

SUPPORTING JUSTIFICATION – Part A
Alleged Violation Reporting Form (OMB No. 2130-0590)
Form FRA F 6180.151

Summary of Submission

- This submission is a revision to the approval granted by OMB under regular clearance procedures on December 8, 2010, which expires on **December 31, 2013**.
- The total number of burden **hours requested** for this submission is **50 hours**.
- The total number of burden **hours previously approved** for this information collection under FRA’s information collection budget was **67 hours**.
- The total number of **responses requested** for this information collection submission is **300**.
- The total number of **responses previously approved** for this submission was **400** under FRA’s information collection budget.
- **Adjustments** for this submission decreased the FRA burden by **17 hours**.
- **Adjustments** for this submission decreased the FRA number of **responses** by **100**.
- ****The answer to question number 12 itemizes the hourly burden associated with each requirement of this rule (See p. 5).**

1. Circumstances that make collection of the information necessary.

Since its inception, FRA has worked diligently and persistently to develop and implement a comprehensive rail safety program with the goal of reducing rail accidents/incidents and corresponding injuries, fatalities, and property damage as much as humanly possible. To have an effective program, FRA collects, organizes, analyzes, and assesses data provided to it by railroads. The data collected from railroads are usually in conjunction with agency safety regulations, since this is the best means of maximizing the agency’s limited number of inspectors while promoting and maintaining a safe rail environment. FRA also collects data from outside contractors who conduct surveys and studies for the agency to gain a better understanding of specific aspects of rail operations in this country.

The data collected allow FRA to target its limited resources in the most effective way possible and provided the means to refine and improve already established rail safety programs and to develop new and warranted safety programs. Although rail traffic in this country has been on an upward swing in terms of the number of rail miles traveled, the

data collected by the agency over the last few years show positive trends regarding accidents/incidents. However, FRA is also seeking to lower these numbers in any way possible, and having extra eyes and ears to report possible or potential safety and hazardous materials regulatory violations to augment the outstanding job that its few hundred inspectors perform each and every day would further the agency goal to save lives and improve rail safety.

It is with this goal in mind that section 307(b) of The Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008, came about. Public law 110-432 was signed by President George W. Bush on October 16, 2008, and mandates the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to “provide a mechanism for the public to submit written reports of potential violations of Federal railroad safety and hazardous materials transportation laws, regulations, and orders to the Federal Railroad Administration.”

FRA has determined the collection of information related to the submission of alleged violation is best received by mean of this agency form. The form’s structured format allows FRA to track the progress of the alleged violation during the investigation process. This Congressional mandated form provides the public with a vehicle to report alleged railroad safety and hazardous materials violations to FRA and thereby allows the public to actively participate in FRA’s vital safety mission to regulate and improve railroad safety throughout the United States.

2. How, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used.

The collection of information is used by FRA administrative staff and support contractors for tracking purposes to ensure a timely response, and by inspectors, specialists, and other pertinent staff for conducting investigations related to the alleged violations. FRA inspectors can promptly review and look into completed report forms filed by the members of the public to ascertain the nature and severity of the alleged violation. Accidents/incidents can have devastating effects both on rail travelers and surrounding communities as is evidenced by accidents such as the one that took place in Graniteville, South Carolina, on June 6, 2005, or the one that took place in Chatsworth, California, September 12, 2008. The Graniteville accident resulted from the collision of two Norfolk Southern (NS) trains, one of which was carrying chlorine gas and other dangerous chemicals. The chlorine gas was released in the collision, and, as a result, there were nine fatalities and 250 people were treated for chlorine exposures. Approximately 5,400 residents within one mile of the accident were forced to evacuate for two weeks while HAZMAT teams and cleanup crews decontaminated the area. Or the accident that took place on September 12, 2008, in which a Southern California Regional Rail Authority (Metrolink) commuter train collided with a Union Pacific (UP) freight train. This accident resulted in 25 deaths, the injury of numerous others, and more than \$7,105,500 in property damage.

The information collected by the Alleged Violation Reporting Form is used by FRA and

by railroads to spot problem areas and take necessary action to prevent potential accidents of the type just cited from occurring. FRA's limited number of inspectors can only cover small geographic areas and thus cannot be everywhere that their presence is needed. Having another resource – active public participation highlighting alleged safety and hazardous materials regulatory violations – allows these inspectors to better focus their investigations and resolve reported problems that might prove harmful to rail safety.

3. Extent of automated information collection.

For many years, FRA has strongly endorsed and highly encouraged the use of advanced information technology, wherever possible, to reduce burden on respondents. In particular, FRA has strongly advocated electronic recordkeeping on the part of railroads and, where feasible, electronic reporting. Section 307(b) of the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 mandates that FRA provide the alleged violation submission process on the home page of the agency's Website.

To meet this requirement, FRA has automated the information collection instrument (agency form). Thus, the public submission process to the agency comes through completely electronic means.

4. Efforts to identify duplication.

This collection of information is mandated by Congress and is, therefore, unique.

Presently, no public or private entity collects information relating to violations of Federal rail safety and hazardous materials regulations provided by the public.

Similar data are not available from any other source.

5. Efforts to minimize the burden on small businesses.

The information to be collected does not involve small businesses.

6. Impact of less frequent collection of information.

If FRA were unable to collect this information or collect it less frequently, the agency would be unable to fulfill an important Congressional mandate. As noted previously, the collection of information is required by Section 307(b) of the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008. If FRA did not collect this information by providing a mechanism for members of the public to report alleged violations of Federal rail safety and hazardous materials regulations, it would be non-compliant with Section 307(b).

Further, without this collection of information, FRA would be deprived of a unique and

important resource -- previously untapped -- to monitor rail safety throughout the nation. As noted earlier, FRA has very limited resources both in terms of staff and finances. The agency only has a few hundred inspectors to review railroad industry practices and enforce Federal rail safety regulations. Clearly, they can only be in a few places at any given time. On the other hand, members of the public are everywhere and highly interested in the welfare of their communities and their personal safety. Reporting alleged violations by members of the public provides the agency with countless eyes and ears concerning potential rail problems that normally go unnoticed and unreported. The result is no necessary action is taken. Potential or actual problem areas that are ignored have a high chance of leading to increased accidents/incidents and the increased injuries, fatalities, and property damage that go along with them. This collection of information provides FRA with a potential and welcome multiplier effect in terms of rail safety monitoring. It behooves the agency to take advantage of this unique opportunity endorsed by Congress.

In sum, the collection of information aids FRA in its vital mission of making rail transportation as safe as humanly possible.

7. **Special circumstances.**

All information collection requirements are in compliance with this section.

8. **Compliance with 5 CFR 1320.8.**

As required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, FRA published a notice in the Federal Register on August 13, 2013, soliciting comment on this particular collection of information. *78 FR 49321*. FRA received no comments in response to this notice.

9. **Payments or gifts to respondents.**

There are no monetary payments provided or gifts made to respondents associated with this proposed collection of information.

10. **Assurance of confidentiality.**

FRA fully complies with the Privacy Act of 1974 and other laws pertaining to privacy and the security of privacy data. Information collected as part of this information collection is used by FRA staff and government contractors to ensure all submissions of alleged violations are responded to in a timely manner and that FRA can gather appropriate details about the alleged violation for its investigation process.

11. **Justification for any questions of a sensitive nature.**

There are no questions or information of a sensitive nature, or data that would normally be considered private matters contained in this proposed collection of information.

12. Estimate of burden hours for information collected.

Form	Number of Respondents	Number of Responses per Respondent	Time per Response	Total Burden in Hours
FRA F 6180.151 Alleged Violation Reporting Form	300	1	10 min	50

Note: A five-year average of the number of alleged violations received by FRA was used to calculate the estimated number of respondents.

13. Estimate of total annual costs to respondents.

Other than the cost associated in question number 12 above, there will be no additional cost to the respondents of this form.

14. Estimate of Cost to Federal Government.

There is no additional cost to the Federal Government in connection with these information collection requirements. Reports of alleged violation are investigated by FRA inspectors as part of their regular enforcement activities.

15. Explanation of program changes and adjustments.

The burden for this information collection has decreased by **17 hours** from the previously approved submission. The change in burden is due solely to one **adjustment** depicted in the table below. There are no **program changes** at this time.

TABLE OF ADJUSTMENTS

Requirement	Responses & Avg. Time (Previous Submission)	Responses & Avg. Time (This Submission)	Burden Hours (Previous Submission)	FRA Burden Hours (This Submission)	Difference (plus/minus)
Form FRA F 6180.151	400 forms 10 minutes	300 forms 10 minutes	67 hours	50 hours	--17 hours --100 resp.

Adjustments above decreased the FRA burden by *17 hours* and decreased responses by *100*.

The current FRA OMB inventory shows 67 hours for this collection of information, while the present request exhibits a total of 50 burden hours. Hence, there is a total decrease of **17 hours** for this information collection.

There is **no change** in costs to respondents from the previously approved submission.

16. Publication of results of data collection.

The results of this information collection will not be published. The information is collected only for the purpose of investigating alleged violations submitted by the public.

17. Approval for not displaying the expiration date for OMB approval.

FRA is not seeking exemption from displaying the expiration date for OMB approval.

18. Exception to certification statement.

No exceptions are requested at this time.

This information collection supports the top DOT strategic goal, namely transportation safety. Without this collection of information, FRA would lose a unique opportunity to help reduce the number and severity of railroad accident/incidents, and corresponding number of injuries and fatalities that occur each year because dangerous rail practices or operations went unnoticed and unreported. By availing itself of this unique and untapped public resource related to the reporting of alleged violations of Federal rail safety and hazardous materials regulations, FRA can better direct and focus its limited inspection/investigation staff to look into potentially serious rail problem areas and take necessary measures to avert accidents/incidents that so often leave families and communities devastated.

Members of the public are everywhere, and highly interested in the welfare of their communities. They can act as public watchdogs regarding rail practices and rail operations where they live. FRA's inspection staff can only be in a very limited number of places at any given time. However, with the public acting as a multiplier force, they can be in places that previously have gone unobserved. An alert public can report potential accident/incidents, and the agency can prioritize these reports and send out FRA inspectors to look into situations and take action, where necessary. Previously, such situations would have led to a rail accident/incident and corresponding injuries and loss of life because needed attention and action were not provided.

In sum, this collection of information supports both DOT's top mission and FRA's mission, which is to promote and enhance rail safety throughout the United States.

As always, FRA seeks to do its utmost to fulfill DOT Strategic Goals and to be an integral part of One DOT.