

Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting Program



Greetings Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish and Coastal Migratory Charter/Headboat Permit Holders:

NOAA Fisheries is implementing new reporting requirements for for-hire vessels through the Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting Program. The purpose of this program is to provide more accurate and reliable fisheries information about for-hire catch, effort, and discards. By providing this information, you will directly improve data collection that is critical to population assessments and better fisheries management. Electronic reporting can also provide more timely, accurate, and reliable information for species with low catches, low annual catch limits, or that are rarely encountered.

All federal Reef Fish and/or Coastal Migratory Pelagic Charter/Headboat Permit holders are required to electronically report fishing effort and landings starting January 5, 2021. Permit holders with both Gulf and South Atlantic permits are required to meet the Gulf requirements, even if you don't fish in the Gulf of Mexico. Complying with Gulf requirements will also satisfy South Atlantic requirements for dual permit holders.

Gulf Charter/Headboat Permit holders are required to declare each fishing trip prior to leaving the dock and to submit an electronic fishing report before offloading fish at the end of the trip. Position reporting units (satellite or cellular VMS) are also required on each vessel. The position reporting requirements are not yet effective and will be implemented at a later date.

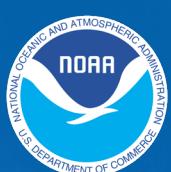
Please take time to read through the enclosed tool kit thoroughly as it outlines all of the program requirements. We highly recommend you take advantage of the other products listed below, such as watching the instructional videos and attending the webinar. Reach out to us directly with any questions.

- Instructional videos: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/southeast/et>.
- Webinars to answer your questions: scheduled for **10:00 AM-12:00 PM and 6:00-8:00 PM, EST** on **December 15, 2020**. Details are available at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/southeast/et>.
- A customer service hotline: available from **8:00-4:30, EST** at **1-833-707-1632**.
- A customer service email: ser.electronicreporting@noaa.gov.

We are here to help, and truly respect your time and business operations. This program is a big transition for all of us, and we look forward to working with you during the implementation. Our goals are to provide each fisherman with excellent customer service, improve for-hire data collection, and reduce the amount of time you spend reporting so you can focus more time on your customers.

Sincerely,

The Southeast Electronic Reporting Team at NOAA Fisheries and the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council



The Requirements

Note: position reporting requirements will become effective at a later date.
Permit holders will be notified when they are going to go into effect.



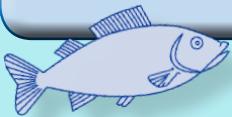
Fishermen with Gulf of Mexico federal charter/headboat permits for Reef Fish or Coastal Migratory Pelagics issued by NOAA Fisheries' Southeast Regional Office, will be required to electronically submit a fishing report which includes information such as fishing effort, landings, economic information, and vessel location, through the NOAA Fisheries' Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting Program.

A trip declaration (hail-out) must be made prior to leaving the dock for any trip.

- **Electronic reports must be submitted for each fishing trip prior to offloading fish.**
 - If no fish are harvested, you will need to complete a report within 30 minutes of landing.
- **Vessels must be equipped with a position reporting unit (satellite or cellular vessel monitoring system) that:**
 - is approved by NOAA Fisheries for use in this program.
 - operates 24 hours a day.
 - collects your location data at least once an hour for transmission to NOAA Fisheries.
 - is installed by a professional that is approved by the unit's vendor.

Note:

Federal charter/headboat permits issued by NOAA Fisheries' Southeast Regional Office are tied to a vessel. If you own multiple vessels with different federal permits, each vessel may have different reporting requirements. As a result, individuals with multiple vessels will receive one informational toolkit for each permitted vessel.



Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting Program

What do I need to do to go on a fishing trip?

Step 1: Declare your fishing trip before leaving the dock. (See Requirements and Making a Trip Declaration)

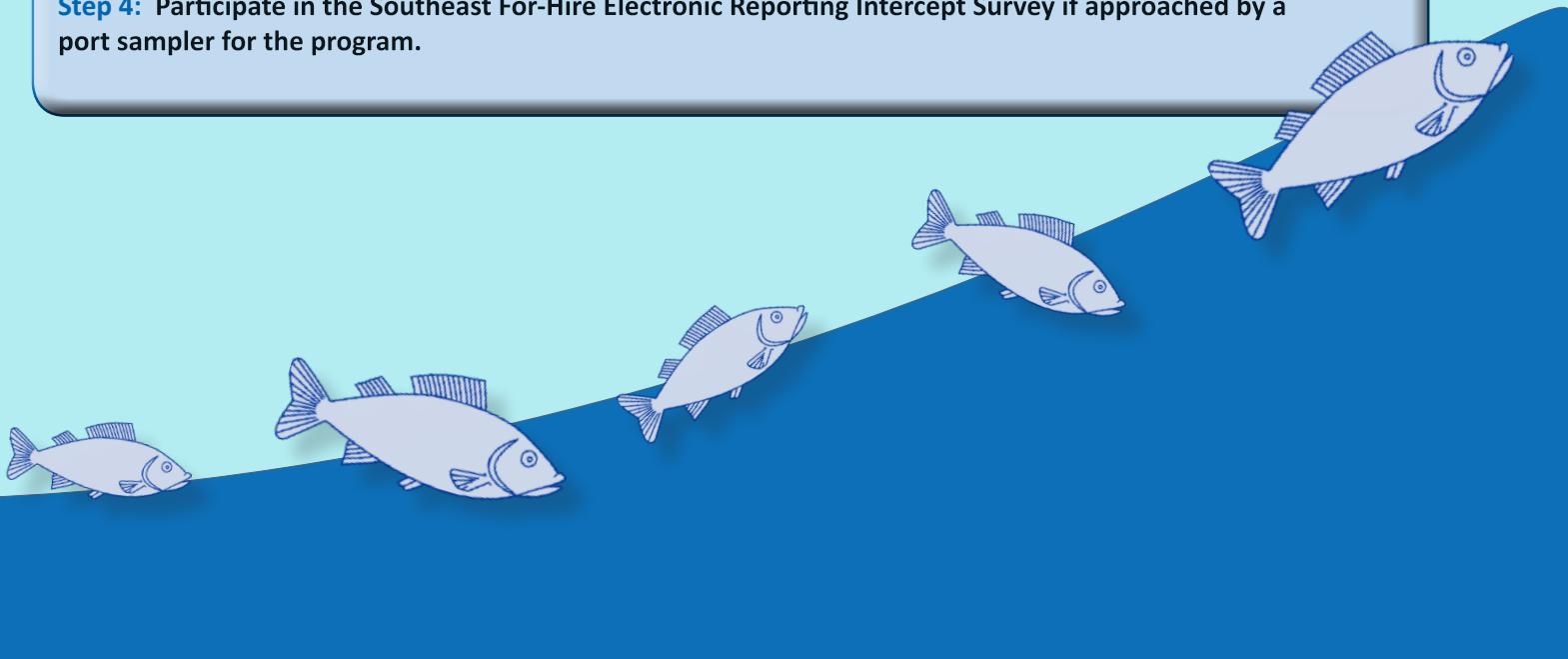
On the declaration, you must report your estimated end date/time and landing location. Landing locations must be verified by the Southeast For-Hire Reporting Program before you submit your declaration.

Step 2: Keep track of what you are keeping and discarding.

Keep track of all of the fish you catch and discard (the enclosed tally sheet may help).

Step 3: Complete and submit your electronic fishing report before offloading fish. (See Requirements and What Do I Report?)

Step 4: Participate in the Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting Intercept Survey if approached by a port sampler for the program.



Making a Trip Declaration

Introduction

You are required to make a trip declaration (hail-out) prior to departing for any trip. When you make a trip declaration you will need to report the following:

- Type of trip (e.g., for-hire, commercial, recreational, or other trip)
- Expected return time (For-Hire trip only)
- Verified landing location (For-Hire trip only)

Please see reverse side for verified landing location information.

Purpose

Once you submit your trip declaration, NOAA Fisheries and partners (i.e. Office of Law Enforcement and state port samplers) are notified that your vessel has left the dock and they will know your anticipated time of return.

A trip declaration also indicates that an electronic fishing report should be expected upon completion of your trip.

Timing

You must complete a trip declaration before leaving the dock. Trip declarations can be made as far in advance as needed.

If you make a trip declaration and the trip is cancelled, please contact the Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting Program at **1-833-707-1632** or ser.electronicreporting@noaa.gov. Otherwise, a fishing report will be expected and your permit may be out of compliance.

Making Your Trip Declaration

Make your trip declaration from the device you use to complete your fishing report (position reporting unit, smart-phone, tablet). You'll need to log into your reporting system, select "Trip Declaration," and complete the required fields.

Modifying Your Trip Declaration

- There is no requirement to update the declaration if the landing location or time changes. However, if you have a satellite-based position reporting unit, you will have an option to submit a new declaration with your modified landing time or location.
- There is no time limit for making your return notification. The commercial reporting program requires landing notification to be made three hours before landing; however, the Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting Program does not require such notice.
- Under any emergency condition, you should return to port without worrying about the return time reported in your trip declaration.

Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting Program



Frequently Asked Questions

What should I do if my equipment is not allowing me to declare my fishing trip?

Please have a back-up reporting option available (phone, tablet, laptop) or call your office or home and have someone else submit for you. If these options don't work please call the help-line at **1-833-707-1632** to notify them that you are experiencing difficulties, and then contact your reporting software provider for help troubleshooting the issue.

Do I need to declare a personal, non-fishing, or commercial trip?

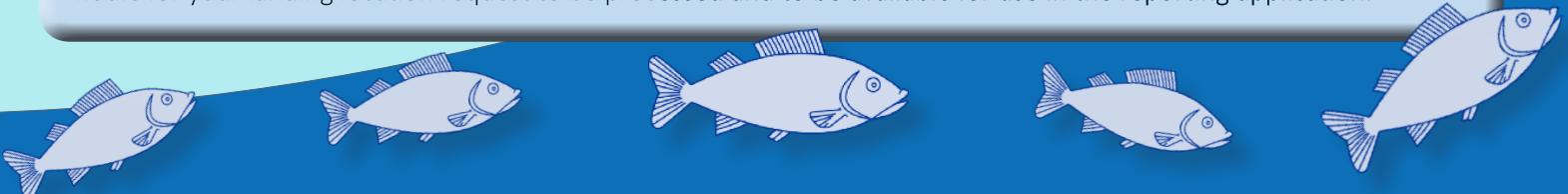
You will need to submit a declaration that identifies the type of trip you are going on. If you select a charter or head-boat trip, you must complete a fishing report for that trip. If you select another trip type, such as private or a non-fishing trip, no additional data are required. If you are going on a commercial trip, you will need to follow the reporting requirements for your commercial permit.

Do I need to declare my fishing trip if I'm only going fishing in the South Atlantic or in state waters?

If you have a Gulf permit, you are required to declare your trip before your vessel leaves the dock, regardless of where you fish or what type of trip you're taking.

How do I get a landing location verified for the Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting Program?

There is a list of verified landing locations posted on our website. If you do not see your desired landing location on that list, you can request a new landing location by submitting an online landing location request form. The electronic form can be found on the our website: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/southeast/et>. Please allow 72 hours for your landing location request to be processed and to be available for use in the reporting application.



Position Reporting

Note: position reporting requirements will become effective at a later date.
Permit holders will be notified when they are going to go into effect.

Purpose

The position reporting requirement is essential for validating the information collected through the Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting Program. Position reporting units will allow managers and scientists to determine when trips are occurring and when to expect electronic fishing reports following a trip's completion.

Approved Units

Units approved for the Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting Program are listed at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/southeast/et>. There are two categories of position reporting units. Satellite based units, commonly referred to as vessel monitoring systems (VMS), and cellular based units. We are in the process of approving position reporting units and the units are not currently required. When the position reporting device requirements become effective, we will provide additional information including which units have been approved. Below is a comparison of satellite and cellular units:

Satellite

- Transmits location in-real-time
- Allows for submission of revised trip declaration
- May provide extra features (e.g. ship-to-shore communication)
- Low failure rate (less than 1%; life of VMS units 5-10 years)
- May not be ideal for vessels stored under cover (requires satellite connectivity)
- Average cost for unit and monthly service may be more expensive

Both

- Collects location data once an hour
- May have integrated electronic trip reports
- Must be installed by a professional approved by device vendor
- May require an additional device (phone, tablet, or laptop) to complete electronic trip report
- Hardwired and solar options may be available

Cellular

- Transmits location data once the vessel returns to cellular range
- Unknown failure rate
- Will not be ideal for vessels that offload in areas with unreliable cellular service
- Average cost for unit and monthly service may be less expensive

Reimbursement

Funds may be available to reimburse you for the purchase of your approved unit. For more information on reimbursement visit: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/southeast/et>. There are installation requirements that must be met in order to be eligible for reimbursement.

Data Security

The Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting Program is committed to keeping the information you report secure. All data submitted to NOAA Fisheries through this program, including catch and location information, meet strict federal standards for data security and confidentiality.

Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting Program



Frequently Asked Questions

Can I use the position reporting unit that I currently use for the commercial reef fish fishery?

Most of the position reporting units that are approved for the commercial fishery are also approved for the Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting Program. Some units will offer only position tracking and others will allow for fishing reports and declarations to be done through the system. When the program becomes effective, you may choose to use your current position reporting unit system if it is approved for the Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting Program. A list of approved units can be found at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/southeast/et>. The website will be updated as new hardware is approved for the program.

What if I won't be using my vessel for an extended period of time?

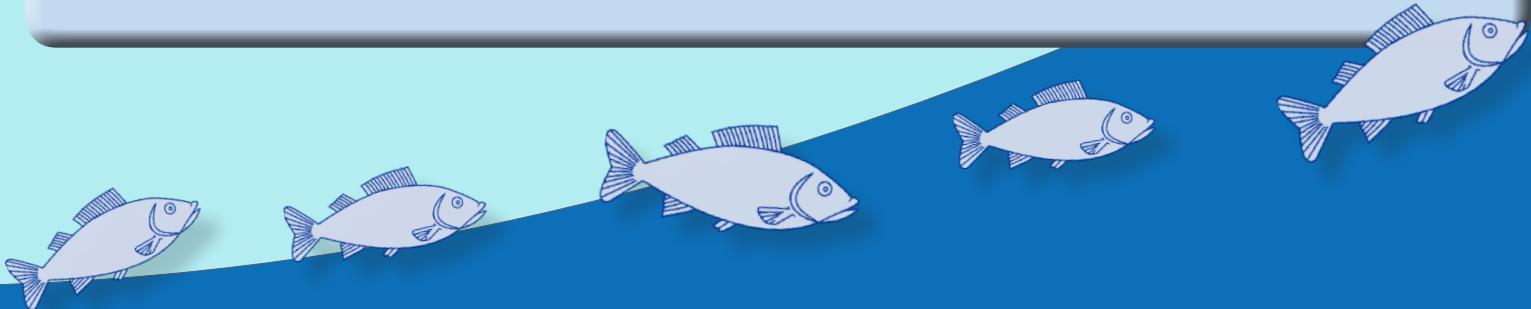
If you want to turn your unit off you'll need to complete a power-down exemption request form, which can be found on our website at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/southeast/et>. This will allow you to turn your unit off for 72 hours or more. Your vessel must be out of the water or remain at port for the duration of your power-down exemption, which is a minimum of 72 hours. Due to the restrictive nature of these exemptions, power-down exemption requests should be carefully considered. At the end of your power-down exemption period, you can turn on your position reporting unit and return to your normal fishing behaviors.

I use my position reporting unit to submit my trip declaration and fishing report. What should I do if my unit fails to submit the information required?

If you plan to submit your trip declarations and fishing reports through your position reporting unit, please have a back-up option available (phone, tablet, laptop) or call your office or home and have someone else submit for you. If these options don't work please call the help-line at **1-833-707-1632** to notify them that you are experiencing difficulties and then contact your reporting software or hardware provider for help troubleshooting the issue.

What should I do if I lose my GPS signal?

If a position reporting unit stops working, please contact the hardware vendor to remedy the situation. If the problem is not remedied you will need to contact the Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting Program for further instructions. If your unit does not work, you may need to obtain a power-down exemption, while your unit is being repaired.



What Do I Report?

The Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting Program will ask questions to gather the following types of information:

TRIP INFORMATION

- Captain and vessel information
- Number of crew and anglers
- Trip start and end date and time
- End Port (landing location)
- Hours fished
- Fishing location and fishing depth
- Fishing method



CATCH

- All fish caught and discarded (No matter where caught)

ECONOMIC INFORMATION

- Trip fee
- Fuel used and fuel cost

The economic information will improve our understanding of the fisheries as a whole and the fish populations you rely on to operate a successful business. The information will also help managers account for potential social and economic impacts of management decisions, in addition to helping quantify damages from disasters.

TRIP DECLARATION

- Vessel information
- Trip type
- Start date and time
- Estimated end date and time
- Verified landing location



POSITION REPORTING

- Vessel location once per hour



Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting Program

Frequently Asked Questions

What species must I report?

You must report all fish caught, regardless of where you fish or what species you are targeting.

Do I need to report if I am going on a personal, non-fishing, or commercial trip?

You will need to submit a declaration that identifies the type of trip you are going on. If you select a charter or headboat trip, you must complete a fishing report for that trip. If you select another trip type, such as private or a non-fishing trip, no additional data are required. If you are going on a commercial trip, you will need to follow the reporting requirements for your commercial permit.

Why do I need to report economic information?

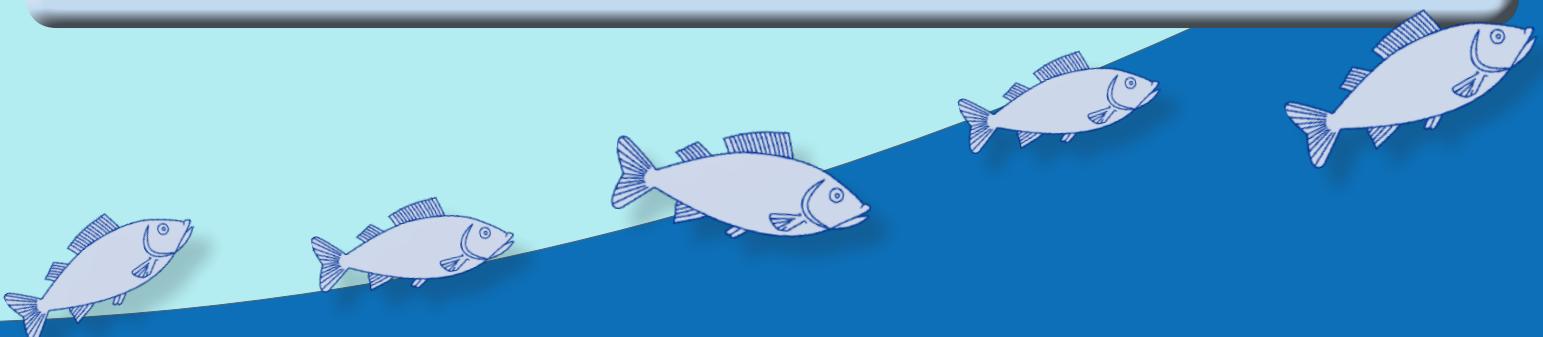
Information on charter fees, amount of fuel used, and fuel price per gallon will be used to obtain better economic information on the federal for-hire sector. This information can be used for evaluating the value of federal for-hire fisheries, measuring the economic impacts of management actions on federal for-hire fishermen and businesses, and determining the impacts of disasters on fishermen and fishing communities due to catastrophic events, such as hurricanes.

What if I forget to submit my fishing report?

If you forget to submit your fishing report, submit it as soon as possible. You will receive an automated notification through email indicating that you have a late or missing report. The Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting Program may reach out to fishermen with delinquent reports.

What if I accidentally input incorrect information in my report?

Contact the Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting Program and we will work with you to correct the report. You can contact us at **1-833-707-1632** or via email at ser.electronicreporting@noaa.gov.



Getting Started With Electronic Fishing Reports

Step 1: Select a Reporting Device

- You'll be able to submit reports using a computer, smartphone, tablet, or a position reporting unit that is capable of submitting forms.
- Ensure that:
 - your device is capable of sending reports via satellite or internet connection.
 - your device allows you to submit a report before offloading fish.
 - the software you choose is compatible with your reporting device.



Step 2: Select Software

- Software must be approved for the Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting Program.
- Different software vendors offer unique features such as:
 - the ability to make trip declarations.
 - the ability to incorporate reporting requirements from other programs.
 - the ability to set up favorites for frequently used data fields.
 - personal preferences related to design and functionality.
- A list of reporting device options and comparison of features can be found at:
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/southeast/et>.



Step 3: Download Reporting Software on your Device

- Your software vendor will provide instructions on how to download software onto your chosen reporting device. You can find vendor information on our website at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/southeast/et>.
- Ensure that your reporting device is updated and that you are using the latest version of the software you choose.
- If you use a position reporting unit that allows you to submit trip declarations and fishing reports, the software will be included.



Step 4: Set-up a User Account

- Vendors will offer instructions on their website and provide help desk support.
- Some programs will allow permit holders to create sub-accounts for different vessels so you can choose to create separate accounts for different captains.

Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting Program



Frequently Asked Questions

What do I do if I have an issue with my position reporting unit or software?

Contact your unit hardware/software vendor first. Each vendor will have a help desk to assist you with questions about how to get set up, how to operate the software, and to assist with your account. If you have additional questions, contact the Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting Program at **1-833-707-1632**.

What information will I need to set up an account?

This will differ by vendor. In most cases you will need your vessel name, vessel permit number(s), vessel permit holder name, contact address, email, and birthdate.

How do I know if the software I choose is approved for the Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting Program?

All the software programs that meet the technical specifications of the Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting Program and are approved for use will be listed at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/southeast/et>. The website will be updated as new software programs are approved for the program.

How much does the position reporting unit cost?

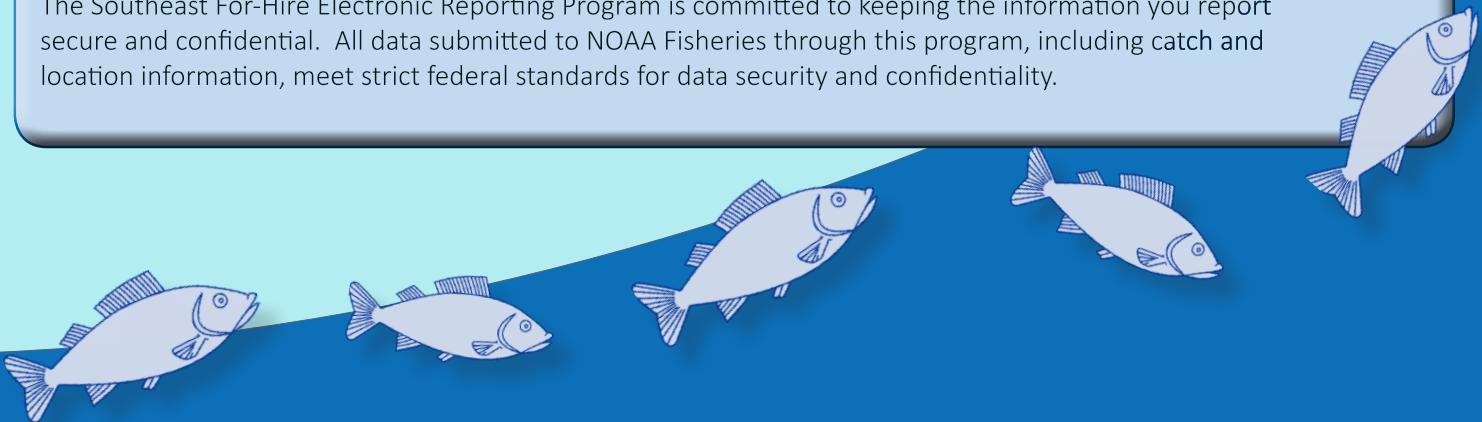
These costs are determined by the vendors and may vary based on a variety of features. The estimated purchase cost for a cellular-based position reporting unit is between \$150.00 - \$800.00, with estimated \$10.00 - \$40.00, monthly fees. The estimated purchase cost range for a satellite-based position reporting unit is between \$2,000.00 - \$3,000.00. The monthly fees are estimated to be \$40.00 - \$75.00 per month for satellite service. Many vendors may offer data packages based on level of use. There is a position reporting unit reimbursement fund that can be used to cover the purchase of the units. It is suggested that permit holders review the requirements for reimbursement. More details can be found at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/southeast/et>.

How much does the software cost?

The costs for software are set by the software provider. There are free software options available. You will be responsible for any fees associated with connecting to the internet or cellular network to transmit data.

How secure is my account information?

The Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting Program is committed to keeping the information you report secure and confidential. All data submitted to NOAA Fisheries through this program, including catch and location information, meet strict federal standards for data security and confidentiality.



Who is Required to Report?

Permit holders with the following federal-charter/headboat permits are required to report:

- Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish
- Gulf of Mexico Coastal Migratory Pelagics (including Historical Captain Permits)

Reporting Across Fisheries

You must meet the reporting requirements for all of your permits. In an ongoing effort to streamline reporting requirements, some software will allow one report to satisfy the requirements of multiple reporting programs.

How to report if you have the following permits:

South Atlantic Charter/Headboat Permits



If you have both a Gulf Charter/Headboat permit and a South Atlantic or Atlantic Charter/Headboat permit (South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper, Atlantic Coastal Migratory Pelagics, and Atlantic Dolphin/Wahoo), you must comply with the Gulf requirements, regardless of where you fish or what species you target.

Southeast Region Headboat Survey



If you are already reporting to the headboat survey, you must continue to use VESL software to satisfy the requirements of the Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting Program. You must also comply with all other Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting requirements.

Greater Atlantic Region For-Hire Permits



If you have both a Gulf/Charter Headboat Permit and a Greater Atlantic Region For-Hire (GARFO) Permit you must comply with the Gulf regulations regardless of where you fish or what species you target. Some of the approved software may allow you to use one report to fulfill Greater Atlantic Region and Gulf Charter/Headboat permit requirements.

Highly Migratory Species For-Hire Permits



If you have a Highly Migratory Species permit, you are required to report certain species within 24 hours. Some approved software for the Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting Program may allow you to submit one report to satisfy the requirements of both programs. If you are currently reporting to the Highly Migratory Species program on a software application that is not approved for use in the Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting Program, you will need to submit multiple reports.

Frequently Asked Questions

What do I do if I hold a permit, but don't fish under the permit?

If you have a Gulf Charter/Headboat permit but don't actively fish under that permit, you will not need to hail out or submit fishing reports unless the permitted vessel leaves the dock. You will still need to meet the location tracking requirements of the permit when they become effective. Power down exemptions are available for periods longer than 72 hours and must be requested through the power down exemption online form, available at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/southeast/et>. When you begin to use the vessel associated with your permit, you will need to comply with all reporting requirements.

What if I have both Gulf and South Atlantic or Atlantic permits, but don't fish in the Gulf of Mexico?

If you have both a Gulf Charter/Headboat permit and a South Atlantic or Atlantic Charter/Headboat permit, you must meet the requirements of the Gulf program, regardless of whether you fish in the Gulf of Mexico.

What if I have both Gulf and South Atlantic or Atlantic permits, but don't fish in the South Atlantic?

If you have both a Gulf Charter/Headboat permit and a South Atlantic or Atlantic Charter/Headboat permit, you must meet the requirements of the Gulf program, regardless of your fishing location.

If I am only fishing in state waters, do I need to report?

If you hold a Gulf Charter/Headboat permit you must report all species caught regardless of where you are fishing or what you are harvesting.

Do I need to keep reporting to the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP)?

The MRIP For-Hire Survey will continue for now. Side-by-side comparisons between data collection methods are necessary to determine the accuracy of this new data collection program.

What is the Southeast For-Hire Intercept Survey and do I need to report to the survey?

In addition to MRIP, port samplers will be interviewing captains at randomly selected fishing sites to validate reported data. The Southeast For-Hire Intercept Survey is designed to avoid duplication of survey efforts. Participation in the Southeast For-Hire Intercept Survey is required as a condition of your for-hire permit.

