



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Australian Fisheries Management Authority Electronic Monitoring Summary Privacy Impact Assessment

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Definitions

To support transparency and ensure consistent interpretation of key terms used throughout this document, the definitions below explain the terminology relevant to the Australian Fisheries Management Authority's (AFMA's) Electronic Monitoring (EM) Program and privacy management arrangements. These definitions are provided for the purposes of this summary Privacy Impact Assessment and should be read in conjunction with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth), AFMA's Privacy Policy, and relevant fisheries legislation. Where a term is defined in legislation, the legislative definition prevails.

Term	Definition
Electronic Monitoring (EM)	A monitoring system that uses cameras, sensors and associated technologies on fishing vessels to record fishing activities for fisheries management, compliance and scientific purposes.
EM Footage	Video recordings collected through the EM system. EM footage does not include audio recordings.
EM Data	Information generated from the review and analysis of EM footage, including fishing activity records, catch information, event classifications and other monitoring outputs. EM data is distinct from the original video footage.
Personal Information	Information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable, whether the information or opinion is true or not and whether recorded in a material form or not, as defined in the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth).
Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA)	An assessment undertaken to identify, evaluate and manage privacy risks associated with a project, program, system or initiative involving the handling of personal information.
Australian Privacy Principles (APPs)	The principles contained in Schedule 1 of the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth), which regulate the collection, use, disclosure, storage and management of personal information by Australian Government agencies and certain organisations
Fishing Concession Holder	A person or entity that holds a concession, permit, licence or other authority granted under Commonwealth fisheries legislation.
Authorised AFMA Staff	AFMA personnel who have been granted access to EM systems, footage or data to perform their official duties and who are subject to applicable privacy, security and confidentiality requirements.

About this document

This document provides a summary of the privacy considerations associated with the (AFMA) Electronic Monitoring (EM) Program. It has been prepared to support transparency by AFMA for Industry, explaining how privacy is managed when EM cameras and sensors are used on Commonwealth fishing vessels.

This document is informed by:

- AFMA's internal Privacy Impact Assessments for the EM Program
- Independent privacy reviews and audits undertaken in relation to EM
- AFMA's [Privacy Policy](#), [Privacy Notice](#) and [Information Disclosure Policy](#) which set out how personal information is collected, used, stored, accessed, shared and corrected
- AFMA's obligations under the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) and the Australian Privacy Principles

This document should be read alongside AFMA's Privacy Policy, which explains in more detail AFMA's Personal Information handling practices such as:

- what Personal Information is collected
- why the Personal Information is collected
- how the Personal Information is protected and used
- what safeguards are in place to protect individual privacy

AFMA publishes this document to help concession holders, vessel operators, crew, and other stakeholders understand the EM Program and to demonstrate AFMA's commitment to handling information lawfully and transparently.

Executive Summary

AFMA uses EM to monitor Commonwealth fisheries activity, verify logbook reports, and inform sustainable fisheries management decisions. EM involves the use of cameras and sensors on fishing vessels to record fishing activities. EM Footage and the EM Data derived from it help AFMA verify logbook information, support compliance activities, and strengthen fisheries management.

Because EM uses cameras, it can sometimes record people (usually crew) and activities on board. AFMA recognises that this raises privacy concerns. This document explains what information is collected, why it is collected, how it is protected, and what safeguards are in place.

In short:

- EM is authorised by law and generally only used for fisheries-related purposes
- No audio is recorded
- Cameras are limited to work areas and fishing activity
- Access to footage is tightly controlled
- Footage that is not needed is deleted after 6 months

This summary Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) is published to provide transparency to industry about how AFMA manages privacy in the EM Program.

About the Electronic Monitoring Program

EM has been part of Commonwealth fisheries management since 2015. It is one of several monitoring tools used by AFMA, alongside logbooks, observers, and vessel monitoring systems (VMS).

The EM Program uses:

- Sensors that activate recording during fishing activity
- Secure storage and review systems
- Fixed video cameras (no sound)

EM helps AFMA:

- Verify catch and effort information
- Detect and investigate non-compliance
- Support scientific research and fishery assessments
- Consider and inform fisheries regulatory and management improvements

Who is affected

The EM Program may capture information about:

- Vessel crew and operators
- Fishing concession holders
- AFMA staff involved in review and compliance

EM is not used for surveillance of private living areas, and cameras are not installed covertly.

What information is collected

EM Footage and EM Data

- Video footage of fishing activities and work areas
- Information from vessel sensors indicating when fishing gear is deployed or retrieved
- Time, date and vessel identifiers associated with EM Footage
- EM Data generated through the review and analysis of EM Footage

Note: Some of the information above could include personal information for the purposes of the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth).

What information is not collected

- Health or biometric information
- Personal details such as names or addresses

- Audio (no microphones)

Why AFMA collects this information

AFMA collects EM Footage and EM Data because they are authorised under fisheries legislation and are required to support fisheries management, compliance and scientific functions. EM Footage, and in some circumstances EM Data, may contain personal information. Unless a legal exception applies, this information is used only for purposes linked to AFMA's functions, including:

- Validating logbook data
- Fisheries research and management
- Compliance and enforcement
- Investigations and prosecutions where required

AFMA does not use footage for unrelated monitoring or general surveillance.

How EM footage is handled

Collection on board

- Cameras are visible and installed in work areas only
- Recording is linked to fishing activity where possible through sensors that activate when fishing commences and deactivate when it ceases
- Vessel crews are informed about camera coverage

Transfer and storage

- EM Footage is encrypted
- EM Footage is transferred securely to AFMA systems
- Strict chain-of-custody procedures apply

Access and review

- Only Authorised AFMA Staff can access EM Footage and EM Data, where required for their duties.
- Access is logged and audited for EM Data and EM Footage
- All AFMA staff receive privacy and security training and Authorised AFMA Staff receive further training before handling EM Footage

Use of technology and automation

AFMA may use technology, including artificial intelligence (AI) tools, to assist with the review and analysis of EM footage and the generation of EM Data. These technologies are designed to support human reviewers, not replace decision-making and review processes. Any AI capabilities will be purpose-built for

AFMA's operational requirements and deployed within AFMA's secure data environment, ensuring that footage always remains under AFMA'S control. The use of AI tools will be subject to the same privacy and security controls that apply to the handling, review and storage of both EM Footage and EM Data.

Sharing of EM data

EM Data is information derived from the collection, review and analysis of EM Footage. It may include records, classifications, observations and other monitoring outputs generated through EM review processes. EM Data is distinct from the original EM Footage. This data generally contains little to no personal information and is shared in accordance with its Information Disclosure Policy and legislative obligations. Where appropriate, AFMA's preference is to share EM Data rather than EM Footage, as EM Data generally provides the information required without sharing the original video recordings.

Sharing of EM footage

Some law enforcement and regulatory agencies have “powers of compulsion” that allow them to direct other agencies to provide data and information for investigation and enforcement purposes. AFMA is subject to these directions from these law enforcement and regulatory agencies.

For fisheries purposes, EM Footage, and where relevant EM Data, are only shared where the law allows and where disclosure is consistent with AFMA's statutory functions and policies. This includes disclosure in accordance with AFMA's [Information Disclosure Policy](#) which sets out how AFMA assesses and manages requests for information it collects. Where EM Footage or EM Data contains personal information, AFMA will ensure disclosure is consistent with the [Australian Privacy Principles](#).

EM Footage may be shared with:

- Other Australian government agencies with relevant regulatory, law-enforcement or scientific functions, such as the Australian Federal Police or the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
- Approved research organisations, such as the Institute of Marine and Antarctic Sciences or the South Australian Research and Development Institute, where the research supports AFMA's functions.

When EM information is shared

- Requests are assessed on a case-by-case basis
- Personal Information and commercially sensitive information are protected (unless authorised or required under law to be shared)
- Disclosure of EM Footage and EM Data is limited to what is necessary for the approved purpose.
- Formal deeds, arrangements, approvals and conditions apply where required
- AFMA does not publish or disclose EM footage and does not routinely disclose EM data outside authorised arrangements.
- Most sharing of EM Footage to date has been initiated by AFMA for the purpose of improving the effectiveness of the program

How long EM information is kept

- EM Footage that is not required for management, scientific or compliance purposes is deleted after 6 months in accordance with approved records authorities.
- EM Footage that forms part of an investigation, compliance action or legal proceedings is retained only for as long as the law requires.
- EM Data is retained in accordance with applicable records management requirements and AFMA's legislative obligations.
- Audit and access logs for EM Data and EM Footage are retained for accountability and oversight purposes

Further information, access to your footage, privacy concerns or complaints

People can:

- Ask AFMA for information about how EM works
- Request access to EM Footage or EM Data relating to their vessel, subject to applicable legislative requirements and exemptions.
- Raise privacy concerns or complaints

AFMA's Privacy Policy and Information Disclosure Policy explain how access requests are handled.

Key privacy safeguards

AFMA has put the following safeguards in place:

- Limited camera coverage (in terms of placement and only recording while actively fishing)
- Encryption of all EM Footage
- Strict access controls and audit logs for EM Footage and EM Data
- No audio recording of EM Footage
- Secure retention and destruction of EM Footage and EM Data in accordance with approved records management requirements.
- Contracts and standards that require vendors and research partners to meet privacy and security requirements when handling EM Data and EM Footage

Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) – Controls in Place

The table below summarises how AFMA's EM Program aligns with each Australian Privacy Principle¹.

Australian Privacy Principle	What this principle is about	EM Program controls in place
APP 1 – Open and transparent management	Being clear and open about how personal information is handled	Public privacy policy and EM privacy information; this published PIA; industry guidance and website information
APP 2 – Anonymity and pseudonymity	Allowing people to interact without being identified where possible	EM footage is not linked to names; individuals are only identified if required for lawful compliance or investigations
APP 3 – Collection of personal information	Only collecting what is necessary and lawful	Video only (no audio); cameras limited to work areas; recording linked to fishing activity; collection authorised by law
APP 4 – Unsolicited information	Dealing appropriately with personal information not intentionally collected	Any unsolicited information is managed under AFMA's existing privacy and legal procedures
APP 5 – Notification	Making people aware their personal information is being collected	Visible cameras; vessel guidance; public EM and privacy notices explaining collection and use
APP 6 – Use or disclosure	Using and disclosing personal information	Footage used only for fisheries management, compliance, investigations and approved research; formal approvals and agreements for sharing
APP 8 – Cross-border disclosure	Regulating personal information if shared overseas	Unless authorised or required under law, EM footage is not shared overseas; no cross-border sharing.

¹ Note: APPs 7 and 9 are not applicable as AFMA is an agency.

APP 10 – Quality of information	Ensuring personal information is current, accurate and relevant	Limited application to video footage; review processes ensure footage is used in context to ensure it is relevant
APP 11 – Security	Protecting personal information from loss or unauthorised access	Encryption, physical security, restricted access, audit logs, staff training, secure systems, policies regarding deletion of footage
APP 12 – Access	Allowing people to access their own personal information	Requests handled under privacy and fisheries legislation; access subject to legal limits
APP 13 – Correction	Allowing correction of personal information	Managed under AFMA privacy processes

Privacy Review Recommendations

The table below shows how recommendations from previous PIAs and privacy reviews have been addressed at the program level.

Privacy area / APP	Recommendation or issue raised in prior reviews	EM Program control or response
APP 1 – Transparency	Improve clarity for industry about EM privacy arrangements	Publication of this industry-facing PIA; updated EM web content and privacy notices
APP 3 – Collection	Minimise incidental capture of people	Camera placement standards; no audio; signage and guidance for vessels
APP 5 – Notification	Make EM-specific notices clearer	EM-specific privacy notices and public information materials
APP 6 – Disclosure	Strengthen controls over sharing for research and technology development	Formal agreements, purpose limitation, and approval processes for any sharing, including wording in AFMA's EM privacy notice about disclosing to CSIRO for research and technology development
APP 8 – Cross-border disclosure	Ensure overseas sharing is controlled	Unless authorised or required under legislation, AFMA does not share EM footage overseas
APP 11 – Security	Strengthen security controls and oversight	Encryption, access logging, secure storage, system assessed against stringent government controls, audit capability

APP 11 – Retention	Avoid keeping footage longer than necessary	Footage not required for compliance or management deleted after 6 months under records authority Audit log information will be destroyed after 20 years of action completed.
Program governance	Ongoing review as the program evolves	Rolling PIA reviews when delivery models or technology changes

