



NOAA
FISHERIES

Amendment 60: VMS Overview and Notification Requirements

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
September 2026 Meeting



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Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS)

Vessel Unit

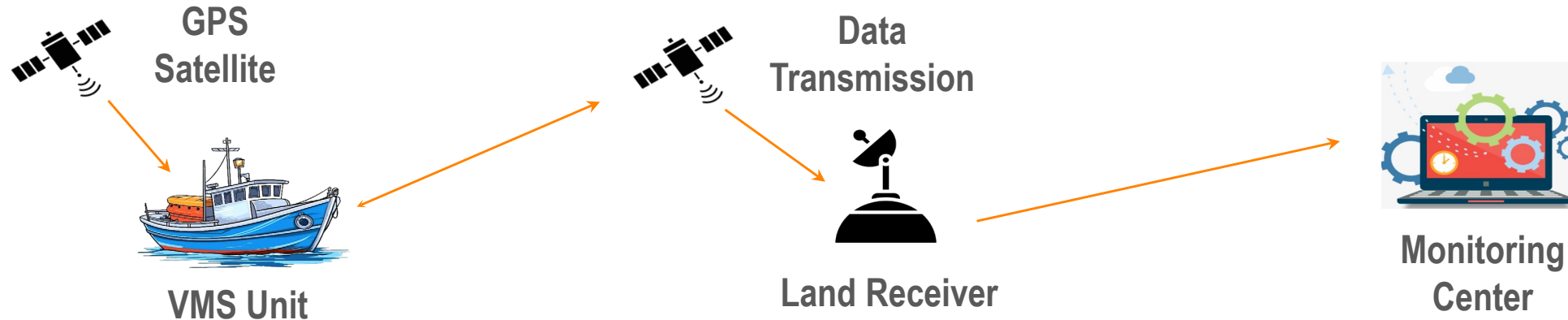
- **VMS Unit:** Onboard transceiver sends position, vessel identification.
- **Reporting:** Transmits fisheries specific form data.
- **Communication:** 2-Way communication.

Transmission

- **Satellite/Cellular Transmission:** Secure 2-way communication link transmitting data to NOAA via vendor.
- **GPS:** Position fixes via Geolocation Satellite Constellations

Monitoring Center

- VMS Data Storage
- VMS Visualization Software
- System Operations and Security
- Illegal Fishing Monitoring
- Fisheries Management Monitoring



VMS Role in Fishery Management

VMS Technology

A secure satellite or cellular based GPS tracking device.

Currently monitors over 4,000 vessels.

Funding Support

Reimbursement Funds Available

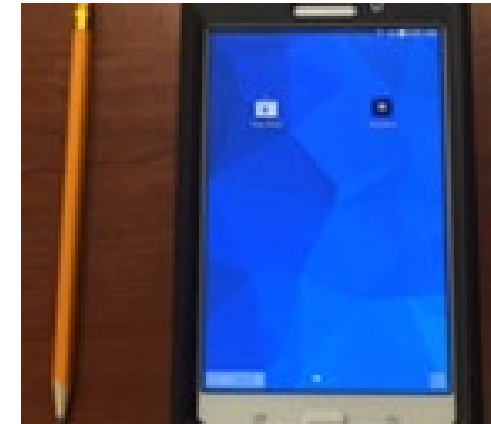
Funds available per unit per qualified new vessel owner:

- If cellular-approved units, up to **\$950**
- If only satellite units, up to **\$3,100**

VMS System Requirements



FMP Specific VMS Regulations



Typical VMS Uses in Fisheries

- Managing sensitive and protected areas, like marine sanctuaries.
- Monitoring activity and arrivals in port to plan for sampling and accountability.
- Supporting catch share programs.
- Tracking, monitoring, and predicting fishing effort, activity, and location.
- Managing observer programs.
- Verifying/validating data from other sources.
- Identifying fishing vessels.

VMS Reimbursement Program Information

Program Administration

Funds are managed and distributed through the [Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission](#) (PSMFC).

Funding Status

Funds are contingent year to year, but have historically been available.

Funding availability may change between now and implementation. Involve VMS Program throughout the amendment process.

If 100% reimbursement is unavailable, the Council or industry may want to consider partial funding.

Not Reimbursable

The program strictly excludes coverage for:

- Monthly communication services
- Equipment repairs
- Installation Costs

Limits

One-Time-Only Program: Limited to one reimbursement per vessel per owner.

Exception: If NMFS causes a unit to become non-compliant, then subsequent reimbursement opportunities may be available.



VMS Reimbursement Program Steps

01 Eligibility

Review NOAA Fisheries regional, [Type-Approved VMS Units information](#).

02 Purchase & Install

Buy a type-approved VMS unit and have it installed by a certified marine technician.

03 Get Confirmation

Call the NOAA OLE VMS Help Desk at **888-219-9228** to get your four-digit confirmation number.

04 Documents

Collect your paid itemized sales invoice (showing transmitter number), federal fisheries permit, and vessel certificate or registration.

05 Form Completion

Complete and sign [VMS Reimbursement Request](#) including documents.

06 Submit Request

Submit via mail or email (vms@psmfc.org) to the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission.



VMS Type-Approvals & Regulations

Evaluation & Approval Process

Application

Type-approval requester (VMS Vendor) submits application for specific fisheries directly to the **HQ VMS Program Manager**.

Testing

Units undergo rigorous evaluation, conducted model by model.

Currently, Contractor performs testing and delivers recommendations.

Issuance

The OLE Deputy Director officially issues the type-approval upon successful testing.

Market Authorization & Standards

Authorized Sales

Approved units are certified for commercial sale in **any fishery** where that specific model is authorized (type-approved).

Ongoing Standards

Vendors must continuously maintain high operational standards.

Dedicated **customer service** is mandatory.

Revocation Rules

Clear and strict **revocation procedures** are established for units that fail ongoing standards compliance.



VMS Vendor Contacts

- Prices and costs will vary by VMS Vendor and unit model
- Suggest Council Staff contact individual vendors for specific information on:
 - VMS Plans
 - Monthly Costs
 - Add-on features and cost

TYPE APPROVED
VMS UNITS



VMS Forms



VMS Form 'Types'

The VMS framework consists of three distinct subsets of forms tailored for specific reporting needs:

- Declarations (hail-outs)
- Landing notifications (hail-ins)
- Fishery-specific data forms



Dual-HMS Concerns

Interaction with dual-HMS permitted vessels presents several key operational challenges:

- HMS requires a declaration
- Changing existing forms is highly costly and time intensive (~\$20K per vendor)
- Modifications for only a small-group may cause confusion



Proposed Solution

Create an independent, fishery-specific form (e.g., **Gear Change Form**) detached from declarations:

- Provides automatic time-stamp at form submission
- Offers flexibility to include custom, fishery-specific fields
- New form will take time and incur administrative costs



Comparison of Methods for Notification

Category	Call Service	Satellite VMS	Cellular VMS
At-sea Notification	✗	✓	✗
Time stamp of gear change	✓**	✓	✓**
Verify fishing location	✗	✓	✓**
Currently available	✗	✓	?
Existing data system	✗	✓	✓
Used to monitor for closed areas	✗	✓	✗
Information available at landing	?	✓	?**
No transmission lag	?	✓	✗
Current approved vendors	✗	✓	✗

**** Possible to receive data, but may be not effective for real-time verification**

Vessels Impacts

- 5-Year Analysis (2020-2024)
 - Vessels with bottom longline gear trips submitted to the Coastal Logbook reporting program
 - 39 unique vessels took 1,531 trips
- Single-Year Analysis (2026)
 - 41 Vessels with both a shark directed permit (SKD) and a Unlimited Snapper Grouper permit (SG1)
 - Majority are in Florida (n = 24), followed by North Carolina (n = 10)
- Considerations for current bottom longline Vessels
 - HMS VMS
 - Still abide by HMS permit requirements
 - Closure areas still in effect
 - Reporting requirements do not change
 - HMS stowing longline gear definition
 - Possession of prohibited species conflict with Snapper-Grouper
 - Gear Type/Species Target switch while underway will require updated trip declaration under VMS regulations



Decision Considerations

- Reporting Methods
 - Call Service or VMS (satellite or cellular)
- VMS decisions
 - Satellite or Cellular
 - Positioning frequency (e.g., “always on” or “trip specific”; hourly location ping)
- Consider any interactions with existing requirements for dual HMS/SG1 permitted vessels (e.g., VMS, gear, and species)
- Agreement with data fields required (see bonus slide, presented earlier in the year)
- “Gear Change” form submission timing
- Administrative burden (time and cost to implement)
- Feedback from the LE AP on enforceability concerns





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Questions





Gear Notification Data Fields

- Vessel name and registration number (USCG or State)
- Permit number (SG1 or SG2)
- Date and time (system generated)
- Area to fish longline gear
- Are they switching TO or FROM bottom longline gear?
- Target fishery for the bottom longline*
- Landing port (determines which enforcement agents receive notifications)*
- Estimated date and time of landing*

* Useful fields in order to inform the correct officers and meet the vessel at dock