

**Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) Mobile Transceiver Unit (MTU)
Power-Down Exemption Request
For Vessels in the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Fishery**

Regulations implementing the requirements for VMS within the Fishery Management Plan for Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico allow for vessel owners and/or operators to discontinue the use of VMS units for a minimum period of 30 days for specific periods of time, provided they obtain a VMS power-down exemption letter from the Southeast Office of Law Enforcement (SE OLE). To obtain this exemption letter, fill out the appropriate information below and submit this form by mail to the address below or by fax to 727-824-5318. **NOAA/NMFS, Southeast Office of Law Enforcement, 263 13th Avenue South, Suite 109, St. Petersburg, FL 33701**

Vessel Information:

Vessel Name: _____ **Permit #:** _____
Vessel State Registration # or USCG documentation #: _____

Vessel Port Location During VMS Power Down: _____

Exemption Period:

Date VMS to be Turned Off: _____
Date VMS to be Turned On: _____

Reason for VMS Power Down (optional): _____

NOTE: VMS units must remain operational until a letter of exemption from the Southeast Office of Law Enforcement is received prior to turning off a vessel's VMS. Upon receipt of the letter of exemption, the vessel owner or operator may discontinue VMS operation for the period requested above. Vessel owners or operators may request changes to the time period for this exemption through a written request to the Southeast Office of Law Enforcement, provided the minimum deactivation period of 30 days is met. Vessels that wish to leave the port specified above during the exemption period for purposes other than engaging in fishing operations may do so, provided the VMS unit is turned on and is operational during transiting according to the regulations at 50 CFR 622.28. Upon reaching another port, the VMS unit may once again be turned off for the duration of the exemption period specified above.

This form is required to obtain approval for a vessel to turn off their VMS unit consistent with the regulations at 50 CFR 622.28(d) and to restart VMS operation for Gulf of Mexico reef fish permit holders. Making a false statement on this form is punishable by law.

Notwithstanding any other provision of the law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act, unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB Control Number.

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 5 minutes per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or suggestions for reducing this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information to Adam Bailey, NMFS, Southeast Region, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701.

