EM Vessel Monitoring Plan Document Management Application
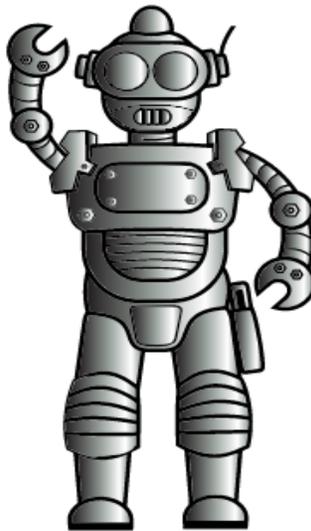
VMAN USER GUIDE

U.S. Department of Commerce

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Introduction to VMAN

The VMAN document management application was created for the purpose of structuring operations central to Vessel Monitoring Plan (VMP) approvals and management of EM programs throughout the fishing year. The VMAN app offers logistical functionality for monitoring draft VMP submissions, active or approved VMPs, and documentation of vessel specific equipment malfunctions and VMP compliance issues. VMAN allows users to track, view, comment, and respond to inquiries on active VMPs and new uploads on a document page for individual vessels. A separate page will be used to log, monitor, and resolve vessel issues. EM Program staff will collaborate on VMP approvals and document issue resolutions directly in the application.

VMAN will be used for both operational EM programs and EM EFPs alike. Service providers are required to upload VMPs and supporting vessel image files directly to VMAN. The Fisheries Monitoring and Research Division (FMRD) will not review draft VMP documents on alternate file sharing web applications. A vessel seeking to participate in an EM program must have a VMP that has been approved by the agency through VMAN.

Pre-Trip Notification System (PTNS) will be using the VMP status and gear approvals identified in VMAN to determine EM participation. FMRD will use VMAN to manage a vessel's VMP and VMP gear status. In cases of non-compliance, FMRD will use VMAN to change the status of the VMP, resulting in the vessel not being eligible for EM when notifying into PTNS. Alternatively, once a vessel has successfully completed a burn-in trip, PTNS will recognize the vessel's EM participation on the next calendar day following the date a vessel status becomes active.

For mid-fishing year additions, the provider must submit a completed VMP Upload Notification Request Form prior to uploading the new VMP.   The notification request will identify the vessel name, hull, and permit number, the vessel's service provider and the EM program. FMRD staff will load the vessel into VMAN to support the service provider's file uploads. Once the new vessel is found in the Vessel Name menu, the provider will import image files, a deck diagram (optional), and a completed VMP draft.

User Roles: There are 4 user roles that will be assigned in VMAN (vessel, provider, reviewer, and FMRD staff) and each will have different capabilities.

> ➢ *Vessel:* EM vessel owners and or operators will be able to sign into the VMAN using their PTNS credentials. Visibility and features for vessel users is strictly limited to their own VMP and VMAN Issues pertaining to their vessel.
> ➢ *Provider:* will have access to uploading new VMPs, viewing both active and draft VMPs, logging comments in VMPs, and viewing and creating issues seen during review or via vessel operator communication reports.
> ➢ *Reviewer:* will be able to view all active VMPs for vessels contracted with their provider, and view and create issues seen during review.

➢ *FMRD staff:* will have access to all VMPs in all statuses, be able to log comments, approve or shift statuses of VMPs, log and comment on issues, and resolve issues.

Key Points:
- VMAN will only accept documents in PDF.
- A VMP document must include camera views, the deck diagram, and the specific details of each view.
- Once a VMP document is uploaded, the service provider will add all required image files separately for the vessel on the Draft VMP Document page.
- VMPs associated with Groundfish Audit Model, Maximized Retention, and IFM EM Herring Compliance will be uploaded by the contracted service provider for FMRD review and approval.
- All data fields listed in a VMAN form must contain values prior to submitting.
- Users are directed to use the comments feature to open a new dialog, communicate, and provide evidence and documentation that an issue has been resolved.
- Each comment submission will generate an email notification to representatives assigned to management user roles, i.e. Provider, Sub-provider, and FMRD. The vessel will not receive email notifications.
- Once a VMP for a new audit model or MREM vessel has been uploaded, the vessel is required to complete a burn-in trip on a groundfish declaration and has the appropriate gear that is on the VMP.

VMAN Homescreen

There are 2 menu options available from the navigation bar on the login page labeled *Documents* and *Issues*. For instructions related to the Issues menu, please begin on page 10.

New Vessel Monitoring Plan (VMP) Uploads

This can be done by either the vessel or provider. To upload a finalized-draft VMP, select **New VMP** from the Documents drop-down menu.

Within the **New VMP** Document card the user will:
- Select the correct vessel name from the dropdown menu.
- Select the correct Electronic Monitoring Program.
- Then, in the Gear Categories tab, click on the gear(s) that the vessel intends to use.

Gear Categories:

- ❏ Otter Trawl, Bottom
- ❏ Gillnets
- ❏ Longline

❏ Handline
❏ Midwater Trawl
❏ Purse Seine

Next, on the bottom left corner of the card, click on the **File** icon. Locate the file in your directory and ensure that the VMP document has been converted to a PDF. Once the PDF is loaded, click on the **Submit** button in the lower right corner of the card.

Once the VMP is uploaded, a **VMP Document** page will appear in DRAFT. Confirm the vessel name, hull, and permit listed on the card matches the PDF file.

Note: A gray file icon should be visible outside of the document card at the top right corner. This file contains the VMP.

Figure 1. Icon indicates that the PDF file was successfully uploaded.

Along the bottom edge of the card, there are 4 options:

I. Update Document II. Add Images III. Add Comment IV. Document History

I.   Update Document
If an incorrect VMP was loaded or if FMRD has required an updated VMP, the user will click on "**Update Document"** and replace the previous VMP draft with a new file. The previous document will be removed automatically once a new file has been uploaded.

II.   Add Images
Images must be added by the provider before FMRD staff members will begin the approval process. In addition to uploading image files for review, camera views and vessel diagrams must also be embedded and referenced in the PDF version of the VMP. Camera views will be specific to each gear category and EM program. Please see Tables 1-6 for gear specific details. Note that if fishing operations and catch processing can be captured by fewer cameras than the number

listed in Tables 1-6, all gear specific catch handling and processing activity must be outlined and demonstrated in the system set-up.

To Add/Delete Images and the Deck Diagram:
Click on **Add Image**
- VMAN will accept camera image files and the deck diagram in jpeg, jpg, or png format.
- The following tables illustrate individual gear categories and the organization of camera views.
- For each camera view upload reference:
    - Table 1 for a gillnet vessel.
    - Table 2 for a bottom otter trawl vessel.
    - Table 3 for a longline vessel.
    - Table 4 for a handline/auto-jig vessel.
    - Table 5 Maximized Retention
    - Table 6 IFM Herring Compliance
- Select the appropriate camera number from the drop-down menu.

Click on the **FILE** icon and select the image from the computer directory, then click **SUBMIT**.

A sample of the uploaded image will appear on the right side of the VMP Document. Click on the image to enlarge and inspect the quality. Proceed by following the same steps for each additional image that will be uploaded for approval. Successful images will be loaded for review on the right side of the page.

To delete an **Image File**:
- Click on the above the image file link.
- To permanently delete the image, click **SUBMIT**.
- To cancel the command or go back, click on DISMISS.

III.   Add Comment
- The comments feature should be used as a primary notification tool whenever revisions to VMP language or details have been addressed by the service provider, including instances when new image files are uploaded.
- A comment is not directly related to a file upload and therefore, the user must indicate the precise reason for commenting.

To add a comment, click on **Add Comment**.

In the comment line, begin typing a message. A comment can include *3000* characters. If the comment is intended for a specific FMRD staff member, include her or his initials or name at the beginning of the comment, when necessary.

IV.   Document History

The document history will store all commentary logged between the provider and the agency while a VMP is in the draft stage. Access to comments will remain available for users while FMRD is conducting a review of the VMP and preparing the vessel for approval. Comments in document history will no longer be displayed after a VMP is taken out of draft status.

Documents Page

Vessel Monitoring Plan Documents Table

The documents page will be used as the main-hub for tracking and reviewing plans once a VMP draft has been uploaded. Users assigned managerial roles can also access the upload platform for new VMPs by clicking on the New Document tab at the top right of the table.

The documents table will include all VMPs that have been uploaded by a service provider for a specific fishing year. Column headers identify the Provider; Sub-provider; Vessel Name; EM Program; Gear; Issues; Status; VMP; Draft; and Archived.

To search the table for a vessel with a corresponding VMP, click on the magnifying glass at the top right, enter the vessel name into the search bar, and the table will remove all non-related vessels from the roster.

Provider, Sub: If the service provider is working with a sub-provider, the primary service provider must define or grant a sub-provider access to a vessel's VMAN records (VMP documents, Issues) by clicking on the "assign" icon in the Sub column of the documents table. This will display the vessel on the documents page of the sub-provider, and allow the sub-provider and their reviewers to view and enter VMP document comments and Issues for this vessel in VMAN. Revoking this access is done by clicking on the sub-provider name in the column.

Gear: This column will be populated once a VMP has been approved by FMRD.

Issues: The service provider, reviewers, and FMRD staff will maintain the ability to log new issues, track comments, and respond to unresolved issues and corrective actions. FMRD personnel will indicate when an issue has been sufficiently resolved. If a vessel has an unresolved/open issue, a value indicator will be present in the column. Users can navigate and view that issue by clicking on the value and then add comments, upload images, or monitor responses.

Status: Presently, icons are color coded to identify the following statuses of a VMP:

- Red = Nonactive VMP
- Green = Active/Approved VMP
- Gray = No VMP or archived document uploaded
- Orange = VMP Draft (Not Approved for Program. Requires amendments, new camera views, or a Burn-In Trip.)

Burn-In Trips

Audit model: New vessels will be required to conduct a burn-in trip (BIT) prior to having their VMP approved. FMRD staff will update the status of the VMP to "DRAFT-BURN IN REQUIRED" once the VMP has been reviewed and the vessel is prepared to take a BIT. The provider will inform FMRD staff (via VMAN) the dates of the BIT and when footage is available. Once the BIT has been reviewed, FMRD staff will upload the BIT evaluation (into VMAN) and provide any feedback. If adjustments are needed, the status will be updated to "DRAFT-REQUIRES AMENDING" and a comment will be entered with the details. If approved, FMRD will update the status of the VMP to "ACTIVE."

All vessels in "DRAFT-BURN IN REQUIRED" status will flag as an "EM burn-in trip" on the Portal for observer providers to ensure observers are aware they are deploying on an EM vessel. Vessels should only be in "DRAFT-BURN IN REQUIRED" status if they are prepared to take a BIT.   As such; a vessel entering the EM Audit model program will have a 90-day period for a VMP to be uploaded, a BIT to be completed and reviewed, and VMP approved. The 90-day period includes two parts: 30-days to upload a VMP, work through revisions and to enter "DRAFT-BURN IN REQUIRED" status, and 60-days to take a BIT and complete the necessary steps for VMP approval. Vessels that do not complete the requirements as outlined above within the respective timelines will be returned to "DRAFT" status until they are ready to proceed with the process. This status change will not disqualify the vessel or VMP but will allow the vessel to go through the BIT process at their convenience. The vessel can move back into "DRAFT-BURN IN REQUIRED" status when ready to move forward in the BIT process.

Maximized Retention (MREM): An important distinction between onboarding Audit model and MREM vessels is when the burn-in trip takes place during the onboarding process. Under the MREM program, vessels retain sublegal fish and therefore must be enrolled in the program to legally land sublegal fish. Under MREM, the BIT will occur while the vessel is enrolled in the program. To accomplish this, we have created a "Preliminary VMP Approval" period. Once a VMP has been reviewed and is ready to take a BIT, FMRD staff will change the VMP status to "ACTIVE."

During the Preliminary Approval period, the vessel will fish in the MREM program, which allows the vessel to legally land sublegal catch and be serviced by a DSM. The vessel must comply with all of the requirements of the MREM program during the Preliminary Approval period. If the vessel does not pass

the preliminary approval period within 30 calendar days, they will be returned to the ASM pool. FMRD staff will unclick the "Preliminary Approval" box and change the VMP status back to "DRAFT-BURN IN REQUIRED."

To move out of the Preliminary Approval phase, the vessel must take a BIT to demonstrate successful catch handling, operation of the EM system, and compliance with DSM procedures. Once the BIT is completed, the provider will upload the footage and notify NMFS staff when it's ready for review. After successful completion of the BIT, the vessel will pass the Preliminary Approval period. FMRD staff will unclick the "Preliminary Approval" box and the vessel status will remain as "Active".

VMP Rollover

The VMAN application will accommodate an abbreviated approval process for currently approved VMPs that would likely be submitted as exactly the same document for the next fishing year. FMRD staff will still need to set up the next fishing year's participation in VMAN. After this happens, the

provider will notice on the FY22 Document page a new "rollover" icon ( ) in the DRAFT column for vessels that will be participating in the same program and provider and have an FY21 status of ACTIVE. If the provider does not anticipate changes to the vessel's current VMP, they may click the "rollover" icon to request a "rollover" of the current VMP document and all camera views. VMAN notifications will be sent out and FMRD EM staff will have the opportunity to view and change the status of the new FY22 VMP to either "DRAFT - REQUIRES AMENDING" or "ACTIVE".

Issues Page

Logging New Issues, Maintaining Issue Records, and Resolving Issues

The Issues menu is located on the navigation bar and a service provider will have 3 menu options available: *All Issues*, *Create New Issue*, and *Open Issues*. The vessel and/or the provider will use VMAN for record maintenance and notifying FMRD that a corrective action plan has been established for each issue. Providers must maintain field staff, technical support, and other appropriate resources to troubleshoot and resolve critical issues that result in data loss or repeated non-compliance. FMRD reserves the right to deactivate or suspend a previously approved VMP with an unresolved critical issue.

To **Create a New Issue** record click on the title in the Issues menu box.

- On the issue card, choose the vessel name.
- If an eVTR is known, enter the 14 digit code (eVTR Ex.10101222012401). This field can be null.
- Select the issue type:
  - Procedural

- ■ Documentation of PTNS notification error; notifications that a vessel operator could not be reached to schedule a vessel visit; failure to meet 1 month or 6 month absent maintenance check requirements; converting vessel to accommodate a new gear type; repositioning camera(s); addition or removal of a camera; adjusting discard control points; addition of a new gear type that does not require updating camera views.
  - ■ FMRD staff/secondary reviewers will log procedural issues to monitor vessels and identify trends. FMRD will communicate through VMAN when an issue or trend needs to be addressed by the provider.
  - ○ Crew Related
    - ■ Reviewers and program managers will document catch handling/processing issues uncovered during review that may require the service provider to contact a vessel operator and give additional outreach and support.
  - ○ EM Equipment
    - ■ Reviewers will have the ability to document system or camera issues that occur during trip review.
    - ■ Vessels and service providers will be able to create system related issue records. Issues to be documented include, but are not limited to, system or camera malfunctions, damaged EM equipment. The issue should include a timeline for the repair.
- ● Select the severity of the issue.
  - ○ High
    Examples:
    - ■ A critical EM system malfunction.
    - ■ Vessel non-compliance that directly impacts data collection.
    - ■ Vessel non-compliance that challenges the reviewer's ability to collect information or validate fishing operations.
    - ■ Camera failures.
    - ■ Damaged or broken EM equipment.

  - ○ Low
    Examples:
    - ■ Reviewers will select low severity for minor inconsistencies with catch handling or other operational instructions listed in the vessel's VMP that are being neglected or overlooked by vessel personnel.
    - ■ Reviewers will select low severity for minor system issues, brief video gaps, system impairment concerns that may escalate and require attention.
    - ■ FMRD will select low severity to journal and study developing trends.

- Service providers will select low severity for actions that will correspond with a VMP resubmission, such as changing a discard control point or addition/removal of a camera.
- Provide a title or subject line that describes the issue.
- Use Issue Description to outline and describe the issue in detail.
- If an image file is warranted or requested, click on the **FILE** tab and upload the image(s) from the directory on your computer.
- Ensure all fields have been populated, then click **SUBMIT**.

The next screen will summarize in detail the New Issue entry. If additional images are needed, add image file attachments below. Click on **FILE**, upload image, then click on **SUBMIT**.

All Issues Page:

To review **All Issues** click on the title in the Issues drop down menu on the navigation bar. The VMP Issues page will list all issues that have been logged by FMRD staff, reviewers, the service provider or the vessel. From the page, the user can create a New Issue card by clicking on the **New Issue** tab in the top right corner of the table. VMP issues can be filtered by vessel name, issue type, or status after clicking on the **Filter** tab.

To continue correspondence within an previously created issue, click on the blue highlighted **Timestamp** in the first column of the table that is associated with the vessel record.

Additional comments will be included here and the user can upload new or additional image files, as well.

- If additional images are needed, add image file attachments by clicking on **FILE**, upload image, then click on **SUBMIT**. (Note: Secondary image files, or image files used as evidence for resolving an issue must be accompanied with a comment).

Comments associated with a specific Issue Card are stored here and can be reviewed by the timestamp entry.

To preview comments for a VMP issue entry from the main VMP Issues table, click on the title of the record. A detail card will pop up with the timestamp of the entry and the specific information logged in that comment. To review the Issue Card in full, click on Details. To close out of the preview, click on Dismiss.

The **Open VMP Issues** page is a pre-filtered table that quickly identifies unresolved VMP Issues. The table structure and filter-functions are identical to the All Issues page. Click on the Title or subject of

unresolved issue to preview the initial comment. From this card, click on **Details** at the bottom right corner to access all related details and comments.

Similarly, the user can click on the Timestamp associated with an open VMP issue to view full details. This will direct to the **Issue Card** and the user can review information, identify specific comments, or add images files or additional comments:

- Vessel name
- Entry date of the issue
- eVTR (if known, not a required field)
- Issue category
    - Procedural
    - Crew Related
    - EM Equipment
- Title or Subject Line of the Issue
- Description of the issue
- All submitted comments
- Entry card for adding comments and image file attachments
- Issue status (new, pending, resolved, archived)

EM Vessel Waivers

Background

The EM system must be operational on every sector EM trip taken by a vessel. A vessel may not fish a sector EM trip without an operational EM system onboard, unless issued a waiver by NMFS. In the event that a vessel's EM system is not operational as required, the vessel operator should troubleshoot the issue as described in the vessel's VMP.   If the vessel operator and/or EM service provider staff are unable to resolve the issue, the trip is eligible for a NMFS waiver.

Issuing a Waiver

EM waivers are managed by EM service providers through the NOAA Fishery Monitoring Portal (Portal). The Portal will communicate with the PTNS once an EM service provider selects an EM waiver. In order for a trip to appear in the Portal to be eligible for an EM waiver, there must be an "EM Equipment" + "High" severity issue logged into VMAN. Once the critical error is logged in VMAN, the trip will be visible in the Portal's "EM Waivers" page through which providers can waive the trip of the EM monitoring requirement. If you do not see the trip in the Portal, please confirm that the issue has been properly entered in VMAN.

Documenting EM System Issues in VMAN

If a vessel performs a pre-trip check of the EM system and identifies a critical system error, the vessel is required to contact the EM service provider and notify them of the issue prior to departure. The EM

service provider is first required to log the issue in VMAN as a "EM Equipment" + "High" severity issue in the Issues tab (see page 7 for detail on how to enter an issue).

Once the critical system issue is logged into VMAN, log into the Portal and navigate to the EM Provider Dashboard. The EM waivers are accessed under the EM trips page. Find the trip using the PTNS confirmation number (obtained from the PTNS notification email or provider dashboard) in the left column. Any trips that have a "EM Equipment" + "High" severity issue submitted in VMAN will instantly display a purple WAIVER button in the EM trips list:

Once the WAIVER button is selected, a list of EM equipment issues, documented in VMAN associated with the vessel/trip will appear. Choose the correct trip using the PTNS confirmation number, select the appropriate issue(s), hit SUBMIT and the vessel will be granted a NMFS-issued waiver from EM coverage for that trip.

Confirmation of a successful EM waiver will display on the portal as the image below.
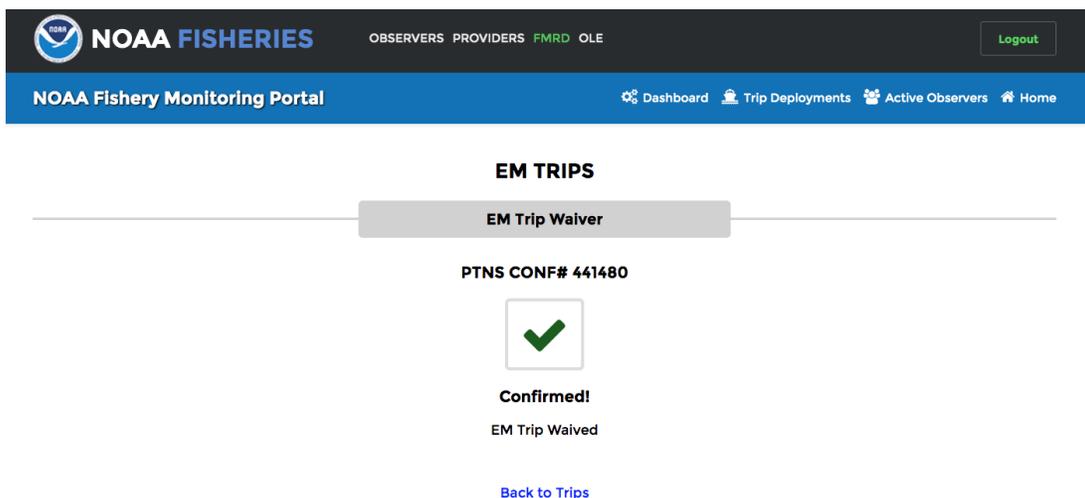
PTNS Communication of Waivers

The EM waiver, once selected in the portal, may be communicated through an automated PTNS email as well *if* the trip was selected for an EM coverage type. If the trip was selected for NEFOP or another coverage type, the PTNS *will not* automatically communicate this waiver from EM coverage. Therefore, once a waiver is submitted, service providers are required to communicate with the vessel to convey an EM waiver for the trip has been issued and they are approved to sail on the trip.

If the vessel has been selected for NEFOP coverage, an EM waiver is still required for critical equipment issues, regardless of observer coverage. The waiver issued is not a waiver from NEFOP coverage, only EM coverage due to the critical system issue.

If there are issues with submitting an EM waiver or if you have selected the incorrect trip for a waiver, please contact the PTNS line at 855-347-4371 and ask to speak with the NMFS staff member on call.