

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT FOR
BRIDGE PERMIT APPLICATION GUIDE
OMB Control No.: 1625-0015
COLLECTION INSTRUMENT(S): Instructions**

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.

Under the provisions of 33 U.S.C. 401, 491, and 525, it shall not be lawful to construct a bridge or causeway over navigable waters of the United States unless the plans and location of such structures have been approved by the Secretary of Homeland Security through the Commandant, U. S. Coast Guard. The plans and map of the location must be in such detail as may be required for a full understanding of the bridge project. The procedures of obtaining an individual bridge permit are set forth in 33 CFR 115.50 and 115.60. The procedure essentially calls for a letter of application with letter size drawings (plans) and map showing the proposed bridge project and its location.

The authority in 33 U.S.C. 401, 491, and 525 is delegated by the Secretary to the Coast Guard via the Department of Homeland Security Delegation No. 0170.1, Revision No. 01.2. (II)(62), (64), and (67).

Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, requires federal agencies to assess in detail the environmental impacts of proposed major federal actions on the quality of the human environment. 40 CFR 1500-1508 sets forth the procedures, and 40 CFR 1502.3 specifically mandates the requirement for impact statements.

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.

It is against the law to build a bridge over the navigable waters of the United States without approval of the plans and location of such structures. The Coast Guard, before a bridge permit is issued or denied, uses the information provided by the applicant to evaluate the effect the bridge project will have on the reasonable needs of navigation and on the human environment. The applicants are private entities, Federal, state, or local government agencies, or organizations employing more than 100 persons.

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.

Current applicants can submit the required material electronically to the Coast Guard via email, CD-ROM or posting documents to applicant websites for Coast Guard download. Development of the Bridge Permit Application Guide (BPAG), COMDTPUB P16591.3 (series), Bridge Permits Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTP), CGTTP 3-71.10, and the Bridge Administration Manual (BAM), CONDTINST M16590.5 (series) have prevented waste within the Coast Guard. The BPAG provides a standard for assisting applicants in compiling the required information and documents. The Bridge Permits TTP provides Coast Guard district bridge offices with tactics, techniques, and procedures on the bridge permit process, to include project coordination, navigational and environmental documentation, case file and findings of fact development, permit writing, and guidance on determining navigation requirements. The BAM provides the same standard for Coast Guard field units and Headquarters to review and evaluate permit applications.

The Coast Guard Office of Bridge Programs owns the permitting process and developed and deployed a new version of the BPAG in July of 2016. This version simplified the application process by modifying the application to a checklist-style document. The document now requires less information be presented by the applicant and is now easier to complete. The document reduced both the time to complete an application for the applicant as well as the review time of the application by the Coast Guard. Overall the time savings was estimated to be 25% for application preparation and 35% for Coast Guard application review.

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 is not collected in any form, and therefore is not duplicated elsewhere.

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities (Item 5 of OMB Form 83-I), describe any methods used to minimize burden.

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

6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

The result of either not collecting this information or conducting it less frequently would be noncompliance with statutory and regulatory requirements. The Coast Guard's bridge permit program would become ineffective and their inability to make informed decisions

on whether proposed bridges or bridge modifications would meet the reasonable needs of navigation with due consideration of the effects on the human environment could jeopardize maritime navigation. Every application for a Coast Guard bridge permit must go through this collection process. The Coast Guard has no influence on how many bridge applications it receives annually. Federal funding for transportation projects is the largest influence.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:
- Requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly;
 - requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;
 - requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document;
 - requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records for more than three years;
 - In connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study;
 - requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB;
 - that includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or
 - requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secret, or other confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.

The special circumstances contained in item 7 of the Supporting Statement are not applicable to this information collection.

8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the data 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.

A 60 and 30 day Notice will be published in the Federal Register to obtain public comment on this collection.

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

There is no offer of 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.

Not applicable. Bridge permit case records are public records and subject to applicable provisions of Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations Part 7, Public Availability of Information Transportation (49 CFR 7). (From COMDTINST M16590.5C, Bridge Administration Manual, paragraph 1.M.2.).

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 person's form whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.

There are no questions of sensitive nature.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. The statement should:

- Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. Unless directed to do so, agencies should not conduct special surveys to obtain information on which to base hour burden estimates. Consultation with a sample (fewer than 10) of potential respondents is desirable. If the hour burden on respondents is expected to vary widely because of differences in activity, size, or complexity, show the range of estimated hour burden, and explain the reasons for the variance. Generally, estimates should not include burden hours for customary and usual business practices.
- If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form and aggregate the hour burdens in Item 13 of OMB Form 83-I.
- Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories. The cost of contracting out or paying outside parties for information collection activities should not be included here. Instead, this cost should be included in

Item 14.

Frequency of Response: Usually once, when applying for Coast Guard approval of proposed bridge construction or bridge modification.

Applicant cost to provide the information contained in the Bridge Permit Application Guide can vary greatly depending upon the level of environmental documentation required under NEPA. There are three levels of NEPA documentation: categorical exclusions (CE), environmental assessments (EA) and environmental impact statements (EIS). For the purposes of this OMB evaluation categorical exclusions shall be considered low impact projects by the Bridge Program since they typically require minimal coordination and documentation. EAs and EISs require a much more rigorous analysis and take more time and capital to produce so they are considered to be high impact projects by the Bridge Program.

All calculations presented in this document are based on the number of permit decisions made between FY18 and FY20. The previous submission of this form (FY15-FY17) included permit pre-application coordination between the Bridge Program and the applicant that is required as an application is prepared for submission. Recognition of this work more accurately captured the work of the Bridge Program and significantly increased the total burden hours. Unfortunately the Coast Guard was unable to continue to support the antiquated database that was used to capture this data and a new database solution is not expected to be fully operational until 2022, therefore reliable data for the full data period is unavailable. This submission does not include pre-application work and will therefore show a drastic decrease in burden hours due to this omission.

Number of Bridge Permit Applicants (Respondents):

FY18 – Low Impact 14 + High Impact 23 = 37 total

FY19 – Low Impact 14 + High Impact 19 = 33 total

FY20 – Low Impact 14 + High Impact 20 = 34 total

Low Impact total = 42

High Impact total = 62

Total = 104

For 80% of Coast Guard bridge permit applications the applicant is another Federal agency (Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), etc. 83 of 104 total applications). The Coast Guard is not the lead federal agency for NEPA on these projects but all Federal actions must comply with the provisions of NEPA. Any Federal applicant for a bridge permit becomes responsible as the lead federal agency under NEPA to conduct a NEPA evaluation. The NEPA documentation has already been complete at the time of application submission since the lead federal agency is required to prepare NEPA documentation when federal funding is involved. The below calculations do not include the number of hours and associated costs a federal applicant spends on preparing their

NEPA documentation since the documentation is not a sole requirement of the Coast Guard, but a requirement that is met before a Coast Guard Bridge permit application is considered.

Due to staffing limitations, the Coast Guard typically requires the applicant to prepare the NEPA documentation when the Coast Guard is identified as the lead federal agency for NEPA, approximately 20% of the time. NEPA documentation requirements vary based upon the impacts and complexity of the project. Implementation procedures are based on Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations found in 40 CFR 1500-1508. When a private entity/owner applies for a Coast Guard bridge permit the Coast Guard must now assume lead federal agency responsibilities for NEPA. The Coast Guard Bridge Program often coordinates with the private applicant to have them produce the NEPA documentation for the Coast Guard to expedite the permit process, as allowed by the CEQ regulations. The cost to do this then falls to the applicant. Market research suggests that low impact (CE) projects typically take 120 hours to produce a NEPA document at an estimated cost of \$12,000. High impact (EA and EIS) projects typically take between 500 (EA) and 5,000 (EIS) hours to produce a NEPA document at an estimated cost of between \$50,000 (EA) and \$500,000 (EIS). Sections a. and b. below represent low and high impact projects, respectively.

The calculations contained below are based upon the level of NEPA documentation required for the proposed project and reflect the low impact (CE) /high impact (EA/EIS) determination. The costs shown are based upon the 2021 schedule of hourly rates for personnel contained within enclosure (2) to COMDTINST 7310.1V. Total estimated respondent financial cost for FY18-FY20 is shown in Section d. at **\$1,002,394.00**. These calculations do not include the hours and cost for NEPA documentation preparation described above.

- a. **Application preparation by the applicant for low impact projects (categorical exclusions).** For FY18-FY20 the Program processed 42 applications for low impact (CE) projects. These projects account for approximately 40% of Coast Guard Bridge Permit Applications. Rates are based on COMDTINST 7310.1V Coast Guard Reimbursable Standard Rate dated 03 November 2021.

Inside government (I/G)

Outside government (O/G)

Pre-application consultations w/federal, state, local govt. (GS-13/14, O/G \$119) X 8 hrs	=	\$952.00
Application preparation (GS-11, O/G \$74) X 30 hrs	=	\$2,220.00
Clerical (GS-5/8, O/G \$59) X 4 hrs	=	\$236.00
Drawings prepared (GS-9, O/G \$63) X 10 hrs	=	\$630.00

Respondent financial burden per application = \$4,038.00

Respondent burden hours per application, low impact (8+30+4+10 hrs) = 52 hrs

Total Respondent hours - 52 hrs X 42 applications (40% of 104, FY18-20) = 2,184 hrs

Total Respondent Cost - \$4,028.00 X 42 applications = **\$169,176.00**

- b. **Application preparation for high impact projects (environmental assessments and environmental impact statements).** FY18-FY20 the Program processed 62 applications for high impact (EA/EIS) projects. These projects account for approximately 60% of Coast Guard Bridge Permit Applications.

Note: the hourly differences between an environmental assessment and an environmental impact statement are evident in the NEPA document preparation, and not with the other Bridge Permit Application requirements, as described below.

Within government (I/G)

Outside government (O/G)

Pre-application consultations w/federal, state, local govt.
(GS-13/14, O/G \$119) X 87 hrs = \$10,353.00

Application preparation (GS-11, O/G \$74) X 30 hrs = \$2,220.00

Clerical (GS-5/8, O/G \$59) X 4 hrs = \$236.00

Drawings prepared (GS-9, O/G \$63) X 10 hrs = \$630.00

Respondent financial burden per application = \$13,439.00

Respondent burden hours per application, high impact (87+30+4+10 hrs) = 131 hrs

Total Respondent hours - 131 hrs X 62 applications (60% of 104, FY18-20) = 8,122 hrs

Total Respondent Cost - \$13,439.00 X 62 applicants = \$833,218.00

- c. **FY18-FY20 total respondent hours (2,184+8,122) = 10,306 hrs (approx. 3,435 hrs annual)**

d. **FY18-FY20 total respondent cost (\$169,176.00+833,218.00) = \$1,002,394.00 (approx. \$334,131.00 annual)**

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information. (Do not include the cost of any hour burden shown in Items 12 and 14).

- The cost estimate should be split into two components: (a) a total capital and start-up cost component (annualized over its expected useful life); and (b) a total operation and maintenance and purchase of services component. The estimates should take into account costs associated with generating, maintaining, and disclosing or providing the information. Include descriptions of methods used to estimate major cost factors including system and technology acquisition, expected useful life of capital equipment, the discount rate(s), and the time period over which costs will be incurred. Capital and start-up costs include, among other items, preparations for collecting information such as purchasing computers and software; monitoring, sampling, drilling and testing equipment; and record storage facilities.
- If cost estimates are expected to vary widely, agencies should present ranges of cost burdens and explain the reasons for the variance. The cost of purchasing or contracting out information collection services should be a part of this cost burden estimate. In developing cost burden estimates, agencies may consult with a sample of respondents (fewer than 10), utilize the 60-day pre-OMB submission public comment process and use existing economic or regulatory impact analysis associated with the rulemaking containing the information collection, as appropriate.
- Generally, estimates should not include purchases of equipment or services, or portions thereof, made: (1) prior to October 1, 1995, (2) to achieve regulatory compliance with requirements not associated with the information collection, (3) for reasons other than to provide information or keep records for the government or (4) as part of customary and usual business or private practices.

The estimated cost for the copying, postage and handling of a bridge permit application:

Low Impact Project	=	\$50.00
Total Respondent Cost - \$50.00 X 42 applications (40% of 104, FY18-20)	=	\$2,100.00
High Impact Project	=	\$200.00
Total Respondent Cost - \$200.00 X 62 applications (60% of 104, FY18-20)	=	\$12,400.00

FY 18-FY20 estimated total cost = \$14,500.00

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. Agencies also may aggregate cost estimates from Items 12, 13, and 14 in a single table.

The estimated annual federal cost for administration for FY18-FY20 is \$1,351,777.75; this number will change slightly from year to year depending on the number of applications received in that year. This estimate is primarily federal personnel salary and overhead costs associated with field and headquarters time expended in processing a respondent's application for a bridge permit or permit amendment. The costs are directly related to working with and evaluating the information collected from respondents in order to make the federal decision required on bridge project impacts on navigation and on the human environment. Personnel costs are calculated from information in enclosure (2) to COMDTINST 7310.1V.

- a. Prepare District jurisdictional and navigational determinations, review and provide feedback for application package, prepare and distribute Coast Guard public notice and agency notifications, review and address public concerns, and prepare District Findings of Fact (total 65.0 hours). These actions differ very little between low impact and high impact projects as well as between Coast Guard lead vs. non-lead federal agency.

CG application review and acknowledgment (GM-12, I/G \$78) X 8 hrs	=	\$624.00
CG jurisdictional/navigation clearance determinations & coordination (GM-12, I/G \$78) X 25 hrs	=	\$1,950.00
Prepare and distribute CG Public Notice/Agency Notifications (GS-13/14, I/G \$111) X .50 hrs	=	\$55.50
(GS-12, I/G \$78) X 11 hrs	=	\$858.00
Review and prepare public notice responses (GS-12, I/G \$78) X 3.5 hrs	=	\$273.00
Prepare District Findings of Fact. Same for low and high impact, same for Coast Guard lead vs. non-lead (GS-12, I/G \$78) X 17 hrs	=	<u>\$1,326.00</u>
65 hrs		\$5,086.50

- b. When the Coast Guard *IS NOT* the lead federal agency, review and comment on preliminary and final environmental documents, attend resource/regulatory agency meetings and draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) or Record of Decision

(ROD) for high impact projects. These projects account for approximately 80% of Coast Guard Bridge Permit Applications.

Review and comment on preliminary and final environmental documents. (GS-12, I/G \$78) X 18 hrs	=	\$1,404.00
Attend resource/regulatory agency meetings. (GS-12, I/G \$78) X 3 hrs	=	\$234.00
Draft FONSI or ROD for high impact projects. (GS-12, I/G \$78) X 5 hrs	=	<u>\$390.00</u>
26 hrs		\$2,028.00

c. When the Coast Guard **IS** the lead federal agency review environmental documents, to include reviewing applicant prepared environmental documents and coordination and consultation with natural resource agencies (average for low and high impact = 37 hours). These projects account for approximately 20% of Coast Guard Bridge Permit Applications.

Please note that the following dollar amounts; \$1,950.00, \$936.00, \$1,794.00 and \$527.25; are used in both the LOW and HIGH impact calculations.

Review applicant-prepared preliminary and final environmental documents (GS-12, I/G \$78) X 25 hrs	=	\$1,950.00
Attend resource/regulatory agency meetings. (GS-12, I/G \$78) X 12 hrs	=	\$936.00
Circulate and address comments and concerns.		
Low Impact (GS-12, I/G \$78) X 17 hrs	=	\$1,326.00
High Impact (GS-12, I/G \$78) X 60 hrs	=	\$4,680.00
Draft CE determination, FONSI or ROD, review and comment on final environmental document.		
Low Impact (GS-12, I/G \$78) X 8 hrs	=	\$624.00
High Impact (GS-12, I/G \$78) X 58hrs	=	\$4,524.00

Prepare final environmental document/cover for agency signature, prepare permit package for District/Commandant review, prepare transmittal letter/case file and completion report.

Same for low and high impact

(GS-12, I/G \$78) X 23hrs = \$1,794.00
 (GS-13/14, I/G \$111) X 4.75 hrs = \$527.25

89.75 hrs Low impact = **\$7,157.25**
182.75 hrs High impact = **\$14,411.25**

d. Coast Guard HQ receives application package, evaluates impacts on navigation and the environment, prepares written evaluations, bridge permit or denial, and transmittal letter to District. This section applies to all applications.

Low Impact

(GS-15, I/G \$128) X 3.50 hrs = \$448.00
 (GS-13, I/G \$93) X 21.75 hrs = \$2,022.75

25.25 hrs Low impact = **\$2,470.75**

High Impact

(GS-15, I/G \$128) X 5.50 hrs = \$704.00
 (GS-13, I/G \$93) X 43 hrs = \$3,999.00

48.5 hrs High impact = **\$4,703.00**

e. **FY18-FY20 Coast Guard hours per response:**

Low impact projects, Coast Guard **not** the lead federal agency = **116.25 hrs**
 (a+b+d(low))

Low impact projects, Coast Guard **is** the lead federal agency = **180.00 hrs**
 (a+c(low)+d(low))

High impact projects, Coast Guard **not** the lead federal agency = **139.50 hrs**
 (a+b+d(high))

High impact projects, Coast Guard **is** the lead federal agency = **296.25 hrs**
 (a+c(high)+d(high))

f. **FY18-FY20 Total Cost burden hours:**

The calculations in this section are based upon 104 projects for FY18-FY20. 40% were considered low impact (42 applications). Of this 14% were Coast Guard lead (6 applications) and 86% were not Coast Guard lead (36 applications). 60% of the applications were considered high impact projects (62 applications). Of this 24% were Coast Guard lead (15 applications) and 76% were not Coast Guard lead (47 applications). These numbers are used to generate the Coast Guard burden hours.

Total Coast Guard burden hours (low impact projects, Coast Guard not the lead federal

agency) = **4,185.00 hrs** (36 applications X 116.25 hrs)

Total Coast Guard burden hours (low impact projects, Coast Guard is the lead federal agency) = **1,080.00 hrs** (6 applications X 180.00 hrs)

Total Coast Guard burden hours (high impact projects, Coast Guard not the lead federal agency) = **6,556.50 hrs** (47 applications X 139.50 hrs)

Total Coast Guard burden hours (high impact projects, Coast Guard is the lead federal agency) = **4,443.75 hrs** (15 applications X 296.25 hrs)

Total Coast Guard burden hours, FY18-20 = **16,265.25 hrs**

g. FY18-20 Federal government financial burden

Coast Guard financial burden (low impact projects/Coast Guard not the lead federal agency) = **\$345,051.00** (\$9,584.75 (a+b+d(low) X 36 applications)

Coast Guard financial burden (low impact projects/Coast Guard is the lead federal agency) = **\$88,287.00** (\$14,714.50 (a+c(low)+d(low) X 6 applications)

Coast Guard financial burden (high impact projects/Coast Guard not the lead federal agency) = **\$555,422.50** (\$11,817.5 (a+b+d(high) X 47 applications)

Coast Guard financial burden (high impact projects/Coast Guard is the lead federal agency) = **\$363,011.25** (\$24,200.75 (a+c(high)+d(high) X 15 applications)

Total Federal Cost (FY18-FY20, 104 applications) = **\$1,351,777.75**

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reporting in Items 13 or 14 of the OMB Form 83-I.

The Estimated burden for the period FY18 - FY20 is 10, 306 hours which averages to 3,435 hours per year. All calculations presented in this document are based on the number of permit applications processed between FY18 and FY20. The previous submission of this form (FY15-FY17) included permit pre-application coordination between the Bridge Program and the applicant that is required as an application is prepared for submission. Recognition of this work more accurately captured the work of the Bridge Program and significantly increased the total burden hours. The Coast Guard stopped supporting the Bridge Registry and Information Exchange (BRIX) database that was used to capture this data and the new database solution is not expected to be fully operational for Bridge Program activities until 2022, therefore reliable data for the full data period is unavailable. This submission does not include pre-application work and will therefore show a dramatic decrease from the last submission in burden hours due to this omission.

16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for

tabulation, and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.

The Coast Guard does not intend to employ the use of statistics or the publication thereof for this information collection.

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

The Coast Guard will display the expiration date for OMB approval of this information collection.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19, "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submission," of OMB 83-I.

The Coast Guard does not request an exception to the certification of this information collection.