111FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION
Railroad Signal System Requirements
Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Parts 233, 235, and 236
SUPPORTING JUSTIFICATION
OMB Control No. 2130-0006

Summary of Submission

- This submission is a request for an extension without change (with changes in estimates) of the last three-year approval granted by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on May 18, 2022, which expires May 31, 2025.

- The Federal Railroad Administration (hereafter "FRA" or "the Agency") published a required 60-day Notice in the Federal Register on March 12, 2025. See 90 FR 11872. FRA received no comments in response to this Notice.

- Overall, adjusted estimates decreased the burden hours by 1,435 hours and increased responses by 32.

- The answer to question number 12 itemizes all information collection requirements.

- The answer to question number 15 itemizes all adjustments.

1. Circumstances that make collection of the information necessary.

FRA has broad statutory authority to regulate all areas of railroad safety. 49 U.S.C. 20103(a); 49 CFR 1.89. The Federal Railroad Safety Act of 1970, Public Law 91-458, contained this broad grant of authority and supplemented the older rail safety laws then in existence. The older safety laws had been enacted in a piecemeal approach and addressed specific fields of railroad safety. For instance, the Signal Inspection Act, 49 U.S.C. 26 (recodified at 49 U.S.C. 20501 et seq. (1994)), has governed the installation and removal of signal equipment since its enactment on August 26, 1937. Until July 5, 1994, the Federal railroad safety statutes existed as separate acts found primarily in Title 45 of the United States Code. On that date all of the acts were repealed, and their provisions were recodified into Title 49 of the United States Code, Chapters 201-213.

In the area of railroad signal and train control systems, FRA has issued regulations, found at 49 CFR part 236 ("part 236"), addressing topics such as the securement of signal apparatus housings against unauthorized entry (49 CFR 236.3), location of roadway signals (49 CFR 236.21), and the testing of relays (49 CFR 236.106). Hereafter, all references to parts and sections shall be parts and sections located in Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

The Signal, Train Control, and Crossings (STCC) Division at FRA promotes an understanding of and compliance with the various Federal regulations related to signal and train control systems. The applicable regulations primarily address the installation, maintenance, inspection, and testing of these systems, and the adjustment, repair, or replacement of essential system components, as well as the associated recordkeeping and reporting requirements. The STCC Division facilitates understanding and compliance with these standards and requirements primarily through the performance of inspection and investigation activities on the Nation's railroads.

A primary goal of the Division is to assist in continually improving railroad safety by reducing the risk of train accident/incidents that may result from signal failures. These failures include the failure of a signal appliance, device, method, or system to function or display an indication as required by 49 CFR part 236 that results in a more favorable aspect than intended or other condition hazardous to the movement of a train. Railroads are required to report signal failures to FRA to facilitate investigation by STCC personnel.

The regulatory sections covered under this information collection require railroads to notify FRA when an accident/incident occurs because of a failure in a signal system. These regulatory sections also establish maintenance and testing standards for signal systems.

The information in this collection request supports FRA's mission of providing safe and efficient rail transportation. If information were not collected as required by these regulations, there could be more accident/incidents related to improperly maintained signal systems.

2. <u>How, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used</u>.

The information collected under 49 CFR parts 233, 235, and 236 is used by FRA to monitor railroad compliance with FRA's inspection and testing requirements for signal systems, as well as to review and approve railroad requests to discontinue or materially modify existing signal systems. The information collected is also used by FRA to monitor signal failures (e.g., failure of a signal appliance, device, method, or system to function or display an indication as required by 49 CFR part 236 that results in a more favorable aspect than intended or other condition hazardous to the movement of a train).

For instance:

- § 233.5 requires each railroad to report to FRA within 24 hours after learning of an accident/incident arising from signal failure.
- § 233.7 requires each railroad to report signal failures to FRA within 15 days.
- § 235.5 generally requires railroads to apply for FRA approval to discontinue or materially modify railroad signal systems.

- § 236.110 requires that the results of certain signal system tests be recorded on pre-printed forms provided by the railroad or by electronic means, subject to FRA approval.
- Finally, § 236.590 requires railroads to clean and inspect the automatic train stop, train control, or cab signal pneumatic apparatus on locomotives and then record the results of the inspection as required by 49 CFR 229.29(a).

3. Extent of automated information collection.

FRA strongly encourages the use of advanced information technology, wherever feasible, to reduce burden on respondents.

FRA estimates that approximately 75 percent of all responses are completed electronically by the railroads.

4. Efforts to identify duplication.

This information is not duplicated anywhere. Similar data are not available from any other source.

FRA has other reporting requirements concerning railroad accident reporting (§ 225.11). Those reporting requirements do not require railroads to report the accident unless certain criteria related to death, injury, or monetary damage are met or exceeded. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) also requires certain accidents to be reported.

Accidents caused by a failure of the signal system or signal appliances may need to be promptly investigated by trained personnel. Immediate notice is therefore needed so the inspector/investigator can be on the scene of the accident as soon as possible.

The railroad accident/incident reporting notification required by § 225.11 provides that the carrier may report the accident up to 30 days after the end of the month in which the accident occurred. However, in the case of accidents involving signal systems, this is too long a timeframe. This long lapse in time could make a meaningful investigation impossible, since the condition(s) that caused the accident may change.

5. Efforts to minimize the burden on small businesses.

Reporting and recordkeeping burdens will vary from carrier to carrier. However, regarding this collection of information, the burden for the larger carriers will generally be greater, and the burden for the smaller carriers will be less, mainly as a result of the amount of signal and train control equipment owned by the affected railroads.

For example, concerning signal system failure reports required under § 233.7, a large carrier which has many signal failures will expend considerable time each year

completing and filing a large number of detailed reports, while a small carrier which has no signal failures will not make any reports at all. This also holds true of the recordkeeping burden. The smaller carriers with only a few hundred miles of signals have a relatively small burden, while the larger carriers – some of which have signals installed on as much as 12,000 miles of track – have a much larger burden.

6. Impact of less frequent collection of information.

If this information were not collected or collected less frequently, railroad safety throughout the United States would be seriously hindered. Specifically, without this collection of information, FRA could not examine records of test results to ensure that railroads are operating and maintaining safe signal systems. Malfunctioning signal systems could jeopardize the safety of train crews and the traveling public by causing accidents, resulting in grave injuries and even deaths, as well as property damage and potential environmental harm to surrounding communities.

Additionally, without this collection of information, FRA would not have the requisite information to determine the effectiveness of current regulations or to ascertain when new regulations are needed.

If this information were collected less frequently, FRA would be deprived of essential information used to discern industry trends in signaling. Moreover, FRA would not be able to exercise adequate oversight of signal system modifications and discontinuances. This could have harmful and possibly catastrophic safety consequences.

In sum, without this collection of information, FRA would be unable to enforce critical safety requirements and to oversee an essential part of its comprehensive national rail safety program.

7. Special circumstances.

There are no special circumstances associated with this information collection request.

8. Compliance with 5 CFR 1320.8.

As required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA) and 5 CFR part 1320, FRA published a notice in the *Federal Register* on March 12, 2025,[1] soliciting comment from the public, railroads, and other interested parties on these information collection requirements. FRA received no comments from the public.

Consultations with representatives of the affected population:
FRA's oversight, field investigations, and enforcement of the regulatory requirements in parts 233, 235 and 236 place FRA personnel in direct contact with individuals from the

[1] 90 FR 11872.

railroad industry on a routine basis. Many of the applications and accident reporting metrics include involvement from FRA's headquarters specialists, subject matter experts, and FRA's district specialists and inspectors. Field investigations are fundamental to FRA's process and routinely involve a site inspection that allows FRA to interface with individuals involved in what occurred and to conduct root cause analysis and develop recommendations. The railroad industry has, at times, benefitted from field investigations by FRA's continued focused interactions and audits. This is especially true with respect to human factor-caused accident/incidents that have led to Safety Advisories or Technical Bulletins in the past.

9. Payments or gifts to respondents.

There are no monetary payments provided or gifts made to respondents associated with the information collection requirements contained in this ICR.

10. Assurance of confidentiality.

Information collected is not of a confidential nature and no assurances of confidentiality are made by FRA.

11. Justification for any questions of a sensitive nature.

There are no questions or information of a sensitive nature, or data that normally would be considered private matters contained in this collection of information.

12. Estimate of burden hours for information collected.

The estimates for the respondent universe, total annual responses, and average time per response are based on the experience and expertise of FRA's Signal, Train Control, and Crossings Division under the Office of Railroad Systems and Technology.

CFR Section	Respondent Universe[2]	Total Annual Responses (A)	Average Time per Response (Hours) (B)	Total Annual Burden Hours (A*B=C)	Wage Rate (D)	Total Cost Equivalent U.S.D. (E) (E=C*D)	Section Analyses and Estimates
Part 233 Signal System Reporting Requirements							
233.5—Accidents resulting from signal failure	150 railroads	1	30 minutes	0.50	$89.13	$44.57	Each carrier shall report to FRA within 24 hours, by toll free telephone number 800-424-0201, after learning of an accident/incident arising from signal failure.
233.7—Signal failure reports—Form FRA F 6180.14 "False Proceed Signal Report"	150 railroads	20	15 minutes	5	$89.13	$445.65	Each carrier shall report within 15 days each signal failure. Form FRA F6180-14, "Signal Failure Report," shall be used and completed in accordance with instructions printed on the form. The form is available electronically.

[2] In this submission, a recent FRA data collection shows approximately 150 railroads, with wayside signaling systems, that must comply with 49 CFR 233.5 and 233.7. When FRA last published a notice in connection with its submission of this ICR (OMB control number 2130-0006), on January 7, 2022, at 87 FR 1003, that notice was based on a Respondent Universe of 754 railroads.

Part 235 Instructions Governing Applications for Approval of a Discontinuance or Material Modification of a Signal System or Relief from the Requirements of Part 236							
235.5—Changes requiring filing of application	117 railroads	8	10	80	$89.13	$7,130.40	Railroads are required to file an application for FRA approval to discontinue or materially modify railroad signal systems
235.8—Relief from the requirements of part 236 of this title	117 railroads	8	10	100	$89.13	$8,913.00	Relief from the requirements of the rules, standards and instructions contained in part 236 of this title will be granted upon an adequate showing by an individual carrier.
235.20—Protests	Railroads, railroad employees, and the public	40	1	40	$89.13	$3,565.20	A protest against the granting of an application may be submitted in writing to FRA as outlined in this section.
Part 236 Rules, Standards, and Instructions Governing the Installation, Inspection, Maintenance, and Repair of Signal and Train Control Systems, Devices, and Appliances.							
236.110—Results of tests	117 railroads	300,000 (paper records) + 636,660 (electronic records)	27 minutes (paper) + 8 minutes (electronic)	219,888.00 hours	$69.79	$15,345,983.52	This paperwork requirement provides that the results of signal system tests required under §§ 236.102 through 109; §§ 236.376 through 387; §§ 236.576 and 577; § 236.586; and §§ 236.588 and 589 be recorded on pre-printed forms provided by the railroad or by electronic means, subject to FRA approval. Note: the burden associated with § 236.917(a) and § 236.587 is covered under OMB Control Number 2130-0553.
236.110(e)—Authorization to use electronic or automated tracking systems for test results	117 railroads	8	80	640	$89.13	$57,043.20	Electronic or automated tracking systems used to meet the requirements contained in paragraph (a) of this section must be capable of being reviewed and monitored by FRA at any time to ensure the integrity of the system. FRA's Associate Administrator for Railroad Safety may prohibit or revoke a railroad's authority to

							utilize an electronic or automated tracking system in lieu of preprinted forms if FRA finds that the electronic or automated tracking system is not properly secured, is inaccessible to FRA, FRA-certified State inspectors, or railroad employees requiring access to discharge their assigned duties or fails to adequately track and monitor the equipment.
236.587—Departure test	*The burden for this requirement is covered under OMB Control Number 2130-0553.*						
236.590—Pneumatic apparatus	42 railroads	6,697	5/60	558.08	$80.38	$44,858.47	This paperwork requirement provides that railroads must clean and inspect the automatic train stop, train control, or cab signal pneumatic apparatus on locomotives and then record the results of the inspection as required by § 229.29(a).
Total[3]	150 railroads	943,444 responses	N/A	221,312 hours		$15,467,984	

13. Estimate of total annual costs to respondents.

There is no additional cost burden to respondents beyond the burden listed in FRA's answer to question number 12.

14. Estimate of cost to Federal Government.

To calculate the Federal Government administrative cost, the 2024 Office of Personnel Management (OPM)[4] wage rates were used. Wages were considered at the burdened wage rate by multiplying the actual wage rate by an overhead cost of 75 percent. The following table shows the estimated average annual cost to the Federal Government to review all the required documents associated with this rule.

[3] Totals may not sum due to rounding.
[4] General Schedule (GS) Pay Calculator - By FederalPay.org.

Resources/Tasks	Pay Grade/Step	Burdened Hourly Wage (Hourly wage rate*75%)	Hours per Call	Annual Frequency	Total Annual Hours	Total Annual Cost
233.5—Accidents resulting from signal failure—Telephone report to FRA						
Analyst	GS-13/5	$112.11	1	1	1	$112.11
Signal, Train Control and Crossing Division Specialist	GS-14/5	$132.48	0.5	1	0.5	$66.24
Subtotal					**1.5**	**$178.34**
233.7—Signal failure reports—Form FRA F 6180.14 "False Proceed Signal Report"						
Signal, Train Control and Crossing Division District Specialist	GS-13/5	$112.11	8	20	160	$17,936.80
Signal, Train Control and Crossing Division Inspector	GS-12/5	$94.27	60	20	1200	$113,127.00
Signal, Train Control and Crossing Division Specialist	GS-14/5	$132.48	8	20	160	$21,196.00
Subtotal					**1,520.00**	**$152,259.80**
235.5—Changes requiring filing of application—Signal systems						
Signal, Train Control and Crossing Division Inspector	GS-12/5	$94.27	80	8	640	$754.18
Analyst	GS-12/5	$94.27	4	8	32	$754.18
Contractor		$100.00	8	8	64	$800.00
Signal, Train Control and Crossing Division District Specialist	GS-13/5	$112.11	12	8	96	$896.84
Signal, Train Control and Crossing Division Specialist	GS-14/5	$132.48	24	8	192	$1,059.80
Travel Expenses (3 x GS employees @ $3000 per traveler per trip)			$9,000	8		$72,000.00
Subtotal					**1,024.00**	**$76,265.00**
235.8—Relief from the requirements of part 236 of this title—Request to FRA						
Signal, Train Control and Crossing Division Inspector	GS-12/5	$94.27	80	8	640	$60,334.40
Analyst	GS-12/5	$94.27	4	8	32	$3,016.72
Contractor		$100.00	8	8	64	$6,400.00
Signal, Train Control and Crossing Division District Specialist	GS-13/5	$112.11	12	8	96	$10,762.08
Signal and Train Control Specialist	GS-14/5	$132.48	24	8	192	$25,435.20
Travel Expenses (3 x GS employees @ $3000 per traveler per trip)			$9000	8		$72,000.00
Subtotal					**1,024.00**	**$177,948.40**

235.20—Protests—Protestant shall file with FRA against the granting of an application						
Signal, Train Control and Crossing Division Specialist	GS-14/5	$132.48	4	40	160	$21,196.00
Subtotal					**160**	**$21,196.00**
236.110—Authorization to use electronic or automated tracking systems for test results.						
Signal, Train Control and Crossing Division Specialist	GS-14/5	$132.48	80	8	640	$84,787.20
Subtotal					**640**	**$84,787.20**
Total Annual Cost to the Government					**4,209.50**	**$512,634.74**

15. <u>Explanation of program changes and adjustments</u>.

This is an extension without change (with changes in estimates) to a current collection of information. The current OMB inventory for this information collection shows a total burden of 222,747 hours and 943,412 responses, while the requesting inventory estimates a total burden of 221,312 hours and 943,444 responses. Overall, the burden for this submission has decreased by 1,435 hours and increased by 32 responses. There is no change in the method of the collection. The adjustments made are detailed in the table below.

CFR Section	Current Annual Responses	Requested Annual Responses	Difference	Current Burden Hours	Requested Burden Hours	Difference	Analyses
Part 233 Signal System Reporting Requirements							
233.7—Signal failure reports—Form FRA F 6180.14 "False Proceed Signal Report"	10	20	10	2.50	5	2.50	FRA SMEs determined based on data from the previous three years that the number of forms submitted annually has increased. The increase in burden more accurately reflects the burden hours associated with this PRA requirement.
Part 235 Instructions Governing Applications for Approval of a Discontinuance or Material Modification of a Signal System or Relief from the Requirements of Part 236							
235.5—Changes requiring filing of application	24	8	-16	240	80	-160	The Asset Inventory Railroad System (AIRS) reflects 117 railroads that this section applies to. Data has shown that the

							number of requests under this section has come down over the last three years.
235.20—Protests	10	40	30	5	40	35	FRA has increased partnerships and interactions with rail labor organizations and changed FRA's Safety Board process. This has resulted in an increase of 50% in submissions under this section over the last three years. The average time for each submission increased from 30 minutes to one (1) hour to reflect more accurately the time spent preparing and submitting these requests.
Part 236 Rules, Standards, and Instructions Governing the Installation, Inspection, Maintenance, and Repair of Signal and Train Control Systems, Devices, and Appliances.							
236.110(e)—Authorization to use electronic or automated tracking systems for test results	0	8	8	0	640	640	The PRA burden under this section was not previously captured and has been added with this submission. Railroads must submit a written request to the Associate Administrator for Railroad Safety to use an electronic recordkeeping system. This is a time- and labor-intensive process to gather documentation, prepare, and submit the request.
236.590—Pneumatic apparatus	6,697	6,697	0	2,511.38	558.08	-1,953.30	The average time per response has changed from 22.5 to 5 minutes. The daily test of pneumatic apparatus has changed since 1984 and there are now exceptions that allow a 92-day inspection interval if certain parameters are met. Some railroads have also obtained FRA's Safety Board approval to remove these systems.
Total[5]	943,412 responses	943,444 responses	32	222,747	221,312	-1,435	

16. Publication of results of data collection.

[5] Totals may not add up due to rounding.

FRA does not plan to tabulate or publish the responses.

17. Approval for not displaying the expiration date for OMB approval.

FRA will be displaying the expiration date.

18. Exception to certification statement.

No exceptions are taken at this time.