plus 30% overhead:

(c) 50 changes to inventory x 1 hour/review = \$4,031.01  
 30% overhead = \$1,209.30  
 Total: \$5,240.31

**Total Cost to Federal Government: \$3,078.69 + \$123.15 + \$5,240.31 = \$8,442.15**

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15. The Commission notes the following:

- (a) The total number of respondents remains the same as in the previous submission.
- (b) The total number of responses has increased from 100 to 150, to conform to the ROCIS calculation matrix.
- (c) The total hourly burden has been disaggregated into the reporting, recordkeeping, and third party disclosure components to conform to the ROCIS calculation matrix.

There are no other adjustments.

There are no program changes.

16. The data will not be published for statistical uses.

17. The Commission requests OMB approval not to display the expiration date for OMB approval on FCC Forms 44 and 45. This will allow the Commission to continue to use the current stock of these forms instead of discarding the forms due to OMB expiration date changes or revisions to the expiration date on the electronic version of the forms.

18. The Commission notes that it has made the following revisions from what were reported in the 60 day *Federal Register* Notice:

- (a) the total number of responses had increased from 100 to 150 responses; and
- (b) there is a recordkeeping requirement that was not listed in the FR Notice.

There are no other exceptions to the Certification Statement.

**B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods.**

This information collection does not use any statistical methods.