

hinder efficacy in recruiting and retaining diverse talent.

The study focuses on performance management systems because there is evidence that organizational culture plays a significant role in shaping industry demographics. The findings from this research will provide a better understanding of how employees at various levels are affected by performance management systems and how these systems contribute to organizational culture. The project team will provide FRA with data and best practices that could be used to recommend workforce development initiatives, that may affect organizational culture, for rail organizations and other related industries. Therefore, the research will offer novel, actionable solutions for diversifying the rail workforce.

The main objectives in this study are to: (1) expand on research done to date and to gain a better understanding of the organizational culture and challenges in recruiting and retaining

underrepresented individuals in the rail industry; (2) understand how employees at various levels are affected by performance management systems and organizational culture; and (3) examine and identify best practices for the use of performance management systems as a tool for equitable and diverse recruitment, development, retention, and promotion.

Primary users of this information will be those in the rail industry. The findings of this study will provide qualitative data on the current workforce culture in rail and how performance management systems may affect organizational culture. Industry stakeholders, FRA, and DOT may use this data to identify gaps, develop approaches, and create interventions/solutions to enhance workforce development initiatives for underrepresented groups.

FRA will publish the results of this study. A summary of the results may also be presented at technical meetings, such as the annual meeting of the

Transportation Research Board, or at conferences/talks with professional associations such as the Women's Transportation Seminar and the American Public Transportation Association.

*Type of Request:* Approval of a new collection of information.

*Affected Public:* Rail stakeholders including those in labor positions, carrier management, research/academia, professional association staff, HR personnel, regulators, executive level staff, etc.

*Form(s):* FRA F 6180.278 and FRA F 6180.279.

*Respondent Universe:* Rail stakeholders including those in labor positions, carrier management, research/academia, professional association staff, human resources (HR) personnel, regulators, executive level staff, etc.

*Frequency of Submission:* On occasion.

*Reporting Burden:*

Description	Respondent universe	Total annual responses (A)	Average time per response (B)	Total annual burden hours (C = A * B)	Total cost equivalent in U.S. dollar (D = C * Wage Rates) <sup>1</sup>
Email notification for on-line survey. This notification includes confidentiality statement to potential participants (before the survey).	150 rail stakeholders .....	50 Participants .....	10 minutes .....	8.33 hours .....	\$377.02
FRA F 6180-279—WFD on-line survey on Organizational Culture & Performance Management in Rail. (New form).	150 rail stakeholders .....	30 Participants .....	20 minutes .....	10.00 hours .....	\$452.60
Email notification for Performance Management Systems interview/focus group. This notification includes confidentiality statement to potential focus group and interview respondents (before the interview).	30 rail stakeholders .....	10 Participants .....	10 minutes .....	1.67 hours .....	\$75.58
FRA F 6180.278—WFD Interview Questions. Semi-structured <sup>2</sup> interview questions/focus groups on experiences with workforce culture & performance Management systems (New form).	30 rail stakeholders .....	5 Participants .....	1 hour .....	5.00 hours .....	\$226.30
<b>Totals<sup>3</sup></b> .....	150 rail holders .....	95 responses .....	N/A .....	25 hours .....	\$1,132

*Total Estimated Annual Responses:* 95.

*Total Estimated Annual Burden:* 25 hours.

*Total Estimated Annual Burden Hour Dollar Cost Equivalent:* \$1,132.

FRA informs all interested parties that it may not conduct or sponsor, and a respondent is not required to respond to, a collection of information that does not display a currently valid OMB control number.

*Authority:* 44 U.S.C. 3501-3520.

**Christopher S. Van Nostrand,**  
*Acting Deputy Chief Counsel.*

[FR Doc. 2024-06890 Filed 4-1-24; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4910-06-P**

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**Maritime Administration**

**MARAD Mariner Workforce Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2023-2027**

**AGENCY:** Maritime Administration, Department of Transportation.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the requirements of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 National Defense Authorization

<sup>1</sup> The dollar equivalent cost is derived from the 2022 Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Occupational Employment Statistics, classified with NAICS 482100, Rail Transportation. See <http://www.bls.gov/oes/>

[current/naics4\\_482100.htm#00-000](http://www.dhs.gov/naics4_482100.htm#00-000). The total burden wage rate (Straight time plus 31%) used in the table is \$45.26 (34.55 +10.71 = \$45.26).

<sup>2</sup> A semi-structured interview is a qualitative research method that utilizes some structured

questions that will prompt discussion with the opportunity for unstructured exploration (additional questions or clarification of responses) of themes as they engage during the discussion.

<sup>3</sup> Totals may not add up due to rounding.

Act (NDAA), the Maritime Administration (MARAD) has developed and published a Mariner Workforce Strategic Plan for fiscal years 2023–2027 (the Plan) to recruit, train, and retain merchant mariners. The Plan is available for review and download on MARAD’s website at [www.marad.dot.gov](http://www.marad.dot.gov) by going to the Education page (<https://cms.marad.dot.gov/education/marad-mariner-workforce-strategic-plan-fy-2023-2927>).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Christopher Wahler, Director, Office of Maritime Labor and Training, via electronic mail at [christopher.wahler@dot.gov](mailto:christopher.wahler@dot.gov) or by calling 202–366–5469.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Section 3508 of the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act amended 46 U.S.C. chapter 517 directing MARAD to develop a 5-year strategic plan to recruit, train, and retain merchant mariners. The Plan addresses the following key points:

1. Merchant mariner recruitment,
2. Merchant mariner training,
3. Merchant mariner retention, and
4. Demonstration and research

priorities concerning the previous three elements.

MARAD sought input from stakeholders including Federal agency partners, the inland towing community, and maritime labor unions. MARAD also identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the mariner workforce and structured the strategy around the following six goals:

1. Strengthen mariner workforce development programs.
2. Support mariner education and training institutions.
3. Expand mariner workforce by actively recruiting from historically underrepresented groups, thereby broadening the recruitment pipeline.
4. Ensure the availability of a skilled and sufficient mariner workforce for national security.
5. Support maritime innovation.
6. Ensure superior policy execution and stewardship of resources.

The Plan describes a comprehensive set of strategies, as well as

demonstration and research priorities. In developing the Plan, MARAD considered the availability of existing research and the need to ensure results having broad applicability for U.S. Merchant Marine workforce development.

MARAD, through an inter-agency agreement with the Volpe National Transportation Systems Center developed the Plan which included extensive engagement with the maritime industry and Federal partners. The full strategic plan is posted on the MARAD website, at <https://www.maritime.dot.gov/sites/marad.dot.gov/files/2024-02/MARAD%20Mariner%20Workforce%20Strategic%20Plan%20FY23-27.pdf>.

Pursuant to the FY21 NDAA, the Plan will be updated every five years until such time as the Maritime Administrator determines that there is an adequate number of United States mariners for sustained strategic sealift.

Pursuant to the statute, the Department of Transportation/MARAD transmitted copies of the Plan to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

(Authority: 46 U.S.C. 51707, 49 CFR 1.93(a))

By Order of the Maritime Administrator.

**T. Mitchell Hudson, Jr.,**  
*Secretary, Maritime Administration.*

[FR Doc. 2024–06934 Filed 4–1–24; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4910–81–P**

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration**

**Hazardous Materials: Notice of Applications for New Special Permits**

**AGENCY:** Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), DOT.

**ACTION:** List of applications for special permits.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the procedures governing the application

for, and the processing of, special permits from the Department of Transportation’s Hazardous Material Regulations, notice is hereby given that the Office of Hazardous Materials Safety has received the application described herein.

**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before May 2, 2024.

**ADDRESSES:** Record Center, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation Washington, DC 20590.

Comments should refer to the application number and be submitted in triplicate. If confirmation of receipt of comments is desired, include a self-addressed stamped postcard showing the special permit number.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Donald Burger, Chief, Office of Hazardous Materials Safety General Approvals and Permits Branch, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, East Building, PHH–13, 1200 New Jersey Avenue Southeast, Washington, DC 20590–0001, (202) 366–4535.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Each mode of transportation for which a particular special permit is requested is indicated by a number in the “Nature of Application” portion of the table below as follows: 1—Motor vehicle, 2—Rail freight, 3—Cargo vessel, 4—Cargo aircraft only, 5—Passenger-carrying aircraft.

Copies of the applications are available for inspection in the Records Center, East Building, PHH–13, 1200 New Jersey Avenue Southeast, Washington DC.

This notice of receipt of applications for special permit is published in accordance with part 107 of the Federal hazardous materials transportation law (49 U.S.C. 5117(b); 49 CFR 1.53(b)).

Issued in Washington, DC, on March 6, 2024.

**Donald P. Burger,**  
*Chief, General Approvals and Permits Branch.*

**SPECIAL PERMITS DATA**

Application No.	Applicant	Regulation(s) affected	Nature of the special permits thereof
21727–N .....	United States Postal Service.	175.10(a)(18)(ii) .....	To authorize the transportation in commerce of not more than ten spare lithium batteries with watt-hour ratings between 100Wh and 160 Wh in carry-on luggage via passenger-carrying aircraft. (mode 5).
21728–N .....	RSO, Inc .....	173.431(a) .....	To authorize the transportation in commerce of one Type A package containing a sealed source of 45 Ci of Cs–137 from Laurel, MD to Oak Ridge, TN and from Oak Ridge, TN to Andrews, TX for the purpose of disposal. (mode 1).