

Dear Permittee,

As stipulated by U.S. regulations at 50 CFR Part 600.502, foreign fishing vessels (FFVs) granted a permit to conduct joint venture operations in the US EEZ must provide activity reports. The operator of each FFV must report the FFV's movements and activities before or upon the event in messages submitted to the appropriate Coast Guard commander and NMFS office. Similar messages are required if the FFVs will receive or have received fish from U.S. vessels. The following messages, identified by the word within quotes, are required:

- “BEGIN” messages must indicate date, time, position, and area the FFV will begin fishing in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The message must be delivered at least 24 hours before the vessel begins to fish.
- “DEPART” messages must specify the date, time, position, and area the FFV will depart the EEZ to embark or debark an observer, to visit a U.S. port, to conduct a joint venture in internal waters, or to otherwise temporarily leave an authorized fishing area, but not depart the seaward limit of the EEZ. The message must be transmitted before the FFV departs the present fishing area and delivered within 24 hours of its transmittal.
- “RETURN” messages must specify the date, time, position, and area the FFV will return to the EEZ following a temporary departure, and the species, product, and quantity of all fish and fish products on board that were received in a joint venture in internal waters. The message must be transmitted before returning to the EEZ and delivered within 24 hours of its transmittal.
- “SHIFT” messages must specify the date, time, and position the FFV will start fishing, and the new area. The message must be transmitted before leaving the original area and delivered within 24 hours of its transmittal.
- “JV OPS” messages must specify the date, time, position, and area at which the FFV will start or end joint venture operations. These reports must be made in addition to other activity reports made under this section. Each message must be transmitted before the event and delivered within 24 hours of its transmittal.
- “TRANSFER” messages are submitted when an FFV anticipates a transshipping operation in which the FFV will receive fish or fisheries products. These reports must specify the date, time, position, and area the FFV will conduct the transfer and the name and IRCS of the other FFV or U.S. vessel involved. The message must be transmitted prior to the transfer.
- “OFFLOADED” messages must specify the date, time, position, and area the FFV offloads fish or fisheries products to another FFV or a U.S. vessel in a transfer, the other FFV's or U.S. vessel's name, and other information. The message must be transmitted within 12 hours after the transfer is completed and delivered within 24 hours of its transmittal and before the FFV ceases fishing in the EEZ.
- “RECEIVED” messages must specify the date, time, position and area the vessel received fish or fisheries products from another FFV in a transfer, the other FFV's or U.S. vessel's name and other information. The message must be transmitted within 12 hours after the transfer is completed and delivered within 24 hours of its transmittal and before the vessel ceases fishing in the EEZ.

- “CEASE” Each operator must specify the date, time, position, and area the FFV will cease fishing in order to leave the EEZ. The message must be delivered at least 24 hours before the FFV’s departure.
- “CHANGE” messages must be submitted if there are any changes to the FFV’s operations.
- “CANCEL” messages must be submitted if the operator wants to cancel a previous message. The message must be transmitted and delivered prior to the date and time of the event in the original message.

BEGIN and CEASE reports are required for actually placing and debarking observers, verifying that the reporting vessel has a valid permit for the planned activity before fishing, or scheduling exit boardings. The time and position data are needed for at-sea boardings by the Coast Guard to intercept reporting FFVs to verify the reported product on board and check for illegal gear.

TRANSFER, OFFLOADED, RECEIVED messages are critical to enforcement. They enable the Coast Guard to prepare for vessel boardings during transfers between fishing and cargo vessels to compare the respective amounts of products reported by the fishing vessel captain against products received and reported by the cargo vessel. Product recovery rates are used to convert product weight to raw weight to verify that raw fish reported to have been caught in the EEZ or received from U.S. fishing vessels are correctly recorded in vessel logs required by §600.507.

Messaged reports on joint venture operations (JVOPS) are used by the NMFS and the Coast Guard to verify that the reporting foreign vessel is authorized to receive U.S.-harvested fish, for placing observers, and to confirm that the operations are confined to the areas and times authorized.

CHANGE and CANCEL messages provide a mechanism for changing or canceling previous reports. These provide the vessel captain with a standard message for keeping Coast Guard and NMFS advised of last minute changes to avoid potential enforcement actions when unanticipated changes or errors occur in previously transmitted messages.

These messages, in combination with the SHIFT message, provide a means for Coast Guard and NMFS to monitor activities at-sea and areas of operation of foreign vessels; to plan occasional, unannounced boardings; to account for all fish aboard foreign vessels; and to distinguish fish taken in the EEZ from fish carried into the EEZ; to verify, by boardings, the information provided in transfer reports, the data maintained in vessel logs under §600.507, and compliance with regulations to protect U.S. fishery resources from illegal fishing.

If you have any questions or need additional information about these reporting requirements, please contact the NMFS Office of International Affairs during business hours at phone number [301-427-8350](tel:301-427-8350).