



## VMS Temporary Switch Off (TSO) Arrangement

AFMA recognises that some concession holders may find it impractical to have their VMS unit operating continuously. AFMA aims to assist concession holders that have a genuine or exceptional cause that prevents continual operation of their VMS.

AFMA can provide the opportunity for concession holders to remain in compliance whilst the unit is switched off by entering into a Temporary Switch Off (TSO) arrangement.

Please be aware that TSO arrangements with AFMA are not intended to exclude or limit any State or Territory obligations. This means if a State concession says a VMS unit must be on, an AFMA TSO does not mean that this State requirement doesn't apply.

### Circumstances in which a TSO may be granted

1. A TSO will only be granted where a vessel has a VMS unit installed which has been polling for AFMA.
2. TSOs will not be issued for vessels without a continuously operational VMS unit polling for AFMA.
3. A TSO may be granted to a concession holder in cases where:
  - a. A nominated vessel is undergoing maintenance or repair-type activity and electrical equipment on board this vessel is required to be shut down.
  - b. A nominated vessel is not undertaking any fishing activity and this vessel is in an extended berth at a single port.
  - c. A nominated vessel is in circumstances which make continual operation of the VMS impractical and AFMA deems it necessary, on a case-by-case basis.

### The obligations of a concession holder under a TSO arrangement

Concession holders should be aware that they are legally responsible for complying with the concession conditions in respect of any vessel/s nominated to their concession/s. By accepting a TSO arrangement from AFMA, the concession holder agrees:

1. The nominated vessel will not undertake any fishing activity as defined under section 4 of the Fisheries Management Act 1991,
2. The nominated vessel will remain stationary at an elected point for the entire duration of the TSO unless AFMA has granted permission to move the vessel,



3. To ensure the VMS unit is operational before embarking on the first fishing trip after the TSO expires, and
4. To any other obligation set out by AFMA.

## Ceasing a TSO before the expiry date

The concession holder may terminate the TSO agreement prior to expiry provided they have confirmed with AFMA that the VMS is operational – you can do this by calling AFMA on 02 6225 5555. In order to be operational, the unit must be sending position reports to AFMA at the frequencies required.

## How to apply for a TSO

You should apply for a TSO as soon as you become aware that your VMS is or will be non-operational. Simply fill out a 'VMS Temporary Switch Off Application form' which can be found here: [afma.gov.au/fisheries-services/vessel-monitoring](http://afma.gov.au/fisheries-services/vessel-monitoring) and send it to AFMA by:

- Fax: 02 6225 5440
- Email: [ausvms@afma.gov.au](mailto:ausvms@afma.gov.au)
- Post: AUSVMS  
Australian Fisheries Management Authority  
PO BOX 7051  
CANBERRA BC  
ACT 2610

## Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a Temporary Switch Off and why do I need one?

*A Temporary Switch Off (TSO) is a formal arrangement with AFMA that acknowledges that a VMS unit will not be operational for a specified period of time. This arrangement protects you from breaching your permit conditions when your VMS is not operational. If the VMS unit is not operational without a TSO being issued then the concession holder may be held liable for breach of their permit conditions.*

2. I don't have an operational VMS, can I get a TSO?

*No. TSOs will not be issued where a vessel does not have a VMS unit installed which has been polling for AFMA. A TSO may be given in exceptional circumstances such as extended berthing, maintenance or accidental damage.*

3. Can I move my boat before the end of the TSO?

*No. The vessel must remain at the location specified for the duration of the TSO, unless you have contacted AFMA and given notification that the vessel is to be moved. This must be done prior to moving the vessel.*



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AFMA will notify you of the outcome of your application. For any further enquiries, refer to the website <http://www.afma.gov.au> or contact AFMA on 02 6225 5555 or by email on [ausvms@afma.gov.au](mailto:ausvms@afma.gov.au).