

Southeast For-Hire Integrated Electronic Reporting Program



Greetings Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) Reef Fish and Gulf Coastal Migratory Pelagic Fish Charter/Headboat Federal Permit Holders:

NOAA Fisheries has implemented reporting requirements for federally permitted for-hire vessels through the Southeast For-Hire Integrated Electronic Reporting (SEFHIER) program. The purpose of this program is to provide more accurate and reliable fisheries information about for-hire trips including catch, effort, and discards. By providing this information, you will directly improve data collection that is critical to stock assessments and improved fisheries management. Electronic reporting may 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 Gulf Coastal Migratory Pelagic Fish Charter/Headboat permit holders are required to electronically report fishing effort and catch. This was effective January 5, 2021. Federal permit holders with both Gulf and South Atlantic/Atlantic permits are required to meet the Gulf requirements, even if you do not fish in Gulf waters. Complying with Gulf requirements will also satisfy South Atlantic/Atlantic requirements for dual permit holders.

Gulf Charter/Headboat permit holders are required to submit a trip declaration prior to leaving the dock. For fishing trips, permit holders are required to submit an electronic logbook before offloading fish. Position reporting units (satellite or cellular VMS) will be required on each vessel, effective on March 1, 2022.

Please take time to read through the enclosed tool kit thoroughly as it outlines all program requirements. We highly recommend you review other helpful items on the program website. Please reach out to us directly with any questions.

- SEFHIER program website: <https://go.usa.gov/xMBjm>
 - A customer service phone line: **1-833-707-1632, 8:00 AM-4:30 PM, EST**
 - A customer service email: ser.electronicreporting@noaa.gov
 - Frequently Asked Questions
 - News and Announcements
 - Guides and Tools
 - Webinar schedules are announced on the program website and via Fishery Bulletins, sign up for and view Fishery Bulletins at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/southeast/outreach-and-education/southeast-regional-fisheries-news-sign-or-follow-us>

We are here to help, and truly respect your time and business operations. This program has been a big transition for all of us, and we look forward to working with you. 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 For-Hire Integrated Electronic Reporting Team at NOAA Fisheries and the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

Disclaimer: This publication was last updated 12/22/2021 for general information purposes only. Any discrepancies between this information and the regulations as published in official sources of information, such as the Federal Register and Code of Federal Regulations will be resolved in favor of the official sources.



The Requirements

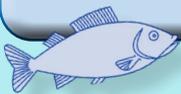
Note: The position reporting requirements are effective March 1, 2022.



Fishermen with Gulf federal charter/headboat permits (Reef Fish or Gulf Coastal Migratory Pelagic Fish) are required to electronically submit their fishing catch and effort logbooks. Logbooks may be submitted through approved software and hardware.

- **A trip declaration (“hail-out”) must be made prior to leaving the dock for *any* trip.**
 - Electronic logbooks 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.
 - Fishermen must land at approved landing locations when completing a fishing trip.
- **Vessels must be equipped with a type-approved position reporting VMS transceiver unit (satellite or cellular) that:**
 - is permanently affixed to your vessel,
 - operates 24 hours a day,
 - collects your location data at least once an hour for transmission to NOAA Fisheries,
 - has been properly installed by a certified and authorized installer (selected by the VMS vendor), and
 - has been activated through the NOAA Fisheries Help Desk (the VMS vendor does this),
 - for complete instructions, see the Code of Federal Regulations, [50 CFR 622.26\(b\)](#).

Note: Federal 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 permits should review the toolkit that corresponds to each for-hire permit type. If your vessel also has commercial permits, you must ensure you meet those reporting requirements.



Southeast For-Hire Integrated Electronic Reporting (SEFHIER) Program

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/southeast/recreational-fishing-data/southeast-hire-integrated-electronic-reporting-program>



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

Step 1: Ensure the VMS unit is installed and functional on your vessel.

Step 2: Declare your fishing trip before leaving the dock.

(See Requirements and Making a Trip Declaration sections)

On the declaration, you must select your trip type and activity. For fishing trips, you must report your estimated end date/time and landing location. Landing locations must be approved by the SEFHIER Program before you submit your declaration.

Step 3: Keep track of what fish you are keeping and discarding.

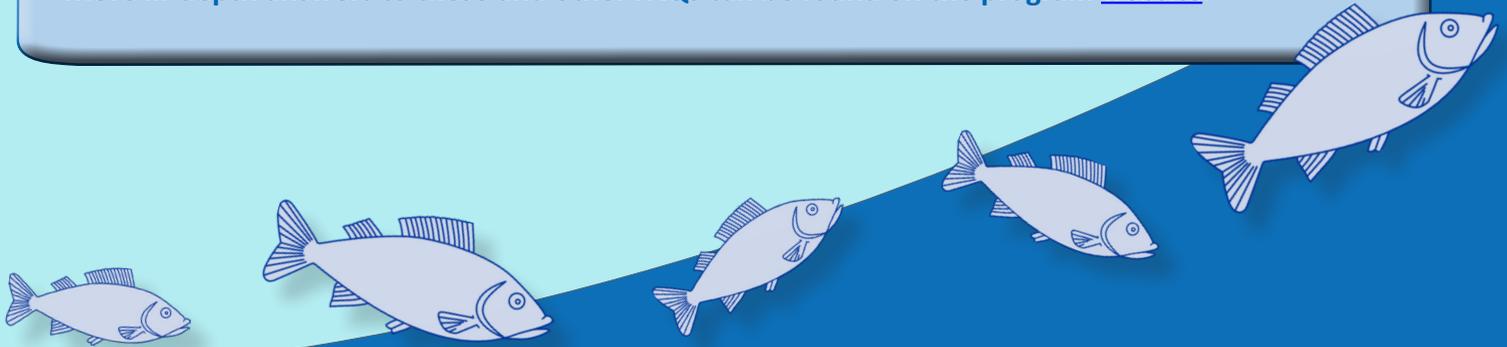
Keep track of all of the fish you catch and discard, by species and number.

Step 4: Complete and submit your electronic fishing logbook before offloading fish.

(See Requirements and What Do I Report? sections)

Step 5: Participate in the SEFHIER Intercept Survey if approached by a port sampler for the program.

More in-depth answers to these and other FAQs can be found on the program [website](#).



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Making a Trip Declaration

Introduction

Trip declarations, also referred to as a “hail-out”, are required each time a Gulf federally permitted for-hire vessel moves on the water (i.e., bait/ice trips, transportation to/from private residences, sunset cruises).

When you make a trip declaration you will need to report the following:

- Type of trip (i.e., for-hire, commercial, recreational, or other trip)
- Trip Activity (i.e., trip with effort, trip but was unable to fish, or non-intended fishing)
- Expected return time (for-hire trip only)
- Approved landing location (for-hire trip only)

Purpose

Trip declarations are used to notify NOAA Fisheries and partners (Office of Law Enforcement, etc.) that your vessel has left the dock and the type of trip being taken. Since the declaration is submitted in advance of the trip completion, the return time in the declaration is an estimate. Estimated times may be used by enforcement, port agents, and validation survey staff to meet the vessel upon return. Both the estimated return time and landing location are critical components to validation of information collected by the SEFHIER program. A fishing trip declaration indicates that an electronic logbook is required upon completion of your trip.

Modifying Your Trip Declaration

At this time, there is no requirement to update the trip declaration that has already been submitted if the landing location or time changes. However, if you have a satellite-based VMS unit, or are using VESL, you will have an option to submit a new trip declaration with your modified landing time or location. If you are using eTrips, you have the option to cancel a trip declaration and submit a new one. It is recommended that if your time or location are changing from the original declaration that you submit a new declaration to supersede the existing one (VMS or VESL), or cancel and submit a new one through eTrips. Under any emergency condition, the for-hire vessel should return to port without worrying about changing the landing location or time.

Timing

A trip declaration may be submitted in advance, but NOAA Fisheries encourages submission on the day of the trip or at the dock as weather, mechanical issues, or other factors might prevent the trip from occurring. If you are using eTrips, you have the option to cancel a trip declaration. In the VESL app, the trip declaration will remain as “*pending*” and no further action is necessary.

If you leave the dock but turn back for any reason without fishing during your trip, you should select “*trip no effort*” in the trip activity field of the logbook in either application, which will format the logbook correctly to reflect only the information that you need to report for this trip type. You will then submit the logbook and be in compliance with program requirements.

Making Your Trip Declaration

For-hire trip declarations may only be submitted using approved software, and must use the appropriate SEFHIER trip declaration form. We recommend you make your trip declaration from the device you use to complete your fishing report (i.e. position reporting unit, smartphone, tablet). You will need to log into your reporting system, select “*Trip Declaration*,” and complete the required fields.

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Position Reporting

Note: The position reporting requirements are effective March 1, 2022.

Purpose

Vessel operators will be required to have an approved vessel monitoring system (VMS) that includes a GPS device affixed to the vessel that, at a minimum, archives and submits vessel position data hourly. Knowing when a federally permitted for-hire vessel leaves the dock and takes a trip allows managers to estimate the total number of for-hire trips and subsequently compare those numbers to the number of trip declarations and logbooks reported. This information is expected to provide better data on fishing effort (number of trips) and allow for better enforcement of fishing regulations.

Approved Units

VMS units approved for the SEFHIER Program are listed on the program [website](#) under the "Information for Gulf of Mexico Permit Holders" section titled "VMS Type Approved Units." There are two types of units: satellite based VMS units, and cellular based VMS units. Below is a comparison of satellite and cellular units:

Satellite VMS

- Collects and transmits location by satellite in real-time
- Include declaration and logbook form submission; Allows for submission of revised trip declaration
- Low failure rate (less than 1%; life of VMS units 5-10 years)
- Requires satellite connectivity when stored under cover
- May provide extra features (e.g. ship-to-shore communication)

Cellular VMS

- Collects location data at sea via satellite and transmits via cellular once the vessel returns to cellular range
- May include declaration and logbook form submission
- Unknown failure rate
- Requires cellular service at offload locations and when stored under cover

Reimbursement

Funds may be available to reimburse you for the purchase of your approved unit. There are installation requirements that must be met in order to be eligible for reimbursement. For more information on reimbursement visit: <http://www.psmfc.org/program/vessel-monitoring-system-reimbursement-program-vms>. If you have any further questions, contact the Office of Law Enforcement VMS Help Desk: (<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/enforcement#vessel-monitoring>) or **888-219-9228**.

Data Security

The SEFHIER 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 Integrated Electronic Reporting (SEFHIER) Program

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/southeast/recreational-fishing-data/southeast-hire-integrated-electronic-reporting-program>



What Do I Report?

The Southeast For-Hire Integrated 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, including landed and discarded fish (No matter where caught)**

Detailed economic data will enhance our ability to understand how the for-hire industry is impacted by changing fishing regulations such as trip limits and bag limits, season and area closures, and external factors such as red tides and oil spills. These data will also allow us to better monitor the economic health of the industry over time. The information can also be used to inform quota allocation decisions, fisheries research, and disaster recovery damage assessments. NOAA Fisheries economists will use these data in their cost-benefit and economic impact analyses for actions and amendments that propose regulatory changes, and always in a confidential manner.

ECONOMIC INFORMATION

- Trip fee
- Fuel used and fuel cost

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



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<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/southeast/recreational-fishing-data/southeast-hire-integrated-electronic-reporting-program>

Getting Started With Electronic Fishing Reports

Step 1: Select a Reporting Device

- You will be able to submit reports using a device that is capable of submitting forms through an approved application.
- Ensure that your device:
 - is capable of sending reports via satellite, cellular, or internet connection.
 - allows you to submit a report at the dock.
 - is compatible with selected software application.
- A list of reporting device options and comparison of features can be found on the program [website](#) under "Information for Gulf of Mexico Permit Holders."



Step 2: Select Reporting Software for declarations and logbooks

- Software applications must be approved for the SEFHIER Program.
- Each software vendor may offer unique features to their application. Select one that best fits your needs. A list of reporting software options and comparison of features can be found on the program [website](#) under "Information for Gulf of Mexico Permit Holders."



Step 3: Download Reporting Software to your Device

- Your software vendor will provide instructions on how to download software onto your chosen reporting device. You can find vendor information on the program [website](#) under "Information for Gulf of Mexico Permit Holders."
- Ensure that your reporting device is up to date with the latest version.
- If you use a VMS unit that allows form submission, the software is available through the unit.



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.

Who is Required to Report?

Owners or operators of vessels that have a Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) issued federal Charter/Headboat permit.

- Charter/Headboat for Reef Fish permit (RCG)
- Historical Captain Charter/Headboat for Reef Fish permit (HRCG)
- Gulf Charter/Headboat for Coastal Migratory Pelagic fish permit (CHG)
- Historical Captain Charter/Headboat for Coastal Migratory Pelagic fish (HCHG) permit

Reporting is now required for all charter/headboat trips, regardless of where fishing occurs, including other regional or state waters.

Reporting Across Fisheries

You must meet the reporting requirements for all of your permits. Some software reporting applications will allow you to submit one report for different permit combinations. To ensure you are using the right software application for your specific combination of permits, please refer to the table of approved software under the "Approved Software" section of the program [website](#).

How to report if you have the following permits:

South Atlantic/Atlantic Charter/Headboat Permits



If you have both a Gulf Charter/Headboat permit and a South Atlantic/Atlantic Charter/Headboat permit (South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper, Atlantic Coastal Migratory Pelagics, or Atlantic Dolphin/Wahoo), you will follow the Gulf regulations, no matter where you fish or what species you target. The Gulf reporting requirements will fulfill South Atlantic requirements; there is no need to report twice.

Southeast Region Headboat Survey (SRHS)



If you are selected to participate in, or already report to the survey, you must use the VESL software and the headboat survey reporting form to satisfy the federal for-hire permit reporting requirements.

Greater Atlantic Region Fisheries Office For-Hire Permits



If you have both a Southeast Regional Office (SERO) Gulf/Charter Headboat Permit and a Greater Atlantic Region Fisheries Office (GARFO) for-hire permit, you must submit the information required by both regions, but under the timing required by the Gulf regulations. If you are currently reporting to GARFO on a software application that is not approved for use in the SEFHIER Program, you will need to submit multiple reports. Some of the approved software may allow you to use one report to fulfill GARFO and Gulf requirements. Check the table of approved software under the "Approved Software" section of the [website](#) for which applications are approved for GARFO and SERO.

Highly Migratory Species For-Hire Permits



If you have both a Gulf/Charter Headboat Permit and a Highly Migratory Species (HMS) for-hire permit, you are required to report by the Gulf requirement (prior to offload), which meets the HMS 24 hour reporting requirement. If you are currently reporting to the HMS program on a software application that is not approved for use in the SEFHIER program, you will need to submit multiple reports. Some approved software for the SEFHIER program may allow you to submit one report to satisfy the requirements of HMS. Check the table of approved software under the "Approved Software" section of the [website](#) for which applications are approved for HMS and SERO.

