



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

GUIDANCE, DOCUMENT

Inshore vessel monitoring systems (iVMS) for fishing vessels under 12m: frequently asked questions

Guidance on the use of inshore vessel monitoring systems for commercial fishing vessels under 12m.

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What is the inshore vessel monitoring systems (iVMS)?

iVMS devices installed on fishing vessels transmit information, including the geographical position, date, time, speed and course of the vessel, to the Fishing Authority. All under 12m commercial fishing vessels operating within Wales and the Welsh zone, and Welsh under 12m registered fishing vessels wherever they are operating, from 15 February 2022 are required to have a functioning iVMS device on board that transmits this information to the Welsh Authorities every 10 minutes. It is an offence to fish without a functioning iVMS device on your vessel and enforcement action could be taken.

What is the purpose of monitoring under 12m vessels?

iVMS shows us when and where fishing activity is taking place. This helps us to gain a better understanding of the scale, location and seasonality of fishing activity and aid fisheries management.

In 2019 we introduced Catch Recording for under 10m vessels. This provides us with more information about what is being caught in Welsh waters. Combining catch data with iVMS gives us a fuller picture of fishing effort and helps us to manage fishing sustainability.

iVMS provides the industry with evidence of their catch origin and fishing grounds. This could be used to resolve conflicts with other marine users and for responding to marine planning and licensing consultations.

The introduction of iVMS creates a common requirement for all UK and third

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country under 12 metre vessels fishing in Welsh waters and enables enforcement to operate in a more efficient and targeted manner.

When did it become a requirement for under 12m vessels fishing in Wales and the Welsh zone to use iVMS?

Legislation requiring the use of VMS on all licensed under 12m fishing vessels that operate in Welsh Waters, and Welsh vessels wherever they are fishing, came into force on 15 February 2022.

[The Sea Fishing Operations \(Monitoring Devices\) \(Wales\) Order 2022 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk)

Am I eligible for a free device from Welsh Government?

Welsh Government offered to supply and fit an iVMS device for free to all Welsh registered under 12m fishing vessels, up until the date the iVMS legislation came in to force. Free devices are no longer available.

The free devices were funded through the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) and due to the EMFF scheme rules we could only offer a device for free if it was fitted to the vessel prior to the legislation commencement date. You must fund and arrange installation of a suitable iVMS device yourself.

Non-Welsh registered fishing vessels that operate in Wales or the Welsh zone were not eligible for a free device from Welsh Government and must supply their

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own. We recommend you contact your Fisheries Authority to discuss whether they can provide support with this.

Where can I get an iVMS device from?

iVMS devices must provide the following information to Welsh Government at least once in every 10 minutes:

- The most recent geographical position of that boat using coordinates of latitude and longitude on the World Geodetic System 1984, with a position error of less than 10 metres.
- The date and time expressed in Co-ordinated Universal Time of any geographical position of that boat.
- The speed and course of that boat at that time.

You may wish to view the [Marine Management Organisation approved devices list](#) to identify potential device suppliers.

If you fish in England information is available at GOV.UK:

[Inshore Vessel Monitoring \(I-VMS\) for under-12m fishing vessels registered in England](#)

[Inshore Vessel Monitoring Systems in 2022](#)

If you chose a device that isn't on the Marine Management Organisation approved devices list or approved by another UK Fisheries Authority you will need to contact us to discuss whether the device is suitable. The device must be able to transmit to the UK VMS hub, any device not already approved by UK authorities may incur additional connection charges.

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Are fishers in other parts of the UK subject to iVMS requirements?

All under 12m commercial fishing vessels that operate in Wales or the Welsh zone must comply with the new iVMS requirements.

Similar iVMS requirements have been introduced by the Isle of Man Government for their waters. The MMO are introducing iVMS requirements for all under-12m fishing vessels transiting or fishing in English waters and Fisheries Authorities in other parts of the UK are also considering similar measures.

Can my device be used to comply with VMS requirements in other nation's waters?

Confirmation should be sought from the device supplier once details of the other nation's iVMS scheme are known. The devices supplied by Welsh Government are programmed to report at 10 minute intervals but can be set to report more frequently if required.

Who will have access to my data?

The data will be accessible to:

- Welsh Fisheries Monitoring Centre and other Welsh Government Marine and Fisheries Control and Enforcement teams;
- Other UK Fisheries Administrations;
- Welsh Government Marine and Fisheries Science and Evidence teams; and
- Welsh Government Marine and Fisheries Policy teams.

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Data will be collected and processed to undertake fisheries monitoring, enforcement, science and management for the purpose of the Administrations' statutory and policy functions. The exchange of personal data between Administrations is for the purposes of marine and fisheries management, science and law enforcement in the United Kingdom.

Data may be shared with the Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG-MARE), EU Commission in specific cases, e.g. monitoring fisheries activities in a wider international context or as part of a specific investigation. In the context of international agreements, VMS data are exchanged via secured channels with third countries and international organisations (Regional Fisheries Management Organisations - RFMOs) and are only managed in secure systems and solely used for inspection and surveillance purposes.

Data with identifying information disguised may be shared with a third party for the purpose of scientific research. Additionally, an anonymised and aggregated version of the data will be added to the Welsh Government data portal, which is publicly available. Your personal information including location information will not be accessible to other fishers or the general public. System technical administrators will not use your details in any way.

Can I use AIS instead?

The Automatic Identification System (AIS) is not considered a suitable enforcement system for under 12m vessels. AIS was developed for a different purpose to VMS and is intended, primarily, to allow ships to view and be seen by marine traffic in their area. AIS is an open-source system, which means all data is publicly accessible including the vessels' location, direction of travel and type of vessel.

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Data privacy was raised as a key concern during the Wales iVMS consultation. iVMS is designed so that only the Fishing Authority receives the data and it's transmitted through a securely encrypted channel. An additional benefit of I-VMS is its tamper-proof design. Unlike I-VMS, AIS can be switched off.

Where can I get further information?

You can contact Welsh Government for information by:

Email: MarineEvidenceandTech@gov.wales

Telephone: 03000 258907/03000 258923.

Rydym yn croesawu galwadau'n Gymraeg / We welcome calls in Welsh.

Address:

Welsh Government
Economy, Skills and Natural Resources Group
Marine & Fisheries Division
C1 Sarn Mynach
Llandudno Junction
Conwy LL31 9RZ

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The following questions and answers relate specifically to the AST devices supplied by Welsh Government to Welsh registered fishing vessels

How will I know if my device is working correctly?

AST Applied Telematics provide vessel owners/skippers, who use an AST device, access to a mobile app. The App will allow you to see if your VMS device is working correctly and show the device's current/last known location. You will only see your own vessels information on the App.

To gain access to the app please contact AST:

- 01493 441485
- globalcustomersupport@theastgroup.com

The app will be available on the app store, search for "AST IVMS Check". You must contact AST to complete your set up at:

- telematics@theastgroup.com or
- (0)1603 327936 and select option 2

The rechargeable and solar devices supplied by Welsh Government have a low battery indicator.

It is your responsibility to ensure the device has sufficient power.

AST send low battery warnings to those who have provided an email address, please check your junk folder, the emails may be diverted by your email provider, you can change this in your settings by adding the email to your trusted list, the warning will be sent from:

- irams-hub@ast-msl.com

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Two warnings will be sent:

“Your VMS/iVMS tracker will operate for approximately two more days before the battery will run out. Please charge your tracker, overnight, or for a minimum of 8 hours, as soon as possible”.

“Your VMS/iVMS tracker will operate for approximately 16 hours before the battery will run out. Please charge your tracker, overnight, or for a minimum of 8 hours, as soon as possible”.

If there is visible damage to the VMS device you must report it to Welsh Government as soon as you become aware of the issue on:

- 03000 253 500 (rydym yn croesawu galwadau'n Gymraeg / We welcome calls in Welsh) or
- MilfordHavenFisheriesOffice@gov.wales

and contact the device supplier to arrange repair on:

- 01493 441485
- globalcustomersupport@theastgroup.com

You will be contacted by Welsh Government or the device supplier if an issue is identified with the data transmitted by the device.

It is your responsibility to ensure that:

- (a) the monitoring device is not manually overridden;
 - (b) the monitoring device is not destroyed, damaged, rendered inoperative, or otherwise interfered with;
 - (c) any antenna connected to the monitoring device is not obstructed in any way;
- and

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(d) the power supply to the monitoring device is not interrupted.

What is the costs of data transmission?

The cost of data transmission for the year 2024-25 is £120 + vat for the Welsh Government supplied devices.

Fishers are required to sign AST terms and conditions, is this a pre-agreement to accepting future cost increases?

No, the supplier's terms and conditions do not include any reference to future costs or cancellation other than their issue of an "invoice 30 days prior to the expiry of the free air time period", the invoice would cover the annual charge in advance, if you decide not to pay the fee, the service will cease.

What are the terms and conditions of a Welsh Government funded device?

By accepting fitting of the device on to your vessel you are agreeing to Welsh Government terms and conditions as set out below:

- No equipment provided will be disposed of, transferred or sold without the prior written consent of Welsh Government. This includes indirect changes e.g. where a vessel changes ownership or where the location of any funded items changes.

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- If you do not accept the terms and conditions of the funding then it is deemed that the item has not fulfilled its obligations to the scheme and therefore recovery proceedings may be started and funding recovered.

Can I return the iVMS device without incurring cost?

The iVMS unit can be handed back to Welsh Government. There would be no charge to you unless you require an engineer to remove the device from the vessel, this cost would fall to you as would the cost of an alternative device and associated data charges of that device.

Will the device transmit when on land?

No the device will stop transmitting positional information if it is taken over land.

Can I fit the device myself?

No the device has to be installed by a qualified Engineer and a test transmission completed by the Engineer on site.

Where should the rechargeable/solar device be positioned when in use?

Devices should always be secured in the bracketry supplied for security and

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coverage purposes. In the few exceptions where bracketry was unable to be fitted, the device should always be placed in the location agreed with the engineer at the point of installation. Paying careful attention to the orientation of the case, as this is critical for solar efficiency and maximum coverage for GPS. The aerial needs to be facing skyward with a clear view of the sky.

Does the blue cap needed to be secured on the recharge port?

The recharge port, when not in use, must always have the waterproof blue cap securely fitted to minimise environmental exposure to the charging pins. The manufacturer's warranty may be invalidated if the charging pins have been damaged due to unnecessary weathering.

How long does the battery take to charge fully on the rechargeable device?

The iVMS device takes 11 hours to fully charge which should provide 11 days of operation. Do not leave the battery gauge switched on when charging the device as this will prevent it from charging properly (power will be diverted into the battery gauge preventing a full charge)

Why does the rechargeable battery go flat in less than 11 days?

If the battery indicator is left switched on it will deplete the charge. The battery

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indicator should only be switched on to check the level of power.

Do not leave the battery gauge on when charging the device as it will not charge properly.

Can I leave my fixed device unpowered while the vessel is not in use to avoid it draining my battery?

It is ok to switch off any supply breaker to the device if you do not plan to use your vessel for several days

How does the Solar panel extend the life of the battery?

The solar units will extend the life of the battery during Summer when there is more daylight. The battery will need to be charged more frequently in the winter. The battery indicator should never be left on as this will deplete the battery. It is recommended that when not in use for extended periods the solar panel is disabled, see section 3.1 (How it works) and 3.2 (Your responsibilities) of the user manual for more information on solar devices.

Where should my device be stored when not in use?

All devices should be stored above the water line at all times. Rechargeable

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devices should not be left on vessels when not in use for long periods.

Who do I contact if I have any questions or issues with an installed device?

AST Helpline 01603 327936 option 2.

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