

NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Region Seafood Dealer Electronic Reporting Questions & Answers

General Rules

Q: What are my reporting requirements?

A: The basic rule is that all seafood dealers permitted by NOAA Fisheries Service Greater Atlantic Region with reporting requirements must report all purchases and receipt of fish or shellfish electronically.

Q: What species do I have to report?

A: If you have a permit that requires mandatory reporting, you must report all species purchased, including Bluefin Tuna. This includes purchases from vessels and harvesters that do not have a NOAA Fisheries permit and species not managed by NOAA Fisheries (with the exception of the “inshore exempted species” defined in [CFR 648.2](#)).

Q: I mostly purchase species harvested inshore or managed by my state marine agency or not managed at all, do I have to report those purchases?

A: Yes. If you have a NOAA Fisheries permit from the Greater Atlantic Region that requires mandatory reporting you must report the receipt or purchase of all species, including Bluefin Tuna (with the exception of the “inshore exempted species” defined in [CFR 648.2](#)).

Q: What is the difference between the purchase of fish and the receipt of fish for commercial purposes, other than solely for transportation on land?

A: Purchase of fish involves the transfer of funds and receipt is for a commercial purpose involving the material handling of fish to add value to the product. Both types of transactions must be reported.

Q: I only offload fish from a vessel for shipment to another dealer for sale. Am I required to report these landings?

A: Yes. If you are the first person to receive fish for commercial purposes, other than solely for transportation of fish from a vessel, you are presumed to be a dealer for federal reporting purposes.

Q: I only have a NOAA Fisheries lobster dealer permit; do I have to report my purchases?

A: Yes. Effective January 1, 2010, federally permitted lobster-only dealers must report all purchases and receipt of fish or shellfish electronically (on a weekly basis), the same as other federal dealers.

Q: Can I report some species purchased to NOAA Fisheries and others to the state?

A: No. All species purchased or received must be reported through SAFIS under NOAA Fisheries rules. State agencies will also have access to these data. We continually work with states to help ensure that SAFIS will meet all dealer reporting requirements and reduce reporting burden.

Q: What if I don't have my own computer? Will I be able to go to my port agent's office to enter data, at least until I can afford one?

A: We have computer kiosks in our field offices for use by dealers during normal business hours. Please contact your local [field office](#) for more details.

Q: I'm a surfclam dealer and in the past only had to report clams. Do I have to report all purchases?

A: Yes. The rules for clam dealers are consistent with those for all other federally permitted dealers; however, you must use the system designed for offshore clams for Surf Clams and Ocean Quahogs and use SAFIS for all other species. This includes the purchase of inshore clams from federally or non-federally permitted vessels, and any bycatch of other species (with the exception of the "inshore exempted species" defined in [CFR 648.2](#)).

Q: What should I do if a vessel does not provide me with the trip identifier (VTR number)?

A: Tell the vessel operator/owner that you cannot purchase or receive the fish.

Q: If I do not want to report electronically, can I drop my federal permit?

A: You may drop your permit at any time by requesting this in writing from the NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Permits Office. However, you must maintain a permit to purchase most federally managed species from federally permitted vessels.

Q: If I drop my federal permit can I get it back?

A: A new permit may be obtained from the NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Permits Office by completing and submitting an application.

Q: If my federal dealer permit lapses, will I be dropped from SAFIS?

A: No. Once you are in SAFIS, your account will be maintained regardless of your permit status.

Reporting Implementation

Q: How do I report electronically?

A: There are several methods. These include:

- 1) A Web-based interface ([SAFIS](#)).
- 2) File transfer of data from your current computer system (accounting software or [Trip Ticket](#)).
- 3) File transfer from an approved state partner reporting system.

Q: I'm already using SAFIS through a state initiative. Will I keep my same user name and password?

A: Yes.

Q: Will I receive instructions and training material?

A: Yes, you should have received information on how to get started with electronic reporting when you received your permit in the mail. If you have not, contact your local [field office](#) and they will provide copies.

Q: I have a computer system that already captures trip level information. Can I use this system to meet my reporting requirements for electronic reporting?

A: Yes, as long as all of the required data elements are available in the system and a standard file can be output. SAFIS has the capability to accept files from a dealer's own computer system. There are some HMS reporting elements that cannot be uploaded and must be manually entered through SAFIS-K.

Q: Will this reporting meet my state reporting requirements?

A: This system is being coordinated with many Greater Atlantic states. It is the intention that the system will fulfill all reporting of landings with the exception of the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Program. However, you should continue to submit your state reports in the prior format unless/until you have received notification from your state that the electronic reports are acceptable.

Q: Who has access to my data?

A: Your individual reports can only be viewed by authorized federal and state employees and the authorized contract personnel who work with our data systems. Aggregate data (such as “total pounds of haddock landed in Massachusetts”) can be viewed by the public, but dealer-level data are *not* available on any public sites.

Q: Can I use SAFIS in my local library?

A: Yes. SAFIS is a true web-based system and can be accessed anywhere you have a high speed internet connection.

System Requirements

Q: I have a Macintosh computer. Will SAFIS work on this?

A: SAFIS does work on MAC but is not supported and may not display information as it will on a PC. Testing is only done on PC's.

Q: My computer is running Windows95. Will SAFIS work on this?

A: SAFIS may not work on machines running Windows95 or WindowsME or older computers and is not recommended for security purposes. .

Q: Do I need to logon to SAFIS in order to use file upload?

A: Yes. There is a button on the SAFIS homepage that initiates the file upload procedure.

Q: Can I add a species or size category that is not on the SAFIS list?

A: No. Contact the DER Help Desk (978-281-9212) and they will get this added for you.

Q: If a vessel or fisherman is not on the SAFIS list, how do we add these?

A: Contact the DER Help Desk (978-281-9212) and they will be able to add them for you.

Q: Can I leave the fisherman's name blank?

A: NOAA Fisheries Service does not require dealers to report the fisherman's name. However, many states do. Since this system is intended to meet all reporting requirements, a state may require that the fisherman's name be entered before they will accept a report. If your state does not, then you may use the "unknown" entry.

Q: What happens if I lose my connection or the system goes down while I am entering a report?

A: The system will keep any records that have been saved. If a report has not been saved, it will be lost and will have to be reentered. If a report has been saved before you have completed all information for that report, you should retrieve that report when you log back on to SAFIS and complete it.

Q: I have two locations where I buy fish. These are under the same NOAA Fisheries permit number. Do I have to make two reports?

A: No. Simply report each purchase under your dealer number. The port landed field will identify where the fish were landed. However, your state marine agency may require that two state permit numbers be reported.

Q: If I buy fish from a vessel's trip that lands in two different ports, how do I report?

A: You need to make two individual reports – one for each port landed.

Q: I cannot find all of the names of the fish I purchase in the SAFIS list.

A: For several species we have only the standard common name in the system. If you have a question about

the correct common name for a particular species, contact your local [field office](#). We will enter additional common names as we become aware of them. If the species itself is not on the list, it can be added.

Q: Down the road, can I review data that I put in years ago?

A: Yes, all data will be archived and can be retrieved at any time.

Vessel Reporting Issues

Q: As a federally permitted vessel, am I required to provide a dealer with my VTR serial number?

A: Yes, as a requirement of offloading your catch to a federally permitted dealer you must also provide that dealer with your vessel name, your federal permit number or your hull number, and the serial number from the VTR for the trip you are selling.

Q: I fished in more than one chart area or used more than one gear on a trip and so used more than one VTR. What serial number do I provide to the dealer?

A: The serial number from the first VTR in the series used on a trip should be provided.

Q: I operate an offshore clam vessel, what do I provide the dealer since I do not use the VTR?

A: Provide the dealer with the serial number of the clam report form. This is in the same location as the serial number on the VTR.

Q: Can a permitted vessel sell his federally regulated catch to a non-permitted dealer?

A: No. A Federally permitted vessel must sell federally managed species to a federally permitted dealer. Any dealer of federally managed species must have a federal dealer permit. You must record each dealer's four-digit federal permit number next to the dealer name on the Vessel Trip Report.

Q: Can a permitted vessel sell non-permitted species to a non-permitted dealer?

A: Yes.

Q: If I sell non-federally regulated species to a non-federally permitted dealer, do I still have to provide that dealer with my VTR serial number?

A: No.