FINAL SUPPORTING STATEMENT
FOR
VISITOR ACCESS REQUEST SYSTEM (VARS)

(3150-XXXX)
NEW

Description of the Information Collection

The Visitor Access Request System (VARS), a module within the Space and Property Management System (SPMS), is an internal self-service portal used by Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) employees and contractors to register visitors requesting physical access to NRC facilities. These include the White Flint Campus, and Regional Offices. To complete a visitor registration in VARS, the following information must be provided: the visitor's full name, company or agency affiliation, dates of the visit, NRC point of contact (name and phone number), visit location, and country of nationality. Upon arrival at an NRC facility, visitors must present a valid government-issued photo ID—such as a driver's license or passport—for identity verification and security screening. A temporary visitor badge will then be issued for the duration of their visit.

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Need For the Collection of Information

    VARS is designed to ensure that security protocols are properly implemented during visits to NRC facilities. Its primary objective is to control access so that only authorized individuals may enter NRC spaces, thereby safeguarding personnel, infrastructure, and sensitive information. VARS supports access control by identifying, tracking, and scheduling visitors. It collects essential data including visitor names, contact details, country of nationality, vehicle information, and the dates and times of arrival and departure. For visits involving classified meetings, VARS also records the visitor's security clearance level to ensure that only appropriately cleared individuals are permitted to attend.

    In accordance with NRC policy, visitor records are retained in the VARS database for seven years. Additionally, scanned copies of government-issued identification —such as driver's licenses or passports—are stored for 30 days to support identity verification and enhance security posture. These practices align with Federal physical security guidance, including the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Interagency Security Committee (ISC) standard: "Facility Security Level (FSL) Determinations for Federal Facilities" and the ISC's "Physical Security Criteria for Federal Facilities", which outline requirements for access control, visitor management, and the handling of foreign national access.

2. Agency Use and Practical Utility of Information

The practical utility of this information lies in its use to:

- Confirm visitor identity and eligibility for facility access;
- Facilitate security screenings and inspections;
- Notify NRC staff of scheduled visitors;
- Track visitor movement for safety, emergency response, and incident investigation purposes; and
- Ensure compliance with NRC and Federal security requirements, including those outlined by the DHS Interagency Security Committee (ISC) standards on Visitor Access Control and Facility Security Level (FSL) determinations.

Together, this data collection process enables effective visitor management while ensuring the protection of NRC personnel, infrastructure, and information.

3. Reduction of Burden Through Information Technology

The requested information is submitted 100 percent electronically, using an internal on-line portal. The information is provided by the visitor, and it is entered into the system by an NRC employee or contractor.

4. Effort to Identify Duplication and Use Similar Information

No sources of similar information are available. There is no duplication of requirements.

5. Effort to Reduce Small Business Burden

Not applicable.

6. Consequences to Federal Program or Policy Activities if the Collection Is Not Conducted or Is Conducted Less Frequently

If a visitor is not registered in advance, they will not be permitted to enter NRC facilities. The information collected during the registration process represents the minimum necessary data required to verify a visitor's identity and ensure the safety and security of NRC personnel, facilities, and sensitive assets.

This information is collected once per visit to provide real-time awareness of who is accessing NRC spaces and for how long. Reducing the frequency of collection would compromise the agency's ability to maintain accurate access records and perform effective security screening.

These compliance measures ensure that NRC access control practices meet Federal standards for protecting critical infrastructure and personnel.

7. Circumstances Which Justify Variation from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Guidelines

Not applicable.

8. Consultations Outside the NRC

Opportunity for public comment on the information collection requirements for this clearance package was published in the Federal Register on September 17, 2024 (89 FR 76157). As part of the consultation process, six NRC employees who frequently use VARS were contacted via email. No comments were received from the potential respondents regarding these consultations.

9. Payment or Gift to Respondents

    Not applicable.

10. Confidentiality of Information

    Information collected is protected by NRC System of Records, NRC-40, "Facility Security Access Control Records."

    Confidential and proprietary information is protected in accordance with NRC regulations at 10 CFR 9.17(a) and 10 CFR 2.390(b).

11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

    Not applicable.

12. Estimated Burden and Burden Hour Cost

    The NRC has approximately 750 visitor registrations annually. Each registration takes approximately 2 minutes per visitor (or 25 hours per year) at a cost of $7,925/year (25 hours x $317 per hour).

    The $317 hourly rate used in the burden estimates is based on the NRC's fee for hourly rates as noted in 10 CFR 170.20 "Average cost per professional staff-hour." For more information on the basis of this rate, see the Revision of Fee Schedules; Fee Recovery for fiscal year 2024 (89 FR 51789, June 20, 2024).

13. Estimate of Other Additional Costs

    There are no additional costs.

14. Estimated Annualized Cost to the Federal Government

    The NRC staff spends approximately 2 minutes per visitor to enter registrations in VARS, at a cost of $7,925 (2 minutes x 750 visitors x $317 per hour). In addition, the agency spends an estimated $1,075 on printing materials (temporary badges for visitors). The total annual estimated cost to the Federal Government is $9,000 ($7,925 + $1,075).

15. Reasons for Change in Burden or Cost

    This is a request for a new clearance.

16. Publication for Statistical Use

Collection of information is not used for statistical use.

17. Reason for Not Displaying the Expiration Date

An expiration date will be displayed.

18. Exceptions to the Certification Statement

There are no exceptions.

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

Not applicable. No statistical method is used.