

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 Assessment of Creative Concepts Supporting a National Awareness Campaign to Reduce Fatalities at Railroad Crossings

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 intends to develop a new communications campaign to support efforts to raise driver and pedestrian awareness of the risks and dangers of attempting to “race” moving trains. This campaign is slated for implementation as early as November 2018. According to Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) data (*source: <https://www.fra.dot.gov/Media/File/1199>*):

- There were approximately 270 fatalities at railroad crossings in 2017; that was an increase of 20 (12.5%) from the previous year.
- Combined with railroad trespasser deaths, these deaths have accounted for approximately 95% of all rail-related deaths over the past ten years.
- About every three hours, a person or vehicle is hit by a train.

These and other facts give credence to the importance of discouraging drivers and pedestrians from risking their lives near moving trains.

Integral parts of NHTSA’s campaign are development of a creative concept to assist states in efforts to increase and sustain awareness of the risks and dangers of moving trains, particularly among drivers at railroad crossings. For assessment of the relative strengths and weaknesses of concept alternatives, NHTSA seeks to use a qualitative research methodology in the form of focus groups. For past NHTSA campaigns, market research in the form of focus groups have been important in gathering feedback because they allow an in-depth understanding of drivers’ attitudes, beliefs, motivations, and feelings than do quantitative studies. Focus groups serve the narrowly defined need for direct and informal opinion on a specific topic.

NHTSA proposes conducting six focus groups among males who are ages 18-49 and who self-report incidences of trying to race trains at rail crossings. For the focus groups, two groups will be conducted in each of three cities:

- Tarrytown, NY
- Houston, TX
- Phoenix, AZ

Specific rail crossings in these communities have been the locations of multiple vehicle/train collisions involving fatalities over the most recent five years, per Federal Railroad Administration data. Additionally, NHTSA believes the geographical dispersion of these three communities will yield a more replete picture of which messaging and communications elements will be most effective for national use.

Focus groups will play an important role in gathering this information because they allow for more in-depth understanding of people’s attitudes, beliefs, and motivations than do other kinds of studies. If such information is not collected, it will be more difficult and less cost-effective for NHTSA to develop and distribute potentially life-saving messages to its target audience.

DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS:

Focus group respondents will correspond to the campaign’s target audience: male drivers ages 18 to 49 who pose risks of “racing” trains. Six groups will be conducted, each composed of seven to nine pre-screened individuals matching that profile. Each group is projected to last 90 minutes in duration. (This total time is a combination of an “arrive early” window of 15 minutes plus 75-minute focus group session). Although no more than nine participants will be seated for each group, more than nine per group will be recruited. Given the target market profile for this effort, twelve people will be recruited for each group in anticipation of at least nine showing. Even with advance confirmations from qualified recruits, the sensitive nature of the subject matter for this research, plus the relatively less reliability of younger males to show for focus groups, necessitates the higher number of recruits. 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). For the six groups, three cities will be used, with two groups per city. Each proposed city has marketing research industry-accredited focus group facilities available, plus they are communities where there have been multiple rail crossing fatalities:

- Tarrytown, NY
- Houston, TX
- Phoenix, AZ

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 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 \$75 following 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 stipend (also in keeping with marketing research industry standards).

BURDEN HOURS

Category of Respondent	Number of Respondents per Category	Participation Time	Total Burden Hours <i>(Number of Respondents x Participation Time)</i>
Unqualified/Refusal Respondents: <i>Individuals who will be contacted, but screened out or refuse participation</i>	720	5 minutes	60
Qualified & Confirmed-Acceptance Respondents Who Participate: <i>Individuals who will meet screening criteria, accept</i>	54	95 minutes <i>5 minutes screening + 15 minutes pre-group arrival + 75 minutes group discussion</i>	85.5

<i>participation, and participate in full group sessions</i>			
Qualified & Accepted “No-Shows” or “Released-Shows”: <i>Individuals who meet screening criteria and are accepted, but either do not show up for the group; or show up and are released prior to start of group</i>	18	20 minutes for “Released-Shows”; (-0- minutes for “No-Shows”) 5 minutes screening + 15 minutes pre-group arrival (for burden hours calculation, assumption is all individuals are “Released-Shows”)	6
Totals	792		151.5 hours

TOTAL BURDEN HOURS: 151.5 hours

FEDERAL COST: The estimated annual cost to the Federal government is \$57,500.

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 accompanying this clearance request.

Each focus group facility in each city does the recruiting on NHTSA’s and NHTSA’s contractor’s behalf, per the screener NHTSA provides. The facility’s recruiting staff works primarily from a pool within its proprietary database of people in that marketplace who have previously submitted demographic, lifestyle and product preference information. When NHTSA submits screeners such as the one for this project, the recruitment manager will filter the database to search for potential respondents in the designated age group (and any other relevant specs if the firm happens to have one or more of those other criteria established in the database). Then the recruiters will use telephone calls to those potential respondents to administer the full screener.

In any given household, only one person will be screened and confirmed.

After going through the database, if the recruiters can't fill the specified total numbers and/or quotas, the secondary step is procuring sample from any of numerous national sample providers of names, addresses and phone numbers. The recruiters will 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.