

FINAL SUPPORTING STATEMENT  
FOR  
SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY REPORTING USING THE  
PROTECTED WEB SERVER (PWS)

(3150-0219)

EXTENSION

Description of the Information Collection

The Protected Web Server (PWS) enables the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to fulfill its mission of communicating sensitive information to licensees and developing more formal, long-term relationships with Federal, State, and local organizations—who, along with the NRC, have responsibilities for protecting nuclear facilities and activities and responding to incidents.

Under the PWS program, NRC license holders and applicants that are not required by the new regulation in § 73.1215 to report suspicious activity can voluntarily provide security reports because of various advisories that the NRC issues their licensed entities. Entities that may voluntarily send reports include but are not limited to applicants for Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) Part 50 license, holders of construction permit under 10 CFR Part 50, applicants for 10 CFR Part 52 license, fuel fabrication facilities, uranium conversion/deconversion facilities, and holders of certificates of compliance under 10 CFR Part 72. Each report that the NRC receives provides details about a specific security incident that occurs (e.g., suspicious person, suspicious activity, flyovers) and the actions that the reporting organization is taking to address the incident.

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Need for and Practical Utility of the Collection of Information

The mission of the NRC is to regulate nuclear reactors, materials, and waste facilities in a manner that protects the health and safety of the public, promotes the common defense and security, and protects the environment. Security at nuclear facilities across the country has long been the subject of NRC regulatory oversight.

The terrorist attacks on the U.S. on September 11, 2001, brought to light a new and more immediate threat to our country. All custodians of the Nation's critical infrastructure needed to reconsider decisions made earlier about the adequacy of security at the facilities under their charge. To cope with these changes in the threat environment, the NRC undertook a reassessment of its safeguards and security programs to identify prompt actions and long-term enhancements that would raise the level of security at the nuclear facilities across the country.

The PWS fulfills a valuable need in relation to the Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) Initiative which began in 2008. PWS is the NRC's contribution to this important national initiative to centralize suspicious activity reporting in the interest of assessing national trends across industries and critical infrastructure.

NRC licensees are encouraged to report suspicious activity, as outlined in the 2005 Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) suspicious activity reporting guide<sup>[1]</sup> and the 2009 DHS cyber-security recommended practice guide.<sup>[2]</sup> The NRC has also issued two information advisories (IAs) providing guidance on suspicious activity reporting: IA-04-08<sup>[3]</sup> and IA-13-01.<sup>[4]</sup>

These reports contain sensitive information and are not publicly available. This sensitive information is added to the PWS and shared with authorized nuclear industry officials and Federal, State, and local government agencies.

## 2. Agency Use of Information

Analysts in the NRC's Office of Nuclear Security and Incident Response (NSIR) review threat-related information to evaluate and assess potential threats to the NRC and its licensees. Analysts coordinate threat-related information with the FBI, DHS, and other national-level intelligence agencies to assess the level of threat. The PWS is also used as a vehicle to communicate threat-related information to NRC licensees.

## 3. Reduction of Burden Through Information Technology

There are no legal obstacles to reducing the burden associated with this information collection. The NRC encourages respondents to use information technology when it would be beneficial to them.

The NRC issued [Guidance for Electronic Submissions to the NRC](#), which provides direction for the electronic transmission and submittal of documents. Electronic transmission and submittal of documents can be accomplished via the following avenues: the Electronic Information Exchange process, which is available from the NRC's "Electronic Submittals" Web page; by optical storage media (e.g., CD-ROM, DVD); by facsimile; by telephone; or by e-mail. It is estimated that none of the potential responses (i.e., security reports from NRC licensees) are filed electronically and 100 percent are reported to the NRC via telephone.

## 4. Effort to Identify Duplication and Use Similar Information

No sources of similar information are available. There is no duplication of requirements.

## 5. Effort to Reduce Small Business Burden

One of the main purposes of this effort is to gather information needed without putting significant additional burden on small businesses. Reporting suspicious

---

[1] "Terrorist Threats to the U.S. Homeland: Reporting Guide for Critical Infrastructure and Key Resource Owners and Operators," DHS/FBI, January 2005.

[2] "Recommended Practice: Developing an Industrial Control Systems Cybersecurity Incident Response Capability," DHS, October 2009.

[3] "Reporting Suspicious Activity Criteria," NRC, October 2004.

[4] "Updated Criteria to Reporting Suspicious Activity Associated with Cyber Security Incidents," NRC, January 2013.

incidents is voluntary for all respondents, and the number of questions on the information collection will be kept to a minimum. However, small businesses, as well as the NRC, will benefit by the government's increased responsiveness to their needs.

6. Consequences to Federal Program or Policy Activities if the Collection is Not Conducted or is Conducted Less Frequently

NRC licensees report this information voluntarily on an ad-hoc basis, as suspicious incidents occur. This reporting is necessary to allow the NRC to provide timely intelligence assessments to prevent or mitigate potential threats to the NRC or its licensees.

If suspicious incident information was not collected, it would negatively affect the NRC's ability to analyze threats to its licensees. It would also create a void in threat-related information pertaining to the nuclear sector in the National Security Environment/SAR program.

7. Circumstances Which Justify Variation from Office of Management and Budget Guidelines

There exists no requirement for NRC licensees to report suspicious incidents on a routine reporting schedule. Rather, licensees are encouraged to voluntarily report suspicious incidents on an as-needed basis as security incidents occur and/or as security incidents are identified, which may lead to reporting more often than quarterly. This immediate reporting is necessary to allow the NRC to provide timely intelligence assessment to prevent or mitigate potential threats to the NRC or its licensees. Additionally, licensees are also encouraged but not required to voluntarily report suspicious incidents as appropriate to State and local law enforcement authorities, FBI, DHS, Federal Aviation Administration, and other Federal agencies.

8. Consultations Outside the NRC

Opportunity for public comment on the information collection requirements for this clearance package was published in the *Federal Register* (FR) on March 22, 2023 (88 FR 17280). Only one public comment was submitted by Aaron Ahern from Madras, Oregon and was found to be out of scope. No changes will be made to the clearance in result to the comment. As part of the consultation process, NRC staff contacted via email five NRC licensees from the areas of research and test reactors and fuel cycle facilities. No comments were received in responses to these consultations.

9. Payment or Gift to Respondents

This section is not applicable.

10. Confidentiality of Information

Confidential and proprietary information is protected in accordance with NRC regulations at 10 CFR paragraphs 9.17(a) and 2.390(b). Suspicious incident

reports may contain personally identifiable information (PII) or other sensitive but unclassified information about the facility, security posture, security countermeasures, and other potential vulnerabilities. For example, information may relate to identifying an individual or vehicle involved in a suspicious incident, such as: name, address, date of birth, vehicle make and model, license plate, vehicle identification number, etc. Access to PII and other sensitive but unclassified information is limited to select individuals within the NRC, FBI, and DHS, and is redacted for all other PWS users.

PWS administrators use the principle of least privilege when assigning access rights to PWS users. All users, including the NRC staff; authorized nuclear industry officials; and Federal, State, and local government agencies, are assigned role-based access rights in PWS based on their need-to-know. PWS users are also required to accept terms of service before being granted an account in the PWS. The NRC will not be able to ensure proper use of information by external users beyond limiting access based on need-to-know. FBI and DHS representatives are the only other users outside of the NRC that will have role-based access rights to any PII in the PWS.

To date, the NRC has approximately 43 representatives from the FBI and DHS who have access to the PWS. These individuals are not from a specific office within the FBI and DHS; rather, they represent a variety of offices, task forces, and directorates related to weapons of mass destruction, critical infrastructure, and nuclear and radiological issues. All requests from the FBI and DHS for accounts in the PWS are reviewed and approved by NSIR before being created.

In December 2020, a Privacy Impact Assessment was performed by the agency for the system. A System of Records Notice is not required for this system because it is not searchable for PII by users. The only searchable fields for suspicious incidents are as follows: incident ID, date, region, reporting organization, site/licensee name, report category, current phase, status, and last updated (date). In order to avoid any potential issues with searching for PII, the full-text search feature is limited to the Communication Documents and Cyber Related Documents Views.

11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

No questions of a sensitive nature are contained in any of the associated information collection requirements.

12. Estimated Burden and Burden Hour Cost

The NRC assumes a \$290 hourly rate for licensees to calculate their estimated hourly cost burden. The \$290 hourly rate is based on the NRC's fee for hourly rates as noted in 10 CFR section 170.20, "Average cost per professional staff-hour." For more information on the basis of this rate, see the Revision of Fee Schedules; Fee Recovery for Fiscal Year 2022 (87 FR 37197, June 22, 2022).

The NRC staff estimates that 52 licensees will annually submit 52 reports through the PWS, and that each report will require 1 hour to prepare and submit. Staff also estimates that there will be 26 third-party notifications by reporting licensees that

will require 15 minutes to prepare and submit. The total licensee burden for this information collection is 58.5 hours (52 reports x 1 hour = 52 hours and 26 reports x 0.25 hour = 6.5 hours) at a cost of \$16,965 (58.5 hours x \$290/hour) (see Table 1).

13. Estimate of Other Additional Costs

There are no additional costs.

14. Estimated Annualized Cost to the Federal Government

The annual costs to the NRC include staff hours and contractual support:

Staff Hours = 500 hours per year, at \$290/hour = \$145,000

Contractual Support = \$185,000 per year

TOTAL COST = \$330,000 per year

15. Reasons for Change in Burden or Cost

A recent rulemaking changed the reporting requirements for suspicious activities so that most of the reports that were previously voluntary are now mandatory. The burden for the mandatory reports is included in the Part 73 clearance (3150-0002.)

The NRC expects there will be fewer voluntary reports submitted annually using the PWS because of the change in reporting requirements which will lead to a decrease in the number of licensees that will voluntarily report. Also, the average burden per voluntary report has decreased from two hours to one hour due to PWS update that allows for a more streamlined and efficient process.

Additionally, the fee rate increased from \$275 to \$290/hour.

16. Publication for Statistical Use

Due to the sensitivity of the information contained in the PWS, all information is considered OFFICIAL USE ONLY and will not be shared publicly.

17. Reason for Not Displaying the Expiration Date

This section is not applicable.

18. Exceptions to the Certification Statement

None.

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

This section is not applicable.

TABLE 1

ANNUALIZED REPORTING BURDEN

Section	Total No. of Responses	Burden Hours per Response	Total Annual Reporting Burden (hours)
Voluntary Suspicious Incident Reporting for CY 2023	52	1	52
Voluntary third-party notification	26	.25	6.5
Total	78	1.25	58.5

TOTAL BURDEN HOURS: 58.5 hours (52 -hours reporting + 6.5 hours third party notification + 0 hours recordkeeping)

TOTAL BURDEN HOUR COST: \$16,965 (58.5 hours x \$290/hour)

ANNUAL RESPONDENTS: 52 respondents

RESPONSES: 78 responses (52 -reporting responses + 26 third party responses + 0 recordkeepers)