

INFORMATION COLLECTION REQUEST (ICR):
SUPPORTING STATEMENT
FOCUS GROUPS – GENERIC CLEARANCE

A. Justification

1. Information to be collected and circumstances that makes the collection of information necessary

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is an independent federal regulatory agency that was created in 1972 by Congress in the Consumer Product Safety Act (CPSA). In that law, Congress directed the Commission to “protect the public against unreasonable risks of injuries and deaths associated with consumer products.” The Commission is authorized under section 5(a) of the CPSA, 15 U.S.C. 2054(a), to collect information, conduct research, perform studies and investigations relating to the causes and prevention of deaths, accidents, injuries, illnesses, other health impairments, and economic losses associated with consumer products. Section 5(b) of the CPSA, 15 U.S.C. 2054(b), further provides that the Commission may conduct research, studies and investigations on the safety of consumer products or test consumer products and develop product safety test methods and testing devices.

In order to better identify and evaluate the risks of product-related incidents, the Commission staff seeks to solicit and obtain direct feedback from consumers on issues related to product safety such as recall effectiveness, product use, and perceptions regarding safety issues. Through participation in certain focus groups, consumers will be able to answer questions and provide information regarding their actual experiences, opinions and/or perceptions on various safety issues such as the use or pattern of use of a specific product or type of product.

In the past, Commission staff has used focus groups to assess consumers’ behavior related to product recalls. The focus groups were helpful in understanding what type of information consumers receive and act upon when a recall personally affects them. Information we received from the focus groups helped support how and what information is presented in CPSC recall notices.

2. Use and sharing of collected information

The information collected from the Consumer Focus Groups will help shape the Commission’s evaluation of consumer products and product use by providing insight and information into consumer perceptions and usage patterns. Such information may also assist the Commission in its voluntary standards activities, and help the staff identify areas regarding consumer safety issues that need additional research. In addition, the information will assist with forming new ways of providing user friendly data to consumers through CPSC’s website and public affairs campaigns.

3. Use of information technology (IT) in information collection

The information collection may be audio and video recorded. The information will be summarized into a final report.

4. Efforts to identify duplication

The intent of the focus groups is to obtain information that is not readily available elsewhere. The information collected will not just be hypothetical consumer opinions, but will be what consumers actually did and thought regarding a specific product issue. The information will also be about how consumers use CPSC data and information and how CPSC can make that information more accessible and usable.

5. Impact on small businesses

The information will not be collected from small businesses or other small entities. Individual consumers will participate in the focus groups.

6. Consequences to Federal program or policy activities if collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently

If this information is not collected, the Commission may not have available certain useful information regarding consumer experiences, opinions, and perceptions related to specific product use, which the Commission uses, in part, in its ongoing efforts to improve the safety of consumer products and safety information on behalf of consumers. Currently, the Commission staff relies on their expert judgment about consumer behavior, perceptions, and similar information related to consumer products and product use. Not conducting the information collection activity, therefore, would not reduce the quality of assessments currently completed by the staff. However, conducting the information collection activity would likely provide the staff with evidence that would focus the staff's assessments, or could provide insight into consumer perceptions and usage patterns that could not be anticipated by the staff. Hence, conducting the information collection activity would likely improve the quality of the staff's assessments.

7. Special circumstances requiring respondents to report information more often than quarterly or to prepare responses in fewer than 30 days

Not applicable.

8. Agency's Federal Register (FR) Notice and related information

An FR notice announcing CPSC's intent to request an extension of approval of information collection requirements was published May 3, 2017. No comments were received.

9. *Decision to provide payment or gift*

It is anticipated that a cash incentive will be provided to participants. It is standard industry practice to provide monetary incentives to those individuals who participate in the focus group session, along with meals, snacks and beverages prior to their focus group. This honoraria covers the cost of transportation to and from the facility, parking, and childcare (if necessary), as well as compensation for the time they are spending to attend the group. Without the incentives, the cost for recruitment would increase greatly, and would likely result in a less diverse group with a lower attendance rate.

10. *Assurance of confidentiality*

None of the participants will be specifically identified by their full name. To facilitate open conversations, individual's first names will be used during the session and therefore may be recorded on the audio and video tapes. However, the audio and video tapes will not be released to the public. Only demographic information will be generalized in the final report and none of the responses in the final report will be attributed to any specific individual.

The contractor for the focus groups will include specific guidance for the security and privacy of the participants and their contact information. Upon completion of the contract the Contractor will be required to return all previously provided databases and will provide documentation demonstrating that no other copies and references to the personal data of the potential and actual focus group participants is maintained. Upon approval of the final report, the Contractor will provide all copies of audio/video data collected for this contract.

11. *Questions of a sensitive nature*

Not applicable. The staff will not pose questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior or attitudes, religious beliefs, or other matters commonly considered private.

12. *Estimate of hour burden to respondents*

We estimate that CPSC will conduct seven focus groups with a total of 650 participants. The hourly burden to these respondents will average 3 hours, for a total hourly burden of 1,950 hours. The total cost in estimated hourly wage burden is $1,950 \times \$34.15$ (U.S. Department of Labor, Employer costs for Employee Compensation, September 2016) = \$66,592.

13. *Estimate of total annual cost burden to respondents*

Not applicable, there are no costs to respondents beyond those listed in section 12 above.

14. *Estimate of annualized costs to the Federal government*

The total cost of this collection to the federal government is \$145,000. This represents 9 months of staff time annually. This sum includes travel costs expended for meeting with contractors and contracts for conducting focus groups as well as salaries and benefits (\$138,802). This estimate uses an annual total compensation of \$126,958 (the equivalent of a GS-14 Step 5 employee) which represents 68.6 percent of the employer costs for employee compensation with remaining 31.4 percent added for benefits (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Employer Costs for Employee Compensation,” September 2016, Table 1, percentage of wages and salaries for all civilian management, professional, and related employees), for a total annual compensation per FTE of \$185,070.

15. *Program changes or adjustments*

Burden hours and participants in this request have increased based on agency experience for the previous three years. The number of focus groups conducted was higher than in past periods, and the average size of the individual focus groups has also increased. Focus groups have been and continue to be a vital part of the programs at CPSC.

16. *Plans for tabulation and publication*

The Commission has no plans to publish this information in a peer reviewed journal; however, staff reports are typically posted on CPSC’s website. Such reports are summaries of the focus groups and do not specifically identify any of the participants. These summaries do not make statistical assertions or implications. Because CPSC does not plan to disseminate the data collected, the requirements of the OMB and the CPSC Information Quality Guidelines do not apply.

17. *Rationale for not displaying the expiration date for OMB approval*

Not applicable.

18. *Exception to the certification statement*

Not applicable.

B. Statistical Methods – Attached in separate document.