

**Supporting Statement
for
Voyage Planning for Tank Barge Transits in the Northeast United States**

OMB No.: 1625-0088
COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS: Instruction

A. Justification.

1) Circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.

A permanent regulated navigation area (RNA) is established within the geographic boundaries of the First Coast Guard District (northeast region of the U.S.) to increase the operational safety of towing vessels and tank barges. The information collection requirements described in this supporting statement are necessary to comply with 33 CFR 165.100(d)(3). The U.S. Coast Guard requires any owner or operator of a towing vessel, which is engaged in towing a tank barge, to prepare a written voyage plan prior to departure.

These recordkeeping requirements are largely consistent with good commercial practices and the dictates of good seamanship for safe navigation. Furthermore, the voyage plan provides a mechanism for assisting Masters of towing vessels in identifying those specific risks, potential equipment failures, or human errors that may lead to an incident. Without an information collection, there would be reduced means for the owner or operator of a towing vessel to be held accountable for adequate navigational practices.

The statutory authority is 46 U.S. Code 70034.

2) Purpose of the information collection.

Accidents sometimes occur because towing vessels lack appropriate voyage planning. The information collection aids safe passage by ensuring that the crew will properly plan for the anticipated voyage. The Master of the towing vessel that is engaged in towing a tank barge will develop the content of the voyage plan prior to the voyage. The Master is also responsible for ensuring that the voyage plan is followed, or, if deviations from the plan are made during the voyage, that the plan is modified to a safe and appropriate alternative. The voyage plan must be in written or electronic form, be retained onboard the vessel, and be readily available to the Coast Guard upon request. Voyage plans also serve as a means for Coast Guard inspectors/investigators to determine if a vessel is in compliance or, in the case of a casualty, whether failure to meet this regulation contributed to the casualty.

3) Consideration of the use of improved information technology.

This requirement does not restrict the voyage plan to paper format. Electronic files are allowed and would reduce the physical volume of records on the vessel. We estimate that 75% of respondents maintain their voyage plans electronically.

Regarding Usability Testing, this ICR—

- Public-facing instructions were tested by the staff of the CG Office of Standards Evaluation and Development (CG-REG) to ensure the use of plain language. Usability testing participants reported that they had no difficulty understanding the instructions. As a result, the USCG did not make any changes to the collection.
- Is not related to a public benefit program as detailed in OMB M-22-10 (titled “Improving Access to Public Benefits Programs Through the Paperwork Reduction Act” dated April 13, 2022).
- Does have a reporting requirement.
- Does not require the use of a form.
- Is required by international treaty, statute, and/or regulation as noted in section 1 of the Supporting Statement.

4) Efforts to identify duplication.

There are no State or local regulations relating to this issue. No similar information collection is conducted by other Federal agencies.

5) Methods to minimize the burden to small businesses if involved.

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

6) Consequences to the Federal program if collection were conducted less frequently.

If the collection was conducted less frequently, compliance with the voyage plan requirement may not be verifiable. Although the Coast Guard believes that most prudent operators already employ many of these safety principles, the regulations ensure compliance by those vessels not conforming to the safety practices of the majority of the industry.

7) Special collection circumstances.

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

8) Consultation.

A 60-day Notice was published in the Federal Register to obtain public comment on this collection (See [USCG-2024-0438]; October 31, 2024, 89 FR 86833) and 30-Day Notice (March 10, 2025, 90 FR 11617) were published in the Federal Register to obtain public comment on this collection. The Coast Guard has not received any comments on this information collection.

9) Provide any payments or gifts to respondents.

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

10) Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents.

There are no assurances of confidentiality provided to the respondents for this information collection. This information collection request is covered by the Marine Information for Safety and Law Enforcement (MISLE) Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA). The link to the MISLE PIA is provided below:

- https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/privacy_pia_uscg_misle.pdf

11) Additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature.

There are no questions of sensitive language.

12) Estimates of hour and cost burdens to respondents.

- The estimated number of annual respondents is 3,088.
- The estimated number of annual responses is 3,088.
- The estimated hour burden is 1,544 hours.
- The estimated cost burden is \$109,624.

The burden to respondents is in Appendix A. We estimate that it will take the Master of the towing vessel about 0.5 hour to prepare a voyage plan. For the wage rate, we used the Bureau of Labor Statistics

(BLS) wage rate for Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels (53-5021) [May 2023, mean hourly wage, loaded 50%, and rounded].¹

We estimate the number of voyage plans (i.e., voyages) based on U.S. Army Corp of Engineers data.² We assume that a certain percentage of voyages are petroleum-laden. Additionally, we assume that a certain percentage of voyage plans would be developed without this regulation (i.e., voluntarily compliance). To estimate the number of voyage plans for this collection, we multiply the estimated annual number of voyages times the percentage of voyages that are petroleum-laden times the required compliance percentage to obtain the number of required voyage plans.

13) Estimates of annualized capital and start-up costs.

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

14) Estimates of annualized Federal Government costs.

The estimated annual Federal Government cost is \$890 (see Appendix B). The cost is based on Coast Guard personnel reviews of the voyage plans during periodic inspections, random boardings, and post-casualty investigations. We estimate 100 reviews per year, conducted by a Lieutenant (LT, O-3) at 6 minutes (0.1 hours) per review. For the wage rate, we used the current edition of COMDTINST 7310.1(series) for "In-Government" personnel.

15) Explain the reasons for the change in burden.

The change in burden is an ADJUSTMENT due to a change (i.e., increase) in the estimated annual number of respondents. There is no proposed change to the recordkeeping requirements of this collection. The recordkeeping requirements, and the methodology for calculating burden, remain unchanged.

16) Plans for tabulation, statistical analysis, and publication.

This information collection will not be published for statistical purposes.

17) Approval to not display expiration date.

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

18) Explain each exception to the certification statement.

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

B. Collection of Information Employing Statistical Method.

This information collection does not employ statistical methods.

¹ <https://www.bls.gov/oes/2023/may/oes535021.htm>

² Waterborne Commerce of the United States, Calendar Years 2020, 2021 & 2022, for selected ports in the New England District and New York, NY District.