

Supporting Statement
Application to Use Automated Commercial Environment (ACE)
1651-0105

A. Justification

- 1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.**

The Automated Commercial Environment (ACE) is a trade data processing system that is replacing the Automated Commercial System (ACS), the current import system for U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) operations. ACE is authorized by [Executive Order 13659](#) which mandates implementation of a Single Window through which businesses will transmit data required by participating agencies for the importation or exportation of cargo. See [79 FR 10655](#) (February 25, 2014). ACE supports government agencies and the trade community with border-related missions with respect to moving goods across the border efficiently and securely. Once ACE is fully implemented, all related CBP trade functions and the trade community will be supported from a single common user interface.

To establish an ACE Portal account, participants submit information such as their name, their employer identification number (EIN) or social security number (SSN), and if applicable, a statement certifying their capability to connect to the internet. This information is submitted through the ACE Secure Data Portal which is accessible at: <http://www.cbp.gov/trade/automated>.

Please Note: A CBP-assigned number may be provided in lieu of your SSN. If you have an EIN, that number will automatically be used and no CBP number will be assigned. A CBP-assigned number is for CBP use only.

There is a standalone capability for electronically filing protests in ACE. This capability is available for participants who have not established ACE Portal Accounts for other trade activities, but desire to file protests electronically. A protest is a procedure whereby a private party may administratively challenge a CBP decision regarding imported merchandise and certain other CBP decisions. Trade members can establish a protest filer account in ACE through a separate application and the submission of specific data elements. See [81 FR 57928](#) (August 24, 2016).

Proposed Changes:

1. New ACE Account type:

CBP is creating a new ACE Account type for ACE Import Trade Carriers and their designees. This new account type, Vessel Agency, enables users to file vessel entrance, clearance, and related data to CBP electronically through the new Vessel Entrance and Clearance System (VECS).

The ACE Account Application will be changed to collect identifying information such as name, employer identification number (EIN), company address, and phone numbers, to be used to setup the Vessel Agency accounts. Users who create a Vessel Agency Account are automatically enrolled into the VECS public pilot.

2. Removing ACE Account types:

In a separate action, unrelated to the Vessel Agency account type creation, CBP will also be removing account types “Cartman” and “Lighterman” from the ACE Account Application. These account types were never used and are being removed due to that lack of use.

2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.

CBP needs basic information from companies electing to establish an ACE Secure Data Portal account to establish an account structure for each company. This information is also needed by CBP for enforcement and security purposes. Once respondents have established an ACE protest filer account, they may file protests electronically instead of using the paper CBP Form 19. CBP Form 19 is currently approved under 1651-0017 and will continue to be accepted.

Users who create a Vessel Agency Account through ACE will be automatically enrolled into the VECS public pilot.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g. permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.

Respondents can submit their information using the ACE Secure Data Portal. This can be accessed at CBP.gov at <http://www.cbp.gov/trade/automated>

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar

information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.

This information collection is unique and not duplicated elsewhere. Parties that have an established ACE Portal Account may add these additional user roles: Protest Filer, or Vessel Agency, to their accounts without resubmitting the data in the application.

In addition, once a Vessel Agency account or Protest Filer account is established, protest filers and vessel agents will not be required to resubmit the account application information each time they file a protest electronically through ACE, or need to file vessel entrance, clearance, and related data to CBP electronically through VECS.

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

This information collection does not have an impact on small businesses or other small entities.

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

If CBP does not collect this information, we would not have enough information to establish accounts for companies or individuals choosing to electronically file a vessel entry in ACE. In addition, CBP would not be able to evaluate the functionality of ACE.

7. Explain any special circumstances.

This information collection is conducted in a manner consistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5(c)(2).

8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8(d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.

Public comments were solicited through two Federal Register notices including a 60-day notice published on November 15, 2021 (Volume 86, Page 63037) which one comment of support for the new Vessel Entrance Clearance System (VECS) was received and recorded on 1651-0019 Vessel Entrance or Clearance Statement, and a 30-day notice published on March 14, 2022 (Volume 87, Page

14279) on which no comments have been received.

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

There is no offer of a monetary or material value for this information collection.

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

A PIA for the Automated Commercial Environment (ACE) dated July 31, 2015, and a SORN for the Import Information System, dated August 17, 2015 (80 FR 49256), and a SORN for the Export Information System, dated September 2, 2015 (80 FR 53181) will be included in this ICR. No assurances of confidentiality are provided to 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. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.

There are no questions of a personal or sensitive nature associated with this collection.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information.

INFORMATION COLLECTION	TOTAL ANNUAL BURDEN HOURS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	NO. OF RESPONSES PER RESPONDENT	TOTAL RESPONSES	TIME PER RESPONSE
Application to ACE (Import)	7,118	21,571	1	21,571	20 minutes (.33 hours)
Application to ACE (Export)	594	9,000	1	9,000	4 minutes (.066 hours)
Application to Establish an ACE Protest Filer Account	248	3,750	1	3,750	4 minutes (.066 hours)
Total	8,276	34,321	1	34,321	

The above chart includes the addition of an estimated 471 annual respondents

and 155 annual burden hours for the Application to ACE (Import) for Vessel Agency accounts. There are no changes to the Applications to ACE for Export or Protest Filer account numbers.

Public Cost

The estimated cost to the respondents is \$259,618. This is based on the estimated burden hours (8,276) multiplied by the average loaded hourly wage rate for importers (\$31.37). CBP calculated this loaded wage rate by first multiplying the Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) 2020 median hourly wage rate for Cargo and Freight Agents (\$21.04), which CBP assumes best represents the wage for importers, by the ratio of BLS' average 2020 total compensation to wages and salaries for Office and Administrative Support occupations (1.4912), the assumed occupational group for importers, to account for non-salary employee benefits.¹ This figure is in 2020 U.S. dollars and CBP assumes an annual growth rate of 0 percent; the 2020 U.S. dollar value is equal to the 2021 U.S. dollar value.

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information.

There are no capitalization, start-up or maintenance costs associated with this information collection.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal Government. Also provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses (such as equipment overhead, printing, and support staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.

The estimated annual cost to the Federal Government associated with the review of these records is \$654,311. This is based on the number of responses that must be reviewed (34,321) multiplied by the time burden to review and process each response (15 minutes or 0.25 hours) = 8,580 hours multiplied by the

¹ Source of median wage rate: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Occupational Employment Statistics, "May 2020 National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates United States." Updated March 31, 2021. Available at https://www.bls.gov/oes/2020/may/oes_nat.htm. Accessed June 1, 2021. The total compensation to wages and salaries ratio is equal to the calculated average of the 2020 quarterly estimates (shown under Mar., June, Sep., Dec.) of the total compensation cost per hour worked for Office and Administrative Support occupations (\$28.8875) divided by the calculated average of the 2020 quarterly estimates (shown under Mar., June, Sep., Dec.) of wages and salaries cost per hour worked for the same occupation category (\$19.3725). Source of total compensation to wages and salaries ratio data: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Employer Costs for Employee Compensation. Employer Costs for Employee Compensation Historical Listing March 2004 – December 2020, "Table 3. Civilian workers, by occupational group: employer costs per hours worked for employee compensation and costs as a percentage of total compensation, 2004-2020." March 2021. Available at <https://www.bls.gov/web/ecec/ececqrtn.pdf>. Accessed June 1, 2021.

average hourly loaded rate for other CBP employees $(\$76.26)^2 = \$654,311$.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in Items 12 or 13 of this Statement.

There has been an increase in the estimated annual burden previously reported for this information collection, due to the addition of a new account type in Application to ACE for Imports: Vessel Agency Account. The increase in annual burden is caused by the increase in the number of respondents, and an increase in total responses received.

The Item 12 chart includes the addition of an estimated 471 annual respondents and 155 annual burden hours for the Application to ACE (Import) for Vessel Agency accounts. The figures in Item 13 were adjusted accordingly as well.

16. For collection of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation, and publication.

This information collection will not be published for statistical purposes.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date, explain the reasons that displaying the expiration date would be inappropriate.

CBP will display the expiration date for OMB approval of this information collection.

18. "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions."

CBP does not request an exception to the certification of this information collection.

B. Collection of Information Employing Statistical Methods

No statistical methods were employed.

² CBP bases this wage on the FY 2021 salary and benefits of the national average of other CBP positions, which is equal to a GS-12, Step 3. Source: Email correspondence with CBP's Office of Finance on September 7, 2021.