

Question 1: Why must I register with the Ministry for Primary Industries?

- No person may commence or continue operating as a charter vessel operator unless registered¹. Registration provides a record of your charter operator business details including the means of contact. Once registered, you will be sent a 'Vessel Listing Notification' (VLN) for each vessel you operate. The VLN should be carried on the vessel to assist with ensuring compliance. A book of reporting forms and instructions on how they are to be completed will be furnished for each vessel.

Question 2: Which charter vessel operators are required to register?

- Anyone who takes people fishing under the amateur fishing regulations and where payment is made for the vessel and guide services. Other types of operation, such as ferries or tourist boats, are not included in the regime because their passengers do not fish.

Question 3: What is the cost of registration?

- You pay the annual registration fee of \$54 which can be reduced to \$27 if vessel and personnel information is provided online. The government is paying most of the charter vessel reporting programme administration costs because the fee does not cover them.

Question 4: Can I register online?

- To register, you must first complete a hard copy application form and post it in with proof of identity. This step cannot be taken online. A secure login will be provided and registration can be completed online by entering your contact people, skipper/guide and vessel information. This login provides you with the ability to make changes as and when required including the annual renewal process. A fully paper-based option is also available.

Question 5: Why is so much information required to complete the application form?

- The application forms have between 15 and 30 questions, depending on which form you fill in. Many of the questions are simple, such as vessel name, phone number and postal address. The other information helps to usefully characterise the charter fleet.

Question 6: Must all those skippers' I have under contract be listed?

- There is no requirement to list contract skipper's details. Such details may still be furnished voluntarily. To do so will help if there are issues with the way forms are being filled in.

Question 7: Why must I re-register every year?

- Registration is an annual process and you must re-register on each anniversary if you wish to undertake charters or receive a new book of reporting forms. The reason for annual registration is to provide up-to-date information on the extent and distribution of the charter fleet. A current register also allows improved communication with charter vessel operators over issues of concern in management of the fisheries. Re-registration costs \$27 if undertaken online and there is no cost for the forms.

¹ Section 53(1) of the Fisheries (Amateur Fishing) Regulations 2013

Question 8: How will the information that I provide be used?

- As the number of people using the marine environment and number of ways they are using it increases, management decisions must be made to allocate scarce resources and to ensure the ongoing health of our fisheries. These decisions can affect charter vessel operators and their clients. Improving amateur fishing information is a government priority. The taxpayer is contributing most to funding recreational fishing research. Since 2010, charter vessel operators have also contributed by providing catch and effort information. Together with improved estimates of amateur catch from surveys, charter vessel reporting ensures that the interests of amateur fishers and charter operators are able to be taken into account in fisheries management decisions.

Question 9: Must charter vessel operators provide information?

- Yes, providing information to the Director-General is a legal requirement².

Question 10: What information is required on the reporting form?

- Section 1 records the page number and total number of pages included in an individual return.
- Section 2 records the date of fishing, vessel details, vessel operator, and port of departure.
- Section 3 collects information on fishing activity at each new fishing event. Fishing activity is reported by location, the target species, fishing method, numbers fishing, and time fished.
- Section 4 collects information on the catch of specified species at each new fishing event.
- Section 5 is the declaration section.

Question 11: Who was consulted during the design of the reporting form?

- In 2009 government consulted on whether to list charter vessel operators and whether to put in place an activity and catch reporting system.
- In addition to the formal consultation, some individuals, recreational fishing forums and researchers are contacted for advice on resolving specific issues. In the past this valuable feedback led to simplified and improved reporting requirements; for example, allowing movement of up to 6 nautical miles before the need arose to enter a new fishing event and by simplifying activity reporting of big gamefish trolling.
- All registered charter vessel operators will be consulted on any future changes to the reporting form.

Question 12: Has the cost and time of completing returns on my business been taken into account?

- Yes. It is acknowledged that meeting the requirements will take up some of your valuable time and impose a new cost on your business. For this reason MPI designed a system that is as easy to use for operators as possible while still ensuring that quality information is collected.

Question 13: How will the Ministry address the issue of non-reporting to ensure all charter vessel operators have the same additional cost of doing business imposed on them?

² Section 54(1) of the Fisheries (Amateur Fishing) Regulations 2013

- The Ministry has been busy raising awareness of the purpose of charter vessel reporting and helping with an understanding of the requirements. The scheme is now well established and where necessary infringement fees are considered.

Question 14: Is there conflict between the requirements to report activity and catches at sea with watch keeping responsibilities required by Maritime New Zealand?

- There is no conflict. The overriding responsibility is to keep watch. Recording should not be undertaken when the vessel is underway, in a busy waterway or when there is inclement weather or fog. This does not mean charter operators are able to avoid reporting obligations, but it does mean they should exercise discretion about when it is undertaken.

Question 15: Are charter vessel operators required to report their activity and catches when a registered boat has no fare-paying passengers?

- No reporting is required in this situation because you are not operating as an amateur-fishing charter vessel.

Question 16: How often am I required to report?

- A return is required for every charter vessel fishing trip with fare-paying clients. Depending on the number of target species or locations fished, a trip return may require one or more pages. The returns can be bundled together and sent by in by post once a calendar month by the 15th of the month following the fishing. You may send in reports at the completion of each trip if you wish to do so.

Question 17: What happens if I don't go fishing during a calendar month?

- Information on when you don't go fishing is important to get an accurate picture of overall fishing activity. To ensure providing nil returns takes up as little of your time as possible, a simple tick box has been added to the form. Only one nil return will be required for a month when no fishing takes place.

Question 18: How is fishing location reported on the charter vessel activity and catch return?

- Locations are reported in latitude and longitude to the nearest minute. A new fishing event (a new activity and catch reporting column) needs to be started only when the vessel moves further than 6 nautical miles. This limits the paperwork for those who drift or move frequently within a small area. There are also special instructions for those trolling for big gamefish because these vessels can cover particularly large distances –see Section 3 of the instructions for users on completing the returns for details.

Question 19: How can I be sure that my best fishing spots won't be disclosed?

- The Ministry will carefully guard your data and disclosure of information is subject to strict rules as required by the Official Information Act 1982.

Question 20: In the target species of the activity reporting section of the form, can I report 'MIX' because my clients are fishing for a mixture of species rather than targeting one particular species of fish?

- No. Providing a valid species code is necessary to identify the most important species sought. Section 3 of the instructions for users provides further information on how best to report the target species.

Question 21: What actions will the Ministry take to convey to charter vessel operators and their clients that the information collected is of benefit?

- Information collected from charter operators is taken into account within research projects and in management decisions and will be evident when research results are published and allocation / sustainability decisions are made. You can request an account of your responses. The Ministry may publish summarised charter vessel information on its website, but will always ensure that details of individuals and fishing locations are protected. The information furnished by big game trolling operators will be used to reduce duplication with the billfish logbook.

Question 22: What species must have their catch reported?

- Below are the species catch information is required and where the number of fish caught, the number of fish kept and the total weight kept for each of the listed species must be recorded.

Species	Number caught	Number kept	Total weight
Bass	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bluenose	Yes	Yes	Yes
Blue Cod	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hapuku	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kingfish	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rock Lobster	Yes	Yes	Yes
Scallop	Yes	Yes	Yes
Snapper	Yes	Yes	Yes
Southern Bluefin tuna	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pacific Bluefin tuna	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tarakihi	Yes	Yes	Yes

Question 23: What is the reason for the choice of species whose catch must be reported?

- Catch reporting is focussed on stocks that can make a significant direct contribution to management over and above activity reporting. Several of the species chosen are subject to recovery plans and for others the charter sector is believed to take a large proportion of the catch as part of the amateur-fishing sector. Information on catch from charters supports improvements in the current ability to assess spatial management issues and ensure the sustainability of these stocks. New Zealand also has specific international obligations with regard to the monitoring of bluefin tuna species. The other important aspect is that restricting catch reporting to specific species will mitigate costs for operators.

Question 24: How can I count and estimate the weight of the catch when clients are uncooperative?

- We recognise it is important to maintain a friendly but professional relationship with your clients. They should be informed that information collected will ensure the interests of amateur fishers and charter boat operators are taken into account. Promoting a culture of sound record keeping is in line with the good stewardship promoted by many charter boat operators and their associations.

Question 25: Is it possible to report catch information for additional species where I believe there is a management need?

- Yes. It is possible to send in species catch information in addition to the species required. To ensure accurate records, reporting of additional species catch data should be consistent with the reporting instructions.

Question 26: Is it possible to report catch information electronically?

- The current requirement is for all catch and activity information to be supplied in a paper format. However, MPI intends to investigate the option for you to furnish, by electronic means, all catch and activity returns.

Question 27: Where do I send my completed returns?

- Completed forms for the calendar month - including any nil fishing returns –should be posted by the 15th day of the month following to:

Fishing Information New Zealand (FINNZ)
P O Box 24441,
Manners Street,
Wellington 6140.

Question 28: Will catch information from individual charter operators be used to construct catch histories in order to allocate quota in future?

- There is no intention to bring charter vessel operators within the Quota Management System.

Question 29: Where can I get further information?

- If you have any other questions please contact the help line at 0800 422 843.