



# Vessel Monitoring System Guide

This document provides step-by-step instructions and useful links for vessels participating in Alaska commercial fisheries **required to install and operate Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS)**.

Fisheries in Alaska requiring VMS can be found at [NOAA's Regional Vessel Monitoring Information](#) website. Alaska regulatory requirements are found at [50 CFR 679.28\(f\)](#); National at [50 CFR Part 600 Subpart Q](#).

## Steps:

1. **Purchase and installation of type-approved VMS Electronic Monitoring Transmission Unit (EMTU)**
  - a. Vessel owner/operator is responsible for the purchase of the base VMS unit (to include shipping and handling, and sales taxes if applicable) and expenses for Mobile Communications Service.
  - b. Type-approved units for Alaska can be found at [NOAA Fisheries Type-Approved VMS Units](#). There is a [Contact Directory](#).
  - c. Vessel owner/operator is responsible for any installation expenses incurred. See details in Section 3 for reimbursement of hardware costs.
2. **Activation of VMS EMTU/Confirmation of data receipt**
  - a. Per [50 CFR 679.28\(f\)\(4\)](#), vessel owner must register the vessel's VMS unit with their appropriate communications service provider. The service provider sends an activation email to the OLE Help Desk to notify of the VMS Activation. The Help Desk will verify successful receipt of positional data.
  - b. Contact OLE, Alaska Division at 907-586-7225 Monday through Friday between 0800 Alaska Local Time (ALT) and 1630 hours, ALT, **at least 72 hours before leaving port the first time** to receive verification that the transmissions are being received. This is also good practice after powering VMS off for extended periods of time.
3. **Request for Reimbursement. \*Reimbursement is not guaranteed.** Limited funds are available, and will be disbursed in order of application. It is suggested that fishery entrants **do not delay** in purchasing, installing, and requesting reimbursement (see link to website and application form below at 3.d.) for VMS EMTU. A lead time of **at least several weeks** prior to the fishery opening is advised.
  - a. Vessel owner/operator contacts OLE Help Desk ([ole.helpdesk@noaa.gov](mailto:ole.helpdesk@noaa.gov), 888-219-9228, option 2 for VMS) to request a four-digit confirmation code (this is the **ONLY** confirmation number that you will receive during the activation process). \*Note that there is a vetting process, so **expect 3-5 business days** before receiving the confirmation number! Help Desk will request the following information:
    - i. Vessel Name
    - ii. USCG Doc # or State registration #
    - iii. Permit # (e.g. FFP or **SFFP**)
    - iv. Division (Alaska)
    - v. VMS Unit/Serial #
    - vi. VMS Vendor/Provider
    - vii. Vessel Owner/Corporation name
    - viii. Vessel Owner/Corporation telephone number
    - ix. Permit type on vessel
    - x. IF in Northwest Region, landing receipt submission required (likely to be N/A for most Alaska fisheries).

**OLE**  
**Help Desk:**  
888-219-9228  
(Option 2)

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*For more information contact* [Scott.Gray@noaa.gov](mailto:Scott.Gray@noaa.gov) or [Alex.Perry@noaa.gov](mailto:Alex.Perry@noaa.gov)



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## Steps Continued:

- b. If the OLE Help Desk determines that a request is **ineligible** for reimbursement, the Help Desk will contact the vessel owner or operator to explain that determination.
- c. If the vessel is deemed **eligible**, the OLE Help Desk will generate the confirmation number, which the applicant can provide (via application form, part 3.d. below) to the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) Vessel Monitoring System Reimbursement Program. PSMFC will verify the confirmation number, perform any additional research into the history of reimbursement payments, and if everything is in order, issue a reimbursement check to the vessel owner.
- d. [Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission \(PSMFC\) Vessel Monitoring System Reimbursement Program website](#).
  - i. [Fillable Application Form for VMS reimbursement](#).
- e. After submitting the application for reimbursement under 3.d.i. (with four-digit confirmation code provided by OLE) to PSMFC, questions regarding payment should be directed to them. The OLE Help Desk will not have any information regarding additional eligibility determination by PSMFC, or payment status.

Reimbursement is not guaranteed and funds will be disbursed in order of application; a lead time of **several weeks** to complete this process prior to the fishery opening is advised.



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