



# Greater Atlantic Region Bulletin

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<http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/>  
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## **IMPORTANT NOTICE**

Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) Requirement for Vessels with Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Permits

*Effective September 1, 2014*

If your vessel has a limited access mackerel permit (Tiers 1, 2 and 3) or a longfin squid/butterfish moratorium permit, you must install and operate a VMS by **September 1, 2014**. If you have not purchased, installed, and activated a VMS unit on your vessel, please do not delay any longer. You will not be able to fish under these permits without an operational VMS.

### **Approved VMS vendors**

VENDOR	APPROVED VMS UNIT	PHONE	WEBSITE
Boatracs, Inc.	FMCT/G	(800) 262-8722	<a href="http://www.boatracs.com/">http://www.boatracs.com/</a>
Network Innovations (formerly GMPCS)	Thrane & Thrane Sailor TT-3026D	(888) 664-6727	<a href="http://www.gmpcs-us.com/">http://www.gmpcs-us.com/</a>
SkyMate	Stellar ST-2500G	(866) 759-6283	<a href="http://www.skymate.com/">http://www.skymate.com/</a>
CLS America	TST-100	(301) 925-4411	<a href="http://www.clsamerica.com/">http://www.clsamerica.com/</a>

More information is available on the VMS webpage at: <http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/vms/index.html> or by calling the Northeast VMS Team at (978) 281-9213, (Press 1 when prompted).

### **Reimbursement**

You may request reimbursement for the purchase of your VMS up to \$3,100, pending the availability of funds. The reimbursement program is managed by the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC). The VMS web page has information on the program, and the PSMFC website below has additional information, instructions and forms.

<http://www.psmfc.org/program/vessel-monitoring-system-reimbursement-program-vms?pid=17>

You may also call the NMFS VMS Support Center at (888) 219-9228 for information.

Once purchased and installed, you have VMS reporting requirements that you must follow when you are fishing under the permits noted above.

*For small entity compliance guides, this bulletin complies with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement and Fairness Act of 1996. This notice is authorized by the Regional Administrator of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Region.*

## **VMS Reporting Requirements**

VMS reporting instructions for vessel owners/operators are available on the VMS web page.

If your vessel has a limited access mackerel permit or a longfin squid/butterfish moratorium permit, you must send the following reports from your VMS when intending to take a mackerel or longfin squid trip to notify the NMFS Office of Law Enforcement:

- 1) **Activity Declaration.** Prior to leaving port on every trip, you must declare your intent to participate in the mackerel or longfin squid fishery by selecting and sending the appropriate activity and gear type on the VMS declaration screen in order to harvest, possess, or land mackerel/squid on that trip;
- 2) **Pre-Landing Notification.** For mackerel trips only, if you intend to land more than 20,000 lbs, provide the time and place of offloading at least 6 hrs prior to landing or, if fishing ends less than 6 hrs before landing, immediately upon leaving the fishing grounds;
- 3) **Daily Catch Report.** For each day of your trip, you must report by 9 am the following day the date the fish were caught, amount (lbs) of mackerel and/or longfin squid kept, and the total fish (lbs) kept.

You are prohibited from powering down your VMS when in port, unless authorized by NMFS. You may request a Letter of Exemption (LOE) from NMFS to power down your VMS if:

- 1) Your vessel will be out of the water for more than 72 hours; or
- 2) Your vessel will remain at the dock/mooring for 30 consecutive days or more. Your vessel is prohibited from leaving the dock/mooring until the VMS unit is powered back up and a VMS activity declaration is sent.

In both cases above, you may power down your VMS only after receiving your LOE. The application for a "VMS Power Down Exemption Request" is available on the VMS web page or by contacting the VMS Team.

## **Observer Notification when Laying-to Shoreward of Demarcation**

Vessels fishing for longfin squid must notify the observer program prior to the start of the trip for possible observer deployment. Some vessel owners have asked whether they would need to call in for an observer if, during a trip, the vessel lays-to shoreward of the VMS demarcation line without landing product, then resumes the fishing trip the next day. Generally, as long as the vessel has not entered port and has not landed any product, the operator does not have to call in to notify the observer program before they resume the trip. **However, each fishing scenario is different, so please contact us at 978-281-9315 to confirm how you intend to run your trip and we can help you be sure that you are complying with the required trip notification and reporting requirements.**

For more information, please visit the NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Region MSB webpage at: <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/sustainable/species/msb/>