

REPORTING - Methods for Commercial and Charter

What is being considered and why is it necessary?

The Department needs to formalize the methods for submitting commercial and charter harvest reports in regulation and require harvesters to declare their method of reporting for each report they are required to submit. Currently, there are three methods to report commercial harvest: paper and two forms of electronic reporting. Not all of those methods are described in regulation and each method of reporting has unique submission requirements. To monitor harvest and effectively manage fisheries, paper reporting is needed monthly, electronic reporting via SAFIS/eVTR is needed monthly or as required by Federal rule, and electronic reporting via FACTS™ is needed daily.

Requiring harvesters to declare a reporting method is necessary for ensuring reporting compliance. If the Department does not know how an individual is going to report, it cannot conduct outreach to delinquent reporters. This declaration will inform the Department whether to expect a report via paper, SAFIS, or FACTS™. Currently, the Department receives only about one half of the required harvest reports each year, making declaration a critical tool as the Department works to increase reporting compliance.

Specifically, the Department would like feedback on:

1. Listing the three methods for reporting, including the rules for each method, in regulation. Adding all reporting methods and their rules to regulation will make it clear for commercial harvesters and charter captains how they need to report their harvest. This also formalizes electronic reporting as a reporting method, as the Department has gathered enough data to conclude the electronic reporting pilot project.
2. Requiring the license holder to declare which reporting method they will use for each report they are required to submit at the time of license renewal or when receiving the license in a transfer. This will allow the Department to know how to expect the reports and follow up with the correct individual if a report is missing.
3. Allowing a license holder to change that declaration two times per license year. Allowing a license holder to change that declaration twice per license year gives the licensee some flexibility while still allowing the Department to plan accordingly.

Methods for Reporting

- Paper forms which are submitted via mail, fax, or email.
- Electronic reporting without hailing. Currently, this reporting is completed through the Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information System (SAFIS) or an electronic vessel trip report (eVTR), but since systems can change, the name of the systems will not be listed in the regulation. Note: oysters and clams cannot be reported in the SAFIS system.
- Electronic reporting with hailing. Currently, this reporting is completed through the Fishing Activity and Catch Tracking System (FACTS™), but since systems can change, the name of the system will not be listed in the regulation. Flexibilities for certain fisheries are available for choosing to electronically report with hailing. The regulation will include the available flexibilities for each fishery. Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) are not electronic reporting with hailing.

Rules for Paper Reporting

- Paper reports must be submitted by the 10th of every month.
- The reports required are listed by license type in [COMAR 08.02.13.06](#).
- The method of returning the report is detailed on each report.

Rules for Electronic Reporting without Hailing (i.e., SAFIS or eVTR)

- Electronic reports must be submitted by the 10th of each month, or in the timeframe required by the federal agency which requires the submission of the report.

Rules for Electronic Reporting with Hailing (i.e., FACTS™)

- Daily reporting only when you plan to engage in harvest activity. Reports are not necessary on non-harvest days.
- Must send a start hail prior to the vessel being underway.
- Must send an end hail and harvest data within 30 minutes of completion of harvest activity and prior to landing harvest.
- Reporting in this manner allows individuals certain regulatory flexibilities in certain fisheries. See Frequently Asked Question #7 for specifics.
- All license holders using that vessel to harvest must report using electronic harvest reporting with hailing
- You must display letters on the vessel that specify which report you are submitting in this method (see below). These letters need to be removed from the vessel upon declaring to report harvest using paper or electronic reporting without hailing.
 - If you are submitting your Daily Record of Commercial Crabbing in this method, you must display the letters “EHRC”
 - If you are submitting your Maryland Monthly Oyster Report, Monthly Softshell/Razor Clam Report, or Monthly Hardshell Clam Report in this method, you must display the letters “EHRCS”
 - If you are submitting your Commercial Charter Boat Captain's Daily Log in this method, you must display the letters “EHRH”
 - If you are submitting your Daily Commercial Fisheries Catch Log in this method, you must display the letters “EHRF”
 - If you are submitting multiple reports in this method, the additional letters can be combined at the end (i.e., EHRCS)

Frequently Asked Questions

1) Why do I need to declare my reporting method?

Requiring harvesters to declare a reporting method is necessary so the Department is able to determine which method harvesters will be using to submit their reports and better be able to conduct outreach for missing harvest reports.

2) How will I declare my reporting option?

During license renewal or during a license transfer, you will be given a form to fill out in which you will select your reporting method. Please see pages 6-7 for an example of the form that you would complete.

3) Am I able to choose multiple methods of reporting? Meaning, can I report differently for each fishery (shellfish, finfish, charter, etc.)?

Yes, you may select different reporting methods for each report type required by your license. For example, you may choose electronic reporting for blue crabs and paper reporting for oysters. Please see the example declaration on pages 6-7 of this document. Currently in FACTS™ you may submit your crab, charter, finfish, oyster, and clam harvester reports.

4) If I am working in two fisheries (e.g. oysters and crabs) do I have to select the same method for both?

No. Please see Question 3.

5) How many times can I change how I would like to report?

A licensee will declare their reporting method for each required report at license renewal or at the time they receive a license transfer. A licensee may change each designation up to two times per license year.

6) Who is responsible for reporting if I temporarily transfer my license or permit authorization?

If a license or permit is transferred, the transferee is responsible for reporting during the time that they hold the license. The transferee will need to select a reporting option at the time of the transfer.

7) Who is responsible for reporting if I name an authorized user?

The license holder is responsible for reporting all harvest under the license. That includes harvest by the licensee and by the authorized user. The authorized user may submit a report for the licensee if the reporting method allows for it, but the license holder is ultimately responsible for the content of all reports.

8) Are there regulatory flexibilities associated with Electronic Reporting with Hailing?

Yes, if you (the licensee) report harvest electronically with hailing you will have the opportunity to use the flexibilities listed below.

- Blue Crabs
 - Flexible day off. While you still may not crab on more than six days during any crabbing week, except as otherwise specifically permitted by the Department for holidays, you will be able to take any day of the week off that you choose. The crabbing week is Wednesday through Tuesday.
 - You may remove crabs from crab pots in the Chesapeake Bay up to two hours before sunrise. If you elect to do so, you must still observe an eight hour workday so that if you start early you must cease removing crabs from their pots six hours after sunrise regardless of your start time.
 - On July 3 and July 4, you may remove crabs from crab pots in the Chesapeake Bay up to three hours before sunrise and must cease removing crabs from your pots six hours after sunrise.
- Oysters and Clams
 - You may designate an authorized representative to take your harvest to dealers. An authorized representative must be a commercially licensed individual allowed

to harvest shellfish and also have declared to report harvest using electronic reporting with hailing.

- You may start harvesting up to ½ hour before sunrise, but must cease harvest ½ hour earlier than the stop times listed in [COMAR 08.02.04.03](#) (oysters), [COMAR 08.02.02.03](#) (soft-shell clams), and [COMAR 08.02.07.03](#) (hard-shell clams).
- For-Hire (Charter)
 - Captain and one mate may each possess up to one striped bass per person per day, within the open recreational striped bass season after May 15.
- Finfish
 - Striped Bass
 - No longer need to use a paper striped bass permit. The electronic reporting system will be used to check in your catch and will update your remaining allocation in real-time.
 - May check-in harvest on the next day after a fishing trip. A previous day's harvest can be checked in either by itself, or can be combined with the next day's harvest at the end of the second fishing day.
 - May designate an authorized representative to check harvest in under your license. The authorized representative must check-in the catch the same day as fished.
 - Yellow Perch
 - Allowed to use box tags in place of individual tags for your harvest.
 - Are not required to call in daily to the Yellow Perch Hotline.
 - Menhaden
 - Not required to send a text or fill out an additional daily online form.

9) Why do I need to put additional letters on my vessel if I am submitting reports through the electronic reporting with hailing method?

Putting EHRC, EHRS, EHRH, EHRF, or a combination on your vessel alerts Natural Resources Police that you are reporting harvest daily using FACTS™ and can choose to use the flexibilities associated with it.

10) Do I need training for an electronic reporting method?

Yes, the Department will provide the training links necessary. If you are new to electronic reporting, you will need about 1-2 weeks to complete the training prior to starting to report.

11) What happens if I do not complete the required training for an electronic reporting method?

You will be required to submit reports via paper forms until training is completed.

12) Am I able to choose an electronic reporting method if I have not submitted all of my past paper reports?

You will need to submit paper reports for any fisheries you are licensed for during the past two years prior to submitting electronically either with or without hailing.

Who will this affect?

Commercial harvesters and the for-hire (charter) industry.

When would this be effective?

The Department would like the declaration to be in place for the beginning of the 2025-26 license renewal period. That way a licensee could declare their reporting choice at license renewal. The Department will follow our normal proposal procedures if this concept moves forward.

Has this change been discussed with advisory bodies?

This idea was scoped with the Sport Fisheries Advisory Commission and the Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commission at their meetings in January 2025. After discussing this with the Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commission the idea was modified from requiring harvesters to choose one method to report all harvest to allowing harvesters to choose how they report based on a particular fishery. This allows flexibility for harvesters and allows the Department to plan.

DRAFT Version of the Declaration Form

Reports Required for Each License Type

	UTFL	FIN/HLI	CC/CAT	CB3/LCC	CLM	OYH/ODB	CCTL	FGR/FGN/FGM
Daily Record of Commercial Crabbing	X			X				
Daily Commercial Fisheries Catch Log	X	X	X				X	
Maryland Monthly Oyster Report ¹	X					X		
Monthly Softshell/ Razor Clam Report ²	X				X			
Monthly Hardshell Clam Report ²	X				X			
Commercial Charter Boat Captain's Daily Log	X ³							X

UTFL - Unlimited Tidal Fish License, FIN - Unlimited Finfish Harvester License, HLI - Finfish Hook & Line License, CC - Chesapeake Channa (Northern Snakehead) License, CAT - Blue and Flathead Catfish Finfish Trotline License, CB3 - Crab Harvester - up to 300 Pots, LCC - Limited Crab Harvester, CLM - Clam Harvester, OYH - Oyster Harvester, ODB - Oyster Dredge Boat, CCTL - Conch, Cancer Crab, Turtle, and Lobster Harvester, FGR - Fishing Guide (Resident), FGN - Fishing Guide (Nonresident), FGM - Master Fishing Guide

¹Must declare method for submitting the oyster report if also pays oyster surcharge

²Must declare method for submitting the clam report if also declares for either soft-shell or hard-shell clams

³UTFL must declare method for submitting the charter log if the licensee possesses a USCG Captain's License and will take paying clients on guided fishing trips

Declaration of Reporting Method

Daily Commercial Fisheries Catch Log (Finfish Report)

- Paper Reporting
- Electronic Reporting without Hailing (SAFIS or eVTR)
- Electronic Reporting with Hailing and Harvest Flexibilities (FACTS™)

Daily Record of Commercial Crabbing (Crab Report)

- Paper Reporting
- Electronic Reporting without Hailing (SAFIS or eVTR)
- Electronic Reporting with Hailing and Harvest Flexibilities (FACTS™)

Daily Record of Commercial Oystering (Oyster Report)

- Paper Reporting
- Electronic Reporting without Hailing (SAFIS or eVTR)
- Electronic Reporting with Hailing and Harvest Flexibilities (FACTS™)

Commercial Charter Boat Captain's Daily Log (Charter Report)

- Paper Reporting
- Electronic Reporting without Hailing (SAFIS or eVTR)
- Electronic Reporting with Hailing and Harvest Flexibilities (FACTS™)

Daily Record of Commercial Clamming (Clam Report)

- Paper Reporting
- Electronic Reporting without Hailing (SAFIS or eVTR)
- Electronic Reporting with Hailing and Harvest Flexibilities (FACTS™)