

**Department of Transportation
Maritime Administration
Information Collection Request (ICR)
OMB 2133-0550**

**Maritime Administration (MARAD) Mariner Preparedness Exercise (PrepEx) Survey
(MARAD Mariner PrepEx Survey) [Maritime Administration Exercise Breakout Survey
(MARAD Exercise Breakout Survey)]**

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

This submission is to request a three-year approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for the information collection entitled OMB 2133-0550 (Maritime Administration Exercise Breakout Survey) (MARAD Exercise Breakout Survey), which expires December 31, 2025. The survey will be renamed Maritime Administration (MARAD) Mariner Preparedness Exercise (PrepEx) Survey (MARAD Mariner PrepEx Survey) to reflect the new name of the exercise program, which includes this survey. A minor change will be made to survey questions 1 and 2, in order to extend the modes of communication that may be restricted when serving as a crewmember on a cargo ship, in support of Department of Defense missions. Therefore, this collection will be submitted as *an extension with change of a current collection*.

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Circumstances Making the Collection of Information Necessary

The Maritime Administration (MARAD) Mariner Preparedness Exercise (PrepEx) Survey (Mariner PrepEx Survey) is a component of the annual Maritime Administration (MARAD) Mariner Preparedness Exercise (PrepEx) program, which satisfies the U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) Strategic Sealift Program Guidance requirement to assess merchant mariner preparedness. The survey is completed by merchant mariners on a voluntary basis and provides vital information to the MARAD Ready Reserve Force (RRF) Program. The survey is designed to test MARAD's internal administrative procedures and coordination necessary for a mass activation of the RRF to meet strategic sealift requirements. Periodic testing is necessary in view of the dynamics that affect the RRF program, which include changes in RRF fleet composition, readiness status, ship location, and changes to the seafaring manpower base.

This information collection supports the Department of Transportation's Strategic Goal of providing for the National Security of the country by providing surge sealift capabilities. Per 49 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) Section (§)1.92 (a), [the Maritime Administration is responsible for] "fostering the development and maintenance of the United States merchant marine sufficient to meet the needs of the national security and of the domestic and foreign commerce of the United States."

2. Purpose and Use of the Information Collection

The Mariner PrepEx is an annual assessment of the capability of ship managers to meet contract crew requirements during RRF activations. The Crewing Drill component of this exercise requires ship managers and their supporting maritime labor unions to identify qualified and available merchant mariners to fill all contract-required crew billets during a simulated activation of the entire RRF. The mariners identified to fill the RRF billets are considered potential respondents for this Mariner PrepEx Survey. Merchant mariners volunteer their names and contact information to their labor unions, which allows the Exercise Coordinator to send each of them an email link to the web-based Mariner Survey.

The Mariner PrepEx Survey is intended to gauge each mariner's training, military experience levels, willingness to participate in time of national need, and awareness of working in a contested maritime environment.

To make it convenient for the mariner to participate, MARAD sends a link to the web-based Mariner PrepEx Survey (using Microsoft Forms), using the mariner's email address provided by the ship managers as part of the Mariner PrepEx Crewing Drill. The web-based survey allows participants to access and complete the survey from their mobile phone or personal computer. The responses collected will be analyzed by MARAD and reported in the annual Mariner PrepEx Final Report.

The results of the Mariner PrepEx Survey will help to formulate mariner training and RRF ship activation training policies. This survey will only be sent to the mariners that have submitted their contact information to their labor union. The survey responses are submitted voluntarily and will be anonymous. This survey is not open to the public or mariners outside of the annual Crewing Drill portion of the Mariner PrepEx.

3. Automation or Use of Information Technology (IT)

The Mariner PrepEx Survey is a simple, eighteen-question survey with multiple-choice options, and a final question for participants to provide comments or concerns related to crewing RRF ships. The survey is fully electronic and operated on the Microsoft Forms platform. A link to the survey is emailed to the mariners listed on crew lists provided by the ship managers, as part of the Crewing Drill portion of the Mariner PrepEx Program. The Microsoft Forms application provides respondents with the mean to complete the survey quickly and easily from the convenience of their personal mobile phone or computer. This web-based survey allows the Exercise Coordinator to easily tally submitted responses.

4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

The Mariner PrepEx Survey is the only way to collect the needed information directly from mariners. Participant email addresses will be validated in order to verify that no survey responses are duplicated. Information collected through this survey is not

otherwise accessible or available through MARAD or the United States Coast Guard.

5. Impact on Small Businesses or Other Small Entities

This survey does not impact small businesses or other small entities.

6. Impact of Not Conducting or Less Frequent Collection of Information

The Mariner PrepEx Survey is a manifestation of MARAD's desire to gauge the willingness of the mariners to participate in an activation of the entire MARAD RRF in a time of critical need. Without the survey, MARAD would lack the ability to determine merchant mariner's willingness to crew RRF ships during times of national emergency and the mariner's level of familiarity with military operations.

7. Special Circumstances Relating to the Guidelines 5 CFR 1320.5

There are no special reporting requirements from the responder. This is a multiple option, voluntary survey that is conducted annually. The information will be tabulated using simple statistical techniques.

There are no other special circumstances that would cause collection of data in a manner such as those outlined below:

- Requiring respondents to prepare a written response in fewer than 30 days after receipt of a collection instrument;
- Requiring respondents to submit more than one original copy of any document;
- Requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records for more than three years;
- Requiring the use of any statistical data that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study;
- Requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB;
- Requiring any pledge of confidentiality; or
- Requiring respondents to submit any proprietary or trade secrets.

8. Public Comments in Response to the Federal Register Notice and Outside Consultation

MARAD published a 60-day notice and request for comments on this information collection in the Federal Register (FR 47899, Vol 90, No. 189) on October 2, 2025, indicating comments should be submitted on or before December 1, 2025. One non-substantive comment commending the minor changes and encouraging reconsideration of the reported burden, received a response. A 30-day notice (FR 60234, Vol. 90, No. 244) was published in the Federal Register on December 23, 2025, to solicit public comments.

The Mariner PrepEx Survey is a component of the larger Mariner PrepEx program, which is coordinated annually with USTRANSCOM. MARAD has consultations

about this survey and other components of the PrepEx program during all stages of these activities with USTRANSCOM, ship management companies, and maritime labor union representatives.

9. Explanation of Any Payments or Gifts to Respondents

There are no gifts or payments to the respondents.

10. Assurance of Confidentiality and Protection of Privacy

The survey is voluntary, and the results are aggregated for use. Collected data is only available to the exercise coordinator, who excludes any identifying information in the results summarized in the PrepEx Final Report.

11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

There are no questions of a sensitive nature or any that require the submission of personal information.

12. Estimate of Annualized Burden Hours and Cost

a. Estimated Annualized Burden Hours

A link to access the survey will be sent to as many as 1,750 mariners, who provide their email information to their labor unions and respective ship managers. No documentation is required, and the survey can be completed and submitted using a mobile phone or personal computer. Each respondent will answer once annually to the survey and will take on average 5 minutes (.0833 hours) to complete the survey. This estimate is based on the average time taken for respondents to complete the survey in 2025. Therefore, the total burden for this collection is 145.83/ 146 hours, which can be calculated as shown in the table below:

Total Respondents		Total Responses per Respondent		Total Responses		Average Time Taken to Respond (Hour)		Total Burden Hours
1,750	*	1	=	1,750	*	0.0833333 (5 minutes)	=	145.83/ 146

13. Estimate of the Total Annual Cost Burden to Respondents and/or Record Keeper

There are no capital and maintenance cost to respondents.

14. Estimate of Federal Government

There is no cost to the Federal Government to administer the Mariner PrepEx Survey.

The Microsoft Outlook application is used to distribute the survey link to respondents, while the Microsoft Forms application is used to host the electronic survey, tabulate the results, and issue a report on the final survey results. Both applications are available for use by all MARAD personnel in their computer suite. There are no additional costs associated with use of these platforms for the Mariner PrepEx Survey.

15. Explanation of Program Changes or Adjustments

During the most recent administration of this survey in April 2025, 1,463 mariners were needed to crew the 48 ships in the RRF fleet. MARAD anticipates that the RRF fleet will increase from 48 ships (as of July 2025) to 57 ships by the end of FY 2026. Therefore, the number of mariners needed to crew a projected RRF fleet of 57 ships will increase to no more than 1,750. This expected increase in both the RRF fleet size and quantity of mariners needed to crew the additional ships, excludes the five ships that are scheduled for retirement in 2026, since the official retirement date is not yet known.

16. Publication of Data Collection Results

The results of this survey will not be made public. The Mariner PrepEx Survey will be administered as part of the Crewing Drill portion of the Mariner PrepEx, typically in the second quarter of the fiscal year. A summary report of the Mariner PrepEx Survey responses will be included in the Crewing Drill Report (a component of the annual Mariner PrepEx final report), typically in the third quarter of the fiscal year. The final report is distributed to MARAD, USTRANSCOM, and the Military Sealift Command leadership.

17. Display of the OMB the Expiration Date

MARAD is not seeking approval to avoid displaying the OMB expiration date for this collection.

18. Exceptions to the Certification Statement

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.