



# Regional Vessel Monitoring Information

Vessel monitoring system (VMS) requirements information according to each region.

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## Alaska

A vessel is required to use a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) when:

- The vessel has a species and gear endorsement on its Federal Fisheries Permit for directed fishing for pollock, Pacific cod, or Atka mackerel and these fisheries are open, except if the vessel is using jig gear or dinglebar gear (50 CFR 679.7(a)(18)).
- The vessel is operating in the Aleutian Islands or in adjacent State of Alaska waters (50 CFR 679.28(f)(6)).
  - If trawling in the Aleutian Islands: Vessels must set their VMS to transmit the vessel location at least 10 times per hour (50 CFR 679.28(f)(7)).
- The vessel has non-pelagic trawl or dredge gear onboard in the Gulf of Alaska or in adjacent State of Alaska waters (50 CFR 679.28(f)(6)).
- The vessel is in federal reporting areas 610, 620, or 630, and receives and processes groundfish from other vessels (50 CFR 679.28(f)(6)).
- The vessel is participating in the Rockfish Program (50 CFR 679.7(n)(3)).
- The vessel is fishing for sablefish in the Bering Sea or Aleutian Islands (50 CFR 679.42(k)(2)).
- The vessel is participating in the Crab Rationalization Program (50 CFR 680.23(d)).
- The vessel is participating as an Amendment 80 catcher/processor (see §679.5(s)).
- The vessel is participating in the Rockfish Program (50 CFR 679.7(n)(3)).
- The vessel is fishing for sablefish in the Bering Sea or Aleutian Islands (50 CFR 679.42(k)(2)).
- The vessel is fishing for IFQ sablefish in the GOA using longline pot gear (see §679.42(l)) or fishing for IFQ or CDQ halibut or CDQ sablefish in the BSAI using pot gear (see §679.42(m)).

For more information, see the [Vessel Monitoring Systems in Alaska - Federal Register Rules and Notices](#) page.

## Northeast (Greater Atlantic Region)

In accordance with [50 CFR 648.10](#), the following vessels must have installed onboard an operations VMS unit:

- full-time or part-time limited access scallop, or LAGC scallop permit
- occasional limited access scallop permit when fishing under the scallop area access program
- limited access monkfish, occasional scallop, or combination permit electing to provide VMS notifications
- limited access multispecies permit when fishing on a Category A or B day at sea (DAS), or catches regulated species or ocean pout while on a sector trip; or a limited access multispecies small vessel category or Handgear A vessel that fishes in multiple stock areas
- surfclam or ocean quahog open access permit
- Maine mahogany quahog limited access permit
- limited access monkfish vessel electing to fish in the Offshore Fishery Program
- limited access herring permit, or an Areas 2/3 open access herring permit, or a vessel declaring a herring carrier trip via VMS
- limited access mackerel permit
- longfin squid/butterfish moratorium permit
- illex squid moratorium permit

VMS units must transmit a signal at least every hour, or at least twice per hour for vessels issued a scallop permit. Tampering with a VMS unit or VMS signal is prohibited.

Vessels may be exempt from the reporting requirements as follows: ([Exemption Request Form](#))

- The vessel will be continuously out of the water for more than 72 consecutive hours, the vessel signs out of the VMS program by obtaining a valid letter of exemption;
- The vessel owner signs out of the VMS program for a minimum period of 30 consecutive days by obtaining a valid letter of exemption, and the vessel does not engage in any fisheries or move from the dock/mooring until the VMS unit is turned back on;
- The vessel has been issued an LAGC scallop permit, is not in possession of any scallops onboard the vessel, is tied to a permanent dock or mooring, the vessel operator has notified NMFS through VMS by transmitting the appropriate VMS power-down code that the VMS will be powered down, and the vessel is not required by other permit requirements for other fisheries to transmit the vessel's location at all times. Such a vessel must re-power the VMS and submit a valid VMS activity declaration prior to moving from the fixed dock or mooring.

Vessel owners must confirm the VMS unit's operation and communications service by calling NOAA Fisheries OLE (at 978-281-9213) to ensure that position reports (and a declaration) are sent to and received by NOAA Fisheries OLE (this is necessary for new owners and owners who replace their VMS units to ensure connectivity between the vessel's VMS and NOAA Fisheries). If a VMS unit is replaced, the owner must submit documentation to NOAA Fisheries (OLE) within 3 days of installation and before the next trip that the VMS is an operational, approved system.

The Orolia 'OmniCom' VMS was type approved for use as of **September 15, 2020**.

- Get specific information about VMS Reporting Instructions for [Orolia-equipped vessels](#).

The SkyMate and Woods Hole Group VMS Reporting Instructions were updated on August 29, 2020.

- Get specific information about VMS Reporting Instructions for [SkyMate-equipped vessels](#).
- Get specific information about VMS Reporting Instructions for [Woods Hole Group-equipped vessels](#).

For more information, visit the [Greater Atlantic Regional Vessel Monitoring System](#) page, or check with our [VMS contacts](#).

## Pacific Islands

Under the following permits, an installed and approved VMS unit is required:

- Hawaii Longline Limited Entry Permit.
- Northern Mariana Islands Bottomfish Permit — fishing vessels 40 feet or longer in overall length.
- American Samoa Longline Limited Entry Permit — fishing vessels 50 feet or longer in overall length.

Under the American Samoa Longline Limited Entry Permit

For more information about the Pacific Islands Regional VMS requirements, contact the Office of Law Enforcement's VMS techs at [pidvms@noaa.gov](mailto:pidvms@noaa.gov).

## Southeast

In the following three fisheries, an installed and approved VMS unit is required:

- Highly Migratory Species. Vessels that have:
  - pelagic longline gear onboard.
  - bottom longline gear onboard, operating off the coast of South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia between 33°00'N and 36°30'N from January 1 through July 31.
  - been issued a directed shark limited access permit with gillnet gear onboard operating in the vicinity of the Southeast U.S. Monitoring Area from December 1 to March 31, pursuant to the

requirements of the Atlantic large whale take reduction plan.

- purse seine gear onboard.
- South Atlantic Rock Shrimp.
- Gulf Reef Fish.
  - An owner or operator of a vessel that has been issued a commercial vessel permit for Gulf reef fish, including a charter vessel/headboat, must ensure that such vessel has an operational and approves VMS unit on board at all times whether or not the vessel is underway.
  - Hourly reporting requirement: An owner or operator of a vessel subject to the requirements of such permit must ensure that the required VMS unit transmits a signal indicating the vessel's accurate position at least once an hour, 24 hours a day every day.
  - Declaration of fishing trip and gear: Prior to departure for each trip, a vessel owner or operator must report to NOAA Fisheries any fishery the vessel will participate in on that trip and the specific type(s) of fishing gear, using NOAA Fisheries-defined gear codes, that will be on board the vessel.
  - IFQ species landing requirements: Vessels landing IFQ species are responsible for ensuring that NOAA Fisheries is contacted at least 3 hours, but no more than 24 hours, in advance of landing to report the time and location of landing, estimated species landings in pounds gutted weight, vessel identification number (Coast Guard registration number or state registration number), and the name and address of the IFQ dealer(s) where the IFQ species are to be received.

For more information about the Southeast Regional Vessel Monitoring System, call the Office of Law Enforcement Southeast Division at 727-824-5344.

## West Coast

VMS requirements apply to commercial fishing vessels registered for use with a Pacific Coast groundfish limited entry permit that fishes in state or Federal marine waters off the states of Washington, Oregon, or California. VMS is also required on any vessel that uses non-groundfish trawl gear to fish in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and any vessel that uses open access gear to take, retain, or possess groundfish in the EEZ or land groundfish taken in the EEZ. In addition, VMS is also required on drift gillnet (DGN) vessels participating in Highly Migratory Species fisheries.

The Pacific Coast vessel monitoring program consists of declaration reports and a vessel monitoring system. The declaration reports are reports given by fishermen before a fishing trip to identify the vessel operator's intent to operate within a conservation area, identify which gear type will be used for fishing, and which fishery they are participating in. The VMS consists of equipment that tracks a vessel's geographic position through a satellite communication system. A VMS transceiver unit is installed aboard the vessel that communicates via a satellite to a processing center. For the Pacific

Coast program, a basic VMS system with one-way communication will be used to track vessel activity in relation to closed areas within 200 nautical miles along the Pacific coast.

For more information, visit the [West Coast Region's Vessel Monitoring System](#) website or contact the Office of Law Enforcement via the West Coast Groundfish Declaration Line at 1-888-585-5518.

## Atlantic Highly Migratory Species

Certain owners or operators of commercial vessels that are permitted, or required to be permitted, to fish for Atlantic HMS are required to install VMS on board the vessel. Use of the VMS is required:

- Whenever the vessel has pelagic longline gear on board.
- Whenever a vessel issued a directed shark limited access permit, has bottom longline gear on board, is located between 33°00' N. latitude and 36°30' N. latitude, and the Mid-Atlantic shark closed area is closed as specified in § 635.21(d)(1).
- Whenever a vessel issued a directed shark limited access permit has gillnet gear on board from November 15 to April 15.

[Download the Atlantic HMS VMS Certification Statement \(PDF, 2 pages\) >](#)

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