

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
(NOAA)**

**Office of Marine and Aviation Operations**



**NOAA Marine and Aviation Operations Health Services  
Database**

**Privacy Impact Assessment Statement**

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National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

# NOAA Marine and Aviation Operations Health Services Database

## Privacy Impact Assessment Statement

**Project:** NOAA Marine and Aviation Operations Health Services Database

**Unique Project Identifier:** 006-03-02-00-01-0511-04

**Privacy Act System of Records:** A draft system of records notice is under review by the NOAA Privacy Officer, and will be submitted before the end of FY 2006 to the Department of Commerce (DOC) for review.

### Project Description

Health screening is required for all members of the public before they are cleared to participate in NMAO air or sea missions, as observers, media representatives or researchers. A specific example of a program for which health screening is required is "Teacher at Sea (TAS)." The mission of TAS is to give teachers a clearer insight into our ocean planet, greater understanding of marine work and studies, and increased environmental literacy by fostering an interdisciplinary research experience. The program provides a unique environment for learning and teaching by sending kindergarten through college-level teachers to sea aboard NOAA research and survey ships to work under the tutelage of scientists and crew. Since its inception in 1990, the program has enabled more than 430 teachers to participate in this program to enrich their classroom curricula with the experience, knowledge and resources they have acquired. To learn more about this program, go to: <http://teacheratsea.noaa.gov/>.

In order to obtain clearance to work or travel on board any of the vessels or aircraft, health screening is also required for all NMAO employees/prospective employees

The OMAO Medical Office is replacing a paper system of the NOAA Health Service Questionnaire (NHSQ), with a modern and secure Web-based system for the completion and review of NHSQs. Additionally, it is adding to the system two new questionnaires: NOAA Health Services Aviation Questionnaire (NHSAQ) and NOAA Health Services Dive Questionnaire (NHSDQ). This medical history database will contain essential information about the health of scientists, teachers in the air/at sea, and qualified non-crewmembers participating in mission operations flights on behalf of NOAA. Only the individual whose medical history is being recorded and the medically authorized medical providers

may enter information into the files, and only the providers are able to access that information.

This PIA has been developed to comply with the requirements in Section 208 of the E-Government Act of 2002 (44 U.S.C. 36) and the Department of Commerce IT Privacy Policy.

### **1. What information is to be collected (e.g., nature and source)?**

Both personally identifiable information and medical information are collected. The personal and medical information collected is pertinent to the stated purposes for which the information is used. Only information that is required to determine fitness for sea/flight duty is to be collected.

This database will contain information collected under the Paperwork Reduction Act: Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Control No. 0648-0283, and will also contain data from an information collection currently under review by the OMB: Aviation Safety Health Questionnaire. The categories of information in the NHSQ/NHSAQ are:

- *Name, Address, Date of Birth and SSN* – Identifying information for individuals with whom medical personnel has interacted; these names will be linked to other medical information that may be required.
- *Medical* – Medical information that may be submitted by the individual involved or other medical providers as needed. Screening forms request information about allergies, dietary restrictions (NHSQ only), medications, immunizations (NHSQ only), active health problems, major hospitalizations, past medical events, mental health events or conditions, and cardiac risks and events.

### **2. Why is the information being collected (e.g., to determine eligibility)?**

The Office of Marine and Aviation Operations (OMAO) is creating a new system to ensure that individuals who embark on OMAO ships/aircraft, and other individuals whom it sponsors to embark on non-NOAA aircraft, are not putting themselves or others at risk due to medical conditions that are beyond the capabilities of the ships/aircraft to handle. The electronic NHSQ/NHSAQ system will allow medical personnel quicker access to more complete medical data. The effectiveness of the medical officers' review depends on this rapid access to complete medical information about embarked personnel. This information is important in potentially life-and-death medical situations.

In the course of meeting its responsibilities, the medical department collects and maintains information on individuals with whom the medical department has interacted. These include individuals who wish to embark on OMAO

aircraft/vessels and individuals being sponsored by NOAA to embark on non-NOAA aircraft

**What is the intended use of the information (e.g., to verify existing data)?**

The information will be used to (1) detect instances of medical conditions that are incompatible with embarkation; (2) render care to individuals who are embarked on OMAO aircraft/vessels; and (3) develop case files to determine fitness to embark on OMAO aircraft/vessels on future missions. These files include medical information provided on the NHSQ and additional supporting documentation provided by the individual.

**3. With whom the information will be shared (e.g., another agency for a specified programmatic purpose)?**

Medical information is shared only with authorized users who have a legitimate need to know. These records or information contained therein may specifically be disclosed as a routine use as stated below. The medical department will be authorized to make the determination as to the relevancy of a record prior to its decision to disclose a document.

From the draft system of records notice for this information collection, Electronic NOAA Health Services Questionnaire (NHSQ), NOAA Health Services Aviation Questionnaire (NHSAQ), and NOAA Health Services Dive Questionnaire (NHSDQ):

A record in the medical department may be disclosed:

- to the legal department to determine legal sufficiency of a denial for embarkation or in response to litigation.
- in response to a court order.
- to other health care providers involved in the case.
- in response to statute (e.g., sexually transmitted disease, homicidal ideation, suicidal ideation, child abuse, elder abuse, etc.).
- to the OMAO leadership involved in the waiver process.
- to the individual involved.

**5. What opportunities do individuals have to decline to provide information (i.e., where providing information is voluntary) or to consent to particular uses of the information (other than required or authorized uses), and how may individuals grant consent?**

Information provided is completely voluntary, however, failure to provide complete information requested will not allow the medical department to make a fitness to embark determination.

## **6. How will the information be secured (e.g., administrative and technological controls)?**

### *Management Controls:*

Medical information can be accessed by authorized medical personnel. NOAA does a thorough background investigation on all of its personnel with a National Agency Check with Inquiries (NACI). Medical data can only be accessed via a secure NOAA network; both the network and the application require passwords that are issued only to those who require access to the system. Paper records related to the medical database are maintained in locked file cabinets at medical facilities in Tampa, FL, Seattle, WA (two locations), Norfolk, VA, and Silver Spring, MD. NOAA identification badges are required for entry.

### *Operational Controls:*

Operational controls include securing all server and communications hardware and software associated with the NOAA Data Centers. The Data Centers are tightly controlled by card entry and staff to restrict access to the servers, their operating systems and databases. There are contingency operating plans in place, including alternative processing sites at secure locations in accordance with Continuity of Operations planning for the U.S. Department of Commerce, NOAA's parent agency. Backups are performed on the processing databases every production day (Monday through Friday). The backups include all file directories (except the operating system directory) and databases. Additional operational controls include: (1) logical edit checks to ensure proper sequence of actions; (2) full auditing of all system transactions; (3) ability to "lock" sensitive files so that only specific authorized personnel have access, or even know about, the sensitive files; and (5) restricted access.

### *Technical Controls:*

The medical database can be accessed through computers at NOAA facilities or via laptop computers carried by medical personnel. Desktop computers at NOAA facilities are protected because, as mentioned above, entry into the facilities requires an authorized NOAA badge. The computers used by medical personnel will be password protected so that unauthorized users cannot gain access to files or to the medical database. To access the medical database, the user must first access a secure NOAA national network. Network access requires a current password. Once on the network, the user must have an additional password to access the medical database application. The IT System Administrator is responsible for issuing medical database passwords.

The medical database is a browser-based system using the secure socket layer (SSL) protocol. This means that information is entered into screens presented to the users after they have logged on to the electronic NHSQ. The information is

not retained in the user's computer once it is entered into the medical database. Medical personnel at remote locations, such as on board a vessel, can review this information securely over the internet. Because of the password protection explained above, this information is not accessible to unauthorized users.

**7. Is a system of records being created under the Privacy Act, 5 U.S.C. 522a.?**

A draft system of records notice is under review by the NOAA Privacy Officer, and will be submitted before the end of FY 2006 to the Department of Commerce (DOC) for review.

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