

Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting Program



An Update from NOAA Fisheries and the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council:



March 3, 2020

Greetings Permit Holder,

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Gulf Council) developed a Generic Amendment to the Reef Fish and Coastal Migratory Pelagic Fishery Management Plans to establish electronic reporting requirements for federally permitted charter vessels (For-Hire Reporting Amendment). The Gulf Council gathered comments from charter captains during the development of the For-Hire Reporting Amendment. The Gulf Council approved the For-Hire Amendment for review by the Secretary of Commerce at its January 2017 meeting. A proposed rule published on October 26, 2018, and the comment period ended on January 9, 2019. NOAA Fisheries has approved the For-Hire Amendment; however, publication of a final rule, which will implement the regulations is pending.

NOAA Fisheries is working to develop and implement the new for-hire electronic reporting program in the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) reef fish and coastal migratory pelagic fisheries. Technical requirements and challenges that are needed to enable electronic reporting are currently being addressed. Here is an update on the timeline for implementation. The Gulf for-hire electronic reporting program will be implemented in two phases:

Phase one will require operators of vessels with federal for-hire permits to:

- Make a trip declaration (hail-out) prior to departing on a trip.
- Submit an electronic fishing report (logbook) for each trip before offloading fish.

Phase two will require operators of vessels with federal for-hire permits to:

- Equip vessels with a location tracking device that reports vessel location to NOAA Fisheries.

It is anticipated that Phase one will begin on or around **September 1, 2020**, and Phase two will be implemented later in 2020. The date for Phase one will be announced in the next couple of months. The Gulf Council will send a press release and NOAA Fisheries will post a Fishery Bulletin with the beginning date for Phase two.

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The final rule for the South Atlantic for-hire electronic reporting program has published and the implementation date of this program is also September 1, 2020. Having the same implementation dates for the two programs should minimize the burden on captains who hold both Gulf and South Atlantic federal for-hire permits. Captains that hold both Gulf and South Atlantic federal for-hire permits should follow the Gulf reporting requirements.

Additionally, it is anticipated that both systems will be up and running in advance of September 1, 2020. This will allow you to download the appropriate software, set-up accounts, and begin reporting before electronic reporting becomes mandatory if you would like to familiarize yourself with the new requirements.

Once the implementation date for Phase one of the Gulf for-hire electronic reporting program is determined, you will be sent a packet with step-by-step instructions detailing what you need to do to prepare for the reporting program. In addition, NOAA Fisheries and the Gulf Council will host meetings near the end of the summer, across the region, to assist you with everything you need to know to participate in the electronic reporting program. NOAA Fisheries has set-up a webpage with information for fishermen located at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/southeast/et>.

Your continued patience and collaboration during the development of this program is greatly appreciated. If you should have any questions please contact NOAA Fisheries by email or phone at SER.electronicreporting@noaa.gov, or 833-707-1632.

NOAA Fisheries and Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

