



Strategies,
Tools,
and Methods
for

Improving Response Rates on
EIA Surveys

FedCASIC 2008





Overview

- General profile of EIA's surveys
- Mandatory collection authority
- Exceptions to mandatory collection
- Corporate approaches
- Common office level approaches
- Individual survey level approaches
- Summary



General Profile of EIA's Surveys

- Most of EIA's surveys are establishment surveys
- Mandatory collection authority for ~ 95 % of EIA's establishment surveys
- Response rates are generally high but it is not always the case that our mandatory surveys yield better response rates; "mandatory" doesn't guarantee good response rates



OOG formed a Response Improvement Team

- The WPSR has five different surveys and some companies fill out more than one form, which may be from different people in the company. Are working to expand to monthly surveys also.
- Send reminder letters to late or non-respondents. We have three levels of letters.
 - The first one is sent to the contact person for a given survey and sent when the trigger is met. For the WPSR, the trigger is not reporting for two consecutive weeks or two out of the last three weeks.
 - A second letter is sent to companies not submitting the form(s) within the next two weeks (or by week four). This letter is signed by the Office Director and is sent to the Comptroller/Vice President.
 - The third letter is sent to the CEO by the Administrator. We have not sent any of these yet and have not even written what I would consider a good prototype. Most of the letters sent so far have been "first" letters. I believe I have signed one or two "second" letters.
- Vagts said that the survey managers perceived an improvement almost immediately. But wanted to be able to track the results.
- Hakes commented that it helps immeasurably to be able to quantify the problem. Especially since EIA is has been open about discussing our nonresponse problems, and some grumbles have occurred in the trade press. Having a graph to show that we have addressed the problem makes a big difference.

Mandatory Collection

- Mandatory collection to Secretary from FEA 1974
- Gathering, analysis, and dissemination of energy information delegated to EIA
- Section 13(b) the FEA Act applies to all energy suppliers but only to *major energy consumers*.
- EIA has not enforced mandatory authorities by imposing the sanctions called for in laws.
- Focus on the survey process and respondent relationships



The mandatory collection authorities given to the Federal Energy Administration in the Act that created it in 1974; later transferred to DOE Secretary upon its creation. Secretary delegated to the EIA functions vested in the Secretary relating to the gathering, analysis, and dissemination of energy information.

(b) Information and data to Administrator from owners or operators of facilities or business premises engaged in energy matters
--"All persons owning or operating facilities or business premises who are engaged in any phase of energy supply or major energy consumption shall make available to the Administrator such information and periodic reports, records, documents, and other data, relating to the purposes of this chapter, including full identification of all data and projections as to source, time, and methodology of development, as the Administrator may prescribe by regulation or order as necessary or appropriate for the proper exercise of functions under this chapter."

The Office of General Council has reaffirmed EIA's use of the FEA Act for mandatory reporting and for enforcement of those mandatory authorities.

Section 13(b) the FEA Act does give the authority for mandatory reporting by energy suppliers but only MAJOR energy consumers.

--RECS is voluntary for households (they are not major energy consumers) but is mandatory for their energy suppliers when we collect amounts/costs of the energy supplied to the households.

EIA has not had to enforce its mandatory authorities by imposing the sanctions called for in laws. Our focus is on the survey process (i.e., well-designed surveys, working with respondents and their representatives on reporting problems, higher level contacts, etc.).

Voluntary Surveys or Portions of Surveys

- Residential Energy Consumption Survey – households
- Commercial Buildings Energy Consumption Survey – buildings
- Greenhouse Gas –individual entities
- Annual Quantity and Value of Natural Gas Production Report – filed by States
- Coordinated Bulk Power Supply Program Report, – Schedule 7, Annual Data on Transmission Line Outages for EHV
- Generic Clearance for Questionnaire Testing, Evaluation, and Research & Generic DOE Customer Survey



Mandatory exceptions include a generic pilot test survey, a generic customer survey, surveys that may result in some financial benefit to the respondent, and (portions of) surveys that are household

Residential Energy Consumption Survey – voluntary for households but mandatory for the energy suppliers to the households

Commercial Buildings Energy Consumption Survey – building portions voluntary but supplier portions mandatory

Greenhouse Gas – an environmental program for individual entities to create a public record of their emissions and to receive public recognition for actions taken to reduce these emissions.

Monthly and Annual Quantity and Value of Natural Gas Production Report – filed by states, or estimated based on other public information

“Coordinated Bulk Power Supply Program Report,” – Schedule 7, Annual Data on Transmission Line Outages for EHV is voluntary, other schedules mandatory

Generic Clearance for Questionnaire Testing, Evaluation, and Research & Generic DOE Customer Survey



Corporate Efforts

- Strategic Plan Kickoff 2006 set up brainstorming session “Working with Respondents” of OD’s and others
- Survey divisions reported good relationships, response not a problem
 - Problem with accuracy, timeliness and up-to-date frames (respondent turnover and staff reduction issues)
- Division-level site visits pending funding
- Division-level success with Internet data collection reducing data problems





Corporate Efforts

- Outreach to trade associations discussed but no plan emerged
- Feedback to good reporters, but no explicit program established
- Concluded no real problem across the agency
- Considered respondent portal with information about reporting instructions, how EIA processes the data, where their data go
--Pursue further as part of a larger Website development plan





Common Internet Data Collection System

- Importance of IDC in future
- Cost of developing/maintaining individual applications
- Corporate IDC System common look and feel for respondents
- Functional requirements based on three views—one is the respondent's point-of-view





Respondent Point-of-View

- Ease of access and use
- Ready and useful help and prompt support
- Ability to report large amounts of data without keying
- 24-7 access
- Reduced burden compared to other reporting modes
- Confidentiality protection
- Stop and complete survey later; save, print, forward, finalize, and transmit information in both directions
- Other incentives for respondents (What's in it for me?)



Ease of access and use (install, updates, sign-on, navigation, system's response, down-time, and other usability issues)

Other Corporate Efforts: EIA 2008 Energy Conference (April 7-8)



- Focus on Customers—indirectly affect respondents
- Some breakout sessions on our tools that relate to respondents
 - use of interactive scatter plots to identify suspicious data
 - Internet data collection and development of a common system





Common Office Level Approaches

- Response Improvement Teams
 - Escalating reminder letter procedures:
 - 1) Survey manager to respondent contact
 - 2) OD to Comptroller/Vice President
 - 3) Administrator to CEO



Common Office Level Approaches

- Toll free number
- Offer alternative reporting modes
- Pre-notification letters and “welcome aboard” letters
- Demonstrate value of participating and relate response to survey products
- One main point of contact for the survey



Individual Survey Level Approaches



- Reporting aids: cheat sheets, guidelines
- Historical database of respondents' reporting characteristics and issues
- Facilitate conference calls for significant data issues
- Report cards
- Industry association meetings
- Site visits
- New contact orientation call
- Provide documentation of statutory authority
- Special respondent help web site and Help Center
- Targeted follow-up for nonresponse



Multi-mode

- Modes of reporting include xls secured, xls or other by email, electronic applications, Internet, Fax, phone, mail and personal interview
- Reporting profiles vary greatly across surveys: vary by fuel type, collection frequency, complexity of survey, size of business—population surveyed and office/fuel type largest factor
- The average percentage of respondents reporting by email across surveys in one office exceeds 50% but Internet collection is only 3%
- The average percentage of respondents reporting by Internet exceeds 90% across surveys for another survey office; Fax and secured file transfer make up the remainder



Example of Survey Form in XLS



OMB No. 1905-0185

Expiration Date: 12/31/2009

Version No.: 2007.01

FORM EIA-810 MONTHLY REFINERY REPORT


REPORT PERIOD: Month Year EIA ID NUMBER: RESUBMISSION:

PART 5. REFINERY OPERATIONS

Item Description	Product Code	Stocks Beginning of Month	Receipts During Month	Inputs During Month	Production During Month	Shipments During Month	Fuel Uses & Losses During Month	Stocks End of Month
Crude Oil (incl. lease condensate), TOTAL	050							
Domestic (incl. Alaskan)	010							
Alaskan	011							
Foreign	020							
Products of Natural Gas Processing:								
Ethane	110							
Propane	231							
Normal Butane	232							
Isobutane	233							
Pentanes Plus	220							
Other Hydrocarbons, Hydrogen & Oxygenates, TOTAL	090							
Other Hydrocarbons & Hydrogen	094							
Fuel Ethanol (FE)	141							

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Example of Internet Survey



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Coal Production Report

U.S. Department of Energy • Energy Information Administration • Form EIA-7A

Form Approved
OMB No. 1905-0167
Expires: 03/31/2005
Burden: 1 hour

[Home](#)


Identification
Process Capacity
Coal Beds
Recoverable Reserves
Disposition of Coal
Coal Preparation
Remarks
Process

Cycle	MSHA ID	Operating Company Name	Mine Name	Form Type
2004	1516577	Consol Of Kentucky Inc	Mill Creek Prep Plant	Prep Plant Only

Dispositions of Coal During the Reporting Calendar Year

This section requests information on sales and transfers of the coal produced at this mine, and on the amount of coal consumed to operate this mine or preparation plant. For purposes of this section, a sale of coal to a party unrelated to the seller in an arm's-length transaction is considered **Open Market**. All other sales or transfers of coal are considered **Captive Market**. The information reported in this section should reflect the condition of the coal as of its disposition. For **Open Market** sales, please calculate Total Revenue using the actual FOB Rail/Barge sales prices on the first-sale basis (i.e. as of the first sale of first change of ownership). For **Captive Market** sales or transfers, please calculate Total Value using the actual accounting values recorded by your company for this coal.

	Quantity	Total Revenue/Value
A. Open Market sales of coal to other coal mining operations, and to coal dealers/brokers (wholesale or retail)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
B. Open Market sales of coal to all consumers other than coal mining companies and coal dealers/brokers, including sales to employees.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
C. Captive Market sales of coal to, or transfers of coal for the use of, the parent company or another <i>Subsidiary</i> of the parent company.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
D. Coal Consumed To Operate This Mine (Please exclude coal consumed to generate electricity that is sold to the grid)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
E. Net Change in the Year-End Coal Stocks . Please report the amount by which the coal stocks at this mine at the end of the reporting year increased (+) or decreased (-) compared with coal stocks at this mine at the end of the previous reporting year.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
F. Total Dispositions of Coal During the Reporting Calendar Year. Please sum the Quantities reported on Lines A through E above.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>



www.eia.doe.gov

Summary

- Mainly establishment surveys; mandatory reporting
- Mandatory reporting doesn't guarantee high response rates or good data
- Approaches and strategies for improving response rates and obtaining high quality data are still critical
- At the EIA corporate level development of a common IDC with a respondent focus
- At the office and survey level, practices include various approaches to communicating and listening to respondents
- Nonresponse follow-up is always important



sending pre-notification letters and cheat sheets or reporting guidelines, providing multiple response modes, maintaining historical database of respondents' reporting characteristics and issues

Facilitate conference calls for significant data issues

Report cards

Industry association meetings

Site visits

New contact orientation call

Provide documentation of statutory authority

Special respondent help web site

Targeted follow-up for nonresponse