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For the foregoing reasons, pursuant to 10 CFR 73.55, the NRC staff has determined that the proposed alternative measures for protection against radiological sabotage meet "the same high assurance objective," and "the general performance requirements" of the regulation and that "the overall level of system performance provides protection against radiological sabotage equivalent" to that which would be provided by the regulation.

Accordingly, the Commission has determined that, pursuant to 10 CFR 73.5, this exemption is authorized by law and will not endanger life or property or common defense and security, and is otherwise in the public interest. Therefore, the Commission hereby grants the requested exemption from the requirements of 10 CFR 73.55(d)(5) to allow individuals not employed by the licensee (i.e., contractors) to take their photo-identification badges offsite, provided that the proposed hand geometry biometrics system is in effect to control access into protected areas at the Hatch nuclear plant.

Pursuant to 10 CFR 51.32, the Commission has determined that the granting of this exemption will not result in any significant adverse environmental impact (62 FR 49539).

For further details with respect to this action, see the request for exemption dated July 2, 1997, which is available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document Room, The Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC, and at the local public document room located at the Burke County Public Library, 412 Fourth Street, Waynesboro, Georgia.

This exemption is effective when modifications, procedures, and training to implement the hand geometry biometrics system have been completed and the corresponding revisions to the Physical Security Plan for the Hatch plant have been submitted to the NRC staff.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 8th day of December 1997.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Frank J. Miraglia,

Acting Director, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

[FR Doc. 97-32523 Filed 12-11-97; 8:45 am]

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OFFICE OF PERSONNEL
MANAGEMENT**Nonforeign Area Cost-of-Living Allowances Price and Background Surveys; Proposed Collection; Comment Request**

AGENCY: Office of Personnel Management.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) seeks comments on its intention to request a reinstatement, with change, of two previously approved information collections for which approval has expired. OPM uses the two collections—a price survey and a background survey—to gather data to be used in determining cost-of-living allowances for certain Federal employees in Alaska, Hawaii, Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The price survey is conducted generally on an annual basis. The background survey is conducted approximately once every 5 years, but the survey is also conducted on a limited basis in preparation for each of the price surveys.

DATES: Submit comments on or before February 10, 1998.

ADDRESSES: *Comments:* Send or deliver comments to Donald J. Winstead, Assistant Director for Compensation Administration, Workforce Compensation and Performance Service, Office of Personnel Management, Room 7H31, 1900 E Street NW., Washington, DC 20415, or FAX comments to (202) 606-4264, or email comments over the Internet to cola@opm.gov. *Copies:* For copies of this proposal, contact Jim Farron at (202) 418-3208 or by email at jmfarron@opm.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kurt M. Springmann, (202) 606-2838.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: OPM is soliciting comments on the reinstatement of its Nonforeign Area Cost-of-Living Allowances Price and Background Surveys for an additional 3 years. As set out in Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regulations at 5 CFR 1320.8(d)(1), comments are requested to—

- Evaluate whether the surveys are necessary and have practical utility;
- Evaluate the accuracy of the burden estimate, including the assumptions and methodological validity used in determining the burden estimate;
- Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and

- Minimize the burden on respondents.

OMB approval of this information collection was originally scheduled to expire on June 30, 1997. Because of delays in conducting the price survey during the first quarter of 1997 as planned, OPM requested an emergency extension of the clearance. OMB granted an extension until September 30, 1997.

Title: Nonforeign Area Cost-of-Living Allowances Price Survey and Background Survey.

OMB Control Number: 3206-0199.

Summary: The Nonforeign Area Cost-of-Living Allowances Price Survey is used by OPM to collect price data in the allowance areas under four cost components: consumption goods and services, transportation, housing, and miscellaneous expenses. The price survey is conducted on approximately an annual basis.

The Nonforeign Area Cost-of-Living Allowances Background Survey is used by OPM to collect information to identify the services, items, quantities, outlets, and locations that will be surveyed in the annual price surveys. It is also used to collect information on local trade practices, consumer buying patterns, taxes and fees, and other economic characteristics related to living costs. The background survey is conducted approximately once every 5 years but is also used on a limited basis in preparation for each of the price surveys.

Need/Use for Surveys: The price survey is necessary for collecting living-cost data used to determine cost-of-living allowances (COLA's) paid to General Schedule, U.S. Postal Service, and certain other Federal employees in the nonforeign allowance areas. The information is used to compare costs in the allowance areas with costs in the Washington, DC, area, and to derive a COLA rate when the local cost of living significantly exceeds that in the DC area. The background survey is necessary to determine the continued appropriateness of items, services, and businesses selected for the annual price surveys. OPM uses the information collected under this survey to define the sources and parameters for the price surveys and to improve the COLA methodology.

Respondents: OPM will survey selected retail, service, realty, and other businesses and local governments in the nonforeign allowance areas and in the Washington, DC, area. Approximately 5,600 establishments will be contacted in the price survey and approximately 300 establishments will be contacted in the background survey.

Reporting and Recordkeeping Burden: OPM estimates that the average price survey interview will take approximately 7 minutes, for a total burden of 650 hours. The average background survey interview will take approximately 10 minutes, for a total burden of 50 hours.

Office of Personnel Management.

Janice R. Lachance,

Director.

[FR Doc. 97-32581 Filed 12-11-97; 8:45 am]

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OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Proposed Collection, Comment Request Optional Form 306

AGENCY: Office of Personnel Management.

ACTION: Proposed collection; comment request.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) and 5 CFR 1320.5 (a) (I) (iv), this notice announces that OPM intends to submit to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) a request for reclearance of an information collection. Optional Form 306 (Declaration for Federal Employment) is used by OPM and other agencies to collect information to determine an individual's acceptability for Federal employment and enrollment status in the Government's Life Insurance program.

"Comments are particularly invited on: whether this collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of function of the Office of Personnel Management, and whether it will have practical utility; whether our estimate of the public burden of this collection of information is accurate, and based on valid assumptions and methodology; and ways in which we can minimize the burden of collection of information on those who respond, through the use of appropriate technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology."

It is estimated that 474,000 individuals will respond annually for a

total burden of 118,500 hours. To obtain copies of this proposal please contact James M. Farron at (202) 414-3208 or by E-mail to jmfarron@opm.gov.

DATES: Comments on this proposal should be received on or before February 10, 1998. Submit comments on this proposal to Richard A. Ferris, Office of Personnel Management, Room 5416, 1900 E. Street N. W., Washington, D.C. 20415.

Office of Personnel Management.

Janice R. Lachance,

Director.

[FR Doc. 97-32582 Filed 12-11-97; 8:45 am]

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RAILROAD RETIREMENT BOARD

Proposed Collection; Comment Request

SUMMARY: In accordance with the requirement of Section 3506 (c)(2)(A) of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 which provides opportunity for public comment on new or revised data collections, the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) will publish periodic summaries of proposed data collections.

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed information collection is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information has practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the RRB's estimate of the burden of the collection of the information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden related to the collection of information on respondents, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Title and purpose of information collection: Application and Claim for Sickness Insurance Benefits; OMB 3220-0039.

Under Section 2 of the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act (RUIA), sickness benefits are payable to qualified railroad employees who are unable to work because of illness or injury. In addition, sickness benefits are payable to qualified female employees if

they are unable to work, or if working would be injurious, because of pregnancy, miscarriage or childbirth. Under Section 1(k) of the RUIA, a statement of sickness with respect to days of sickness of an employee is to be filed with the RRB within a 10-day period from the first day claimed as a day of sickness. The RRB's authority for requesting supplemental medical information is Section 12(l) and 12(n) of the RUIA. The procedures for claiming sickness benefits and for the RRB to obtain supplemental medical information needed to determine a claimant's eligibility for such benefits is prescribed in 20 CFR part 335.

The forms used by the RRB to obtain information needed to determine eligibility for and the amount of sickness benefits due a claimant follows: Form SI-1a, Application for Sickness Benefits; Form SI-1b, Statement of Sickness; Form SI-3, Claim for Sickness Benefits; Form SI-7, Supplemental Doctor's Statement; Form SI-8, Verification of Medical Information; Form ID-7h, Non-Entitlement to Sickness Benefits and Information on Unemployment Benefits; and Form ID-11a, Requesting Reason for Late Filing of Sickness Benefit. Completion is required to obtain or retain benefits. One response is requested of each respondent.

The RRB proposes to revise Form SI-1a to add new items that obtain information from a sickness claimant who is filing a delayed claim for benefits and also to reformat and clarify an existing item that requests wage information. Form SI-3 is being revised to clarify an existing item that requests wage information and also to modify the certification statement. Form SI-8 is being revised primarily to emphasize that a response is needed only if the information provided is erroneous. Minor editorial changes which include the addition of language required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 are also proposed to Forms SI-1b, SI-7, SI-8 and ID-11A.

Estimate of Annual Respondent Burden

The estimated annual respondent burden is as follows:

Form Nos.	Annual responses	Time (minutes)	Burden (hours)
SI-1a/1b(ee)	27,700	10	4,617
SI-1a/1b(Dr.)	27,000	8	3,693
SI-3	181,000	5	15,083
SI-7	33,600	8	4,480
SI-8	50	5	4
ID-7H	50	5	4
ID-11A	800	3	40