

8/14/2017

We wanted to inform you that the USCG has agreed to a significant enhancement in the NRBSS Participation Survey. Instead of collecting annual 2017 recreational boating participation data (in January and February of 2018) to estimate Recreational Boating Participation for 2017, we will instead be collecting data on a monthly basis beginning in February 2018 continuing until January 2019. This parallels the method that was proposed, and still will be used to collect boating exposure data and estimate boating exposure rates.

There were several reasons that precipitated this augmented method. First, there were real and increasing concerns that anticipated delays in achieving OMB approval would hold up the NRBSS Participation Survey (i.e., proposed to take place in January and February 2018), and possibly even delay the start of the NRBSS Exposure Survey. Rather than accepting this delay the USCG requested that RTI and Dr. Mahoney develop and recommend alternative approaches. The enhanced data collection method was recommended by the grantee, RTI, and also Dr. Ed Mahoney, for a number of important reasons including: (1) collecting data on a monthly basis will reduce recall bias and increase the reliability of the data, especially in cold weather states where boating predominately takes place during the summer months, and therefore the reliability of the participation estimates and, (2) both participation and exposure data and estimates will be produced for the same (reference) year (2018) rather than, as previously proposed/planned, participation data for 2017 and exposure data for 2018. Participation estimates and participant profiles will still be produced on a nation-wide basis and exposure estimates on both a state and national basis.

After, alternative data collection methods were proposed, vetted and a decision was reached by the USCG to approve the monthly collection, a decision was reached by Department of Homeland Security that because the NRBSS Survey, including the design of the methods (e.g., instruments, sampling), administration, analytics and reports was to be performed by the grantee (RTI), in consultation with Dr. Mahoney (MSU), and that the USCG would not be provided the raw data and only reports of the data analytics, OMB approval was not necessary. But, since the enhanced/improved alternative method was already proposed and approved by the USCG, it was decided to continue and implement the alternative method. The grant agreement with RTI has already been revised to reflect the alternative/enhanced method of collecting participation data on a monthly rather than annual basis.

It is important that you know that both RTI and MSU are required to, and they will seek

and gain approval for the research methods, including protecting the privacy of respondents from their Institutional Review Boards (IRB). IRBs are bodies at any research institutions (often universities) that regulates research on human subjects, ensuring that it complies with NIH guidelines (no harm, justice, etc.). The purpose of IRB's is to "protect human subjects (e.g., survey respondents) by reviewing research protocols and related materials. The review of methods evaluates the ethics of the research and its methods." The USCG is also requiring (i.e., specified in the agreement) that the survey methods adhere to the OMB's Standards and Guidelines for Statistical Surveys.

The data from both the monthly NRBSS Participation and Exposure Surveys will still be available to the public on a web site that will be developed by RTI. MSU will also maintain copies of all raw data and cleaned data sets on its secure servers. RTI will also, as previously planned, develop and provide access to a web-based NRBSS Data Query Tool.

As previously agreed RTI has agreed to design and conduct the NRBSS Surveys (Boating Participation Survey, Boating Exposure Survey) in a manner that will produce valid and reliable estimates/findings including the following:

- 1) The number and percentage of persons in the general population that go recreational boating. The Coast Guard will specify what constitutes "going recreational boating". Boating participants include boat owners, borrowers and renters, and guests aboard boats out on the water.
- 2) Socio-economic profile of persons that go boating (e.g., age, race, marital/family status, income).
- 3) The average and total annual number of days that persons of various socio-economic segments (e.g., age) go recreational boating.
- 4) Activities (e.g., fishing, skiing) engaged in while boating (per boat type, size).
- 5) The number and characteristics (e.g., age, gender, experience, boating safety training) of persons that regularly operate boats of different types and sizes, meaning persons that are in charge or in control (e.g., steering, maneuvering) of a boat when the boat is out on the water.
- 6) The total number of registered, documented and (legally) unregistered recreational boats of different types and sizes owned in all states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.
- 7) The number and percentage of boat-owning households by boat type and size; i.e., the average number of boats owned per household;
- 8) The number and percentage of recreational boats by type and size that are used out on the water (not at the dock). The Coast Guard will define what specifically constitutes boat use out on the water.
- 9) The (average) number of days that boats by type and size are used out on the water (not at the dock); (i.e., boat-days).

- 10) The number and percentage of boats by type and size used on specific water bodies. The Coast Guard will decide on the list of the water bodies.
- 11) The (average) number of hours' boats by type and size are used on days when they are in use out on the water (not at the dock); (i.e., boat-hours).
- 12) The number and percentage of boats by type and size used in states other than the state where they are registered or primarily kept, how much use (days and hours) in these other states, and the number of persons aboard when used in other states.
- 13) The percentage and number of households that own: only registered or documented boats, only non-registered and non-documented boats, and both registered and non-registered boats.
- 14) The percentage and number of households owning various combination of different types of boats (e.g., canoes, kayaks, sailboats, inboards, sterndrives (i/o), outboards, personal watercraft (PWC), rowboats, rafts, and others).
- 15) The total annual number of person-days of recreational boating by boat type and size.
- 16) The total annual number of person-hours of recreational boating by boat type and size.
- 17) The (average) number of boating participants aboard (different type and size) boats on days when boats are in use out on the water (not at the dock).
- 18) The number of boat-person hours (hours the boat is out on the water [not at the dock] multiplied by number of people aboard that boat) by type and size of boats.
- 19) The number of days on boats that are: owned by participant households, owned by persons not residing in their households (e.g., borrowed from family or friends) and, rented (to be operated by the renter).
- 20) State of residence of boat-owning households, and state of boat registration (if registered), or state of boat storage for most of the year (if unregistered or documented) the percentage of boats registered/ kept in states other than the states of owners' residence.
- 21) Recommended (but not required by regulation) safety equipment aboard boats in use out on the water; boats by type and size.
- 22) Where boats are stored/kept (e.g., in water at a marina, on trailer at permanent home) during the boating season; by boat type and size. The Coast Guard will provide the storage types of interest/concern.
- 23) The number and percentage of boats by type and size that are trailered or transported for the purposes of launching them. The number of times they are trailered/ transported and type(s) of launch sites used (e.g., agency provided, USACOE, NOAA).

If you have any questions concerning the enhanced monthly Participation Survey data collection please contact either myself [Donald Kerlin, Donald.J.Kerlin@uscg.mil] or Dr. Ed Mahoney (edmahoneysu@gmail.com)