

**MECS: Manufacturing Energy Consumption Survey
Protocol for Asphalt Plants – Round One
March 2014**

(This protocol is a guide – the questions presented here won't necessarily be asked exactly as worded in the protocol or in this order. It is important to note that not all questions will be asked in every interview.)

Research Goals

- To confirm if potential respondents at asphalt plants, both the person and the company, can complete the new questions that will be added to the MECS;
- To assess the cognitive burden required from potential respondents at asphalt plants to respond to these new questions;
- If time allows, to confirm that potential respondents at Asphalt plants are able to identify energy efficient measures taken at the entities that they report for.

Part A – Introduction

- Introduce observers and their background

Purpose of visit:

Let me start by telling you a little about what we will be doing today:

- The Energy Information Administration (EIA) added some new questions to the Manufacturing Energy Consumption Survey (MECS) that will be conducted in 2015.
- The MECS is a national survey conducted jointly by EIA and the Census Bureau. The survey provides detailed data on energy consumption in the manufacturing sector.
- As a potential respondent that may receive this survey, we want to ask you and your plant about these questions to see how easy or difficult they are to answer. This plant was selected because it manufactures asphalt.
- Ultimately, we are interested in how you understand our questions, how the information we ask for is kept in your records, and the challenges you may face when reporting the data to EIA.
- There are no right or wrong answers, and if something doesn't make sense to you or you have any questions, please ask. It is important for us to know both things that work and don't work so we can improve the form.
- Before we get started, I'd like to audio record this interview so I don't have to later rely on my memory. This session is confidential, which means only persons directly related to this project can listen to your tapes, and the recordings are erased once our report is written. The report combines information from all of our interviews and contains no information that personally identifies you or the plant at which you work. Is it okay if I record this interview?

- Do you have any questions?

Part B – Background Information

Let's begin by talking about your asphalt plant:

- How long has this asphalt plant been in business?
- What is the primary function of your asphalt plant?
- What kinds of activities occur at this asphalt plant/location?

What is your role at this company?

- What is your title?
- How long have you been with the company?
- What are your responsibilities?
- Are you in charge of government reporting? (If not, who is?)

Do you currently complete any government forms? Can you tell me more about the other forms for which you report?

- (If needed) Do you complete any regulatory forms, State and/or Federal?
- (If needed) Do you complete any other EIA forms?
- (If respondent has completed the MECS in the past) Are the data that you submit on the MECS reported on any other government forms? These may be forms from EIA, other federal agencies, or state agencies.
- Do you generally have the data needed to report for these forms, or do you work with others to gather this data?
- How do you usually submit these other reports? (electronically, fax, mail, email)
- Do you fill out these other forms manually or automatically?

Part C – New MECS Questions for Asphalt Plants

In the interest of time, we are only going to ask you about new questions that EIA would like to add to the 2015 MECS.

(Provide brief overview of the added questions to the MECS form, if appropriate.)

Petrochemical Feedstocks or Asphalt: Produced, Consumption, and Shipments

Please take a few minutes to look over these proposed new questions that we want to add to the 2015 MECS.

Looking at the columns on this page, can you tell me in your own words what these columns are describing?

Would you answer for both columns? Why or why not?

Looking at the Asphalt column, are we missing any examples that we should be including? What about excluding?

Now let's look at **Item 63**. Can you tell me in your own words what this question is asking?

- What does the term "energy source" mean to you?
- How much time passes between the purchase and the delivery of the "energy source"?
- How are "energy source" purchases tracked in your records?
- What unit of measurement is used in your records?
- Would you have access to this information on your own or would you need to ask someone else? If someone else, who would you ask?

Next, please look at **Item 64**. What is this question asking?

- What does the term "total expenditures" mean to you in the context of this question?
- What would you include in delivery, management, transportation, and demand charges?
- How is this information kept in your records?

Next, please look at **Item 65**.

- In your own words, what is this question asking?
- How easy or difficult would it be to answer this question?
- Does this question apply to this plant? Why or why not?

Next, look at **Item 66**.

- Can you tell me in your own words what this question is asking?

- How does this question compare to **Item 63**?
- What does the term “on-site” mean to you?
- How would you answer this question? Would it be easy or difficult to answer it?
- (If needed) Is this information tracked in your records?

Now, please let’s move to the next question on the page (**Item 67**).

- In your own words, what is this question asking?
- How would you answer this question? Would it be easy or difficult to answer it?
- (If needed) Is this information tracked in your records?

Looking at the next question, **Item 68**, what is this question asking?

- How would you answer this question? Would it be easy or difficult to answer it?
- What does the phrase “for any purpose other than fuel use” mean to you?
- What kind of consumption would you include in this question?
- How is this kept in your records?
- (If needed) How is this “phrase/term” kept in your records?
- Is that a sizeable amount of energy?

Can you read **Item 69** and tell me in your own words what this item means to you?

- How would you define “off-site?”
- Does your company currently ship energy sources of petrochemical feedstocks or asphalt products?
- How is this kept in your records?
- (If needed) How is this “phrase/term” kept in your records?

Wrapping Up

- Overall, what do you think of these questions?
- If we weren’t here, how long do you think it would take you to complete these questions?
- Do you have any suggestions to improve them?

Thank you for your time today!