

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

1. Provide a numerical estimate of the potential respondent universe and describe any sampling or other respondent selection method to be used. Data on the number of entities (e.g. households or persons) in the universe and the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular format for the universe as a whole and for each strata. Indicate expected response rates. If this has been conducted previously include actual response rates achieved.

During a 12-month period, 480 **Beneficiary** surveys will be released to insured/beneficiaries.

End Product	Surveys To Be Released	Actual Response (Number)	Expected Response (Percent)
76,232			
Mail Survey	480	269	56%

During a 12-month period, 480 **Cash Surrender** surveys will be released to insured.

End Product	Surveys To Be Released	Actual Response (Number)	Expected Response (Percent)
10,371			
Mail Survey	480	302	63%

During a 12-month period, 480 **Correspondence** surveys will be released to insured.

End Product	Surveys To Be Released	Actual Response (Number)	Expected Response (Percent)
157,309			
Mail Survey	480	268	56%

During a 12-month period, 480 **Insurance Claims** surveys will be released to insured/beneficiaries.

End Product	Surveys To Be Released	Actual Response (Number)	Expected Response (Percent)
136,788			
Mail Survey	480	236	49%

During a 12-month period, 480 **IVR** surveys will be released to insured.

End Product	Surveys To Be Released	Actual Response (Number)	Expected Response (Percent)
28,348			
Mail Survey	480	188	39%

During a 12-month period, 318 **Missing Check/Account** surveys will be released to insured/beneficiaries. *

End Product	Surveys To Be Released	Actual Response (Number)	Expected Response (Percent)
318			
Mail Survey	318	94	30%

During a 12-month period, 480 **Policy Loan** surveys will be released to insured.

End Product 28,109	Surveys To Be Released	Actual Response (Number)	Expected Response (Percent)
Mail Survey	480	247	51%

During a 12-month period, 480 **Insurance (S-DVI) Application** surveys will be released to insured.

End Product 21,829	Surveys To Be Released	Actual Response (Number)	Expected Response (Percent)
Mail Survey	480	151	31%

During a 12-month period, 480 **Waiver of Premiums** surveys will be released to insured.

End Product 10,939	Surveys To Be Released	Actual Response (Number)	Expected Response (Percent)
Mail Survey	480	174	38%

During a 12-month period, 381 **VMLI** surveys will be released to insured. *

End Product 542	Surveys To Be Released	Actual Response (Number)	Expected Response (Percent)
Mail Survey	381	145	38%

During a 12-month period, 480 **Telephone Service (ICD)** surveys will be released to insured/beneficiaries.

End Product 247,564	Surveys To Be Released	Actual Response (Number)	Expected Response (Percent)
Mail Survey	480	237	49%

During a 12-month period, 480 **Telephone Service (PSD)** surveys will be released to insured.

End Product 399,888	Surveys To Be Released	Actual Response (Number)	Expected Response (Percent)
Mail Survey	480	240	50%

* These surveys released less than 480 due to the fact there were not enough end products to solicit 40 surveys per month.

2. Describe the procedures for the collection of information, including:

- **Statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection**

Type of Survey	Selection Process	Mailing Method
<i>Policyholder Services Division</i>		
Telephone Service	Manual – select every 5 th	Manually printed, stuffed

	monitored call from the Telephone Interview Evaluation sheet.	and mailed
Loans <i>Surveyed Monthly: 40</i>	Automated – VICTARS SQC Reports	Manually printed, stuffed and mailed
Cash Surrenders <i>Surveyed Monthly: 40</i>	Automated – VICTARS SQC Reports	Manually printed, stuffed and mailed
Correspondence <i>Surveyed Monthly: 40</i>	Automated- VICTARS SQC Reports	Manually printed, stuffed and mailed
IVR <i>Surveyed Monthly: 40</i>	Manual – select every 15 th call (file number) from the File Log report.	Manually printed, stuffed and mailed
Type of Survey	Selection Process	Mailing Method
<i>Insurance Claims Division</i>		
Waiver of Premiums <i>Surveyed Monthly: 40</i>	Manual – based on processed claims and approved cases (Items are selected weekly from VICTARS report 078)	Manually printed, stuffed and mailed
Insurance Claims <i>Surveyed Monthly: 40</i>	Automatic - VICTARS	Manually printed, stuffed and mailed
Insurance (S-DVI) Application <i>Surveyed Monthly: 40</i>	Manual – based on processed claims and approved cases (Items are selected weekly from VICTARS report 022)	Manually printed, stuffed and mailed
Missing Checks/Account <i>Surveyed Monthly: 40</i>	Manual – based on processed claims and approved cases (Items are selected from “Unavailable Check” report printed in Control-D)	Manually printed, stuffed and mailed
Beneficiary <i>Surveyed Monthly: 40</i>	Automatic – VICTARS	Manually printed, stuffed and mailed
Telephone Service <i>Surveyed Monthly: 40</i>	Random-VICTARS journal (20 paid claims and 20 Beneficiary Designation, IRS Form 712, Estate Tax etc.)	Manually printed, stuffed and mailed
VMLI <i>Surveyed Monthly: 40</i>	Manual – based on newly approved cases and completed coverage changes. (Selected from VMLI Report generated from VICTARS)	Manually printed, stuffed and mailed

The selection process for manual cases is being automated for FY2011 surveys.

- **Estimation procedure**

The sample size of 40 surveys per category was determined for all survey categories. The sample size was established and approved in the mid-nineteen nineties by the VBA Office of Surveys and Research and validated by the Chief, Insurance Actuarial Staff.

We will survey 40 randomly selected Veterans/ beneficiaries per month for each of the Insurance end products. The sample size is 95% confidence level with a 3% error tolerance rate.

The sample size formula that we utilize assumes a standard normal distribution, which is appropriate since we process a sufficiently large number of cases, correspondence, calls, etc. to assume a normally distributed population.

The parameters required for the formula are:

Population size = N

Sampling error tolerance = e

Confidence level expressed in number of standard deviations (i.e., 1.96 for 95% confidence level, 1.64 for 90% confidence level) = z

True proportion of the characteristic being sampled for in the population = p (This can be estimated from a pilot sample or prior experience.)

The formula that we use to calculate the sample size (n) is:

$$n = [N*z^2*p*(1-p)]/[N*e^2+z^2*p*(1-p)]$$

- **Degree of accuracy needed**

The above formula will yield a 95% confidence level with a 3% error tolerance rate.

The final high ratings of returned responses are a weighted calculation based on the number of responses and end products in each category of service sampled.

- **Unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures**

No unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures.

- **Any use of less frequent than annual data collection to reduce burden**

N/A

3. Describe methods to maximize response rate and to deal with issues of non-response. The accuracy and reliability of information collected must be shown to be adequate for intended uses. For collections based on sampling, a special justification must be provided for any collection that will not yield “reliable” data that can be generalized to the universe studied.

To maximize response rates, a cover letter is released with the survey explaining how the response will help improve service to all our insured Veterans. The response rate for

FY09 was 53% for eleven surveys mailed. We do not include the IVR Survey in the response rate calculation because customers do not speak directly with an Insurance Telephone Specialist. We utilize the survey for system improvements only. The 53% overall response rate was calculated by the average of the four Policyholder Services Division surveys (55%) and the seven Insurance Claims Division surveys (50%).

According to Custom Insight and NCS Pearson, leading survey research companies, the private industry rate of response for surveys ranges between 10- 20%. Therefore, the Insurance response rate is well above the average. In light of this, and due to the fact the Insurance expenses are borne by the Policyholders, it would be counterproductive to send a follow-up letter with each survey. An additional follow-up letter would also delay our ability to provide timely information to management (e.g. trends and problems), which is derived from the returned surveys.

4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken. Testing is encouraged as an effective means of refining collections to minimize burden and improve utility. Tests must be approved if they call for answers to identical questions of 10 or more individuals.

No testing of procedures or methods is required for the surveys.

5. Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on statistical aspects of the design and the name of the agency unit, contractor(s), grantee(s), or other person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.

Richard Foreman
Insurance Specialist
Business Systems Support Staff
Department of Veterans Affairs
Philadelphia, PA 19144
(215) 842-2000, ext. 4261