

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
North Pacific Observer Program
OMB Control No. 0648-0318

Abstract

This is a resubmission, with the final rule, of a request by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Alaska Regional Office (AKRO), for revision of this currently approved information collection that contains requirements for the North Pacific Observer Program.

Under the Observer Program, observers and electronic monitoring systems collect information necessary for the conservation and management of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands and Gulf of Alaska groundfish and halibut fisheries.

This information collection is revised due to the final rule (RIN 0648-BL08) to implement Amendment 122 to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area, which establishes a new limited access privilege program, the Pacific Cod Trawl Cooperative Program (PCTC Program). This rule also affects information collection requirements approved under OMB Control Numbers 0648-0213, -0334, -0515, -0678, and -0711 and adds a new information collection for the PCTC Program under a new OMB control number, 0648-0811. NMFS is submitting separate requests for these collections.

This collection is revised because vessels participating in the PCTC Program will be required to provide equipment and at-sea data transmission capabilities to facilitate electronic transmission of observer data to NMFS. This increases the number of vessels that need to provide observers access to a computer with ATLAS installed. This collection is also revised because catcher vessels that choose to participate in the PCTC Program will be required to be in the full observer coverage category instead of the partial observer coverage category. These catcher vessels will no longer be required to use the Observer Declare and Deploy System (ODDS) to log fishing trips, which decreases the number of respondents that log trips in ODDS.

A correction was made to the number of respondents for ATLAS communications and data entry from the supporting statement submitted with the proposed rule.

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 [Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act](#) 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.* (Magnuson-Stevens Act), the Secretary of Commerce is responsible for the conservation and management of marine fishery resources within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the United States through NOAA/NMFS. NMFS Alaska Region manages the groundfish fisheries in

the EEZ of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area (BSAI) and Gulf of Alaska (GOA) under fishery management plans (FMPs) developed by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) for groundfish in the respective areas. Regulations governing U.S. fisheries and implementing the groundfish FMPs are at 50 CFR [parts 600](#) and [679](#).

The International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) and NMFS Alaska Region manage fishing for Pacific halibut (*Hippoglossus stenolepis*) through regulations established under the authority of the [Northern Pacific Halibut Act of 1982](#), 16 U.S.C. 773c (Halibut Act). The IPHC promulgates regulations governing the halibut fishery under the [Convention between the United States and Canada for the Preservation of the Halibut Fishery of the Northern Pacific Ocean and Bering Sea](#) (Convention). Regulations pursuant to the Convention are set forth at [50 CFR 300 subpart E](#).

Section 313 of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (16 U.S.C. 1862) authorizes the Council, in consultation with NMFS, to prepare a fishery research plan for the purpose of stationing observers and electronic monitoring (EM) systems to collect data necessary for the conservation, management, and scientific understanding of the commercial groundfish and Pacific halibut fisheries of the BSAI and GOA management areas. Under the North Pacific Observer Program (Observer Program), observers and EM systems collect fishery-dependent information used to estimate total catch and interactions with protected species. Managers use this data to manage groundfish and prohibited species catch within established limits and to document and reduce fishery interactions with protected species. Scientists use this data to assess fish stocks, provide data for fisheries and ecosystem research and fishing fleet behavior, assess marine mammal interactions with fishing gear, and characterize fishing impacts on habitat. The Observer Program is implemented by regulations at [50 CFR 679 subpart E](#).

All vessels and processors that participate in federally managed or parallel groundfish and halibut fisheries off Alaska (except catcher vessels delivering unsorted codends to a mothership) are subject to Observer Program requirements and assigned to one of two categories: the full observer coverage category (full coverage); or the partial observer coverage category (partial coverage). Vessels and processors in the full coverage category have at least one observer present during all fishing or processing activity. Vessels and processors in the partial coverage category are assigned observer or EM coverage according to the scientific sampling plan described in the Annual Deployment Plan (ADP) developed by NMFS in consultation with the Council. Since 2013, observers have been deployed in the partial coverage category using established random sampling methods to collect data on a statistically reliable sample of fishing vessels in the partial coverage category. Some vessels and processors may be in full coverage for part of the year and partial coverage at other times of the year depending on the observer coverage requirements for specific fisheries.

Observer coverage in the full coverage category is industry-funded through a pay-as-you-go system whereby fishing vessels procure observer services through NMFS-permitted observer service providers. Observer coverage in the partial coverage category is funded through a system of fees based on the ex-vessel value of groundfish and halibut. NMFS uses a portion of the fees collected under section 313 of the Magnuson-Stevens Act to deploy EM systems on vessels in the EM selection pool of the partial coverage category. The observer fee is assessed on landings by vessels not included in the full coverage category. The system of fees fairly and equitably distributes the cost of observer coverage among all vessels and processors in the partial coverage

category. Information collected for the observer fee is approved under OMB Control Number 0648-0711.

The following classes of vessels and processors are currently in the full observer coverage category when harvesting halibut or when harvesting, receiving, or processing groundfish in a federally managed or parallel groundfish fishery:

- Catcher/processors (with limited exceptions);
- Motherships;
- Shoreside processors or stationary floating processors (SFPs) when receiving or processing Bering Sea pollock;
- Catcher vessels while participating in catch share programs with transferable prohibited species catch limits, including American Fisheries Act or Western Alaska Community Development Quota (CDQ) pollock fisheries, some CDQ groundfish fisheries, and the Central Gulf of Alaska Rockfish Program; and
- Catcher vessels using trawl gear that have requested placement in the full coverage category for all directed fishing for groundfish in the BSAI for a calendar year.

The final rule (RIN 0648-BL08) will add catcher vessels harvesting PCTC Program cooperative quota to this list of vessels and processors in the full observer coverage category.

All vessels and processors that are not in the full coverage category are in the partial coverage category. In general, the following vessels and processors are in partial coverage:

- Catcher vessels designated on a Federal Fisheries Permit when directed fishing for groundfish in federally managed or parallel fisheries, except those in the full coverage category;
- Catcher vessels when fishing for halibut individual fishing quota (IFQ) or sablefish IFQ (there are no prohibited species catch limits for these fisheries);
- Catcher vessels when fishing for halibut CDQ, fixed-gear sablefish CDQ, or groundfish CDQ using pot or jig gear; or catcher vessels less than or equal to 46 ft length overall (LOA) using hook-and-line gear fishing for groundfish;
- Catcher/processors that meet criteria described at [50 CFR 50.679.51\(a\)\(3\)](#) that allows assignment to the partial coverage category; and
- Shoreside processors or SFPs, except those in the full coverage category.

The ADP describes how observer coverage and EM will be assigned to vessels and processors in the partial observer coverage category in the upcoming year. NMFS develops the ADP in consultation with the Council after reviewing an evaluation of deployment performance for the previous year. Vessels and processors in the partial coverage category may be in the “no selection pool,” the “trip selection pool,” or the “EM selection pool.” Vessels and processors in the no selection pool are not required to carry an observer or EM while participating in fisheries subject to partial coverage. Vessels in the trip selection pool and EM selection pool are required to log trips in the Observer Declare and Deploy System (ODDS) and carry an observer or EM system on randomly selected trips. Specific vessel owners may submit a request to place their vessel in a different coverage category or selection pool.

More information on the Observer Program is provided on the NMFS [North Pacific Observer Program webpage](#). More information on electronic monitoring is provided on the NMFS Alaska Region [electronic monitoring webpage](#).

Reasons for Revisions Due to the Rule (RIN 0648-BL08)

This information collection is revised due to the final rule (RIN 0648-BL08) to implement Amendment 122 to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area. Amendment 122 establishes a new limited access privilege program, the Pacific Cod Trawl Cooperative Program (PCTC Program), for the harvest of Pacific cod in the BSAI trawl catcher vessel sector. The rule adds subpart L to 50 CFR 679, consisting of §§ 679.130 through 679.135, for the PCTC Program regulatory requirements.

The PCTC Program allocates Pacific cod harvest quota to qualifying groundfish License Limitation Program (LLP) license holders and qualifying processors. This program is necessary to increase the value of the fishery, minimize bycatch to the extent practicable, provide for the sustained participation of fishery-dependent communities, ensure the sustainability and viability of the resource, and promote safety in the harvesting and processing sectors.

Observer coverage requirements and other monitoring and enforcement provisions under the PCTC Program will ensure that fleet-wide harvests can be effectively monitored and that catches remain within their allocations. These requirements include full observer coverage for all vessels under the PCTC Program and requirements for communications equipment to facilitate observer data entry and electronic transmission to NMFS. These monitoring provisions are designed to maximize the quality of data used to estimate PCTC Program catch and bycatch, including prohibited species catch.

This collection is revised because all vessels used to harvest PCTC Program cooperative quota will be required to provide equipment and at-sea data transmission capabilities to facilitate electronic transmission of observer data to NMFS. At-sea transmission of observer data improves data quality. Requirements for non-AFA (American Fisheries Act) trawl catcher vessels to install equipment necessary to facilitate at-sea observer data transmission requirements will not be effective until three years after the effective date of the final rule implementing the PCTC Program. To accommodate concerns by small vessel operators, for the first three years after implementation, the current at-sea observer data transmission requirements will be maintained, unless the necessary equipment is installed before that time. Public testimony suggests that most of the vessels that do not currently have data transmission capability will realize the benefits from this program and be able to obtain the technology.

This collection is also revised because catcher vessels harvesting PCTC Program cooperative quota will be placed in the full observer coverage category of the Observer Program instead of the partial observer coverage category. The owner of a trawl catcher vessel in the full observer coverage category contracts directly with a permitted full coverage observer provider to procure observer services, as described at § 679.51(d), and is not required to log fishing trips in ODDS, as is required for vessels in the partial coverage category. Catcher vessels that choose to participate in the PCTC Program will no longer be required to use ODDS to log fishing trips.

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 anticipated that the information collected will be disseminated to the public or used to support publicly disseminated information. NMFS 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 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](#) (the Information Quality Act), which requires NMFS to ensure the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of information it publicly disseminates. Public dissemination of data collected by this information collection is governed by [NOAA's information quality guidelines](#), which were issued on October 30, 2014.

Each year since 2013, NMFS has published the North Pacific Observer Program Annual Report. The annual report provides descriptive information, analysis, and recommendations based on observer deployment in the previous year. An important component of the annual report is Chapter 3, the “deployment performance review” chapter, which scientifically evaluates the deployment of observers and EM in the previous year. The purpose of the deployment performance review is to evaluate whether observer deployment and monitoring goals detailed in regulation and the ADP were achieved and to identify recommendations for observer deployment in order to promote the collection of data necessary to conserve and manage the groundfish and halibut fisheries. The annual report is an important source of information for the estimates presented in this collection.

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The following table lists the elements of this collection and provides the regulatory citations and how the information is submitted.

Information Collection		Regulations (50 CFR part 679)	Form?	Submission Method				
				Mail	Fax	Email	Online	Phone or verbal communication
I. Industry Requirements								
1	Observer notification	§§ 679.21(f)(15)(ii)(B)(2) and (f)(15)(iii), 679.51(e)(1)(vi), 679.51(e)(1)(ix)(B) and (e)(2)(ii), and 679.120(e)(2)	No					◆
2	Industry request for assistance in improving observer data quality issues	§ 679.51(c)(3)	No	◆	◆	◆		
3	USCG safety decal	§ 679.51(e)(1)(ii)(B)(1)	No	Not applicable				
4	ATLAS communications and observer data entry	§ 679.51(e)(1)(iii) and (e)(2)(iii)	No	Not applicable				
5	Pre-cruise meeting notification	§§ 679.32(c)(3)(i)(E)(4), 679.84(c)(7), 679.93(c)(7), 679.100(b)(1)(v) and (b)(2)(i)(E), and 679.120(c)	No					◆
6	Catcher/processor request to be placed in partial observer coverage	§ 679.51(a)(3)	Catcher/Processor Observer Partial Coverage Request	◆	◆			
7	Request to be placed in the full observer coverage category	§ 679.51(a)(4)	No form—submitted through ODDS				◆	◆
8	Request to be placed in or removed from the electronic monitoring selection pool	§ 679.51(f)(1)(ii) and (f)(i)(ix)	No form—submitted through ODDS				◆	◆
9	Observer Declare and Deploy System (ODDS) log a fishing trip	§ 679.51(a)(1)(ii) and (f)(2)	No form—submitted through ODDS				◆	◆
10	Deck safety plan	§ 679.120(d)	No		◆	◆		
11	Deck sorting safety meeting	§ 679.120(e)(1)	No					◆
12. Electronic Monitoring Selection Pool								
12.a	Vessel Monitoring Plan	§ 679.51(f)(4)	Electronic Monitoring (EM) Vessel Monitoring Plan			◆		
12.b	Closing electronic monitoring trips in ODDS	§ 679.51(f)(3)(ii)	No form—submitted through ODDS				◆	◆
12.c	Submit electronic monitoring data to NMFS	§ 679.51(f)(5)(vii)	No	◆				
13	Life Raft Release Request	§ 679.51(a)(1)(iii)	No	Not applicable				
II. Observer Provider Requirements								

Information Collection		Regulations (50 CFR part 679)	Form?	Submission Method				
				Mail	Fax	Email	Online	Phone or verbal communication
1	Observer provider permit application	§ 679.52(a)	No	◆	◆	◆		
2	Candidate college transcripts	§ 679.52(b)(1)(i)	No	◆	◆	◆		
3.a	Observer training registration	§ 679.52(b)(11)(i)(A)	No			◆		
3.b	Observer briefing registration	§ 679.52(b)(11)(i)(B)	No			◆		
4	Projected observer assignments	§ 679.52(b)(11)(ii)	No	◆	◆	◆		
5	Physical examination verification	§ 679.52(b)(11)(iii)	No		◆	◆		
6	Observer deployment/logistics report	§ 679.52(b)(11)(iv)	No		◆	◆	◆	
7	Observer debriefing registration	§ 679.52(b)(11)(v)	No		◆	◆	◆	
8	Certificates of insurance	§ 679.52(b)(11)(vi)	No	◆	◆	◆		
9	Observer provider contracts	§ 679.52(b)(11)(vii)	No	◆	◆	◆		
10	Other reports	§ 679.52(b)(11)(x)	No		◆	◆		
11	Update to provider information	§ 679.52(b)(11)(ix)	No	◆	◆	◆		
12	Observer provider invoices	§ 679.52(b)(11)(viii)	No	◆	◆	◆		
III. Administrative Appeals		§§ 679.51(a)(3)(vii), (a)(4)(vi), (f)(1)(vii), (f)(4)(iv), 679.52(a)(7)(ii), 679.120(d)(2), and 15 CFR part 906	No	◆	◆			

I. INDUSTRY REQUIREMENTS

1. Observer Notification

Observer notification requirements apply to vessels and processors in the full coverage category and in the observer trip selection pool of the partial coverage category. Notifications provide an observer the opportunity to sample catch and complete sampling duties as described in the Observer Sampling Manual.

Vessel and processor personnel verbally notify the observer; there is no form for the observer notification.

Section [679.51\(e\)\(1\)\(vi\)](#) requires that vessels required to carry an observer must notify the observers at least 15 minutes before fish are brought on board, or fish and fish products are transferred from the vessel, to allow sampling the catch or observing the transfer, unless the observers specifically request not to be notified. Section [679.51\(e\)\(2\)\(ii\)](#) requires all processors and SFPs to notify the observers, as requested, of the planned facility operations and expected receipt of groundfish prior to receipt of those fish.

Section [679.120\(e\)\(2\)](#) requires that operators of vessels participating in halibut deck sorting must notify the observer on duty that halibut deck sorting will occur at least 15 minutes prior to bringing fish on board.

Section [679.21\(f\)\(15\)\(ii\)\(B\)\(2\)](#) requires that operators of vessels delivering to shoreside processors or SFPs when participating in the Bering Sea pollock fishery must notify the observer at least 15 minutes before handling catch on board the vessel, including, but not limited to, sorting, moving catch from one location to another, or discard of catch prior to the delivery of catch to the processor receiving the vessel's Bering Sea pollock catch. Section [679.21\(f\)\(15\)\(iii\)](#) requires operators of vessels and managers of shoreside processors and SFPs that are required to retain salmon under § 679.21(f)(15)(i) to designate and identify to the observer aboard the vessel, or at the shoreside processor or SFP, a crew person or employee responsible for ensuring all sorting, retention, and storage of salmon occurs according to the requirements of § 679.21(f)(15)(ii).

If the observers will be transferred at sea, [§ 679.51\(e\)\(1\)\(ix\)\(B\)](#) requires the observers must be notified at least 3 hours before they are transferred so they can collect personal belongings, equipment, and scientific samples.

Since the last extension of this information collection in 2019, the observer notification requirements were revised due to a rule that implemented catch handling and monitoring requirements to allow Pacific halibut bycatch to be sorted on the deck of trawl catcher/processors and motherships participating in the non-pollock groundfish fisheries off Alaska ([84 FR 55044, October 15, 2019](#); corrected [84 FR 67183, December 9, 2019](#)). The rule added the observer notification requirement at § 679.120(e)(2) for vessel operators participating in halibut deck sorting.

2. Industry Request for Assistance in Improving Observer Data Quality Issues

Section [679.51\(c\)\(3\)](#) states that vessel, shoreside processor, and SFP owners and operators, as well as observers and observer providers, may contact NMFS in writing to request assistance in improving observer data quality and resolving observer sampling issues. Requests are submitted by mail, fax, or email.

Issues may include—

- Sampling issues on vessel, shoreside processor, or SFP;
- Creating new sampling protocols;
- Developing and implementing research projects;
- Maintaining knowledge of current vessel, shoreside processor, or SFP operations for observer sampling purposes; and
- Providing on-site training for an observer(s) employed by an observer provider.

NMFS addresses observer-related issues by placing staff or individuals authorized by NMFS in actual working conditions experienced by observers. Such deployments increase the ability of NMFS to work with industry, observers, and observer providers to resolve the issues that face the stakeholders in the groundfish fisheries of the BSAI and GOA and foster a more cooperative working relationship with better informed industry participants.

3. USCG Safety Decal

Section [679.51\(e\)\(1\)\(ii\)\(B\)\(1\)](#) requires that operators of vessels selected for observer coverage must have a valid Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety Decal issued within the past two years prior to an observer boarding the vessel. These safety decals are issued by the United States Coast Guard (USCG) upon successful completion of the Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety Examination. The requirement for a USCG safety decal is not included in the costs and burdens of this collection because all vessels are required to comply with USCG requirements regardless of whether they carry an observer.

4. ATLAS Communications and observer data entry [REVISED: adds requirements for catcher vessels participating in the PCTC Program to provide a computer with ATLAS and at-sea data transmission capabilities]

Revision: The final rule revises [§ 679.51\(e\)\(1\)\(iii\)\(B\)](#) to require catcher vessels participating in the PCTC Program to provide a computer with NMFS supplied or approved software and at-sea data transmission capabilities for observers to enter and transmit data, and communicate with NMFS. Most vessels comply with this requirement by allowing NMFS to install ATLAS on an existing computer on the vessel. If a vessel does not already have an existing computer that supports the ATLAS program, a new computer would need to be purchased. NMFS has estimated a computer that meets the regulatory requirements costs approximately \$500. Many, if not all, of the catcher vessels that will need to install ATLAS already have a computer that meets the minimum requirements, and they will only incur costs if they choose to purchase an additional computer. The cost of at-sea data transmission is challenging to estimate because there are a variety of options and levels of service plans for vessels to choose from. At the low end, NMFS estimates that the cost per vessel would include a one-time cost of \$5,000 to purchase and install the system and approximately \$200 per year for the communication services. At the high end, the cost per vessel could be a one-time cost of \$5,000 for installation, up to \$32,000 for purchasing the system, and approximately \$1,000 per year for the communication services. If the vessel chose to lease equipment, the low-end costs would be approximately \$600 per month and between \$2,000 and \$2,500 to install, depending on the location. For more information on costs, see Section 2.10.7.2 of the analysis¹ prepared for this rule. To minimize impacts to small vessel operators, the rule adds a regulation at [§ 679.51\(e\)\(1\)\(iii\)\(D\)](#) that non-AFA catcher vessels will not be required to provide data transmission capability until three years after the effective date of the final rule. However, once a non-AFA catcher vessel in the PCTC Program is capable of at-sea data transmission, the operator must comply. NMFS estimates that up to 25 vessels (8 AFA and 17 non-AFA) may need to add ATLAS or add or upgrade data transmission capabilities to participate in the PCTC Program. With this revision, 25 vessels are added to the tables in #12, #13, and #15 as respondents to ATLAS communications and observer data entry. This is a correction to the number of respondents added by the supporting statement submitted with the proposed rule. It added only the AFA vessels because it inadvertently stated the non-AFA vessels were not required to provide the computer with ATLAS and data transmission capabilities until after the first three years of the Program. The computer with ATLAS is required at implementation of the program; only the at-sea data transmission capability is not required for non-AFA vessels until after the first three years of the Program.

NMFS uses and installs a custom software application (ATLAS) that allows observers to enter and send data directly from a vessel or plant to NMFS at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center in Seattle. Since 2014, all observer data has been entered into the ATLAS software. This ensures maximum data quality, facilitates timely electronic data entry and transmission of data to NMFS, and allows observers to communicate with NMFS. The ATLAS software contains business rules that perform many quality control and data validation checks automatically, which dramatically

¹ NMFS. 2022. Regulatory Impact Review/Environmental Assessment for Proposed Amendment 122 to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area: BSAI Pacific Cod Trawl Cooperative Program.

increases the quality of the preliminary data.

Once the electronic observer data is received, the data are used by NMFS fisheries managers to make inseason management decisions on those ongoing fisheries. The software also allows observers and Observer Program staff to communicate via inseason messages, which is a vital link to help observers in the field with any issues they may face. The operator of vessels and processors in the full coverage category are required to provide the following equipment, software, and data transmission capabilities ([§ 679.51\(e\)\(1\)\(iii\)](#) and [\(e\)\(2\)\(iii\)](#)):

- Observer access to computer: Make a computer available for use by the observer.
- NMFS-supplied software: Ensure that the most recent release of NMFS data entry software provided by the Regional Administrator, or other approved software, is installed and, if required, the data transmissions to NMFS can be executed effectively aboard the vessel by the equipment.
- Data transmission: The computer and software must be connected to a communication device that provides a point-to-point connection to the NMFS host computer. The required equipment that is used by an observer to enter or transmit data must be fully functional and operational. “Functional” means that all the tasks and components of the NMFS supplied, or other approved, software and the data transmissions to NMFS can be executed effectively by the communications equipment.

Currently, catcher vessels less than 125 ft. LOA are not required to provide data transmission capabilities; however, the final rule (RIN 0648-BL08) will add data transmission requirements for catcher vessels participating in the new PCTC Program. Most vessels allow NMFS to install data entry software supplied or approved by NMFS on an existing computer on board the vessel to comply with this requirement. When this occurs, the cost of providing the computer is minimal.

The requirement to have NMFS supplied software installed on a computer accessible to the observer imposes costs associated with scheduling a visit by NMFS personnel to install the software. Therefore, a vessel owner or operator also will incur costs associated with supplying power for the computer, equipment replacement or repair, and possibly lost fishing time, if the computer fails at any time while it is required.

Inshore processors are required to allow observers to “use the ... processor’s communication equipment and personnel, on request, for the entry, transmission, and receipt of work-related messages, at no cost to the observers or the United States” ([§ 679.51\(e\)\(2\)\(iii\)\(A\)](#)). For catcher vessels less than 125 feet LOA, the processor receiving the vessels’ catch must allow vessel observers access to a computer for transmission of data to NMFS.

5. Pre-cruise meeting notification

Sections [679.32\(c\)\(3\)\(i\)\(E\)\(4\)](#), [679.84\(c\)\(7\)](#), [679.93\(c\)\(7\)](#), [679.100\(b\)\(1\)\(v\)](#) and [\(b\)\(2\)\(i\)\(E\)](#), and [679.120\(c\)](#) require trawl catcher/processors participating in Rockfish Program and Amendment 80 Program fisheries, freezer longline vessels subject to § 670.100, pot catcher/processors when groundfish CDQ fishing, and motherships and catcher/processors participating in halibut deck sort to notify the Observer Program for a pre-cruise meeting.

These vessels are required to notify the Observer Program by phone at 907-581-2060 (Dutch Harbor, AK) or 907-481-1770 (Kodiak, AK) at least 24 hours prior to departure when the vessel will be carrying an observer who has not previously been deployed on that vessel within the last 12 months. Subsequent to the vessel's departure notification, but prior to departure, NMFS may contact the vessel to arrange for a pre-cruise meeting. The pre-cruise meeting must minimally include the vessel operator or manager and any observers assigned to the vessel. A pre-cruise meeting may be necessary to ensure an observer is adequately prepared to complete sampling duties, discuss compliance issues with deck safety plans, and facilitate communication between observers and vessel crew prior to embarking on a trip.

6. Catcher/processor request to be placed in partial observer coverage

Section [679.51\(a\)\(3\)](#) allows the owner of a qualifying catcher/processor using non-trawl gear to annually request placement in the partial observer coverage category. Absent a request by the owner of a qualifying vessel, that catcher/processor will be in the full observer coverage category in the upcoming fishing year.

To request placement in the partial observer coverage category, the owner submits the Catcher/Processor Observer Partial Coverage Request form to NMFS by mail or fax. This form is posted on the NMFS [North Pacific Observer Program webpage](#).

NMFS uses information submitted in this form to determine which catcher/processor vessels will be placed in the partial coverage category for the upcoming fishing year. This information is necessary for the Agency's analysis and observer deployment planning process.

The information collected on this form includes owner name and contact information, vessel name and Federal Fisheries Permit number, and the fishing year the request is for. If the form is completed and signed by the owner's representative, then authorization must be attached.

A vessel owner must request placement in the partial observer coverage category before July 1 of the year prior to fishing activity. The July 1 deadline does not apply to vessels with no production from 2009 through the standard basis year.

If a request is submitted, NMFS reviews the vessel's production history to determine if the vessel is eligible to be placed in the partial coverage category and provides written notification to the vessel owner. All qualifying vessels that submit a request by the deadline are placed in the partial observer coverage category. If approved, the applicant will receive instructions and necessary information to log trips in ODDS.

A vessel denied placement in the in the partial observer coverage category receives an initial administrative determination (IAD) from NMFS, which explains the basis for the denial. If the owner of a catcher/processor wishes to appeal NMFS's denial, the owner may appeal the determination. See "Administrative Appeals" below.

7. Request to be placed in the Full Observer Coverage Category

Section 679.51(a)(1) places trawl catcher vessels participating in the BSAI trawl limited access sector in the partial coverage category. Under regulations at [§ 679.51\(a\)\(4\)](#), the owner of a trawl catcher vessel may annually request the catcher vessel to be placed in the full observer coverage category for all directed fishing for groundfish using trawl gear in the BSAI management area

for the upcoming year. Vessel owners requested this option so that they can take an observer for all of their fishing trips in the BSAI groundfish fisheries. Vessel owners and fishing cooperatives use the data collected by observers to manage internal cooperative allocations of prohibited species catch and prefer complete observer data to NMFS's estimates of catch for unobserved trips. The vessel owner or operator contracts directly with a permitted full coverage observer provider to procure observer services.

Requests to be placed in the full coverage category are made through ODDS (see description of ODDS below). The instructions to submit a request for placement in the full observer coverage category are posted on the [NMFS Alaska Region website](#). Vessel owners log into ODDS and select the vessel for which they are requesting placement in the full coverage category for the upcoming year. The deadline to submit this request is October 15 of the year prior to the year in which the vessel will be placed in the full coverage category.

NMFS notifies the vessel owner of approval of their request to be placed in full coverage by a receipt issued by ODDS. A list of the vessels that have been placed in full coverage under this provision is provided at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/bsai-trawl-catcher-vessels-cvs-full-coverage>.

Once notified by NMFS of placement in the full observer coverage category, the vessel is subject to full observer coverage requirements for all fishing activity using trawl gear in the BSAI in the particular year. NMFS will approve all requests to be placed in the full coverage category unless the vessel is not licensed or permitted to participate in the BSAI trawl limited access groundfish fisheries.

A vessel denied placement in the full coverage category receives an IAD from NMFS, which explains the basis for the denial, and may appeal the decision. See "Administrative Appeals" below.

The owner of a vessel in the full observer coverage category is not required to log fishing trips in ODDS, and landings made by a vessel in the full observer coverage category are not subject to the partial observer coverage fee (see OMB Control Number 0648-0711).

8. Request to be placed in or removed from the EM selection pool

Section [679.51\(f\)](#) authorizes vessels in the partial coverage category that are using nontrawl gear to request placement in the EM selection pool instead of the trip selection pool for observer coverage. The owner or operator of a catcher vessel using nontrawl gear that is in the partial coverage trip selection pool may request to be placed in the EM selection pool by submitting a request to NMFS through ODDS (see description of ODDS below). Vessels approved to be placed in the EM selection pool remain in the pool until removed by the vessel owner or operator, or if NMFS disapproves the vessel's Vessel Monitoring Plan (VMP) (described below), or the vessel no longer meets the criteria to be in the EM selection pool.

In ODDS, a vessel owner may answer "Yes" or check a box in response to a single question presented to vessel owners and operators after they have successfully logged in and selected the vessel name and identification number from a drop down list. The question asks, "Do you request that this vessel be placed in the EM selection pool?" For vessels in the EM selection

pool, ODDS also allows the vessel owner or operator to answer affirmatively to the question “Do you request that this vessel be removed from the EM selection pool?”

In addition to random selection for catch accounting purposes, vessel owners or operators may use EM in lieu of an observer to fish for halibut or sablefish IFQ in multiple areas. ODDS allows vessel owners or operators to make this selection when they are logging an upcoming fishing trip.

A vessel denied placement in the EM selection pool receives an IAD from NMFS, which explains the denial, and may appeal the decision. See “Administrative Appeals” below.

9. Observer Declare and Deploy System (ODDS) Log a fishing trip [Decreased respondents because PCTC Program catcher vessels will not log trips in ODDS]

Revision: Currently, participants in the Pacific cod trawl catcher vessel fishery are in the partial observer coverage category, with the exception of vessels that request to be placed in the full coverage category. The final rule adds a new regulation at § 679.51(a)(2)(i)(C)(5) to add catcher vessels participating in the PCTC Program to the list of vessels placed in the full observer coverage category of the Observer Program. This is necessary to monitor at-sea discards and obtain data to manage transferable prohibited species catch limits. The reporting requirement to log fishing trips in ODDS does not apply to vessels in the full observer coverage category; therefore, catcher vessels that choose to participate in the PCTC Program will no longer be required to use ODDS to log fishing trips. NMFS expects this will decrease the estimated number of respondents who log fishing trips in ODDS by approximately 25.

Section [679.51\(a\)\(1\)\(ii\)](#) and [\(f\)\(2\)](#) require vessels in the trip selection pool and EM selection pool of the partial coverage category to provide information to NMFS in ODDS. ODDS is an Internet-based system used to facilitate observer and EM coverage in the Federal groundfish and halibut fisheries off Alaska. ODDS is used by NMFS to select fishing trips for observer and EM coverage and facilitates communication among the Observer Program, the owner or operator of a vessel in the partial coverage category, and the observer provider or the EM service provider. ODDS was created and is maintained by the Fisheries Monitoring and Analysis Division of the Alaska Fisheries Science Center.

Prior to embarking on each fishing trip, owners or operators of vessels in the trip selection pool and EM selection pool are required to log their fishing trips in ODDS so that NMFS can determine if a particular fishing trip is randomly selected for required observer or EM coverage. In addition to logging fishing trips, the owners or operators of some vessels in the trip selection pool may use ODDS to request placement in either the EM selection pool or the full coverage category.

NMFS registers the vessel owner in ODDS and sends their ODDS account information by mail or email. This includes information on how to log in to ODDS.

The ODDS webpage and log-in link is at <https://apps-afsc.fisheries.noaa.gov/ords/f?p=140:1> and provides links to the online user manuals, FAQs, contact information, and other information for ODDS users.

Vessel owners or operators who do not have access to the ODDS website may provide information to NMFS by phoning the call center at 1-855-747-6377. Call center personnel enter the required vessel and trip information into ODDS on behalf of the vessel owner or operator.

For each upcoming fishing trip, a vessel owner or operator provides the following information:

- User identification (user name and password);
- Vessel identification including vessel name and permit number;
- Contact information for the vessel owner or operator;
- Fishery (target species);
- Gear type that the vessel will use during the trip; and
- Trip information including start and end dates, times, and location (port) the trip will start from.

10. Deck Safety Plan

The Deck Safety Plan describes the procedures to be followed by the vessel crew and observers in order to safely access and work on the trawl deck during halibut deck sorting. Section [679.120\(d\)](#) requires vessel operators to annually submit a Deck Safety Plan for review and approval by NMFS before participating in halibut deck sorting as defined at § 679.2. The Deck Safety Plan is necessary because when vessels participate in halibut deck sorting, the vessel crew and observer will spend more time on deck, which increases exposure to safety hazards. This plan facilitates communication between the observer and vessel personnel to mitigate potential safety hazards during deck sorting.

The Deck Safety Plan must include the following elements:

- The route for observers to safely access and leave the deck sampling station, including locations where observers should shelter during gear retrieval and movement.
- Hazardous areas and potential hazardous conditions that could be encountered on deck, including locations that the observer should not access.
- Communication procedures to inform the observer when it is safe to access the deck. These procedures must identify who will tell the observer it is safe to access the deck, how that communication will happen, and how they will communicate with the observer if a new safety hazard arises while on deck.
- A list of personal protective equipment that must be worn by the observer while on deck.
- A list of all personnel the observer should contact to discuss safety hazards, any safety hazards not identified in the Deck Safety Plan, deviations from the Deck Safety Plan, or any conditions that would require the suspension of halibut deck sorting.
- Procedures to ensure the observer remains safe while working in the deck sampling station.
- A scale drawing showing the deck sampling station, the routes to access the deck sampling station, the emergency muster location, and safety hazards that could be encountered on deck.

The vessel must be inspected by NMFS prior to approval of the Deck Safety Plan to ensure that the vessel conforms to the elements addressed in the Deck Safety Plan.

The vessel owner and operator must submit a complete Deck Safety Plan to NMFS by fax (206-526-4066) or email (station.inspections@noaa.gov) at least 10 working days in advance of the requested date of inspection. NMFS will complete its review of the plan within 14 working days of receiving a complete Deck Safety Plan and conducting a Deck Safety Plan inspection of the vessel. NMFS will approve the Deck Safety Plan if it meets the requirements at § 679.120(d)(1).

If NMFS disapproves a Deck Safety Plan, the vessel owner and operator may resubmit a revised Deck Safety Plan or file an administrative appeal as set forth under the administrative appeals procedures set out at 15 CFR part 906. See “Administrative Appeals” below.

The vessel owner and operator may change the Deck Safety Plan by submitting a Deck Safety Plan addendum to NMFS. NMFS will approve the modified deck safety plan if it continues to meet the requirements in § 679.120(d)(1). Depending on the nature and magnitude of the change requested, NMFS may require a second Deck Safety Plan inspection.

The vessel operator must provide the observer with a copy of the NMFS-approved Deck Safety Plan and review its contents with the observer during the deck sorting safety meeting as required at § 679.120(e)(1) (described below).

NMFS estimates the time burden for developing a new Deck Safety Plan to be 12 hours during the first year the vessel participates in halibut deck sorting. This includes time required to locate and revise deck layout plans and to consult with crew and NMFS staff on practical implementation. After the first year, NMFS estimates the annual time burden for modifying or renewing an existing Deck Safety Plan to be one hour.

11. Deck Sorting Safety Meeting

As noted above, [§ 679.120\(e\)\(1\)](#) requires that vessel operators conduct a deck sorting safety meeting prior to embarking on a trip when any one of the following—observer, vessel operator, or key crew member that will be responsible for providing notification or reasonable assistance during halibut deck sorting—boards the vessel.

12. EM Selection Pool

Section 679.51(f) requires additional information to be submitted by vessel owners or operators in the EM selection pool. The following sections identify these information collection requirements.

a. Vessel Monitoring Plan

A Vessel Monitoring Plan (VMP) is a document that describes how fishing operations on the vessels in the EM selection pool will be conducted, including how gear will be set, how catch will be brought on board, and where catch will be retained and discarded. The VMP also describes how the EM system and associated equipment will be configured to meet the data collection objectives and purpose of the EM program, including camera locations to cover all fishing activities, any sensors to detect fish activities, and any special catch handling requirements to ensure the data collection objectives can be met. The VMP includes methods to troubleshoot the EM system and instructions for ensuring the EM system is functioning properly.

There is no form for the VMP. The VMP template is available on the NMFS Alaska Region website at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/resources-fishing/electronic-monitoring-alaska>.

NMFS uses information submitted in the VMP to determine whether the vessel's EM system will meet the data collection objectives and purpose of the EM program.

Once the VMP is complete and the vessel owner or operator agrees to comply with the components of the VMP, the vessel owner or operator must sign and submit the VMP to NMFS via email. NMFS reviews the VMP for completeness and may request additional clarification. If the VMP meets the requirements established in the VMP template, NMFS will approve the VMP for the calendar year. A vessel in the EM selection pool must have a copy of a valid NMFS-approved VMP on board before that vessel goes fishing in a fishery subject to EM coverage.

NMFS estimates the total time to complete, sign, and submit a VMP is approximately 48 hours. This time estimate includes the time it may take the vessel operator to install the needed infrastructure, such as installing pressure sensors or fabricate camera mounting poles. The time estimate also includes discussions with vessel operators about the best location to install the EM system equipment and then installing the equipment itself. The time estimate also includes, taking the necessary photos, drawing diagrams, and writing descriptions of how vessel operations will occur. Finally, the time estimate includes compiling all the above information in a VMP document, the vessel operator signing the VMP, and submitting the information to NMFS via email.

The time estimate also includes the possibility that some vessels may need to amend their VMP after it has been approved. After reviewing the data from a fishing trip selected for EM coverage, NMFS may determine that the approved camera location(s) in the VMP or fishing activities conducted by the vessel crew outlined in the VMP do not allow for the data collection necessary for catch accounting. Additionally, the vessel operator may want to have a camera moved if it impedes his or her ability to fish, or the operator may reconfigure the vessel to change fishing activities during the season that would warrant changes to the VMP. Whether requested by the vessel owner or operator or by NMFS, the vessel owner or operator is required to make any changes to the VMP with the assistance of the EM service provider. These amendments to the VMP are signed and submitted to NMFS via email. The vessel is allowed to begin another fishing trip, provided that NMFS has received the VMP amendments in writing.

If NMFS denies approval of a VMP, an IAD that explains the denial is issued to the vessel owner who may appeal the decision. See "Administrative Appeals" below.

b. Closing EM trips in ODDS

Vessel owners or operators in the EM selection pool that are selected to carry EM on a fishing trip are required to log into ODDS and close all logged fishing trips once they are completed. EM trips must be closed in ODDS so that NMFS can notify the vessel owner or operator if they must submit their hard drive to NMFS at the end of the trip (see explanation below about submitting EM data to NMFS). If hard drive submission is required, ODDS will provide instructions for the proper methods to submit the hard drive.

c. Submit EM Data to NMFS

NMFS estimates that approximately 30 percent of the fishing trips logged by vessels in the EM selection pool will be selected for EM coverage. This means that the vessel owner will be required to use the EM equipment on his or her vessel to record and monitor the fishing trip in accordance with the vessel's VMP. Within two business days of completing the fishing trip selected for EM coverage, the vessel owner or operator is required to submit the video data storage devices to NMFS using a method that requires a signature for delivery and provides notification of delivery. NMFS may consider extenuating circumstances that prevent someone from mailing the device within two business days. Additional documentation described in the vessel's VMP must be submitted along with the video data storage devices.

Timely data is essential for inseason management and extensive delays could result in delayed fishery closures and openings. Delays in submitting video storage devices could also result in lost or overwritten data, if the vessel does not send in a video storage device prior to embarking on another fishing trip selected for EM coverage and forgets to replace the video storage device.

13. Life Raft Release Request

Section [679.51\(a\)\(1\)\(iii\)](#) authorizes NMFS to release selected trips from observer coverage on a case-by-case basis. NMFS or the observer provider may release vessels from selection to carry an observer if the observer provider is unable to get an observer to the location where the fishing trip is starting. In addition, NMFS may receive requests from vessel owners to release a selected trip for a variety of reasons. One of the more common situations in which NMFS has released a selected trip from observer coverage is if the vessel does not have a life raft that can carry the crew plus the observer. In the first years of Observer Program restructuring (2013 and 2014), this request was an option in ODDS. However, with implementation of the EM cooperative research project, NMFS removed this option from ODDS and requested that any vessel with life raft capacity issues volunteer to carry EM.

The Life Raft Release Request is not included in the costs and burdens of this collection because vessels that have previously submitted these requests may request and have been prioritized for placement in the EM selection pool.

II. OBSERVER PROVIDER REQUIREMENTS

Observer candidates are recruited and hired by independent observer provider companies permitted by NMFS (see http://www.afsc.noaa.gov/FMA/observer_providers.htm). Section 679.52 specifies the permit application and approval process as well as observer provider responsibilities. Section 679.53 specifies the requirements for observer certification and deployment endorsement. The following sections describe the information collection requirements submitted by permitted observer provider companies. There are currently four permitted observer provider companies.

Observer duties include—

- Record fishing effort, location, and total catch information
- Sample to determine the species composition of catches

- Collect biological samples
- Monitor for and document compliance with fishing regulations
- Record incidental takes and interactions of marine mammals and seabirds with fishing gear and vessels
- Maintain a detailed logbook of sampling activities
- Complete a post-cruise debriefing

1. Observer Provider Permit Application

The Regional Administrator may issue a permit authorizing a person's participation as an observer provider for operations requiring full observer coverage. Persons seeking to provide observer services must obtain an observer provider permit from NMFS. An applicant may submit a completed application by fax or mail.

NMFS uses the provided information to evaluate the abilities of the prospective provider to perform the required responsibilities and duties on a recurring basis. A NMFS-appointed observer provider application review board reviews and evaluates each application for completeness against evaluation criteria.

An observer provider permit is not transferable. An observer provider that experiences a change in ownership that involves a new person must submit a new permit application and cannot continue to operate until a new permit is issued.

Except for ownership information, each observer provider must submit to NMFS any changes or corrections to applicable contact information. Observer providers must notify NMFS within 30 days of the effective date of such change when any of the required permit elements change. This requirement helps facilitate the communication between NMFS and observer providers. Any change to the information submitted on the provider's permit application must be submitted by fax or mail.

The observer provider permit expires after 12 continuous months during which no observers are deployed by the provider to the North Pacific groundfish or halibut industry. NMFS provides a written determination to an observer provider if NMFS deployment records indicate that the permit has expired. An observer provider who receives an IAD of permit expiration may appeal the IAD. See "Administrative Appeals" below. A permit holder who appeals the IAD will be issued an extension of the expiration date of the permit until after the final resolution of that appeal.

An observer provider permit application includes the following information ([§ 679.51\(a\)\(3\)](#)):

- Identification Information: Identification of the management, organizational structure, and ownership structure of the applicant's business, including identification by name and general function of all controlling management interests in the company, including but not limited to owners, board members, officers, authorized agents, and other employees.
- Contact information
 - Permanent mailing address, telephone and fax numbers for each owner
 - Current physical location, business mailing address, business telephone and fax numbers, and business email address for each office.

- For an observer provider with ownership based outside the United States, the identification of an authorized agent and the contact information for that agent including mailing address and phone and fax numbers.
- Attachments
 - If a corporation, articles of incorporation
 - If a partnership, partnership agreement
 - Signed statement of no conflict of interest from owner(s), board members, and officers
 - Signed statement describing any criminal convictions, Federal contracts held and the performance rating received on each contract, and previous decertification action while working as an observer or observer provider
 - Description of applicant's prior experience in placing individuals in remote field and/or marine work environments, including recruiting, hiring, deployment, and personnel administration
 - Description of the applicant's ability to carry out the responsibilities and duties of an observer provider

2. Candidate College Transcripts

An observer provider must submit documentation that observer candidates have completed the required educational requirements prior to registering an observer for training. The observer candidate's time and cost in preparation of a resume and submittal of college transcripts are not included in the burden estimates for this information collection because resumes and transcripts routinely are required by most employers, including observer providers. Review and handling of this candidate material by the observer provider and NMFS are included in the burden estimates in the tables below.

3. Observer training and briefing registration

The observer provider must submit training and briefing registration information to NMFS at least five business days prior to the beginning of a scheduled observer certification training or briefing session. This information ensures that sufficient class space is reserved for the session requested and that each observer candidate meets the observer educational qualification standards. The registration information is submitted by email.

Observer training registration includes the following information ([§ 679.52\(b\)\(11\)\(i\)\(A\)](#)):

- Dates of requested training
- A list of observer candidates, including each candidate's full name, date of birth, and sex
- A copy of each candidate's academic transcripts and resume
- A statement signed by the observer candidate that discloses the candidate's criminal convictions (if any)

Observer briefing registration includes the following information ([§ 679.52\(b\)\(11\)\(i\)\(B\)](#)):

- Dates and type of requested briefing session and briefing location
- List of observers to attend the briefing session, including each observer's full name

The types of observer briefing and training sessions include 4-day briefings, 3-day annual briefings, 2-day briefings, 1-day briefing, fish and crab identification training, and nontrawl lead level 2 training. The schedule for observer training may be viewed at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/fisheries-observers/north-pacific-observer-program-training-schedule>.

4. Projected observer assignments

Prior to an observer's or observer candidate's completion of the training or briefing session, the observer provider must submit to NMFS a statement of projected observer assignments that includes the observer's name; vessel, shoreside processor, or stationary floating processor assignment; gear type; and vessel or processor code; port of embarkation; target species; and area of fishing (§ 679.52(b)(11)(ii)). The projected assignments are used by the training or briefing instructor to adapt classroom instruction to meet the specific needs of the individual(s) and to assign special projects to students. Special project assignments are often dependent on the projected vessel assignments and are often species or vessel-type specific.

5. Physical examination verification

The observer provider must provide to NMFS a signed and dated statement from a licensed physician that he or she has physically examined an observer or observer candidate (§ 679.52(b)(11)(iii)). The statement must confirm that, based on that physical examination, the observer or observer candidate does not have any health problems or conditions that would jeopardize that individual's safety or the safety of others while deployed, or prevent the observer or observer candidate from performing his or her duties satisfactorily. The statement must declare that, prior to the examination, the physician was made aware of the duties of the observer and the dangerous, remote, and rigorous nature of the work by reading the NMFS-prepared pamphlet, provided to the candidate by the observer provider.

The physician's statement must be submitted to the NMFS Observer Program prior to certification of an observer. The physical exam must have occurred during the 12 months prior to the observer's or observer candidate's deployment. The physician's statement expires 12 months after the physical exam occurred. A new physical exam must be performed, and accompanying statement submitted, prior to any deployment occurring after the expiration of the statement.

Observer providers incur the costs associated with submitting to NMFS the physical examination verification. This information is submitted to NMFS via email or fax. Observer providers do not incur the costs of an observer or observer candidate's time and cost for the actual exam.

6. Observer deployment/logistics report

A deployment/logistics report must be submitted by Wednesday, 4:30 pm, Pacific local time, of each week with information on each observer deployed by the observer provider during that week. As an alternative, providers may submit this information via a secure, online web interface that is accessible 24 hours a day.

The deployment/logistics report must include the observer's name; cruise number; current vessel, shoreside processor, or stationary floating processor assignment and vessel/processor code; embarkation date; estimated or actual disembarkation dates; and location of any observer employed by the observer provider who is not assigned to a vessel, shoreside processor, or

stationary floating processor ([§ 679.52\(b\)\(11\)\(iv\)](#)).

These reports are used for routine recordkeeping in the NMFS observer database. Accurate and timely observer deployment information is important for fisheries management. Knowing where observers are at all times is also extremely important should emergencies arise while an observer is deployed at sea.

7. Observer debriefing registration

After each deployment, an observer completes a debriefing process to ensure the methods used were consistent with the observer training and that the data collected are sound. The observer provider must contact the Observer Program within 5 business days after the completion of an observer's deployment to schedule the date, time, and location for the observer's debriefing. The following registration information must be provided by the observer provider when scheduling the debriefing: observer's name; cruise number; vessel, or shoreside processor, or stationary floating processor assignment name(s) and code(s); and requested debriefing date ([§ 679.52\(b\)\(11\)\(v\)](#)). This information is used by the Observer Program to track debriefing requests, assign debriefing staff to observers, show wait time and how long a debriefing takes, and other logistics. Cruise number and vessel or processor assignment codes help track observer deployment history, and allow the debriefing staff to score each assignment individually. All information is tracked in the observer evaluation and can be referenced if there are any reoccurring issues.

8. Certificates of Insurance

Observers are insured by their employer, as required in regulation for full coverage vessels and in the contract between NMFS and the observer provider for vessels in the partial coverage category. Observers are also covered by the Federal Employees Compensation Act. This insurance coverage does not prevent an observer or observer provider from filing a suit for injuries that occur on a vessel. Thus, industry members may choose to protect themselves from lawsuits by obtaining additional liability insurance.

Copies of "certificates of insurance" must be submitted to NMFS by February 1 of each year. Insurance certification allows NMFS to confirm that an observer provider is meeting the minimum insurance coverage required. The certificates of insurance shall verify all coverage provisions specified at 50 CFR 600.748(b) and (c) and state that the insurance company will notify the certificate holder if insurance coverage is changed or canceled ([§ 679.52\(b\)\(11\)\(vi\)](#)).

9. Observer provider contracts

Observer providers must submit to NMFS a completed and unaltered copy of each type of signed and valid contract (including all attachments, appendices, addendums, and exhibits incorporated into the contract) between the observer provider and those entities requiring observer services in the full coverage category (required under § 679.51(a)(2) and (b)(2)), by February 1 of each year.

Observer providers must also submit to NMFS upon request, a completed and unaltered copy of the current or most recent signed and valid contract (including all attachments, appendices, addendums, and exhibits incorporated into the contract and any agreements or policies with

regard to observer compensation or salary levels) between the observer provider and the particular entity identified by the Observer Program or with specific observers. These copies must be submitted to NMFS within 5 business days of the request for the contract. Signed and valid contracts include the contracts an observer provider has with observers and with vessels, shoreside processors, and SFPs in the full coverage category.

10. Other Reports

The following reports are used by NMFS to monitor and enforce standards of observer conduct and to identify problems on deployments that may compromise the observer's health and well-being. The observer provider submits these reports to the Observer Program by fax or email.

Observer providers must notify NMFS of a breach of the observer provider's policy on observer conduct within 72 hours after the provider becomes aware of the alleged violation.

The observer provider must submit these reports within 24 hours after the observer provider becomes aware of the information ([§ 679.52\(b\)\(11\)\(x\)](#)):

- Information regarding possible observer harassment
- Information regarding any prohibited action
- Concerns about vessel safety, processor safety, or marine casualty under 46 CFR 4.05-1(a)(1) through (7)
- Observer illness or injury that prevents the observer from completing any of his or her duties described in the observer manual.
- Any information, allegations, or reports regarding observer conflict of interest or breach of the standards of behavior.

11. Update to provider information

Except for changes in ownership, an observer provider must notify the Observer Program of any other change to the information submitted on the provider's permit application within 30 days of the effective date of such change ([§ 679.52\(b\)\(11\)\(ix\)](#)). This requirement facilitates the communication between NMFS and observer providers.

12. Observer provider invoices

Vessels and processors in the full coverage category contract with observer provider companies directly. In order to accurately evaluate the cost of observer coverage requirements for vessels and plants, NMFS requires observer providers to submit copies of all invoices for observer coverage to the Observer Program monthly. Observer providers are required to submit these invoices to NMFS for each observer aboard a catcher/processor, catcher vessel, mothership, SFP, or shoreside processor on a monthly basis for a full calendar year.

The invoice information allows NMFS to develop an accurate assessment of costs and benefits under potential program changes recommended for fisheries management actions.

The invoices must contain the following information ([§ 679.52\(b\)\(11\)\(viii\)\(b\)](#)):

- Name of each individual to which the invoice applies
- Dates of service for each observer
- Rate charged in dollars per day (daily rate) for observer services

- Total charge for observer services (number of days multiplied by daily rate)
- Amount charged for air transportation
- Amount charged by the provider for any other observer expenses, including but not limited to ground transportation, excess baggage, and lodging. Charges for these costs must be separated and identified.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS

Sections 679.51 and 679.52 provide an opportunity to submit an administrative appeal if NMFS denies a request to place a vessel in a coverage category or specific selection pool, disproves a Vessel Monitoring Plan, or for an observer provider company who receives an IAD of permit expiration.

In most cases, NMFS expects that only the owners or operators of vessels authorized to be placed in the coverage category or selection pool under the regulatory provisions will apply to do so. Therefore, NMFS expects few or no denials of these requests.

NMFS expects few or no administrative appeals on requests for placement in a coverage category or selection pool because the criteria for placing a vessel in the partial coverage category or full coverage category are well known and static. Approval of a request to be placed in the EM selection pool is granted if the vessel meets the criteria specified in the Annual Deployment Plan. These criteria may include gear type, vessel length, the port from which the vessel will be fishing, and other criteria related to the EM Program. These criteria are developed annually in the Annual Deployment Plan through a public process that involves review by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council at its October meeting each year, and the opportunity for members of the fishing industry to provide comments. Therefore, NMFS expects few or no administrative appeals on these criteria.

Vessel owners and operators of vessels participating in halibut deck sorting (at § 679.120) for whom NMFS has disapproved a Deck Safety Plan may submit a revised Deck Safety Plan or file an administrative appeal. NMFS expects most vessel owners and operators will submit a revised Deck Safety Plan if their original plan is disapproved rather than file an administrative appeal.

Administrative appeals of adverse decisions made by NMFS Alaska Region must be submitted to the NMFS National Appeals Office (NAO) under the appeals process set out at [15 CFR part 906](#). Instructions for submitting an appeal are provided on the NAO website at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/rules-and-regulations/appeals>. The appeal may be submitted by fax (307-713-2384) or by mail or commercial carrier to National Appeals Office, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

There is no form for this collection.

For purposes of this analysis, NMFS estimates that no more than one administrative appeal will be filed each year

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.

The table at the beginning of Question #2 shows the use of technology in this collection. Most of information is collected, or can be collected, electronically.

The video data storage devices for vessels selected for electronic monitoring coverage must be sent to NMFS for review. Electronic submission is not possible for this element of the collection.

Administrative appeals cannot be submitted electronically because the National Appeals Office requires submission of documents by fax, mail, or delivery to provide the appropriate record for legal proceedings.

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 Question 2

Most of our individual information collection instruments require respondents to provide identification and contact information. However, this duplication is necessary to properly identify and communicate with the individuals submitting each report or required information.

We have identified no duplicative requirements in this information collection. NMFS reviews its requirements to identify any potential for duplication and seeks public comment through proposed rulemaking and periodic meetings with the affected industry.

In general, Alaska Region information collections are prepared and reviewed by staff familiar with all of the information collection requirements for the region. Staff work together to develop information collection requirements for new programs. In addition, NMFS staff work closely with the staff of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the International Pacific Halibut Commission to reduce duplication in information collection requirements to the extent possible given overlapping jurisdictions and complex fisheries. Senior staff at the Alaska Region, NMFS headquarters, and the Department of Commerce General Counsel review all new and revised information collection requirements that are associated with rulemakings. This process minimizes the potential for duplication of information collection requirements for participants in the Federal fisheries off Alaska.

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

NMFS attempts to minimize the information required to be submitted by all respondents, including the small entities. Specifically, NMFS provides options for electronic transmission as well as the option to provide information by phone for those entities without access to a computer or the internet.

This rule (RIN 0648-BL08) accommodates concerns by small vessel operators by maintaining the current at-sea observer data transmission requirements for non-AFA vessels for the first three years after implementation of the rule. Requirements for non-AFA trawl catcher vessels to install equipment necessary to facilitate at-sea observer data transmission requirements will not be effective until three years after the effective date of the final rule implementing the PCTC Program. Public testimony suggests that most of the vessels that do not currently have data

transmission capability would realize the benefits from this program and be able to obtain the technology.

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.

All information is required for the efficient operation of the Observer Program and must be submitted in the time frames requested. Collecting this information less frequently would jeopardize the goals and objectives of the Observer Program and the effective management of the Alaska groundfish and halibut fisheries.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

- Some of the collections could require respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly. Vessel owners and operators in the trip selection pool and EM selection pool are required to log their fishing trips in ODDS, which could result in information being submitted more often than quarterly. NMFS uses this information to determine if a particular fishing trip is randomly selected for observer or EM coverage.

The following are required to be submitted by observer provider companies within a specific time period, which could result in information being submitted more often than quarterly.

- Observer training and briefing registration information must be submitted at least 5 business days prior to the beginning of a scheduled observer certification training or briefing session to ensure that sufficient class space is reserved for the session and that each observer candidate meets the observer educational qualification standards.
- A statement of projected observer assignments must be submitted prior to an observer's or observer candidate's completion of the training or briefing session. This is used by the instructor to adapt classroom instruction to the specific needs of the individual(s) and to assign special projects to students.
- A deployment/logistics report must be submitted each week for each observer deployed during that week. These reports are necessary for fisheries management and are important should an emergency arise while an observer is deployed at sea.
- An observer provider must contact the Observer Program within 5 business days after the completion of an observer's deployment to schedule an observer debriefing. Timely observer debriefings are necessary to ensure quality data for inseason fishery management.
- Invoices must be submitted monthly for observer coverage for vessels and processors in the full coverage category. This is necessary for NMFS to accurately evaluate the cost of observer coverage requirements for vessels and plants.
- Reports of a breach of the observer provider's policy on observer conduct must be submitted within 72 hours after the provider becomes aware of the alleged violation. The following must be submitted within 24 hours after becoming aware of the

information: possible observer harassment, any prohibited action, vessel or processor safety, marine casualty, some observer illnesses or injuries, and conflict of interest or breach of the standards of behavior.

8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publications 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 proposed rule ([88 FR 8592](#)) soliciting public comments published on February 9, 2023. The comment period ended on March 13, 2023. No comments were received on this information collection.

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

No payment or gift to respondents is provided under this program.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy. If the collection requires a systems of records notice (SORN) or privacy impact assessment (PIA), those should be cited and described here.

All information collections by NMFS, Alaska Region, are protected under confidentiality provisions of section 402(b) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act as amended in 2006 (16 U.S.C. 1801, *et seq.*) and under [NOAA Administrative Order 216-100](#), which sets forth procedures to protect confidentiality of fishery statistics.

An observer provider must ensure that all records on individual observer performance received from NMFS under the routine use provision of the Privacy Act System of Records Notice [COMMERCE/NOAA-15](#) remain confidential and are not further released to anyone outside the employ of the observer provider company to whom the observer was contracted except with written permission of the observer.

The System of Records Notice that covers all observer information collected in this information collection is [COMMERCE/NOAA-15, Monitoring of National Marine Fisheries Service Observers](#). Vessel information is covered by [COMMERCE/NOAA-6, Fishermen's Statistical Data](#). In exceptional circumstances, the owners and operators of vessels may provide to the Regional Administrator written justification at the time observer data are submitted, or within a reasonable time thereafter, that disclosure of information could reasonably be expected to cause substantial competitive harm. The determination whether to disclose the information will be made pursuant to 15 CFR 4.7.

The Privacy Impact Assessment that covers this information collection is [NOAA NMFS Alaska Region Local Area Network \(NOAA4700\)](#).

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior or 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.

This information collection does not involve information of a sensitive nature.

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

The rule (RIN 0648-BL08) adds requirements that increase the respondents for ATLAS communications and observer data entry and decrease the respondents that are required to log their fishing trips in ODDS. The number of respondents for ATLAS communications and observer data entry has been corrected from the supporting statement submitted with the proposed rule. With this revision, 25 respondents are added. The previously submitted supporting statement omitted the non-AFA vessels. While non-AFA vessels have three years after implementation of the program to provide at-sea data transmission capabilities, on implementation they will be required to provide the computer with ATLAS installed.

The hourly wage rates have been updated to use the most current rates available (May 2022) from the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The rate \$22.52 is the Alaska mean hourly wage for Occupation Code 45-0000 (Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations; https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_ak.htm). The rate \$44.07 is the Washington mean hourly wage for Occupation Code 11-9013 (Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers; <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes119013.htm>). Burden and wage rate estimates are updated and revised when new rates are available and when public comment supports doing so. Slight differences in the total annual burden hours and total annual wage burden costs may occur due to rounding.

Information Collection	Type of Respondent (e.g., Occupational Title)	# of Respondents/ year (a)	Annual # of Responses / Respondent (b)	Total # of Annual Responses (c) = (a) x (b)	Burden Hrs / Response (d)	Total Annual Burden Hrs (e) = (c) x (d)	Hourly Wage Rate (for Type of Respondent) (f)	Total Annual Wage Burden Costs (g) = (e) x (f)
I. Industry Requirements								
1	Observer notification	705	varies	100,000	2 min	3,333	22.52	75,059
2	Industry request for assistance in improving observer data quality issues	10	1	10	30 min	5	33.30 ¹	167
4	ATLAS communications and observer data entry	189	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	Pre-cruise meeting notification	53	varies	265	5 min	22	22.52	495
6	Catcher/processor request to be placed in partial observer coverage	5	1	5	30 min	3	22.52	68
7	Request to be placed in the full observer coverage category	34	1	34	5 min	3	22.52	68

Information Collection		Type of Respondent (e.g., Occupational Title)	# of Respondents/ year (a)	Annual # of Responses / Respondent (b)	Total # of Annual Responses (c) = (a) x (b)	Burden Hrs / Response (d)	Total Annual Burden Hrs (e) = (c) x (d)	Hourly Wage Rate (for Type of Respondent) (f)	Total Annual Wage Burden Costs (g) = (e) x (f)
8	Request to be placed in or removed from the electronic monitoring selection pool	Vessel owner or operator	165	1	165	5 min	14	22.52	315
9	Observer Declare and Deploy System (ODDS) log a fishing trip	Vessel owner or operator	710	varies	6,675	15 min	1,669	22.52	37,586
10	Deck safety plan—initial year	Vessel owner or operator	1	1	1	12 hours ²	12	22.52	270
	Deck safety plan—annual renewal	Vessel owner or operator	24	1	24	1 hour	24	22.52	540
11	Deck sorting safety meeting	Vessel owner or operator	25	4	100	15 min	25	22.52	563
12. Electronic Monitoring Selection Pool									
12.a	Vessel Monitoring Plan	Vessel owner or operator	165	1	165	48 hours ³	7,920	22.52	167,508
12.b	Closing electronic monitoring trips in ODDS	Vessel owner or operator	142	once per selected fishing trip	142	5 min	12	22.52	254
12.c	Submit electronic monitoring data to NMFS	Vessel owner or operator	142	once per selected fishing trip	142	1 hour	142	22.52	3,003
II. Observer Provider Requirements									
1	Observer provider permit application	Observer provider company applicant	1 ⁴	1	1	60 hours	60	44.07	2,644
2	Candidate college transcripts	Permitted observer provider company	4	varies	150	8 hours	1,200	44.07	52,884
3.a	Observer training registration	Permitted observer provider company	4	varies	150	1 hour	150	44.07	6,611
3.b	Observer briefing registration	Permitted observer provider company	4	varies	852	7 min	99	44.07	4,363
4	Projected observer assignments	Permitted observer provider company	4	varies	650	7 min	76	44.07	3,349
5	Physical examination verification	Permitted observer provider company	4	varies	384	5 min	32	44.07	1,410
6	Observer deployment/logistics report	Permitted observer provider company	4	52 (weekly)	208	7 min	24	44.07	1,058

Information Collection		Type of Respondent (e.g., Occupational Title)	# of Respondents/ year (a)	Annual # of Responses / Respondent (b)	Total # of Annual Responses (c) = (a) x (b)	Burden Hrs / Response (d)	Total Annual Burden Hrs (e) = (c) x (d)	Hourly Wage Rate (for Type of Respondent) (f)	Total Annual Wage Burden Costs (g) = (e) x (f)
7	Observer debriefing registration	Permitted observer provider company	4	varies	609	30 min	305	44.07	13,441
8	Certificates of insurance	Permitted observer provider company	4	1	4	12 min	1	44.07	44
9	Observer provider contracts	Permitted observer provider company	4	1	4	30 min	2	44.07	88
10	Other reports	Permitted observer provider company	4	varies	400	2 hours	800	44.07	35,256
11	Update to provider information	Permitted observer provider company	4	once or less	4	5 min	0	44.07	15
12	Observer provider invoices	Permitted observer provider company	4	12 (monthly)	48	30 min	24	44.07	1,058
III. Administrative Appeals		Vessel owner or operator; permitted observer provider company	1	1	1	4 hours	4	33.30 ¹	133
Totals					111,193		15,961		\$371,921

¹ The mean hourly wage rate used is an average of \$22.52 and \$44.07 ($22.52 + 44.07 = 66.59 / 2 = \33.30).

² NMFS estimates the time for developing a new Deck Safety Plan to be 12 hours during the first year the vessel participates in halibut deck sorting. This includes time required to locate and revise deck layout plans and to consult with crew and NMFS staff on practical implementation. After the first year, NMFS estimates the annual time burden for modifying or renewing an existing Deck Safety Plan to be one hour.

³ NMFS estimates the total time to complete, sign, and submit a VMP is approximately 48 hours. This estimate includes discussions with vessel operators about the best location to install the EM system equipment; installing the needed infrastructure and equipment; taking the necessary photos, drawing diagrams, and writing descriptions of how vessel operations will occur; compiling all the information in a VMP document; and the vessel operator signing the VMP and submitting it to NMFS via email. The time estimate also includes the possibility that some vessels may need to amend their VMP after it has been approved.

⁴ NMFS estimates that one or fewer companies may apply for a new permit each year. For purposes of this analysis, one is used.

13. Provide an estimate for 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 already reflected on the burden worksheet).

Information Collection		# of Respondents/year (a)	Annual # of Responses / Respondent (b)	Total # of Annual Responses (c) = (a) x (b)	Cost Burden / Respondent ¹ (h)	Total Annual Cost Burden (i) = (c) x (h)
I. Industry Requirements (Unique respondents = 870 [705 vessels and processors in full and partial observer categories + 165 EM vessels])						
1	Observer notification	705	varies	100,000	0	0
2	Industry request for assistance in improving observer data quality issues	10	1	10	0	0
4	ATLAS communications and observer data entry	189	0	0	0	0
5	Pre-cruise meeting notification	53	varies	265	0	0
6	Catcher/processor request to be placed in partial observer coverage	5	1	5	Operating costs ² - \$5	\$25
7	Request to be placed in the full observer coverage category	34	1	34	0	0
8	Request to be placed in or removed from the electronic monitoring selection pool	165	1	165	0	0
9	Observer Declare and Deploy System (ODDS) log a fishing trip	710	varies	6,675	0	0
10	Deck safety plan—initial year	1	1	1	0	0
	Deck safety plan—annual renewal	24	1	24	0	0
11	Deck sorting safety meeting	25	4	100	0	0
12. EM Selection Pool						
12.a	Vessel Monitoring Plan	165	1	165	0	0
12.b	Closing electronic monitoring trips in ODDS	142	once per selected fishing trip	142	0	0
12.c	Submit electronic monitoring data to NMFS	142	once per selected fishing trip	142	\$8.25 to mail with return receipt	\$1,172
II. Observer Provider Requirements (5 unique respondents (Unique respondents = 5 [4 permitted observer provider companies + 1 observer provider applicant])						
1	Observer provider permit application	1*	1	1	0	0
2	Candidate college transcripts	4	varies	150	0	0

Information Collection		# of Respondents/year (a)	Annual # of Responses / Respondent (b)	Total # of Annual Responses (c) = (a) x (b)	Cost Burden / Respondent ¹ (h)	Total Annual Cost Burden (i) = (c) x (h)
3.a	Observer training registration	4	varies	150	0	0
3.b	Observer briefing registration	4	varies	852	0	0
4	Projected observer assignments	4	varies	650	0	0
5	Physical examination verification	4	varies	384	0	0
6	Observer deployment/logistics report	4	52 (weekly)	208	0	0
7	Observer debriefing registration	4	varies	609	0	0
8	Certificates of insurance	4	1	4	0	0
9	Observer provider contracts	4	1	4	0	0
10	Other reports	4	varies	400	0	0
11	Update to provider information	4	once or less	4	0	0
12	Observer provider invoices	4	12 (monthly)	48	0	0
III. Administrative Appeals		1	1	1	\$505 (Operating costs ² - \$5 Attorney - \$500 ³)	\$505
TOTALS		875⁵		111,193		\$1,702

¹ Most of these information collections are submitted by email or online rather than by fax or mail; so, although fax and mail may be an option, we do not expect any submissions by fax or mail. Therefore, the miscellaneous costs for information collections expected to be submitted by email or online are estimated to be \$0.

² Operating costs account for the typical inclusive general office services packages that include expenses for email, fax, copying, mailing, printing, and internet.

³ 4 hours of attorney time at \$125 per hour

⁵ Total respondents includes unique respondents only. Some respondents submit more than one instrument in this collection; therefore, the number of unique respondents is used to show the estimated annual number of separate participants who are expected to submit information during the 3-year renewal period for 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.

Federal government costs are based on one ZP-5, one ZP-4, one ZP-3, one ZP-2, and one GS-14. The fully loaded salary is based on the 2023 salary and includes 52 percent of the salary to account for benefits and other overhead costs. For example, for a capped out ZP-2 step 3, \$92,174 * 1.52 = \$140,104 loaded salary. The grade and step are from the Department of Commerce Alternative Personnel System (CAPS) pay tables (<https://www.commerce.gov/hr/practitioners/caps/pay-administration>). The general schedule grade equivalent for CAPS is included in parentheses.

Cost Descriptions	Grade/Step ¹	Loaded Salary /Cost	% of Effort	Fringe (if Applicable)	Total Cost to Government
Federal Oversight	ZP-5 step 3 (GS 15)	\$278,920	1%		\$2,789
Other Federal Positions	ZP-4 step 3 (GS 13/14)	\$259,245	5%		\$12,962
	ZP-3 step 3 (GS 11/12)	\$184,495	25%		\$46,124
	ZP-2 step 3 (GS 9/10)	\$140,104	15%		\$21,016
	GS 14	\$261,554	.2%		\$523
Contractor Cost		—	—	—	—
Travel					—
Other Costs:					—
TOTAL				—	\$83,414

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in ROCIS.

This collection is revised because the rule (0648-BL08) adds requirements to provide equipment and at-sea data transmission capabilities to facilitate electronic transmission of observer data to NMFS. This increases the number of vessels that need to provide observers access to a computer with ATLAS installed. This collection is also revised because catcher vessels that choose to participate in the PCTC Program will be required to be in the full observer coverage category instead of the partial observer coverage category. These catcher vessels will no longer use ODDS to log fishing trips, which decreases the number of respondents that log trips in ODDS.

Information Collection		Respondents		Responses		Burden Hours		Reason for change or adjustment
		Current Renewal / Revision	Previous Renewal / Revision	Current Renewal / Revision	Previous Renewal / Revision	Current Renewal / Revision	Previous Renewal / Revision	
I. Industry Requirements								
1	Observer notification	705	705	100,000	100,000	3,333	3,333	—
2	Industry request for assistance in improving observer data quality issues	10	10	10	10	5	5	—
4	ATLAS communications and observer data entry	189	164	0	0	0	0	Program Change: The rule adds requirements that increase the number respondents.
5	Pre-cruise meeting notification	53	53	265	265	22	22	—
6	Catcher/processor request to be placed in partial observer coverage	5	5	5	5	3	3	—
7	Request to be placed in the full observer coverage category	34	34	34	34	3	3	—
8	Request to be placed in or removed from the electronic monitoring selection pool	165	165	165	165	14	14	—
9	Observer Declare and Deploy System (ODDS) log a fishing trip	710	735	6,675	6,950	1,669	1,738	Program Change: The rule adds requirements that decrease the number of respondents, which decreases the total annual responses and total annual burden hours.
10	Deck safety plan—initial year	1	1	1	1	12	12	—
	Deck safety plan—annual renewal	24	24	24	24	24	24	—
11	Deck sorting safety meeting	25	25	100	100	25	25	—
12. Electronic Monitoring Selection Pool								
12.a	Vessel Monitoring Plan	165	165	165	165	7,920	7,920	—

		Respondents		Responses		Burden Hours		Reason for change or adjustment
12.b	Information Collection Closing electronic monitoring trips in ODDS	142	142	142	142	12	12	
12.c	Submit electronic monitoring data to NMFS	142	142	142	142	142	142	—
II. Observer Provider Requirements								
1	Observer provider permit application	1	1	1	1	60	60	—
2	Candidate college transcripts	4	4	150	150	1,200	1,200	—
3.a	Observer training registration	4	4	150	150	150	150	—
3.b	Observer briefing registration	4	4	852	852	99	99	—
4	Projected observer assignments	4	4	650	650	76	76	—
5	Physical examination verification	4	4	384	384	32	32	—
6	Observer deployment/logistics report	4	4	208	208	24	24	—
7	Observer debriefing registration	4	4	609	609	305	305	—
8	Certificates of Insurance	4	4	4	4	1	1	—
9	Observer provider contracts	4	4	4	4	2	2	—
10	Other Reports	4	4	400	400	800	800	—
11	Update to provider information	4	4	4	4	0	0	—
12	Observer provider invoices	4	4	48	48	24	24	—
III. Administrative Appeals		1	1	1	1	4	4	—
Total for Collection		875*	875*	111,193	111,468	15,961	16,030	
Difference		0		- 275	Program Change	-69	Program Change	

*Total respondents includes unique respondents only.

Information Collection		Labor Costs		Miscellaneous Costs		Reason for change or adjustment
		Current	Previous	Current	Previous	
I. Industry Requirements						
1	Observer notification	75,059	91,424	0	0	Labor costs (Adjusted): Updated to use the most current BLS wage rate available.
2	Industry request for assistance in improving observer data quality issues	167	176	0	0	Labor costs (Adjusted): Updated to use the most current BLS wage rate available.
4	ATLAS communications and observer data entry	0	0	0	0	—
5	Pre-cruise meeting notification	495	603	0	0	Labor costs (Adjusted): Updated to use the most current BLS wage rate available.
6	Catcher/processor request to be placed in partial observer coverage	68	82	25	25	Labor costs (Adjusted): Updated to use the most current BLS wage rate available.
7	Request to be placed in the full observer coverage category	68	82	0	0	Labor Costs (Adjusted) The hourly wage rate was updated to use the most current BLS wage rate available.
8	Request to be placed in or removed from the electronic monitoring selection pool	315	384	0	0	Labor costs (Adjusted): Updated to use the most current BLS wage rate available.
9	Observer Declare and Deploy System (ODDS) log a fishing trip	37,586	47,673	0	0	Labor Costs (Adjustment); The hourly wage rate was updated to use the most current BLS wage rate available.
10	Deck safety plan—initial year	270	329	0	0	Labor costs (Adjusted): Updated to use the most current BLS wage rate available.
	Deck safety plan—annual renewal	540	658	0	0	Labor costs (Adjusted): Updated to use the most current BLS wage rate available.
11	Deck sorting safety meeting	563	686	0	0	Labor costs (Adjusted): Updated to use the most current BLS wage rate available.
12. Electronic Monitoring Selection Pool						
12.a	Vessel Monitoring Plan	167,508	217,246	0	0	Labor costs (Adjusted): Updated to use the most current BLS wage rate available.
12.b	Closing electronic monitoring trips in ODDS	254	329	0	0	Labor costs (Adjusted): Updated to use the most current BLS wage rate available.
12.c	Submit electronic monitoring data to NMFS	3,003	3,895	1,172	1,172	Labor costs (Adjusted): Updated to use the most current BLS wage rate available.
II. Observer Provider Requirements						
1	Observer provider permit application	2,644	2,573	0	0	Labor costs (Adjusted): Updated to use the most current BLS wage rate available.

		Labor Costs		Miscellaneous Costs		Reason for change or adjustment
2	Information Collection Candidate college transcripts	52,884	51,456	0	0	
3.a	Observer training registration	6,611	6,432	0	0	Labor costs (Adjusted): Updated to use the most current BLS wage rate available.
3.b	Observer briefing registration	4,363	4,245	0	0	Labor costs (Adjusted): Updated to use the most current BLS wage rate available.
4	Projected observer assignments	3,349	3,259	0	0	Labor costs (Adjusted): Updated to use the most current BLS wage rate available.
5	Physical examination verification	1,410	1,372	0	0	Labor costs (Adjusted): Updated to use the most current BLS wage rate available.
6	Observer deployment/logistics report	1,058	1,029	0	0	Labor costs (Adjusted): Updated to use the most current BLS wage rate available.
7	Observer debriefing registration	13,441	13,078	0	0	Labor costs (Adjusted): Updated to use the most current BLS wage rate available.
8	Certificates of Insurance	44	43	0	0	Labor costs (Adjusted): Updated to use the most current BLS wage rate available.
9	Observer provider contracts	88	86	0	0	Labor costs (Adjusted): Updated to use the most current BLS wage rate available.
10	Other Reports	35,256	34,304	0	0	Labor costs (Adjusted): Updated to use the most current BLS wage rate available.
11	Update to provider information	15	14	0	0	Labor costs (Adjusted): Updated to use the most current BLS wage rate available.
12	Observer provider invoices	1,058	1,029	0	0	Labor costs (Adjusted): Updated to use the most current BLS wage rate available.
III. Administrative Appeals		117	141	505	505	Labor costs (Adjusted): Updated to use the most current BLS wage rate available.
Total for Collection		\$371,921	\$482,628	\$1,702	\$1,702	
Difference		- \$110,707 Adjustment		0		

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.

A list of the BSAI trawl catcher vessels annually placed in full coverage rather than partial coverage at the request of the vessel owners is posted on the NMFS Alaska Region website (<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/bsai-trawl-catcher-vessels-cvs-full-coverage>). NMFS posts the vessel's name and FFP number.

Most information collected by observers is confidential and is only provided to the public in summary form. However, under § 679.54, the following information may be made available to the public:

Summary of weekly data. The following information collected by observers for each catcher/processor and catcher vessel during any weekly reporting period may be made available to the public:

- Vessel name and Federal permit number.
- Number of Chinook salmon and "other salmon" observed.
- The ratio of total round weight of incidentally caught halibut or Pacific herring to the total round weight of groundfish in sampled catch.
- The ratio of number of king crab or *Chionoecetes bairdi* Tanner crab to the total round weight of groundfish in sampled hauls.
- The number of observed trawl hauls or fixed gear sets.
- The number of trawl hauls that were basket sampled.
- The total weight of basket samples taken from sampled trawl hauls.

Haul-specific data. The information listed below collected by observers from observed hauls on board vessels using trawl gear to participate in a directed fishery for groundfish other than rockfish, Greenland turbot, or Atka mackerel may be made available to the public:

- Date.
- Time of day gear is deployed.
- Latitude and longitude at beginning of haul.
- Bottom depth.
- Fishing depth of trawl.
- The ratio of the number of Chinook salmon to the total round weight of groundfish.
- The ratio of the number of other salmon to the total round weight of groundfish.
- The ratio of total round weight of incidentally caught halibut to the total round weight of groundfish.
- The ratio of total round weight of herring to the total round weight of groundfish.
- The ratio of the number of king crab to the total round weight of groundfish.
- The ratio of the number of *C. bairdi* Tanner crab to the total round weight of groundfish.
- Sea surface temperature (where available).
- Sea temperature at fishing depth of trawl (where available).

The identity of the vessels from which the haul-specific data are collected is not released. In addition, in exceptional circumstances, the owners and operators of vessels may provide to

NMFS written justification at the time observer data are submitted, or within a reasonable time thereafter, that disclosure of this information could reasonably be expected to cause substantial competitive harm. The determination whether to disclose the information is made pursuant to 15 CFR 4.7.

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.

Some of the requirements in this collection do not have instruments on which to provide an OMB expiration date because they are conducted by phone, in person, or are not submitted on a form or online. The agency will display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection on all other instruments.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions."

The agency certifies compliance with [5 CFR 1320.9](#) and the related provisions of [5 CFR 1320.8\(b\)\(3\)](#).