



**NOAA
FISHERIES**

Q&A: Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Fishery Trip Reporting and VMS Positioning in the Greater Atlantic Region

Trip Reporting:

Fishing vessels with a permit for surf clams and/or ocean quahogs issued by NOAA Fisheries' Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) must report every fishing trip in one of two ways. This includes trips within state waters and trips targeting other species.

- A vessel on an Individual Transferable Quota (ITQ) trip must use tags and the Fishing Trip Record (Shellfish)/ clam logbook for reporting.
- A vessel on a non-ITQ trip (e.g., in state waters with state tags) must use the Vessel Trip Report for their activities. Instructions for this form can be found at: http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/aps/evtr/doc/vtr_inst.pdf

Q. If I'm fishing in federal waters harvesting clams under an ITQ permit, which form do I use?

A. The clam logbook should be used to report these trips.

Q. If I'm fishing under an ITQ permit, do I have to report any whelks, scallops or other species that I catch?

A. Yes, any other species that you catch should be reported on a Vessel Trip Report. This is in addition to reporting in the clam logbook.

Q. If I'm fishing in state waters and using state issued tags, do I need to report to NOAA/GARFO?

A. Yes, these trips should be reported using the Vessel Trip Report form. States may have additional reporting requirements, so check with your state marine fisheries agency.

Q. Do all species caught need to be reported from state water trips?

A. Yes, all species caught must be reported on the Vessel Trip Report form.

Q. If my boat is in another fishery, do I still have to report to NOAA/GARFO?

A. Yes, all fishing trips must be reported as required under a surfclam and ocean quahog permit.

Q. If I do not fish, do I still have to report?

A. Yes, a negative report, or Did Not Fish Report, is required if no trip was taken within a reporting timeframe.

Q. When are reports due to NOAA/GARFO?

A. Clam logbook reports for ITQ trips are due by the first Tuesday following the week the trip(s) occurred. If the vessel also holds a NE multispecies, Atlantic herring or any Atlantic mackerel, longfin squid, Illex squid, or butterfish permit, Vessel Trip Reports are due at the same time. All other Vessel Trip Reports are due within 15 days of the end of the month in which the trip(s) occurred.

Q. Do these requirements apply to the Maine mahogany clam fishery?

A. Yes, like the ITQ fishery, you must report your catch of ocean quahogs on the clam logbook, and any other species on a Vessel Trip Report.

VMS Positioning:

All surfclam and/or ocean quahog ITQ vessels (SF-1 and OQ-6 permits) must have a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) that is transmitting positions at all times unless on an approved power down exemption. This applies to Maine Mahogany Quahog vessels (OQ-7) as well.

Q. If my vessel is fishing in a non-ITQ fishery, such as inside state waters, does my VMS unit need to be turned on?

A. Yes, it must be on and transmitting 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, regardless of fishing activity.

Q. How do I obtain a power down exemption?

A. You may obtain a power down exemption form by contacting our Office of Law Enforcement's VMS team at 978-281-9213 or at this link:

<https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/aps/permits/forms/vmspowerdownexemptionform.pdf>

You may also contact your local NOAA/ GARFO port agent office. For a listing of field offices, go to:

<http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/sed/portagents/index.html>

Q. Where can I find information describing these requirements?

A. For more information, go to: <http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/vms/regs/index.html>

If you have questions on any of these topics, contact Doug Potts, Sustainable Fisheries Division, at 978-281-9341 or email him at Douglas.Potts@noaa.gov