

Commodity Flow Survey (CFS) Cognitive Interview Protocol (DRAFT)

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Research Questions

- Are the physical location and mailing address the same?
- Is the shipment ID number helpful for respondents when drawing their own sample?
- Do respondent records track temperature controlled modes of transportation?
- Are shipments time sensitive and how often are expedited services used?

General Probes

- In your own words, what was that question asking?
- What are you thinking about?
- Can you tell me more about that?
- You answered, “...” because...?
- I want to make sure I understand, can you explain that again?
- Can you tell me how you arrived at that answer? What did you include? What did you exclude? What records did you use?
- Reflect back on R’s answer and ask R to correct (“I want to make sure I have it right. I think you said, “...?””)

Before the Questionnaire

- Tell me a little about your role in this business. How long have you been here, and what are your major responsibilities?
- Have you filled out government forms in the past?
- Generally speaking, how do government forms get completed?
- Shipping records:
 - o What do they look like?
 - o What information is contained within them?
 - o How your shipping records are kept? (Are they paper-based or spreadsheet-based? If paper based, do they get lost or misplaced and how are they stored? What system do you use for creating spreadsheets? Are records in more than one format?)
 - o Are they easily accessible or is there a process you need to go through in order to access them? Who has access to these records?

- o How are they filed (by date, customer, product, something else)?
- o How long do you keep the records on hand?

Now I'm going to hand you a copy of the questionnaire. We'll go through it page by page. Please write on it, and complete it as if we weren't here. I'll ask you questions when you've finished each page.

Item A – Verification of Physical Location

- Observe R to see if they have to make corrections. Probe as necessary.

Item B – Mailing Address

- Observe R to see if they have to enter a different mailing address. Probe as necessary.

Item C – Operating Status

- How did you arrive at your answer to this question?
- How easy or difficult was it to come up with your response to this question?

Item D – Total Number of Outbound Shipments

- How did you arrive at your answers to this question? What records, if any, do you consult in order to come up with an answer?
- How easy or difficult was it for you to answer this question?
- Did you happen to notice the definition of an outbound shipment?
 - o How well or how poorly does this definition match your own definition of “outbound shipment”?
 - o If R didn't read the definition before providing an answer: does this definition change your answer? In what ways? Does it change the process that you would use to come up with an answer?
- Did you happen to notice the instructions after the response options in the second question?

Item E – Sampling Instructions

- Observe how R works through Item E. Note if they have difficulty working through the item.
- **Report every:** How did you come up with your “report every” number?
- **Instructions:** Can you tell me in your own words what the instructions under the chart are asking you to do?
- **Example:** Did you read the example? Did the example help to clarify the instruction or make them more difficult? Is there a better way to help you understand the instruction in Item E?

Item F – Shipment Characteristics

- Ask Rs to complete 2-3 lines of shipment data on Item F, using their own data. Observe Rs navigation and completion of pages 4-5. Are Rs following the arrows across the page or are they completing page 4 before starting page 5?
 - **Column A:** Does the shipment ID number help you in the process of drawing your sample? How so? How so? If you were contacted by someone at Census, who asked you about one of the shipments you reported, would the shipment ID number be helpful to you?
 - **Column D:** If R says “don’t know value,” ask about range/approximation.
 - **Column F:** How helpful is the SCTG code manual? How easy/difficult was it for you to find the codes you were looking for? What do you think of the way the codes are organized? Do you have any suggestions for improvement?
 - **Column I:** How did you arrive at your answer? Is this information available within your shipping records or not?
 - **Columns J and N:** How do you track the modes? Do you know if the modes vary within shipments? What does your answer represent (just when it left the facility vs. all modes until it reaches recipient?) What do each of the transport codes mean to you?
 - Are outbound shipments from this establishment the result of repackaged or redistributed goods that were imported to this establishment?
 - Do you have shipments to Canadian provinces or Mexican states? Do your records track information for these locations? If so, what information is tracked? Would you know the postal/zip codes?
 - Transportation costs at the establishment level, “for-hire truck” or “private truck,” probe what types of costs R are typically included? Do your records track this information? How is it tracked (e.g. – annual basis)? Is this information found in the same records that you would use to complete the columns in Item F? If your records do not track this information, how would you go about finding out the answer?

Item G – Monthly Value of Outbound Shipments

- How did you come up with this answer? (Records? Estimate? “Usual” month?)
- What period of time does this amount refer to?
- What does “most recently completed month” mean to you, in the context of this question?

Item H – Time Sensitivity

- How did you arrive at your answer? What does “time sensitive” mean to you?
- If any of these services are used, probe why they were used. What kinds of commodities were moved by expedited services? How was it determined which commodities should be expedited?
- Is this information tracked in your records? If yes, how so?
- How easy/difficult was it for you to determine the percentage?

Wrap-up

- How much time would it take you to complete this report (actual time, not elapsed time)?
- Are you the person who would probably answer these questions, or would someone else answer them?
- Would the information requested on this form generally be available to you, or would information have to come from someplace else?
 - How would you go about getting that information?
 - Would you pass the form over to that department, or just get information from them over the phone/e-mail?
- Overall, how easy or difficult was it to complete this form?
- Any other comments?