

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT  
NORTHEAST REGION VESSEL IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS  
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0350**

**A. JUSTIFICATION**

**1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.**

This request is for renewal of this information collection.

Regulations at [50 CFR 648.8](#) and [697.8](#) require that vessels over 25 feet in registered length, with Federal permits to fish in the Northeast, display the vessel's name and official number. The success of fisheries management programs depends upon regulatory compliance. The vessel identification requirement, which is required of all federally permitted fishing vessels in the Northeast region, is essential to facilitate enforcement. The ability to link fishing or other activity to a vessel owner or operator is crucial to the enforcement of regulations issued under the authority of the [Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act](#) (MSA). By being able to identify vessels, enforcement personnel can easily identify Federal permit holders that are fishing in restricted areas and/or during restricted times.

**2. Explain how, by whom, how frequently, and for what purpose the information will be used. If the information collected will be disseminated to the public or used to support information that will be disseminated to the public, then explain how the collection complies with all applicable Information Quality Guidelines.**

The vessel name and number must be affixed to the port and starboard sides of the deckhouse or hull, and on an appropriate weather deck so as to be visible from enforcement vessels and aircraft. This identification allows law enforcement personnel, including the United States Coast Guard (USCG), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Office of Law Enforcement (OLE), and state marine patrols, to ascertain whether the vessel's observed activities are in accordance with those authorized for that vessel. Concerned fishermen also use the number to report suspicious activities that they observe. Fishermen ultimately benefit, as unauthorized and illegal fishing is deterred, which reduces the need for more restrictive fishing regulations.

The information collected will not be disseminated to the public, as it consists solely of marking gear and/or vessels with the appropriate vessel or permit number. This information is not submitted to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

**3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological techniques or other forms of information technology.**

This identification requirement facilitates the visual identification of fishing vessels. Although technologies have been developed to electronically identify and monitor vessels, this form of vessel identification is indispensable. The visual collection of the vessel identification characters by law enforcement personnel may involve binoculars or other sight enhancement technology.

**4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.**

There is no duplication of this requirement with other collections by NOAA Fisheries. However, the USCG, and many states, require the same identification of vessel name and official number. These requirements are complementary and do not create additional nor duplicative requirements.

**5. If the collection of information involves small businesses or other small entities, describe the methods used to minimize burden.**

Nearly all the commercial fishing vessels subject to this information collection are categorized as small businesses. It is not anticipated that the information collection will have any significant impact on the operations of small businesses.

**6. Describe the consequences to the Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently.**

If commercial fishing vessels were not identifiable by NMFS, USCG, or any other cooperating enforcement agency the ability to enforce fishery regulations would be significantly impaired. The requirements of this collection are only repeated once the identification markings become illegible.

**7. Explain any special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.**

No special circumstances require the collections to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidelines.

**8. Provide information on the PRA Federal Register Notice that solicited public comments on the information collection prior to this submission. Summarize the public comments received in response to that notice and describe the actions taken by the agency in response to those comments. Describe the efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.**

A Federal Register Notice published on February 18, 2011 (76 FR 9550) solicited public comments. No comments were received.

The regulatory process also ensured public comment when the requirements were initially proposed.

**9. Explain any decisions to provide payments or gifts to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.**

No payments or gifts are provided to respondents as part of this collection.

**10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.**

Vessel identification is not considered confidential information and thus no confidentiality is provided.

**11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.**

No sensitive questions are asked as a part of this collection.

**12. Provide an estimate in hours of the burden of the collection of information.**

The commercial fishing vessel's name and official number must be displayed at a specified size on the port and starboard sides of the deckhouse or hull and on a weather deck. It is estimated that each vessel will require 45 minutes to display (paint) the identification on the vessel. This information is expected to need to be touched-up or repainted on an annual basis. Table 1 provides a summary of annual burden for vessel identification. This comes to approximately 3,690 hours (45 min x 4,920 vessels).

**13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to the respondents or record-keepers resulting from the collection (excluding the value of the burden hours in Question 12 above).**

The cost to the respondents is minimal. Materials needed are paint and paintbrush, and possibly a stencil. The cost of paint each year for re-painting or repairs can be estimated to be \$10 per respondent. It is anticipated that repainting or repairs would occur annually due to natural weathering of the paint, with a total expenditure of \$49,200. Table 1 provides a summary of annual costs for vessel identification.

**14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government.**

There are no costs attributed to the Federal government resulting from this collection.

**15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments.**

The number of respondents, federally permitted commercial fishing vessels, has been adjusted downward by 1,080 respondents due to the current number of permitted vessels currently listed in the permit database that are greater than or equal to 25 feet in overall length. The total number of respondents is now estimated to be 4,920 entities per year.

**16. For collections whose results will be published, outline the plans for tabulation and publication.**

This collection will not produce any results that will be published.

**17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons why display would be inappropriate.**

This information collection does not utilize any forms to display the OMB approval expiration date.

**18. Explain each exception to the certification statement.**

There are no exemptions.

**B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS**

This collection does not employ statistical methods.

**Table 1.** Final Cost Table

<b>Collection</b>	<b>Number of Entities</b>	<b>Items per Entity</b>	<b>Total Number of Items</b>	<b>Cost of Materials per vessel</b>	<b>Total Cost of Materials</b>	<b>Response Time</b>	<b>Total Burden (Hours)</b>
Vessel Identification requirements	4,920	1	4,920	\$10	\$49,200	45 minutes	3,690