

SUPPORTING STATEMENT PART A
North Pacific Observer Safety and Security Survey
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0759

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) utilizes observers to collect information on catch, bycatch, fishing efforts, biological characteristics, interactions with protected species, as well as socioeconomic information, from U.S. commercial fishing and processing vessels. More information on the observer population is needed to support the Agency's conservation and management goals, to strengthen and improve fishery management decision-making, and to satisfy legal mandates under the Reauthorization of the [Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act](#), the [Regulatory Flexibility Act](#), the [Endangered Species Act](#), and the [National Environmental Policy Act](#), [Executive Order 12866](#), and other pertinent statutes.

NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) certified observers are a vital part of fisheries management. Observers are deployed to collect fisheries data in the field; observers often deploy to vessels and work alongside fishers for weeks and months at a time. The work environment observers find themselves in can be challenging, especially if observers find themselves a target for victim type violations such as sexual harassment, intimidation, or even assault. NOAA Fisheries' Office of Law Enforcement prioritizes investigations into allegations of sexual harassment, hostile work environment, assault and other complaints, which may affect observers individually. However, it is difficult for a person to disclose if they have been a victim of a crime, and law enforcement cannot respond if no complaint is submitted. The true number of observers who have experienced victim type crimes is unknown, and the reasons why they do not report is also unclear. More information is needed to understand how many observers per year experience victim type crimes, and why they chose not to report to law enforcement.

The Office of Law Enforcement, Alaska Division, is conducting a survey of North Pacific Observers to determine the number of observers who experienced victimizing behavior during deployments. The survey will also investigate the reasons that prevented observers from reporting these violations. The results of the survey will provide the Office of Law Enforcement a better understanding of how often observers are victimized, which will enable them to reallocate resources as needed, conduct more training for observers to ensure they know how to report, conduct training to ensure people understand what constitutes a victim crime, and to increase awareness of potential victimizations. Additionally, the survey results will help law enforcement understand the barriers to disclosure, so enforcement may begin to address these impediments so they no longer prevent observers from disclosure.

2. Explain how, by whom, how frequently, and for what purpose the information will be used. If the information collected will be disseminated to the public or used to support information that will be disseminated to the public, then explain how the collection complies with all applicable Information Quality Guidelines.

While this survey will be launched once a year and open for a month, the results of this survey will be used by the Office of Law Enforcement on an annual basis to determine a more accurate frequency of crimes against observers, and on a month basis to address the impediments to disclosure. By understanding the frequency, enforcement efforts can be adjusted accordingly. Additionally, by understanding the impediments to disclosure, the Office of Law Enforcement can also begin to eliminate the impediments, thus encouraging more reports of violations in real time.

The first section of the survey is an introduction, with no questions asked. The second section of the survey will determine basic demographics of the respondent. This is to determine if there is any correlation associated with demographics. The third section of the survey asks questions regarding the respondent's safety and security on deployment, followed by questions seeking to understand any impediments to disclosure. The fourth and fifth sections of the survey thank the respondent for their time; the fourth section is meant for anyone who did not deploy in the North Pacific Observer Program in the previous year, while the fifth section is for respondents who complete the survey.

It is anticipated that the information collected will be disseminated to the public or used to support publicly disseminated information. NOAA Office of Law Enforcement will retain control over the information and safeguard it from improper access, modification, and destruction, consistent with NOAA standards for confidentiality, privacy, and electronic information. See response to Question 10 of this Supporting Statement for more information on confidentiality and privacy. The information collection is designed to yield data that meet all applicable information quality guidelines. Prior to dissemination, the information will be subjected to quality control measures and a pre-dissemination review pursuant to [Section 515 of Public Law 106-554](#).

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological techniques or other forms of information technology.

This will be a web-based survey. The link for the survey will be provided to all possible respondents who deployed with the North Pacific Observer Program in a given year. Only aggregate results will be published.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

As the current liaison between the Office of law Enforcement and the North Pacific Observer Program, responsibility for collecting data Jaclyn Smith, sponsor; there are no current projects with a similar purpose. This was verified with other regions and with the National Observer Program.

5. If the collection of information involves small businesses or other small entities, describe the methods used to minimize burden.

Small businesses or other small entities will not be impacted.

6. Describe the consequences to the Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently.

When a person endures a difficult situation, such as sexual harassment or assault, especially in an isolated work environment that observers work in, there is the potential that the event will not be reported to law enforcement. The anonymous nature of the survey may encourage observers to report crimes against them as all judgement is removed. Anonymous surveys often produce more accurate rates. These rates are what the Office of Law Enforcement would like to know, so enforcement efforts can be adjusted appropriately. Without the survey, the Office of law Enforcement must rely on the rates of what was reported, which may not reflect the real frequency of crimes against observers.

7. Explain any special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

There are no special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

8. Provide information on the PRA Federal Register Notice that solicited public comments on the information collection prior to this submission. Summarize the public comments received in response to that notice and describe the actions taken by the agency in response to those comments. Describe the efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

A Federal Register Notice published on November 20, 2018 (83 FR 58554) solicited public comments. No comments were received.

The survey was discussed with a detective of the Ashland Police Department and Program Director of the You Have Options Program, a program which seeks to improve reporting of sex crimes. The detective and Program Director stated that an anonymous survey of this type, geared towards such a specific group, would be extremely beneficial to earning the trust of the observers, and would compel them to want to come forward. She explained that explaining the data would also be helpful as many victims of crime often think they are alone in what they have experienced, and the data would show them that they are not the only ones who have been victimized. The survey was also discussed with the Training Director for Standing together Against Rape, a local victim advocacy service in Alaska. The Training Director stated the anonymity is important to victims because they are often struggling with self-blame and other impediments to disclosure. The anonymity will give victims a chance to let others know what happened to them without feeling judged. The Program Director fully supported the impediments to closure section as it will give specific areas to focus on during future training. She also stated

that the data would be a useful tool for others to understand the extent of victimization that occurs but is not reported. Additionally, further consultation was conducted through attendance of a conference focusing on improving reactions to sexual assault victims, understanding the neurobiology of trauma, and conducting trauma informed interviews. Review of data available from the Bureau of Justice Statistics was also done, but nothing was found specific to data collection of NMFS certified observers in Alaska.

9. Explain any decisions to provide payments or gifts to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

No payments or gifts will be given to the respondents.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

No personally identifiable information will be requested from respondents.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.

The questions asked may be considered of a sensitive nature; however, the Office of Law Enforcement is requesting the information to determine the type of negative work environment observers may be experiencing. By understanding what observers are experiencing, the Office of Law Enforcement can take specific actions to implement a positive change to improve the work environment. The survey is voluntary, and observers do not have to take it if they are uncomfortable with the questions.

12. Provide an estimate in hours of the burden of the collection of information.

Estimated 50 hours: 10 minutes per person with an estimated 300 respondents.

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to the respondents or record-keepers resulting from the collection (excluding the value of the burden hours in Question 12 above).

There will be no recordkeeping/reporting cost anticipated for the respondents.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government.

There is no cost anticipated for the Federal government beyond the normal labor costs for staff. One staff member will compile the data; approximately \$57 per hour x 3 hours = \$171 annually.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments.

N/A.

16. For collections whose results will be published, outline the plans for tabulation and

publication.

The survey will be open for approximately one month. After the results are analyzed; analyzing will be completed within three days, it will be presented at the International Fisheries Observer and Monitoring Conference, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, and the American Fisheries Society Conference.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons why display would be inappropriate.

N/A.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement.

N/A.