

BUREAU OF TRANSPORTATION STATISTICS
OMB CLEARANCE PACKAGE

For
CLEARANCE TO UPDATE THE NATIONAL FERRY
CENSUS QUESTIONNAIRE

National Census of Ferry Operators
(OMB Control Number - 2139-0009)

Prepared by
Office of Survey Programs
Bureau of Transportation Statistics
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology
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Attachment I: The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) (P.L. 105-178), section 1207(c)

Attachment II: The Safe, Accountable, Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act—A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) Public Law 109-59, Section 1801(e)

Attachment III: Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (P.L. 112-141)

Attachment IV: Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) Public Law 114-94, Section 1112

Attachment V: TITLE 5 United States Code 552(b)(4)

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Attachment VII: 60- Day Federal Register Notice

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Attachment IX: Title 49 C.F.R. 7.17

Attachment X: NCFO Cover Letter

Attachment XI: NCFO Questionnaire (draft) including the ICR statement

B. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

1. Describe (including a numerical estimate) the potential respondent universe and any sampling or other respondent selection methods to be used. Indicate expected response rates for the collection as a whole. If the collection had been conducted previously, include the actual response rate achieved during the last collection.

This survey will be a census of all known ferry boat operators within the US. Current enumerations have provided an estimate of approximately 250 operators. All known ferry operators will be encouraged to participate. Since this is a census of establishments, each ferry operator will be asked to select the person or persons who are most knowledgeable about the operation to complete the questionnaire. Thus, it will be up to the operator to decide who the individual respondent will be. Previous National Census of Ferry Operators (NCFO) data collection efforts in the years 2006, 2008, and 2010 achieved response rates of 89%, 88% and 84%, respectively. The 2014 NCFO achieved a response rate of 60%. The 2014 NCFO was the first year where operators who responded to the questionnaire could qualify for federal funding through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) under the specifications outlined within the MAP-21 authorization. Among the operators that were eligible for funding, the overall response rate was 76%, while for those operators that were not eligible for funding the overall response rate was 47%.

2. Describe the procedures for the collection of information including: statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection, estimation procedure, degree of accuracy needed for the purpose described in the justification, unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures, and any use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden.

As the NCFO is a census of all known ferry operations in the United States, no sampling or stratification procedures will be employed. All operations will be asked to participate. Given the difference in operating cycles between operations (some only operate seasonally), it is estimated that the data collection period for this survey will last up to 6 months. This will allow responses to be received from ferry companies that do not operate year round. As previously noted, statute requires that the census data be updated every two years.

3. Describe methods to maximize response rates 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.

Techniques used to maximize response rates will include the use of an advance letter to inform operators about the census as well as articles in industry related publications and announcements at conferences, a notification banner on the NCFO website, the availability of a toll-free number for respondents to call in the event they have questions about the survey, as well as an email address. Telephone follow-up will also be used as needed to increase response rate.

In 2010, the questionnaire was also made available online to decrease respondent burden and simplify the data collection process. This resulted in a cooperation rate of about 84%. A web

based questionnaire will be used in 2018, in addition to a paper questionnaire option to achieve a similarly high response rate.

4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken. Testing is encouraged as an effective means of refining collections of information to minimize burden and improve utility.

The content of the survey was established by the legislation requiring the data collection. The survey was modified and reviewed by the Office of Survey Programs using feedback from a number of United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) staff affiliated with the 2010, 2014, and 2016 studies. The national ferry database questionnaire was reviewed by staff within the Maritime Administration (MARAD), the FHWA, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Transportation Research Board (TRB) Ferry Committee, and the Passenger Vessel Association (PVA). There are no experimental conditions built into the NCFO data collection itself. To make sure the NCFO is consistent with the National Transit Database (NTD), a review of NTD and the forms used to collect the data were reviewed. Where appropriate, items were revised within the NCFO questionnaire to maximize content validity and constructability.

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.

The data entry and follow up phoning will be conducted by BTS. The questionnaire design specifications, specifications for data collection, questionnaire content, and data production are under the supervision of BTS. BTS is solely responsible for the review of the final survey questionnaire, data, and technical documentation. The points-of-contact at BTS are:

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