

## **Request for Approval under the “Generic Clearance for the Collection of Routine Customer Feedback” (OMB Control Number: 2127-0682)**

**TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION:** ODI Communications Campaign Focus Group Research

### **PURPOSE:**

NHTSA’s Office of Communications and Consumer Information (OCCI) is currently in the process of developing a new communications campaign in support of the Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) with the following goals:

- 1) Raise awareness of NHTSA as the go-to resource for motor vehicle and highway safety issues;
- 2) Foster a lasting relationship with vehicle owners; and,
- 3) Increase the rate of complaints reported and recall fixes made.

As NHTSA moves forward with campaign planning, the agency is seeking approval to conduct research among vehicle owners who have experienced vehicle safety problems to better understand the current process they go through when faced with these issues. This research would build upon previous research efforts conducted by the agency and will specifically explore how consumers deal with these vehicle safety issues and what NHTSA can do to improve communications about the defects investigation and recalls processes.

To collect this information, NHTSA is proposing conducting a round of focus groups that builds upon previous research completed by the agency, but is unique in its specific exploration of how consumers deal with vehicle safety problems. NHTSA will conduct 2-hour focus groups with consumers in two cities (i.e., Richmond, Va. and Kansas City, Mo.).

Specifically, through these consumer focus groups NHTSA will seek to do the following:

- Develop a clear picture of consumer experiences when faced with a vehicle safety issue.
- Identify go-to sources of information consumers use when faced with a vehicle safety issue.
- Develop a better understanding of the motivations and barriers to reporting vehicle safety issues to NHTSA.
- Explore opportunities for NHTSA to foster ongoing relationships with vehicle owners.
- Test potential campaign elements, like taglines and tactical concepts (e.g., dual-purpose complaint form, web communications, etc.) to help guide the overall campaign development process.

During the focus groups, data will be collected via an in-person group discussion. A trained moderator will facilitate these discussions utilizing the questions included in the discussion guide. Results from these discussions will be viewed in aggregate and analysts will seek to compare and contrast the information collected in different regions or across different audience types (e.g., male versus female). Data collected in this research are intended to be directional in nature, and will not be generalized to the total universe studied.

Actual campaign materials developed as a result of this collection will be tested in a future research program to ensure they are clear, understandable, and effective.

## **DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS:**

For the purposes of this study, the recommended screening criteria are broad enough to include a cross-section of vehicle owners who have experienced vehicle safety issues. Potential subjects will be asked several questions to determine their eligibility to participate in the focus groups.

Focus groups will be held utilizing the services of professional focus group facilities, with attention paid to those facilities with a long history of quality respondents. For any focus group research, recruitment can be executed using one or a mix of the following methods:

- 1) A list of potential respondents is provided to the focus group facility. This method is generally used when participants must meet specific and unique criteria or when the group is to be made up of a specific population for which a list of members exists.
- 2) A database of potential local respondents is compiled by facilities over time. This database is compiled through a mix of word of mouth, paid advertisements and free advertising on local websites. These are people who have agreed in advance to participate in focus groups, if they qualify. The focus group facility maintains this database and adheres to the Marketing Research Association's code of ethics on data collection in keeping personal information private.
- 3) An advertisement looking for participants can be included in the local newspaper, on a local website, or through some other channel to attract potential participants.

Since the first methodology does not apply to this program, participants for this research will be recruited using the other two methodologies. Facilities will begin the recruitment applying the second methodology, by making random calls to their database of respondents seeking to invite potential participants who fit the screening criteria provided. As recruitment moves along, the facility may employ the third tactic as described above in order to attract potential participants to ensure the group consists of a diverse mix of respondents based on various demographic criteria.

Potential participants will be screened for various criteria and the sample for these discussion groups will be built in the following way:

- 1) First, participants must qualify as an adult over the age of 18.
- 2) Next, participants must qualify as a vehicle owner.
- 3) Next, participants must qualify as the primary or shared decision maker for vehicle maintenance.
- 4) Next, participants will be asked if they have ever experienced a vehicle safety defect or if they have ever owned a vehicle that has been part of a safety recall. Participants must qualify as having had one of these experiences.
- 5) Next, participants will be asked if they ever reported a potential vehicle defect in order to allow the moderator to know how many respondents in the group are "complainants."

During the screening process, potential respondents are also asked demographic questions, such as gender, age, ethnicity, income and others. This along with the criteria above is used to ensure that we speak with a mix of respondents within each group. The entire recruitment process is designed to achieve this "mix" of respondents. For example, if halfway through the recruitment, one group is largely made up of respondents over the age of 45, recruiters will target younger respondents and attempt to schedule older participants for a different group time or as "back up" in the event of a cancellation.

**TYPE OF COLLECTION:** (Check one)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Comment Card/Complaint Form          | <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Satisfaction Survey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Usability Testing (e.g., Website or Software) | <input type="checkbox"/> Small Discussion Group       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focus Group                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                 |

**CERTIFICATION:**

I certify the following to be true:

1. The collection is voluntary.
2. The collection is low-burden for respondents and low-cost for the Federal Government.
3. The collection is non-controversial and does not raise issues of concern to other federal agencies.
4. The results are not intended to be disseminated to the public.
5. Information gathered will not be used for the purpose of substantially informing influential policy decisions.
6. The collection is targeted to the solicitation of opinions from respondents who have experience with the program or may have experience with the program in the future.

Name: Kil-Jae Hong, Marketing Specialist

To assist review, please provide answers to the following question:

**Personally Identifiable Information:**

1. Is personally identifiable information (PII) collected?  Yes  No
2. If Yes, will any information that is collected be included in records that are subject to the Privacy Act of 1974?  Yes  No
3. If Yes, has an up-to-date System of Records Notice (SORN) been published?  Yes  No

**Gifts or Payments:**

Is an incentive (e.g., money or reimbursement of expenses, token of appreciation) provided to participants?  Yes  No

Focus group participants are provided a cash honorarium of \$75 as compensation for their time. This honorarium is provided as an incentive for participants to take the time to travel to the facility and participate in the discussion (therefore minimizing participant out-of-pocket expenses), as well as a sign of appreciation for their thoughts and opinions. Compensation will be equal for all participants.

**BURDEN HOURS**

For the focus group phase of this collection, NHTSA plans to conduct a total of 4 focus groups, each lasting approximately two hours. In each group, 8 participants will be seated. Therefore, a total of 32 people will participate in the group sessions. To recruit these participants, however, a total of 48 potential participants (12 per group) will be recruited via telephone screening calls, which are estimated to take 15 minutes per call. Based on experience, it is prudent to recruit up to 12 people per group in order to ensure at least 8 will actually appear at the focus group facility at the appointed time.

Thus, the total burden per person actually participating in this research is estimated to be 135 minutes (15 minutes for the screening/recruiting telephone call plus 120 minutes in the focus group discussion session). Additionally, the total burden per person recruited but not participating in the discussions is 15 minutes.

<b>Category of Respondent</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Participation Time</b>	<b>Burden Hours</b>
Individuals who are recruited and participate (includes recruitment time)	32	Recruitment: 15 min/person Group: 120 min/person Total: 135 min/person	72
Individuals who are recruited but do not participate (includes recruitment time and interview time)	16	15 min/person	4
<b>Totals</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>95 min/person</b>	<b>76</b>

**FEDERAL COST:** The estimated annual cost to the Federal government is \$30,000.

This figure includes the following estimated direct costs:

Focus Group Facility Rental & Technology - \$5,250

Respondent Recruitment - \$6,000

Respondent Incentives - \$3,600

The total cost also includes staff time for our research partners, which is calculated using per hour billing rates. The costs estimated here are based on hours needed for past qualitative projects of a similar scope. These hours include time needed for screener and discussion guide finalization, group moderating, data analysis and reporting, as well as meetings and conference calls with the NHTSA team.

Total Partner Staff Time - \$15,150

For a 2-city focus group plan, we estimate the costs of staff travel to be approximately \$2,000 per person. This figure includes airfare, hotel room, ground transportation, and other incidental expenses. All staff travel will be billed at cost and utilize government travel guidelines. Actual costs may vary and are dependent on dates of travel and research schedule.

**If you are conducting a focus group, survey, or plan to employ statistical methods, please provide answers to the following questions:**

**The selection of your targeted respondents**

1. Do you have a customer list or something similar that defines the universe of potential respondents and do you have a sampling plan for selecting from this universe?  
 Yes  No

If the answer is yes, please provide a description of both below (or attach the sampling plan)? If the answer is no, please provide a description of how you plan to identify your potential group of respondents and how you will select them?

The screening criteria and recruitment procedures for this study are described on page 2 of this document.

**Administration of the Instrument**

1. How will you collect the information? (Check all that apply)  
 Web-based or other forms of Social Media  
 Telephone  
 In-person  
 Mail  
 Other, Explain
2. Will interviewers or facilitators be used?  Yes  No

**Please make sure that all instruments, instructions, and scripts are submitted with the request.**

The participant screener and moderator's discussion guide are included as this package in Attachments A and B. Handouts that will be used to facilitate the discussion are included in Attachment C.