



DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Occupational Safety and Health Administration

[Docket No. OSHA-2011-0858]

Permit-Required Confined Spaces; Extension of the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Approval of Information Collection (Paperwork) Requirements

AGENCY: Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Labor.

ACTION: Request for public comments.

SUMMARY: OSHA solicits public comments concerning the proposal to extend the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) approval of the information collection requirements contained in the Standard on Permit-Required Confined Spaces.

DATES: Comments must be submitted (postmarked, sent, or received) by [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES:

Electronically: You may submit comments, including attachments, electronically at <http://www.regulations.gov>, the Federal eRulemaking Portal. Follow the instructions online for submitting comments.

Docket: To read or download comments or other material in the docket, go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Documents in the docket are listed in the <http://www.regulations.gov> index; however, some information (e.g., copyrighted material) is not publicly available to read or download through the website. All submissions, including copyrighted material, are available for inspection through the OSHA Docket Office. Contact the OSHA Docket Office for assistance in locating docket submissions.

Instructions: All submissions must include the agency name and the OSHA docket number for this *Federal Register* notice (OSHA-2011-0858). OSHA will place comments and requests to speak, including personal information, in the public docket, which may be available online. Therefore, OSHA cautions interested parties about submitting personal information such as Social Security numbers and birthdates. For further information on submitting comments, see the “Public Participation” heading in the section of this notice titled “**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION.**”

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Seleda Perryman or Theda Kenney, Directorate of Standards and Guidance, OSHA, U.S. Department of Labor, telephone (202) 693-2222.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

The Department of Labor, as part of a continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent (i.e., employer) burden, conducts a preclearance process to provide the public with an opportunity to comment on proposed and continuing information collection requirements in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA) (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)). This program ensures that information is in the desired format, the reporting burden (time and costs) is minimal, the collection instruments are clearly understood, and OSHA’s estimate of the information collection burden is accurate. The Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (OSH Act) (29 U.S.C. 651 et seq.) authorizes information collection by employers as necessary or appropriate for enforcement of the OSH Act, or for developing information regarding the causes and prevention of occupational injuries, illnesses, and accidents (29 U.S.C. 657). The OSH Act also requires OSHA to obtain such information with a minimum burden upon employers, especially those operating small businesses, and to reduce to the maximum

extent feasible unnecessary duplication of effort in obtaining said information (29 U.S.C. 657).

The purpose of the information collection requirements specified in the Permit-Required Confined Spaces Standard (29 CFR 1910.146) is to ensure that employers systematically evaluate the dangers in permit spaces before entry is attempted, and to ensure that adequate measures are taken to make the spaces safe for entry. Section 1910.146(c)(2) requires the employer to post danger signs to inform exposed employees of the existence and location of, and the dangers posed by, permit spaces.

Section 1910.146(c)(4) requires the employer to develop and implement a written “permit-space program” when the employer decides that its employees will enter permit spaces. The written program is to be made available for inspection by employees and their authorized representatives. Section 1910.146(d) provides the employer with the requirements of a permit-required confined space program.

Section 1910.146(c)(5)(i)(E) requires that the determinations and supporting data specified by paragraphs (c)(5)(i)(A), (c)(5)(i)(B), and (c)(5)(i)(C) of this section are documented by the employer and are made available to each employee who enters a permit space or to that employee’s authorized representative.

Under paragraph (c)(5)(ii)(H) of § 1910.146, the employer is required to verify that the space is safe for entry and that the pre-entry measures required by paragraph (c)(5)(ii) of this section have been taken, using a written certification that contains the date, the location of the space, and the signature of the person providing the certification. The certification is to be made before entry and is required to be made available to each employee entering the space or to that employee’s authorized representative.

Section 1910.146(c)(7)(iii) requires the employer to document the basis for determining that all hazards in a permit space have been eliminated using a certification that contains the date, the location of the space, and the signature of the person making

the determination. The certification is to be made available to each employee entering the space or to that employee's authorized representative.

Section 1910.146(c)(8)(i) requires that the employer inform the contractor that the workplace contains permit spaces and that permit space entry is allowed only through compliance with a permit space program meeting the requirements of this section.

Section 1910.146(c)(8)(ii) requires that the employer apprise the contractor of the elements, including the hazards identified and the host employer's experience with the space, that make the space in question a permit space. Section 1910.146(c)(8)(iii) requires that the employer apprise the contractor of any precautions or procedures that the host employer has implemented for the protection of employees in or near permit spaces where contractor personnel will be working. Section 1910.146(c)(8)(v) requires the employer to debrief the contractor at the conclusion of the entry operations regarding the permit space program followed and regarding any hazards confronted or created in permit spaces during entry operations.

Section 1910.146(c)(9)(iii) requires that the contractor inform the host employer of the permit space program that the contractor will follow and of any hazards confronted or created in permit spaces, either through a debriefing or during the entry operation.

Section 1910.146(d)(5)(vi) requires the employer to immediately provide each authorized entrant or that employee's authorized representative with the results of any testing conducted in accord with paragraph (d) of the Standard.

Section 1910.146(d)(14) requires employers to review the permit space program, using the canceled permits retained under paragraph (e)(6) within 1 year after each entry and revise the program as necessary, to ensure that employees participating in entry operations are protected from permit space hazards.

Section 1910.146(e)(1) requires the employer to document the completion of measures required by paragraph (d)(3) by preparing an entry permit before employee

entry is authorized. Paragraph (f) of § 1910.146 specifies the information to be included on the entry permit. Paragraph (e)(3) requires that the employer make the completed permit available at the time of entry to all authorized entrants by posting the permit at the entry portal or by any other equally effective means, so that the entrants can confirm that pre-entry preparations have been completed. Paragraph (e)(6) requires the employer to retain each canceled entry permit for at least one year; any problems encountered during an entry operation must be noted on the pertinent permit so that revisions to the permit space program can be made.

Section 1910.146(g)(4) requires that the employer certify that the training required by paragraphs (g)(1) through (g)(3) has been accomplished by preparing a written certification record.

Section 1910.146(h)(3) requires the employer to ensure that all authorized entrants communicate with the attendant as necessary to enable the attendant to monitor entrant status and to enable the attendant to alert entrants of the need to evacuate the space as required by paragraph (l)(6) of the Standard. Section 1910.146(h)(4) requires the employer to ensure that all authorized entrants alert the attendant whenever the entrant recognizes any warning sign or symptom of exposure to a dangerous situation (paragraph ((h)(4)(i)), or the entrant detects a prohibited condition (paragraph (h)(4)(ii)).

Section 1910.146(i)(5) requires the employer to ensure that each attendant communicate with authorized entrants as necessary to monitor entrant status and to alert entrants of the need to evacuate the space under the conditions specified in paragraphs (i)(6)(i)-(i)(6)(iv) of the Standard. Section 1910.146(i)(7) requires the employer to ensure that the attendant summon rescue and other emergency services as soon as the attendant determines that authorized entrants may need assistance to escape from permit space hazards. Section 1910.146(i)(8) requires that the employer ensure that the attendant warn unauthorized persons that they must stay away from the permit space

(paragraph (i)(8)(i)); advise unauthorized persons that they must exit immediately if they have entered the permit space (paragraph (i)(8)(ii)); and inform authorized entrants and the entry supervisor if unauthorized persons have entered the permit space (paragraph (i)(8)(iii)).

Section 1910.146(j)(2) requires the employer to ensure that each entry supervisor verifies, by checking that the appropriate entries have been made on the permit, that all tests specified by the permit have been conducted and that all procedures and equipment specified by the permit are in place before endorsing the permit and allowing entry to begin.

Section 1910.146(k)(1)(i) requires the employer to evaluate a prospective rescuer's ability to respond to a rescue summons in a timely manner, considering the hazard(s) identified; Section 1910.146(k)(1)(ii) requires the employer to evaluate a prospective rescue service's ability, in terms of proficiency with rescue-related tasks and equipment, to function appropriately while rescuing entrants from the particular permit space or types of permit spaces identified. Section 1910.146(k)(1)(iv) requires that the employer inform each rescue team or service of the hazards they may confront when called on to perform rescue at the site. Section 1910.146(k)(1)(v) requires that the employer provide the rescue team or service selected with access to all permit spaces from which rescue may be necessary so that the rescue service can develop appropriate rescue plans.

Section 1910.146(k)(4) requires that if an injured entrant is exposed to a substance for which a "Material Safety Data Sheet" (MSDS) [now referred to as an SDS (Safety Data Sheet)] or other similar written information is required to be kept at the worksite, that the employer make the MSDS or written information available to the medical facility treating the exposed entrant.

Section 1910.146(l)(1) requires that employers consult with affected employees and their authorized representatives on the development and implementation of all aspects of the permit space program required by paragraph (c). Section 1910.146(l)(2) requires that employers make all information required to be developed by this section available to affected employees and their authorized representatives.

II. Special Issues for Comment

OSHA has a particular interest in comments on the following issues:

- Whether the proposed information collection requirements are necessary for the proper performance of the agency's functions, including whether the information is useful;
- The accuracy of OSHA's estimate of the burden (time and costs) of the information collection requirements, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;
- The quality, utility, and clarity of the information collected; and
- Ways to minimize the burden on employers who must comply—for example, by using automated or other technological information collection and transmission techniques.

III. Proposed Actions

OSHA is requesting an adjustment increase for the information collection requirements of 415,512.80 burden hours (from 1,660,526.00 to 2,076,038.80). The burden hour increase is related to updated data estimates showing an increase in the number of permit space entrants (from 1,471,634 to 1,488,877) and establishments with permit spaces (from 210,281 to 214,994) affected by the Standard. It is also related to the adjustment of the estimated percentage of establishments assumed to incur burden hour costs conducting atmospheric monitoring and testing.

The agency is requesting an increase in capital and operation and maintenance costs of \$14,100.00 (from \$630,900.00 to \$645,000.00) for atmospheric testing and monitoring equipment. This increase is also related to the updated data estimates showing an increase in the number of permit space entrants and establishments with permit spaces affected by the Standard.

The agency will summarize the comments submitted in response to this notice and will include this summary in the request to OMB.

Type of Review: Extension of a currently approved collection.

Title: Permit-Required Confined Spaces.

*OMB Control
_Number:* 1218-0203.

Affected Public: Business or other for-profits.

*Number of
Respondents:* 214,994.

*Frequency of
Responses:* On occasion.

*Total
Responses:* 13,959,314.

*Average Time
per Response:* Varies.

*Estimated Total
Burden Hours:* 2,076,038.80.

*Estimated Cost
(Operation and
Maintenance):* \$645,000.00.

IV. Public Participation – Submission of Comments on this Notice and Internet

Access to Comments and Submissions

You may submit comments in response to this document as follows: (1) Electronically at <http://www.regulations.gov>, which is the Federal eRulemaking Portal; (2) by facsimile (fax); or (3) by hard copy. **Please note:** While OSHA's Docket Office

is continuing to accept and process submissions by regular mail, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Docket Office is closed to the public and not able to receive submissions to the docket by hand, express mail, messenger, and courier service. All comments, attachments, and other material must identify the agency name and the OSHA docket number for the ICR (Docket No. OSHA-2011-0858). You may supplement electronic submissions by uploading document files electronically. If you wish to mail additional materials in reference to an electronic or facsimile submission, you must submit them to the OSHA Docket Office (see the section of this notice titled “**ADDRESSES**”). The additional materials must clearly identify electronic comments by your name, date, and the docket number so that the agency can attach them to your comments.

Due to security procedures, the use of regular mail may cause a significant delay in the receipt of comments.

Comments and submissions are posted without change at <http://www.regulations.gov>. Therefore, OSHA cautions commenters about submitting personal information such as social security numbers and dates of birth. Although all submissions are listed in the <http://www.regulations.gov> index, some information (e.g., copyrighted material) is not publicly available to read or download through this website. All submissions, including copyrighted material, are available for inspection and copying at the OSHA Docket Office. Information on using the <http://www.regulations.gov> website to submit comments and access the docket is available at the website’s “User Tips” link. Contact the OSHA Docket Office at (202) 693–2350, (TTY (877) 889–5627) for information about materials not available through the website, and for assistance in using the internet to locate docket submissions.

V. Authority and Signature

James S. Frederick, Acting Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health, directed the preparation of this notice. The authority for this notice is the

Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3506 et seq.) and Secretary of Labor's
Order No. 1-2012 (77 FR 3912).

Signed at Washington, DC, on June 15, 2021.

James S. Frederick,

Acting Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health.

[FR Doc. 2021-13188 Filed: 6/22/2021 8:45 am; Publication Date: 6/23/2021]