

Digital Monitoring – how will your information be protected?

The Official Information Act and Privacy Act

Fisheries New Zealand recognises that a commercial operator's fishing knowledge is a valuable commodity and is aware of industry concerns around the protection of their data and reputation.

We're confident we have well tested systems and tools in place to protect private, personal and commercially sensitive information received through digital monitoring within the existing framework of the Privacy Act 1993 and Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

To help meet our OIA and Privacy Act obligations, we have a set of longstanding guidelines for the release of fisheries information. These guidelines have been recently reviewed and will continue to be updated as digital monitoring is rolled out to ensure currency.

Fisheries New Zealand has also consulted with the Privacy Commissioner and the Government Chief Privacy Officer to identify appropriate controls that can be used to protect information received through digital monitoring.

There is nothing to suggest that the risks associated with information received through digital monitoring are significantly different from those already managed under our existing systems. Currently, all fisheries information is assessed on a case by case basis prior to being released under the OIA. In particular, Fisheries New Zealand would not normally release commercially sensitive information, such as fishing locations, under the OIA. Any information we do release is routinely aggregated, anonymised and at a high-level.

Information sharing between Government agencies

A Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) has also been developed to address potential privacy issues specific to digital monitoring. This considers the protection of privacy and information sharing between government agencies. The PIA includes measures to ensure that any digital monitoring data provided to Fisheries New Zealand will be encrypted before being shared.

[IEMRS \(now Digital Monitoring\) Privacy Impact Assessment \[PDF, 7.7 MB\]](#)

Protecting key fishing information

While permit holders are currently required to report their catch information in fine detail, we are aware that in some cases the fisher is not the permit holder and may want to protect the exact location of their fishing marks. Fisheries New Zealand has recently finished consulting on a possible amendment to the electronic reporting regulations that would see fishers still required to record their location in fine detail (to the equivalent of 11 metres), but the permit holder only required to verify the location (to approximately 11 km) thereby protecting the precise location. Fisheries New Zealand is currently considering feedback on this proposal.

[Consultation on amendments to regulations to support digital monitoring](#)