



U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Justice Programs


*Bureau of Justice Statistics*


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Washington, D.C. 20531

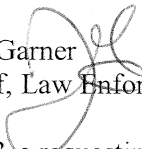
August 23, 2010

**MEMORANDUM TO:** Lynn Bryant  
Deputy Program Manager, PRA  
Information Management and Security Staff  
Justice Management Division

**THROUGH:** James Lynch   
Director

Allen Beck   
Senior Statistical Advisor

Michael Sinclair   
Deputy Director

**FROM:** Joel Garner   
Chief, Law Enforcement Statistics

Please find attached OMB Form 83-c requesting non-substantive changes to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) currently approved Arrest-Related Deaths CJ-11A instrument (OMB # 1121-0249 expiring 12/31/2012). BJS is requesting these changes to the form for use in the 2010 and 2011 data collection cycles. For 2010, the data collection form will be sent to the respondents after these revisions are finalized for the deaths occurring during the process of arrest throughout 2010. BJS plans to use the same form with the proposed changes for 2011. BJS is in the process of a re-design for the program and may implement a new data collection strategy in 2012 or 2013 to necessitate additional changes.

The requested changes to this instrument are based on recent advice received by BJS from an expert panel. More than a dozen law enforcement managers, medical examiners, state reporting agents and law enforcement researchers attended a meeting to provide recommendations for improving this data collection program. Although other issues were considered at this meeting, two data collection issues were of particular concern to the participants — the source of information about the cause of death and the manner in which we ask about the criminal behavior committed by the deceased. BJS determined that we would address these two concerns with some minor revisions to the 2010 data collection instrument.

To ensure that these two proposed changes function as expected, BJS discussed them with six of the current state reporting agents. We also discussed with them the addition of some clarifying language and new response codes for several existing questions (see below). The agents reported that the proposed changes eliminated the confusion with the prior wording and helped to clarify the source of the crucial information about cause of death. They did not think the proposed changes to the new instrument would modify the existing level of respondent burden.

BJS views the proposed changes to be minor and has determined that the changes do not increase the burden on respondents. As a result, BJS is requesting OMB approval for a non-substantive change to the instrument in order to implement these revisions as soon as possible.

Each of the specific changes to the data collection instruments are described in detail below. We have attached a copy of the 2009 instrument and the proposed 2010 instrument with the changes highlighted to facilitate the review process.

#### Changes to the Instrument:

1. Question 5: We added a category to permit the reporting of age when the actual date of birth is unknown.
2. Question 8: We dropped the screener and replaced it with a direct request that became the new Question 10.
3. Questions 11 and 12: We changed the format of questions 11 and 12 to ask about “offenses committed” by the deceased rather than “charges filed.” The original questions requested that the respondents indicate whether charges had been or would have been filed against the deceased and, if so, what was the nature of these charges. The terminology used in these questions are not relevant in many jurisdictions. Law enforcement officers, typically, do not “file charges.”
4. Question 13: This did not account for alcohol or drug-related deaths. To address this issue, we incorporated an “alcohol/drug-related death” response code, dropped the “both” option, and requested that the respondents mark all categories that apply.
5. Question 15: We have included the “firearm discharge” as a response option and added the phrase “by law enforcement officers.”
6. Question 18: At the recommendation of law enforcement officials, we have added a conditional phrase and replaced the previous single response option of “none” with two response options, “don’t know” and “not applicable.”
7. Question 19: We revised one response code to better capture the location where death was pronounced as “dead on arrival.”
8. Lastly, we used consistent categories for “don’t know”, “none of the above” and “not applicable” throughout the document and corrected a typographical error in the burden statement.

Please direct questions related to this request to Joel Garner, Chief, Law Enforcement Statistics Unit, at 202-305-2682 or by email at [Joel.Garner@usdoj.gov](mailto:Joel.Garner@usdoj.gov).

#### Attachments