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Updated: November 5, 2025

COMPLIANCE GUIDE FOR THE CALIFORNIA COMMERCIAL DUNGENESS CRAB FISHERY ELECTRONIC MONITORING PROGRAM

This compliance guide was prepared to help the commercial Dungeness crab fleet comply with data collection requirements under the Risk Assessment and Mitigation Program (RAMP).

GENERAL

Q: What do I need for the 2025-2026 Fishing Season?

A: All vessels participating in the fishery must have a satellite or cellular based electronic monitoring system when participating in the California Dungeness crab fishery (see System Requirements for specifications on system capabilities). The system shall track and record a vessel's location at a frequency of no less than once a minute during an entire fishing trip when the vessel possesses any Dungeness crab or Dungeness crab trap onboard, when the vessel owner/operator has Dungeness crab gear present or placed in any Fishing Zone, or when the vessel is otherwise participating in the California commercial Dungeness crab fishery.

Q: Does data need to be uploaded automatically to CDFW?

A: Yes. Current RAMP regulations specify vessel location data shall be uploaded automatically and be made available to the Department or authorized agent within 24-hours during the 2025-2026 Fishing Season.

Q: What is an electronic monitoring system?

A: An electronic monitoring system consists of equipment that is capable of tracking a vessel's geographic position.

Q: Why does the commercial Dungeness crab fishery need an electronic monitoring program?

A: The RAMP regulations mandated data reporting requirements which are necessary to support collection of essential fishery information as of the 2023-24

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season for the entire Dungeness crab fleet. Electronic monitoring will be used by managers to track fleet-wide trends based on fishing effort to help inform the potential for risk of entanglement with whales and sea turtles. Law enforcement personnel will also use it to monitor compliance in closed areas, depth restrictions, fair start, etc.

Q: Can I receive an exemption to the electronic monitoring requirement?

A: No, exemptions are not allowed.

Q: Are there any opportunities to obtain an electronic monitoring device?

A: The Department procured electronic monitoring devices (LIME) that satisfy the current requirements of RAMP. The distribution of these devices began in Fall 2023 and over 400 units were provided to the fleet. There are few units that can be made available to permit holders who have not previously obtained them at no cost and on a first-come, first-served basis. Contact WhaleSafeFisheries@Wildlife.ca.gov to inquire about availability.

Q: I've obtained an electronic monitoring device (LIME) from Archipelago. How do I install it?

A: You will have received a blue information card with your LIME unit. The QR code on this card will direct you to the online installation manual. You can also access the manuals at: archipelago.ca/fishvuelime-help.

Q: I've installed my LIME electronic monitoring device. What do I need to do to activate it?

A: Your electronic monitoring device requires a data subscription in order to send data to CDFW. It is a simple process done through Archipelago's online shop: store.archipelago.ca. There is a limited number of no-charge subscriptions available on a first-come, first-served basis. Once those are exhausted, you will need to purchase a subscription. If you need assistance with purchasing a subscription, email techsupport@archipelago.ca with your name and the serial number of your unit, which can be found on the unit itself.

Q: How long is my LIME subscription valid for?

A: The subscription is valid for the entire 2025/2026 fishing season.

Q: How do I know my LIME unit is working?

A: Your LIME unit will have a flashing red light to indicate that it is connected to power. If you have purchased a subscription and the LIME unit has a flashing red light, you should be ready to go. You can email techsupport@archipelago.ca with your name and the serial number of your unit, which can be found on the unit itself, to double check.

Q: My LIME device shipped with a hydraulic sensor, do I need to also install it to be compliant with RAMP regulations?

A: No, hydraulic sensor installation is currently optional and not required by RAMP regulations. CDFW might consider adding this capability during a future update to the electronic monitoring regulations, so the sensor should not be discarded. Any data collected at this stage by the sensor installation would inform future adoption potential. If you would like to install your hydraulic sensor, the installation manual can be found at archipelago.ca/fishvuelime-help.

DATA REQUIREMENTS

Q: Why is the ping rate set at once per minute?

A: Given the speed at which gear can be deployed and retrieved in this fishery, a ping rate of one ping per minute will allow the Department to differentiate between actively fishing and transiting and will be helpful in determining potential for co-occurrence with whales and sea turtles.

Q: How does the Department get access to vessel tracking data?

A: Data must be made available to the Department within 24 hours. The Department recommends individuals work with their specific service provider to ensure their service agreement contains a provision granting the Department access to these data. Currently, data from Archipelago electronic monitoring units (e.g. LIME) will automatically upload and be made available to the Department within 24-hours.

EQUIPMENT

Q: What types of equipment can I use?

A: The regulations do not specify a particular vendor or type of equipment to provide maximum flexibility. The electronic monitoring system should comply with the requirements in the RAMP regulations (ping rates, data access, etc.). If you have questions about whether a particular system will comply with this requirement, please contact the Department at WhaleSafeFisheries@wildlife.ca.gov.

Q: Can a single electronic monitoring system be used on more than one vessel?

A: No. Each vessel must have a unique monitoring system assigned only to that vessel.

Q: Can I transfer my electric monitoring equipment from one vessel to another?

A: Please contact CDFW regarding the transfer of monitoring equipment in the event of a change to your vessel or permit.

Q: I have a vessel monitoring system (VMS) on my vessel already. Can I use that to satisfy the requirement?

A: No. VMS systems cannot be used because they do not satisfy the requirements specified in regulation. VMS ping rates for federally managed fisheries range between one to four pings per hour (as opposed to once per minute) and VMS data cannot be made available to the Department in the time frames required under the RAMP regulation.

Q: Can AIS be used to satisfy the requirement?

A: No. AIS does not satisfy the requirements of RAMP.

Q: I have an electronic monitoring system that includes cameras and gear sensors. Can I use that to satisfy the electronic monitoring requirement?

A: As long as the equipment is capable of tracking and transmitting GPS data consistent with the RAMP regulations, an electronic monitoring system with cameras or gear sensors should satisfy the electronic monitoring requirement.

Q: Can I use a solar logger?

A: Possibly. As long as the solar logger meets the requirements of the regulations (ping rate, data availability, etc.) it could be used. The RAMP regulations do not specify the type of power source for electronic monitoring equipment. Solar powered or hard-wired equipment may be used. If you intend to use a solar logger as the electronic monitoring device, please ensure that you have subscribed to a data plan through the vendor in order to activate it.

Q: What if my electronic monitoring equipment malfunctions or the battery runs out during a fishing trip?

A: It is an individual's responsibility to ensure that their equipment is fully charged and working properly before engaging in any fishing activity. Fishing without functioning electronic monitoring when electronic monitoring equipment is required is a violation of regulation. If data transmission is interrupted, or the vessel owner/operator is notified by the department that data are otherwise not being received, the vessel shall return to port immediately until regular data transmission resumes. The vessel's owner shall also immediately notify the department's law enforcement division of the interruption at LEDMarineNotifications@wildlife.ca.gov.

OTHER

Q: Do I need electronic monitoring when I am done fishing for the season?

A: No, once you are done fishing for the season you are no longer required to have an electronic monitoring system on your vessel unless you are using approved alternative gear in a zone closed to traditional gear.

Q: Do I need RFID tags for my traps?

A: No. Although RFID tags or "radio frequency identification" tags are being tested in other trap fisheries, they are not required to be used on commercial Dungeness

crab traps under the RAMP at this time. Regulations do not prohibit the use of this technology, so an individual may use RFID tags to track their trap gear.

Q: Who can I talk to if I have more questions?

A: Please direct any questions to WhaleSafeFisheries@wildlife.ca.gov.