



NOAA Fisheries

Northeast Seafood Dealer Electronic Reporting

Questions & Answers

General Rules

Q: When do these changes take effect?

A: All changes are effective on May 1, 2004.

Q: What are my reporting requirements under the new rule?

A: The basic change is that all seafood dealers permitted by NOAA Fisheries, Northeast Region with reporting requirements must report all purchases and receipt of fish electronically.

Q: What are the new data element requirements?

A: There are two new data elements that are required by the regulations. These are:

- 1) **Trip Identifier** - This is to be received from the vessel for each transaction and is defined as a vessel trip report serial number from one form completed for the trip. If multiple forms are completed for the trip, only one needs to be included.
- 2) **Disposition** - This is our standard utilization code for the fish landed. These include food, reduction, pet food, and bait.

Q: Will NOAA Fisheries accept any paper reports after May 1, 2004?

A: No, all transactions on or after May 1 must be reported electronically. However, you may continue to submit negative reports on paper until January 1, 2005 if you do not purchase or receive any fish for commercial purposes. If you do report a transaction, all subsequent reports, including null reports, must be submitted electronically.

Q: How can negative reports be submitted?

A: If you do not purchase or receive any fish for a commercial purpose you may submit the required negative reports on paper to your local field office through January 1, 2005, or electronically through SAFIS. However, if you purchase or receive any fish, these must be reported electronically and all negative reports from then on must be submitted electronically.

Q: What are the dealer categories?

A: Three dealer categories are defined in the regulation.

- 1) **Large dealers** are those that purchased \$300,000 or more for all species combined of any species any year from 2000 through 2002.
- 2) **Small dealers** are defined as those that purchased less than \$300,000 of all species each year during that time period.

3) *New dealers* are those who received a permit for the first time in 2004. Large and new dealers must report daily beginning on May 1, 2004.

Q: Can I contest which dealer category I have been assigned?

A: If you believe we made an error in your assigned category contact your local field office. Your port agent will provide you with information on the steps you need to take next. These include a written request to the Fishery Statistics Office.

Q: What species do I have to report?

A: If you have a permit that requires mandatory reporting you must report all species purchased. This includes purchases from vessels and harvesters that do not have a NOAA Fisheries permit and species not managed by NOAA Fisheries.

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 Northeast Region that requires mandatory reporting you must report the receipt or purchase of all species.

Q: What is the difference between the purchase of fish and the receipt of fish for commercial purposes, other than solely for transpiration 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 have a NOAA Fisheries lobster dealer permit, do I have to report my purchases?

A: No. Lobster permits do not have reporting requirements associated with them. However, you may have state reporting requirements. Please check with your state marine management agency.

Q: In the past I have reported some species purchased to NOAA Fisheries and some to the state. Can I keep this up?

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 are working with states to help ensure that SAFIS will meet all dealer reporting requirements and reduce reporting burden.

Q: What are the different reporting requirements for large and small dealers?

A: The only difference between the two groups of dealers is that large dealers must submit their reports daily. Small dealers must submit reports at least weekly. Both categories of dealers must submit their reports electronically.

Q: What if I don't yet have a computer after May 1st? Will I be able to go to my port agent's office to enter data, at least until I can afford one?

A: We will be setting up kiosk type computers in our field offices for use by dealers during normal business hours. Please contact your local port office for more details.

Q: I'm a surfclam dealer and currently only have to report clams. Do I now have to report all purchases?

A: Yes. The rules for clam dealers are now consistent with those for all other federally permitted dealers. This includes the purchase of inshore clams from federally or non-federally permitted vessels, and any bycatch of other species. However, currently you must use the system designed for offshore clams for those species and SAFIS for all other species.

Q: Will I still have to report purchases of quota managed species through the IVR system?

A: No. The IVR system will be shut off for dealers to make these reports for landings after May 1. You should report landings for quota limited species for the week of April 25 and ending on May 1 to the IVR call-in system. Purchases and receipt of fish from May 1 onward must be reported electronically through SAFIS.

Q: Will vessels still be required to report through the IVR system?

A: Yes. Those quotas managed through vessel reporting and research set aside landings will continue to be reported through the IVR system.

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

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 Northeast Permit and Compliance Team. 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 Northeast Permit and Compliance Team by completing and submitting an application. However, beginning on May 1, 2004 all new dealers must report electronically daily.

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 form
- 2) Web-based file transfer of data files from your current computer system.
- 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 in the mail. If you have not, contact your local port agent 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.

Q: Will this reporting meet my state reporting requirements?

A: This system is being developed in coordination with many northeast states. It is the intention that the system will meet all reporting of landings with the exception of the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Program. However, you should continue to submit your state reports until you receive notification from your state that the electronic reports are acceptable.

Q: Can I use SAFIS in my local library?

A: You may be able to, but the system requires that specialized software be loaded onto the local machine. Libraries may not allow this.

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.

System Requirements

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

A: No. Only PC-based computers will work. However, some Macintosh computers can operate as a PC-based/Windows system. Check your user manual for details.

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.

Q: Can I change my password once I log onto SAFIS?

A: Not at this point. The next release will include this ability.

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

A: Yes. This 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 your local field office 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 your local field office and they will be able to add them for you.

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

A: NOAA Fisheries 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, 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 under your dealer number, each purchase. 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: Right now we have only the standard common name in the system. If you have a questions about what the correct common name is of a species contact your local field office. We are working to put in additional common names. If the species is actually 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

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, and either 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 any one of the VTR's used on a trip may be provided.

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.

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.