

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
U.S. Department of Commerce
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Institute of Standards and Technology
Joplin, MO Tornado Public Warnings and Response Interviews
OMB Control No. XXXX-XXXX

A. JUSTIFICATION

This is an expedited review request in order to proceed with the Joplin, MO Tornado Public Warnings and Response Interviews. NIST is requesting approval by August 19, 2011.

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

The National Construction Safety Team Act (Act), 15 U.S.C. 7301 et seq., authorizes the Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) to establish investigative Teams (Teams) to assess building performance and emergency response and evacuation procedures in the wake of any building failure that has resulted in substantial loss of life or that posed significant potential of substantial loss of life. The purpose of investigations by Teams is to improve the safety and structural integrity of buildings in the United States. As stated in the statute, a Team will (1) Establish the likely technical cause or causes of the building failure; (2) evaluate the technical aspects of evacuation and emergency response procedures; (3) recommend, as necessary, specific improvements to building standards, codes, and practices based on the findings made pursuant to (1) and (2); and (4) recommend any research and other appropriate actions needed to improve the structural safety of buildings, and improve evacuation and emergency response procedures, based on the findings of the investigation.

NIST sent a preliminary reconnaissance team to study the tornado that touched down in Joplin, MO, on May 22, 2011. Based on the recommendations of the reconnaissance team and evaluation of the criteria listed in the Act, specifically in 15 CFR 270.102, the Director of the NIST established a Team to study the effects of the tornado on June 29, 2011.

There are five main objectives of this technical study:

1. Determine the tornado hazard characteristics and associated wind fields in the context of historical data.
2. Determine the pattern, location, and cause of fatalities and injuries, and associated emergency communications and public response.
3. Determine the response of residential, commercial, and critical buildings, including the performance of designated safe areas.

4. Determine the performance of lifelines as it relates to the continuity of operations of residential, commercial, and critical buildings.
5. Identify, as specifically as possible, areas in current building and fire codes, standards, and practices that warrant revision.

The focus of this clearance is to achieve approval to perform interviews with individuals who have knowledge and/or experiences related to the May 22nd Joplin, MO tornado disaster. Interviews will specifically focus on obtaining information to address Objective 2 above and consequently, interviewees will be asked about the following topics:

- the ways in which people received information about the tornado (if at all),
- the personal protective actions they took in response to the tornado (if any),
- their knowledge about injuries and fatalities resulting from the tornado disaster,
- pre-5/22/11 experiences with and/or planning for tornados inside and outside of the Joplin, MO area (if any).

It is imperative that this data collection effort be considered on an expedited review due to the fact that the information being collected is extremely perishable data. Interview data from any event, including the Joplin, MO tornado, rely on individuals' memories of the tornado event, which can degrade as the time period increases between the present and the disaster.

The purpose of the imposed urgency on the timeline of this data collection effort is to minimize the consequences of two major issues that arise when asking interviewees to recall events that happened in their past: retrospective interpretation and false memories. Retrospective interpretation occurs when behaviors performed in the past are seen from the point of view of the present. In other words, past behavior is continually re-evaluated based on happenings in current situations and on typified understandings that may be novel. As more time passes, the individual may come to a new understanding of her past which serves to confirm or reconfirm the present. Second, false memories pose another issue for this study. Studies have shown that memories are vulnerable to information received after an event has taken place, which can be a result of talking to other people, reading or viewing media coverage, being asked leading questions about experiences after an event has taken place, or simply letting too much time pass and allowing the memory to fade .

Therefore, it is critical to collect this information as quickly as possible using techniques that allow the interviewee to focus specifically on their experiences and retell their personal stories. There are interviewing methods that can be used to facilitate the retrieval of more comprehensive and accurate memories of incidents. One such method will be used in this study, as discussed in the attached Interview Process Description.

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 information gleaned from interviews with individuals affected by the Joplin, MO tornado will be used in a NIST technical investigative study report to: determine the pattern, location, and cause of fatalities and injuries, and associated emergency communications and public response. NIST Team members and contractors will be collecting this data; however, data will only be analyzed by NIST staff. Any findings from this data collection effort – based on experiences of individuals affected by the tornado -- will be used to eventually develop science-based guidance containing recommendations on emergency communication systems as well as buildings and safe area designs. The data collected will also be used for developing a NIST investigative report, which will likely contain recommendations for improvement to codes, standards, and emergency procedures.

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.

For the most part, the collection of this information does not use automated, electronic, mechanical or other technological techniques. NIST may use electronic media to advertise this interview study specifically to ask families and friends of victims to contact designated NIST Team members if they are interested in being interviewed. The advertisement for this interview study has been provided in ROCIS.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

NIST is not aware of any other collection that gathers similar information related to this event.

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

NIST may contact individuals who are owners or employees of small businesses. Any burden to the small business is minimized by the fact that any response to this questionnaire is voluntary.

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

If this collection is not conducted, the Team will be unable to meet objective of this technical investigative study.

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

The proposed collection of information will be conducted in a manner consistent with OMB guidelines.

8. Provide information of 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 soliciting public comments has been submitted and will publish on or about August 17, 2011 (copy in ROCIS). The public will be instructed to send comments to OMB.

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

Not applicable. There are no payments or gifts to respondents.

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

As noted in the interview process description, NIST team members and contractors will collect contact information for each respondent, if the respondent is willing to share this information. Contact information may include the respondent's name, mailing address, email address, and/or telephone number(s) (including cell phone numbers) as well as contact information for individuals with whom the respondent is staying, if applicable. In order to provide assurance of confidentiality, the Team and NIST contractors will not associate interviewee names and contact

information with interview responses. Instead, a number will be given to each set of interview data, stored in one secured location, and the same number will be given to the corresponding set of contact information, located in a different secured location, and a key (that identifies the number that corresponds to each interviewee) in a third secured location not to be shared with anyone outside of the Team. If the information is shared with NIST contractors, NIST will ensure that the contracts contain appropriate nondisclosure clauses.

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.

Not Applicable.

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

It is estimated that a maximum of 400 respondents will be interviewed for this study (over the course of two months) and it is estimated that the interview will take 30 minutes. The estimated total annual burden is **200 hours**.

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).

Not Applicable.

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

The federal cost to collect and review interview data, analyze results, and compose the report based on these data will be approximately \$150,000, including a contract for interview services.

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

This is a new collection.

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

The results from this study will be published as a chapter within the larger NIST technical investigative study report on the May 22, 2001 tornado that struck Joplin, MO.

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.

Not Applicable.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement.

Not Applicable.