

**Supporting Statement
for
Request for Designation and Exemption of Oceanographic Research Vessels**

OMB No.: 1625-0014
COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS: Instruction

A. Justification

1) Circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.

This data collection is necessary for the designation of Oceanographic Research Vessels (ORV). According to 46 U.S. Code (U.S.C.) 2113, 46 CFR 3.10, and 46 CFR 14.403, oceanographic vessels may be exempted from the statute and regulations governing the shipment, discharge, payment and personal outfitting of merchant seamen.

Section 2113 of 46 U.S.C. also provides the Secretary of Homeland Security with the authority to exempt certain vessels from the inspection and manning requirements of law when vessels are engaged in oceanographic research. It also contains flexible exemption authority for regulation of ORVs.

According to 46 CFR Section 3.10-1, an individual can submit a written request to the Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection (OCMI) seeking a vessel be designated as an ORV. At a minimum, the following information must be submitted during the initial request: 1) a detailed description of the vessel, including its identification number, owner and charterer; 2) a specific operating plan stating precisely the intended use of the vessel; and 3) any additional information as may be requested by the OCMI. According to 46 CFR 3.10-5, at least 60 days prior to the expiration date of the Letter of Designation or Certificate of Inspection, a request for renewal must be submitted in the same manner as above.

According to 46 CFR 14.403, certain requirements of 46 U.S.C. do not apply to the employment of merchant mariners on ORVs. Those requirements include concerns for the shipment and discharge of mariners, their pay and allotments, and the adequacy of their clothing. According to 46 CFR 14.405, an individual in charge of an ORV may submit a written request to the OCMI seeking an exemption. The request must state: 1) any requirement of any section listed in 46 CFR 14.403(b) from which the applicant wishes an exemption; and 2) what business practices regarding, among other things, the shipment and discharge of merchant mariners, their pay and allotments, and the adequacy of their clothing would justify the exemption.

The statutory authority is 46 U.S.C. 2113.

2) Purpose of the information collection.

This information is used by the OCMI to determine: 1) if a vessel can be designated as an ORV; and 2) can be exempted from specific inspection and/or manning requirements. [According to 46 CFR 3.05-3, an ORV is a vessel which the U.S. Coast Guard finds is employed exclusively in one or more of the following: a) oceanographic instruction, b) limnologic instruction, c) oceanographic research, or d) limnologic research.]

An ORV may be inspected or uninspected. If uninspected, it receives a Letter of Designation; if inspected, its designation appears on its Certificate of Inspection. A Letter of Designation is valid for two years and a Certificate of Inspection is valid for five years.

3) Consideration of the use of improved information technology.

There is no specific CG form that must be completed for the request and the content of a request can vary. Requests for ORV designation can be mailed, faxed or electronically submitted via e-mail to the OCMI. A list of Coast Guard sectors, as part of a comprehensive list of Coast Guard units, can be found

at: <https://www.uscg.mil/Units/Organization/>.

We estimate that 100% of the reporting requirements can be done electronically. At this time, we estimate that approximately 75% of the responses are collected 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. No changes were needed.
- 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).
- Is voluntary.

4) Efforts to identify duplication.

The Coast Guard may hold information regarding the physical description of the vessels concerned. Consequently, if a vessel renews its Letter of Designation or Certificate of Inspection, it does not have to duplicate its physical description unless changes have been made.

With the partial exception of certain inspected vessels, the information necessary to allow designation of ORVs and their exemption(s) from certain requirements is not generated elsewhere.

5) Methods used to minimize the burdens to small business 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.

The initial written request for a vessel to receive the designation of ORV and corresponding exemptions is voluntary. Once designated, an uninspected vessel, on average, must renew its designation every two years, and an inspected vessel every five years.

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 will be published in the *Federal Register* to obtain public comment on this 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) and System of Records Notice (SORN). Links to the MISLE PIA and SORN are provided below:

- https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/privacy_pia_uscg_misle.pdf
- <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2009-06-25/html/E9-14906.htm>

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

There are no questions of sensitive language.

12) Estimate of hour and cost burdens to respondents.

- The estimated annual number of respondents is 37.
- The estimated annual number of responses is 37.
- The estimated annual hour burden is 37 hours.
- The estimated annual cost burden is \$2,775.

The burden to respondents is provided in Appendix A. We estimate that it will take a Technical Specialist about 1 hour to prepare an ORV designation request. For the wage rate, we used the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) wage rate for Geoscientists, Except Hydrologists and Geographers (19-2042) [May 2023, mean hourly wage, loaded 50%, and rounded].¹

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 \$1,482 (see Appendix B). We estimate that it will take Coast Guard Technical Specialist an average of 0.5 hours to process and complete each ORV designation request, and that the task is performed by a GS-12. For the wage rate, we used Office of Personnel Management (OPM) data [2024-RUS Salary Table, GS-12-Step 5, hourly basic rate, loaded 65%, and rounded].²

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 responses. There is no proposed change to the reporting or recordkeeping requirements of this collection. The reporting and 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 Methods

The collection of information does not employ statistical methods.

¹ <https://www.bls.gov/oes/2023/may/oes192042.htm>

² https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/pdf/2024/RUS_h.pdf

Appendix A: Total Estimated Annual Burden on Industry*Reporting and recordkeeping*

Category	Respondents (& responses)	Burden Hours / Response	Annual Hour Burden	Wage Rate	Annual Cost Burden
ORV designation requests	37	1	37	\$75	\$2,775
Totals	37		37		\$2,775

*Estimates may not sum due to rounding

Total

Total Respondents	37
Total Responses	37
Total Hour Burden	37
Total Cost Burden	\$2,775

Appendix B: Estimated Annual Federal Government Cost

Category	Responses	Hours / Response	Annual Hours	Wage Rate	Annual Cost
ORV designation requests	37	0.5	19	\$78	\$1,482
Totals					\$1,482

*Estimates may not sum due to rounding

Total

Total Cost	\$1,482
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