

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

B. Collection of Information Employing Statistical Methods

1. Describe the Survey Procedures.

This data collection does not involve a survey or a sample. It involves passive reporting of qualifying close call events on a voluntary basis. Unlike a survey where all respondents are expected to respond, BTS will receive a close call report only if and when an employee experiences a close call and the affected employee decides to report it. More than one person may be eligible to provide a report for a close call incident. All incidents that meet the definition of a close call, as stated in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by UP, NJT, FRA and BTS, are included in the scope of this data collection. All yard and rail employees at the North Platte facility of UP and NJT employees (including NJT managers), an estimated total of 3,100, are included in the C³RS demonstration project and will be eligible to submit close call reports to BTS whenever they experience a qualifying event. Based on previous experience with close call reporting in railroad yards, BTS is expecting to receive no more than 365 reports per year. Since the departure of Canadian Pacific from the project, BTS has been receiving approximately one report per day.

The data collection should have no coverage bias as every employee eligible to report will receive training on how to report close calls to BTS. In addition to electronic reporting, BTS will continue to accept paper reports in an effort to facilitate reporting of close calls by employees with limited internet access. However, it takes employees several months to become comfortable with and build enough trust in a program that involves confidential reporting of potentially incriminating events. This is especially true with new hires. And, since there is increased hiring of new employees at all locations, initially, BTS does not expect to receive a representative sample of all close calls events occurring at both pilot sites. As confidence in this program grows, the reporting of close calls will become more representative of true close calls in rail operations.

The primary goal of this data collection effort is to provide accurate information on the feasibility of establishing an industry-wide, voluntary, close call reporting program. A secondary goal is to better understand key factors to consider in developing an implementation plan for such program.

2. Description of procedures for the collection of information.

There is no sample selection for this data collection. Theoretically, the C³RS will contain a census of all valid close calls that took place in the pilot sites during the duration of the C³RS demonstration project. However, since this data collection is completely voluntary, it will be difficult to ascertain the size of the true population of close calls in the test facilities. Given the

design of this study, we know that we don't have a representative sample of the universe of close calls; however, the reported data are still useful in our understanding of the nature of close calls without making overall inferences.

3. Describe the methods to maximize response rates, and describe how the Department deals with non-responses.

Steps have been taken to increase employee and carrier participation to this voluntary demonstration project. Those include:

1. Strong support from local management and local union leadership for the project,
2. BTS participation to assure data confidentiality,
3. For employees: protection from carrier discipline and/or decertification and FRA enforcement, if they report an event within 48 hours after its occurrence, and
4. For participating carriers/pilot sites: protection from FRA enforcement potentially arising from reported events.

4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods undertaken.

The C³RS reporting form is comprised of a number of demographic data fields (name, address, phone number, location, time of event, weather conditions, etc.) and a comment field for the employees to describe the close call event in their own words. The C³RS reporting form was pilot tested by two individuals at the North Platte facility. Completion time was reported to range between fifteen and twenty minutes. The form has been constructed based on expert input from FRA staff, UP management, and employees with UP and NJT. Similarly, the interview tool was developed using expert input from FRA, UP, NJT, and BTS. Interview time ranges from 20 to 40 minutes.

5. Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on the statistical aspects of the design and the name of the agency unit, contractor grantee, or other persons who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.

The team involved in the development of the C³RS data warehouse and data analysis is as follows:

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Statistical expert, confidentiality officer, and project manager at the Bureau of Transportation Statistics – involved in providing project management, data processing, and data analysis.

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Senior manager at MacroSys -- prime contractor for the development and staffing of the Confidential Close Calls Reporting System.