

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

TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION: Focus Groups for Assessments of NHTSA Perceptions and Brand Positioning/Identity

PURPOSE:

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) was authorized by the Highway Safety Act of 1966 to carry out a Congressional mandate to reduce the mounting number of deaths, injuries and economic losses resulting from motor vehicle crashes on our Nation’s highways. In support of this mission, NHTSA oversees and implements a vast array of programs, projects, research studies, data collection and reporting – all relative to vehicles, vehicle equipment, vehicle research and testing, driver behavior, safety technologies and other areas. Some of these areas are particularly important because of the large numbers of citizens affected and/or who consider NHTSA’s information helpful. Three areas of high priority focus on (1) vehicle recall information, (2) vehicle safety/crash test information, and (3) child passenger safety seat information.

To identify more effective ways to communicate such information to its publics, NHTSA needs a deeper understanding of how people perceive the agency and how well they know and understand what the agency offers. Focus groups conducted earlier in 2015, relative to NHTSA’s website safercar.gov, revealed that while most of the participants were aware of NHTSA, a large majority of them had low familiarity of what NHTSA does. These focus groups were conducted to fulfill other objectives; however, so more in-depth understanding about the low familiarity was not sought during the research. Further, the study did not seek to query people’s perceptions.

Therefore, additional research is needed to gain more insight about perceptions and familiarity, as well as to assess potential ways that NHTSA can project a clear, managed image of the agency’s purpose in serving the public.

In order to accomplish this, NHTSA seeks to use focus group research. For NHTSA campaign development in the past, focus groups have fulfilled an important role in gathering valuable qualitative insights and feedback because they allow for a more in-depth understanding of drivers’ attitudes, beliefs, motivations, and feelings than do quantitative/statistical studies. They provide the means of collecting both verbal remarks, as well as often-insightful non-verbal “responses.” Focus groups serve the narrowly defined need for direct and informal opinion on specific topics.

NHTSA proposes conducting twelve focus groups among licensed drivers categorized by potential interests in information disseminated by NHTSA:

- *Shoppers for new and pre-owned vehicles who may be interested in crash test data and other vehicle safety issues*
- *Owners of vehicles for which recalls have been issued*
- *Parents-to-be whose children will be using child passenger seats and who may be seeking information about seats*

NHTSA's proposed plan is to conduct the focus groups in four major U.S. cities, and in each city NHTSA will conduct one group for each of the three categories.

Focus groups will be a helpful means for assessing public familiarity and perceptions of the agency, how they perceive specific information resources NHTSA provides them, what they understand NHTSA's role to be, and how NHTSA can better inform people of its missions and resources.

DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS:

Recruited respondents will differ according to interest group, as noted by the three categories of groups noted above. More specifically, each category will consist of participants matching these characteristics:

Shoppers for new and pre-owned vehicles

- Men and women (50%/50% split)
- Ages 25 or older
- Self-report that they plan to purchase a new or pre-owned car within the next six months
- Mix of African-Americans, White/Caucasians and Hispanics (English-speaking)
- Not working (nor immediate family member working) in these occupations:
 - Marketing, advertising, public relations or marketing research
 - Graphic design
 - News media, including newspaper, television, radio or publishing
 - Law enforcement
 - Legal
 - Road/highway safety-related departments of local, state or federal government

Owners of vehicles for which recalls have been issued

- Men and women (50%/50% split)
- Ages 25 or older
- Self-report that they own a vehicle that they know has been recalled within the past year; and/or that they have had a recall repair made within the past six months
- Mix of African-Americans, White/Caucasians and Hispanics (English-speaking)
- Not working (nor immediate family member working) in these occupations:

- o Marketing, advertising, public relations or marketing research
- o Graphic design
- o News media, including newspaper, television, radio or publishing
- o Law enforcement
- o Legal
- o Road/highway safety-related departments of local, state or federal government

Parents-to-be whose children will be using child passenger seats

- Men and women (50%/50% split)
- Ages 21 to 35
- Self-report that they are expecting birth or adoption of a child (if adoption, a child two-years or younger) within the coming six months
- Mix of African-Americans, White/Caucasians and Hispanics (English-speaking)
- Not working (nor immediate family member working) in these occupations:
 - o Marketing, advertising, public relations or marketing research
 - o Graphic design
 - o News media, including newspaper, television, radio or publishing
 - o Law enforcement
 - o Legal
 - o Road/highway safety-related departments of local, state or federal government

In each group, seven to nine pre-screened individuals will be seated. However, in keeping with conventional focus group recruiting standards, twelve individuals will be recruited for each group in anticipation of seven to nine actually arriving. Should more than nine arrive on time, only nine will be seated in the group, and the others will be released (as well as paid their promised incentives).

Each group is projected to take 75 minutes of participants’ time: an “arrive early” window of 15 minutes, plus 60 minutes for the actual focus group discussion.

In each of these four cities, three focus group sessions will be conducted (one for each of the interest-categories noted above):

- Chicago
- Dallas
- Los Angeles
- Miami

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: **Susan McMeen**

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

Personally Identifiable Information:

1. Is personally identifiable information (PII) collected? [] Yes [X] 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? [X] Yes [] No

Each respondent will be provided with up to \$75 following her/his participation in a focus group session. This amount is in line with the industry standard, relative to focus group participation by people in the target market. These industry-standard stipends help to ensure that respondents can be recruited efficiently and ensure their arrival and participation in the groups. These standards exist to provide fair compensation for costs incurred by participants while attending groups, based on the location of and expenses in each market. As noted earlier, pre-screened and invited respondents who arrive on time but are released prior to the group will also be awarded their stipends (also in keeping with marketing research industry standards).

BURDEN HOURS

No. of Respondents	No. of Responses per Respondent	Average Burden per Response (hours)	Total Burden Hours
144 (recruits)	1	5 minutes (1/12-hours) phone interview	12

108 (participants)	1	75 minutes (1-and-1/4-hours) pre-group arrival plus discussion	135
36 (recruits arriving, but released prior to participation)	1	15 minutes (1/4-hours) pre-group arrival	9
		Total hours:	156 hours

TOTAL BURDER HOURS: 156 hours

FEDERAL COST: The estimated annual cost to the Federal government is \$101,800.

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?

(Please see recruitment screener included with this package.)

Each focus group facility in each city does the recruiting on NHTSA’s behalf, per the screeners NHTSA provides. The facility’s recruiting staff works primarily from a pool within their proprietary database of people in that particular marketplace who have previously submitted demographic, lifestyle and product preference information. So based on submission of NHTSA’s screener, the recruitment manager will filter the database to search for potential respondents in the project’s specifications. Then the recruiters will place telephone calls to those potential respondents to administer the full screener.

If there is more than one person in a household who may match the screening criteria, the recruiter will screen only the first one willing to be screened. This will prevent multiple respondents from the same household.

After going through the database, if the recruiters can't fill the project’s total numbers and/or quotas, the secondary step is the facility procuring sample from any of numerous national sample providers of names, addresses and phone numbers. The recruiters then make phone calls to this list until the recruiting is completed.

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.