



NOAA FISHERIES FACT SHEET



Answers to Commonly Asked Questions Regarding Vessel Trip Reports

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

If you have any questions about vessel reporting requirements, please contact the Vessel Trip Reporting Office at 978-281-9246. If you have any questions about vessel permits, please contact the Permits Office at 978-281-9370.

Introduction

Reporting regulations require that the owner or operator of any vessel issued a permit for any of the species listed below submit an accurate fishing log report detailing the fishing activity for each trip, regardless of species fished for or taken and regardless of the area fished, on forms supplied by or approved by the Regional Administrator. If no fishing trip is made during a month, a report stating so must be submitted.

Vessel trips must be reported on National Marine Fisheries Service approved forms or approved methods of reporting. FVTRs must be received or postmarked by the 15th of the following month from which the trip landed (e.g., trips landing in June are due by July 15). Did Not Fish reports are also due 15 days after the last day of the month in which no fishing activity took place. Did Not Fish reports may be submitted in advance if known periods of inactivity are anticipated.

The FVTR is to be filled out prior to entering port. Information that may not be known at that time, such as dealer name, dealer permit number, and date sold should be recorded once that information becomes available.

In order to be eligible for mandatory reporting permits vessel owners/operators must comply with all permit application requirements including the submission of any mandatory landing/negative reports. If the vessel owner/operator fails to meet their requirements for permit renewal, the permits listed below will not be issued.

Failure to comply with reporting requirements may result in a referral to the Office of Law Enforcement for appropriate action.

Protected Species

All species caught, whether kept or discarded and including all protected species are required to be reported on the FVTR. This information will be used to assess the distribution, seasonality, and level of sea turtle bycatch in commercial fishing operations to better protect these species, as required by the Endangered Species Act of 1973. For additional information, contact the Protected Resources Division, Northeast Region, at 978-281-9328.



Questions/Answers

- 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.
- Q:** I just received a letter stating my vessel was out of compliance for vessel trip reporting. Could you explain this to me?
- A:** Yes. I can explain the reporting time frame and requirements and which time periods are currently delinquent for the vessel in question. Permits with mandatory VTR reporting requirements will be withheld from issuance until such time all VTR reporting requirements have been fulfilled.
- Q:** I never received a logbook. What do I need to do?
- A:** Once your current address is confirmed a logbook and complete instructions package will be mailed to your attention. Please complete and submit reports for each trip taken during the relevant time period. In cases where information for reports/fields are not available in existing documentation use your best faith efforts to complete the VTR. You may also pick up a logbook package at any NMFS-NER Port Office.

Submission of Reports

Fishing Vessel Trip Reports (FVTR) must be received or postmarked by the 15th of the following month from which the trip landed (e.g., trips landing in June are due by July 15).

Submit the white original to:
NMFS
Vessel Trip Reporting Office
One Blackburn Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930

If you have any questions regarding the FVTRs, please call NMFS at (978) 281-9246

- Q:** I bought this boat recently, and I got this letter stating I was missing reports for periods prior to my ownership. What should I do about that?
- A:** You are not responsible for reporting trips that occurred prior to your ownership. If all trips occurring under your ownership have been sufficiently reported your vessel permit will be cleared from our non-compliance list.
- Q:** If my vessel wasn't fishing do I have to report that?
- A:** If a vessel does not fish for an entire calendar month, a Did Not Fish report is required. A separate report is required for each such month. The report must contain month/year, vessel name, hull, permit, operator name, operator number, and signature.
- Q:** If I fish in state waters, do I have to submit a trip report?
- A:** Yes. If you have VTR reporting requirements, you need to report all activity regardless of area fished or species fished for or taken.
- Q:** What if my vessel is used for experimental or research purposes? Do I have to submit a FVTR?
- A:** If a trip is a catch and release program, no FVTR is required. If the catch is retained and sold, held

for research, or used in home consumption then a FVTR is required.

Q: What if I take my boat out for recreational purposes only. Do I have to report?

A: No. You only need to report commercial, party, or charter trips. The party/charter trips are defined as accepting payment for vessel's use.

Q: I report to the NMFS Southeast office also. Do I still need to report to you?

A: If a trip has already been reported to the SE office you do not need to duplicate that effort and report it to the NERO. All trips taken that were not required to be reported to the SE must be reported to our office on the VTR.

Q: Can I fax you copies of missing trip reports to clear my boat?

A: Generally, No. Faxes typically are not legibly suitable for the VTR data processing software, thus an original hard copy is required. In the extreme cases where it's necessary to expedite the processing of a permit our office may allow a faxed copy to facilitate clearing the vessel from non-compliance. Even in those rare cases the hard copy is still required.

Q: If I change gear, mesh size, or area fished during a trip, how do I document the trip?

A: Complete a separate report page for any change in gear type, mesh size or chart area.

Q: I hold several federal permits. Do I have to complete more than one FVTR per trip?

A: No. Only one report is required for each trip regardless of how many permits a vessel holds.

Q: Do I have to complete a report if I am going out just to set gear?

A: No. FVTRs do not have to be completed if the vessel only sets gear and does not haul that or any other gear during that trip.

Mandatory Reporting Permits

Northeast Region Federal fisheries permits that require mandatory reporting include the following species:

- Northeast multispecies
- Black sea bass
- Summer flounder
- Spiny dogfish
- Monkfish
- Atlantic bluefish
- Atlantic sea scallop
- Atlantic herring
- Atlantic mackerel, squid, and butterfish
- Tilefish
- Scup
- Atlantic Deep-Sea red crab
- Skate

Q: What if I do not land/come into port and do not offload fish?

A: If no species are landed, complete all of the trip information and gear information fields and enter No Catch in the species code name column (#17).

Q: If I send in several reports at one time, do I have to sign and date every report?

A: Yes. All FVTRs must be signed and dated or they will be returned to you for completion.

Q: My vessel engages in dayboat fishing, why do I have to complete the date four times on a report?

A: All fields that require a date or time must be completed for the following reasons:

1. Date/Time Sailed field (#4) and Date/Time Landed field (#24) are necessary to determine the length of the trip.
2. Date sold column (#22) is needed to ensure the FVTR data coincides with the landing data reported by the dealer.
3. Signature Date field (#26) is required to certify that the information provided on the FVTR is true, complete and correct to the best of the owner/operator's knowledge.

Q: Why are there so many copies of the FVTR?

A: The white copy of the FVTR is submitted to NMFS and the yellow copy should be retained for your own records. The blue copy is for your State agency. Contact your State fisheries agency to determine if the blue copy is required. If necessary, the green or goldenrod copies may be submitted to the dealer(s) to whom you sold your catch in order to provide the dealer with the required VTR serial number.

Q: My supply of FVTRs is getting low. How do I get more?

A: FVTRs can be obtained by mailing in the pink renewal form contained in each logbook package to the NMFS address below. You may also obtain FVTRs by contacting the NMFS Vessel Trip Reporting staff, either in person, or by telephone at (978) 281-9157 or by contacting your local NMFS Field Office.

Q: The dealer I sold my catch to made a mistake and recorded an incorrect serial number from my VTR; can I alter the serial number on my report or develop my own report and use the next sequential serial number from my logbook?

A: No. The serial number is a preprinted unique number and is used as a control number by NMFS. Any changing or altering of a serial number will result in the FVTR being returned to you. If the dealer has already submitted data for this trip, the dealer may correct the VTR serial number in their data.

Q: How long do I have to keep copies of my logbook and where should it be stored?

A: FVTRs and any records upon which the reports were based must be kept on board the vessel for at least one year and retained by the owner/operator for a total of three years after the date of the last entry on the report.



New Interactive Voice Response Call-In System Requirements

As of June 1, 2006, vessels will be required to use the new Interactive Voice Response (IVR) call-in system to manage their Days-At-Sea (DAS) requirements unless they are required to or have elected to use the vessel monitoring system (VMS) for this purpose. The regulatory requirements have not changed, just the method by which this information is collected. The new IVR system will collect the DAS information submitted through the telephone keypad. NOAA Fisheries Service anticipates IVR will provide more efficient service to the user and result in significant cost savings to the taxpayer.

The system is simple to use. Vessels will call a toll-free telephone number, enter the 6-digit Federal fisheries permit number and a unique Agency personal identification number (PIN) and, through a series of IVR prompts and responses, obtain a sailing, landing or block confirmation number. It is important to safeguard the confirmation number in case you receive any inquiries about your activity from NOAA Fisheries Service, U.S. Coast Guard, or State law enforcement. The toll-free telephone number for this new system is 1-888-284-4904.

For more information regarding the new IVR call-in system, contact the NOAA Fisheries Service Office of Law Enforcement, at 978-281-9213 or email questions or concerns to nmfs.ole.ne@noaa.gov.

Q: Why do I need to complete a separate FVTR if I change area fished, mesh/ring size or gear type?

A: It is necessary to complete separate FVTRs in order to properly attribute effort and location data to your catch.

Q: My fishing activity is already captured through VMS? Do I need to submit a FVTR?

A: Yes. The VMS data does not capture all the data that is required by FVTRs, therefore, you are required to also complete a FVTR.