

National Archives and Records Administration
REQUEST FOR DISPOSITION AUTHORITY

Records Schedule Number: DAA-0370-2025-0001

Status: APPROVED
Date Approved: 04/14/2026

General Information

Agency or Establishment	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Record/Scheduling Group	0370 - Records of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Records Schedule Applies To	Agency Subdivision
Major Subdivision	National Marine Fisheries Service
Minor Subdivision	Office of Law Enforcement (OLE)
Schedule Subject	Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) Records-Southeast Region Office
Additional Schedule Information	<p>The vessel monitoring system (VMS) is a satellite surveillance system primarily used to monitor the location and movement of commercial fishing vessels within U.S. jurisdiction and treaty areas. The system uses satellite and cellular based communications from onboard transceiver units, which certain vessels are required to carry. The transceiver units send position reports that include vessel identification, time, date, and location, and are mapped and displayed on the end user's computer screen.</p> <p>VMS is used by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) to support law enforcement initiatives and to prevent violations of laws and regulations. VMS helps enforcement personnel focus their time on areas with the highest potential for significant violations. VMS automatically sends position reports and other information that is monitored by law enforcement staff. This information is used to help identify fishing activity and its location. The VMS allows enforcement personnel to monitor compliance and is used as evidence in the prosecution of many environmental laws and regulations including regional fishing quotas, the Endangered Species Act, and the Marine Mammal Protection Act.</p> <p>Previously, VMS requirements were identified in more than 22 fisheries in both US and international waters. New agreements have expanded the VMS program and now require that all vessels fishing under the High Seas Fishing Compliance Act (HSFCA) and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) have VMS units aboard.</p>

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The VMS program currently monitors more than 4,000 vessels. It is the largest national VMS fleet in the world. The system operates 24 hours a day with near-perfect accuracy.

Other Uses for the Vessel Monitoring System

- Managing sensitive and protected areas, like marine sanctuaries.
- Monitoring activity and arrivals in port to plan for sampling.
- 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.

Is There a Classified Version of This Schedule?

No

Is consultation and coordination with Tribal Governments required?

No - the records covered by this schedule do not implicate Tribal interests

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Item Count

Total number of disposition items: 3

Number of Temporary disposition items: 3

Number of Permanent disposition items: 0

Number of Items with Disposition Not Approved: 0

Number of Inactive disposition items: 0

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Outline of Records Schedule Items for DAA-0370-2025-0001

Item #	Title	Disposition
0001	Vessel Management System (VMS) Installation and Activation Checklist	Temporary
0002	Letter of Exemption Vessel Management System (VMS) Power-Down Authorization Records	Temporary
0003	Vessel Management System (VMS) Reports	Temporary

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Records Schedule Items

DAA-0370-2025-0001-0001		STATUS: Active
ITEM GENERAL INFORMATION		
Item Title	Vessel Management System (VMS) Installation and Activation Checklist	
Item Description	The Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) installation and activation checklist documents the installation of a Mobile Transmitter Unit (MTU) and the Mobile Communication Services Provider (MCSP) which will provide communication services once the equipment is installed. The checklist also certifies that installation and activation procedures were followed if required for compliance with Federal regulations. As applicable, vessel owners who possess South Atlantic Rock Shrimp, Highly Migratory Species (HMS) or Commercial Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish permits must submit this documentation to the NOAA, National Marine Fisheries (NMFS), Southeast Region Office (SERO), or the NMFS Office of Law Enforcement (OLE), however, they must adhere to any changes to regulatory requirements regarding the management of these records.	
Is this item media neutral?	Yes	
Is this item a Big Bucket?	No	
MANUAL CITATION		
Agency Code	1500	
Manual Title	National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)	
SUPERSEDED AGENCY DISPOSITION AUTHORITIES AND GRS DEVIATIONS		
Does this item supersede existing disposition authorities?	No	
Is this item a deviation from the GRS?	No	
DISPOSITION INSTRUCTION		
Final Disposition	Temporary	
Cutoff Instructions	Cut off at end of Calendar year when the monitoring device is permanently deactivated, replaced or removed from vessel	
Retention Period	Destroy 5 year(s) after cutoff	
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION		
Are any of the records covered by this item national security classified?	No	
GAO Approval Required	No	

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DAA-0370-2025-0001-0002		STATUS: Active
ITEM GENERAL INFORMATION		
Item Title	Letter of Exemption Vessel Management System (VMS) Power-Down Authorization Records	
Item Description	This exemption permits vessel owners to “power-down” or turn off the VMS equipment while the vessel is continuously out of the water or in port. The vessel owner must cite how long the equipment will be powered-down and when the equipment’s power will be turned back on. The vessel owners must submit the Power-Down Exemption Request to the NMFS Office of Law enforcement for approval via an online form.	
Is this item media neutral?	Yes	
Is this item a Big Bucket?	No	
MANUAL CITATION		
Agency Code	Chapter 1500	
Manual Title	National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)	
SUPERSEDED AGENCY DISPOSITION AUTHORITIES AND GRS DEVIATIONS		
Does this item supersede existing disposition authorities?	No	
Is this item a deviation from the GRS?	No	
DISPOSITION INSTRUCTION		
Final Disposition	Temporary	
Cutoff Instructions	Cut off at end of Calendar year when the exemption has expired.	
Retention Period	Destroy 3 year(s) after cutoff	
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION		
Are any of the records covered by this item national security classified?	No	
GAO Approval Required	No	

DAA-0370-2025-0001-0003		STATUS: Active
ITEM GENERAL INFORMATION		
Item Title	Vessel Management System (VMS) Reports	
Item Description	This series include the Top Sail reports and other data generated, daily, weekly, or monthly. These reports support OLE compliance, monitoring and enforcement activities.	
Is this item media neutral?	Yes	
Is this item a Big Bucket?	No	

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MANUAL CITATION	
Agency Code	Chapter 1500
Manual Title	National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
SUPERSEDED AGENCY DISPOSITION AUTHORITIES AND GRS DEVIATIONS	
Does this item supersede existing disposition authorities?	No
Is this item a deviation from the GRS?	No
DISPOSITION INSTRUCTION	
Final Disposition	Temporary
Cutoff Instructions	Cut off at end of Calendar year.
Retention Period	Other: Destroy 5 year(s) after cut off or when no longer needed for enforcement activities, whichever is later.
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	
Are any of the records covered by this item national security classified?	No
GAO Approval Required	No

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Signatory Information

Action	User	Date
Approve	Edward Forst (Acting Archivist)	04/14/2026



Office of the Chief
Records Officer for the
U.S. Government

This schedule was signed outside of the ERA system using Standard Form 115.

NARA staff updated ERA to reflect this approval, moving the record schedule into an approved status. The approved status allows for generation of a PDF indicating that the schedule has been approved, and allows an agency to use the schedule in ERA to create transfer requests. The approved date in the system and on the PDF version of the records schedule reflects the system actions.