New England Fishery Management Council

Mid-Atlantic | FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Councils Approve Omnibus Commercial eVTR Framework

The New England Fishery Management Council and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council have taken final action on an omnibus framework adjustment that will require commercial fishermen to submit vessel trip reports (VTRs) electronically as eVTRs instead of on paper for all species managed by both Councils. The Mid-Atlantic Council initiated the action in December of 2018 and signed off on the framework during its December 2019 meeting. The New England Council joined the framework in June of 2019 and took final action during its late-January 2020 meeting in Portsmouth, NH.

Once approved and implemented by the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS/NOAA Fisheries), the framework will:

- Require commercial vessels with federal permits for all species managed by both Councils to submit currently required VTRs to NOAA Fisheries through electronic means; and

- Change the VTR reporting deadline to 48 hours after entering port at the conclusion of the trip.

This action does not change any other existing requirements associated with VTRs but would be an administrative modification in the method and timing for submitting these reports.

The vast majority of fishermen currently submit VTRs on paper even though the option to submit vessel trip reports electronically has been available since 2013. NMFS is aware that the learning curve will be steep, and the agency already has indicated that a final rule would include an extended implementation deadline of up to a year to allow for

Number of Commercial eVTRs Submitted in 2018

Paper	73, 132
Electronic	7,727

The above VTR numbers were reported by GARFO for vessels issued a commercial permit in 2018 for New England or Mid-Atlantic Council-managed species.

New England Fishery Management Council Affected Stocks / Management Plans	Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council Affected Stocks / Management Plans
- **Northeast Multispecies (Groundfish)** - **Atlantic Sea Scallops** - **Atlantic Herring** - **Skates** - **Small-Mesh Multispecies (Whiting)** - **Atlantic Deep-Sea Red Crab** - **Monkfish – managed jointly with Mid-Atlantic** - **Spiny Dogfish – managed jointly with Mid-Atlantic**	- **Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass** - **Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish** - **Bluefish** - **Surfclams and Ocean Quahogs** - **Tilefish** - **Spiny Dogfish – managed jointly with New England** - **Monkfish – managed jointly with New England**

adequate preparation and training for software developers, managers, and affected users. The Mid-Atlantic Council is arranging for in-person training sessions and workshops throughout the Greater Atlantic Region and will be hosting online webinars. Any video-based training materials provided by software distributers will be posted on the eVTR webpage along with available presentations and other helpful outreach tools.

Vessel operators will be able to choose which NMFS-approved eVTR application they prefer to use, and operators will be able to switch applications at any time.

The table below lists free applications that currently are NMFS-approved. Additional systems may be developed and will be added to the list if approved.

The table on the next page lists two applications that come with fees, generally for installation and/or monthly or annual usage. These two fee-based applications are pending recertification to meet GARFO's technical requirements.

NOTE: *The Mid-Atlantic Council already has an eVTR requirement in place for the* *charter and party fleet* *for species managed by the MAFMC. The New England Council will develop a* ***separate action*** *to address eVTRs for recreational for-hire vessels later this year.*

The Mid-Atlantic Council has posted a recorded demonstration of the free ACCSP eTrips Mobile app and GARFO's Fish Online app. Watch the demo recording.

FREE NMFS-APPROVED eVTR APPLICATIONS

APPLICATION / (PROVIDER)	COMPATIBLE DEVICES
eTrips Mobile 2 (ACCSP)	Android and Apple tablet/smartphone, Windows 10, or web browser
Fish Online (GARFO)	iPhone/iPad or web browser
Elog (Teem Fish)	Android and Apple tablet/smartphone, Windows 10, or web browser (used with electronic monitoring)
FLDRS (NEFSC)*	Computer (used for cooperative research)

*The applications above are maintained at **no cost to the user**. *FLDRS is designed to collect high resolution fisheries data for research that also satisfies eVTR requirements. FLDRS also is the only current application that complies with reporting guidelines for ocean quahog and surfclams.*

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FEE-BASED eVTR APPLICATIONS

APPLICATION / (PROVIDER)	COMPATIBLE DEVICES
FACTS (Electric Edge)	Windows computer
Olrac DDL (OLSPS)	Web browser, Windows computer, Windows tablet

(1) Fees are associated with above the applications. (2) The above applications are currently pending recertification to meet GARFO's technical requirements.

Why Is This Happening?

The Commercial eVTR Omnibus Framework states that this action is needed to:

1) Increase the timeliness and availability of data submitted through VTRs;

2) Reduce the reporting burden on data providers (commercial vessel operators) by eliminating the need for paper-based reporting, and

3) Increase the accuracy and quality of data by reducing recall bias associated with delayed completion and submission of paper forms.

NOAA Fisheries said, "Electronic reporting will make the collection of important data on fishing vessel activity more efficient, convenient, and timely" for fishery managers, and other data users.

Materials used during the New England Council's January 28, 2020 discussion and decision-making are available at commercial eVTRs.

For more information contact either:

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Find Out More! Visit the Commercial eVTR Webpage

The Mid-Atlantic Council established a webpage containing documents and meeting materials related to the joint Commercial eVTR Omnibus Framework Adjustment.

➢ Take a look at eVTR info.

➢ Scroll down and sign up to receive eVTR email updates. The sign-up box looks like this:

Sign up to receive email updates:

First Name   Last Name

Email*

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