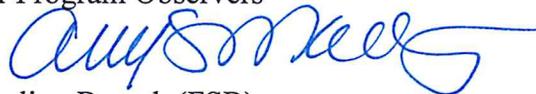




July 21, 2016

MEMORANDUM FOR: A.I.S., Inc.,
East West Technical Services,
Fathoms Research LLC, and
MRAG Americas
At-Sea Monitors, Industry Funded Scallop Observers, and
Northeast Fisheries Observer Program Observers

FROM: Amy S. Martins 
Branch Chief, Fisheries Sampling Branch (FSB)

SUBJECT: Observer Work Status Policy

To effectively manage observer coverage rates, training needs, and field gear distribution, FSB must have an accurate accounting of the working status of each observer. This policy outlines the definitions of the work statuses and how they will be tracked.

Full Time vs Part Time

Full Time will be defined as actively observing an average of at least 12 sea days¹ per month over the previous 3-month period. **Part Time** will be defined as actively observing at least 1 trip every 30 days, but averaging fewer than 12 sea days per month over the previous 3-month period.

Each month, FSB staff will review the average sea days covered by each observer in the previous 3 months and update their status from full time to part time (if the average falls below 12 days) or from part time to full time (if the average rises above 12 days) as appropriate. This change is significant as in the past we have relied on the provider notifying FSB of an observer's work status. This new definition will allow FSB to assign an observer as part time or full time.

Leave of Absence (LOA)

Leave of Absence will be defined as more than 30 days elapsing between trips. The observer provider company should notify the appropriate COTR/POC that an observer will be going on LOA, as well as the expected duration or date of return to active observing.

¹ Sea days defined as days absent, or any part of a day spent on the water. Days spent in an FSB training course can be counted towards active days for this policy only.

If an observer has not taken a trip in 30 days, an email notice will be sent to them and their provider. After 45 days, the observer's status will be changed to LOA and their account will be suspended, preventing them from accessing the noaa.gov email system and all of the FSB data upload systems.

If an observer has not taken a trip in 75 days, an email notice will be sent to their provider. After 90 days, the observer's account will be deleted and they can no longer take trips until they have had either a phone or in-person debriefing with FSB staff².

When an observer is going on a planned LOA (notification from provider) or an automatic LOA (after 45 days of inactivity) they must return their NMFS-issued gear and CAC (observer ID card) to FSB. Gear may be reissued to another active observer, depending on need. The provider is responsible for returning the NMFS-issued gear and CAC to FSB within 2 weeks of LOA notice.

If an observer is returning from LOA, the provider must notify FSB at least 2 weeks before the expected return date. If the account was disabled, FSB can reinstate it without loss of data. If the account was deleted, the observer must retake the NOAA IT Security Awareness Course and complete a Non-Disclosure Agreement.

Whether actively taking trips or not, it is the observer's responsibility to keep all their gear secure, to log into their noaa.gov email accounts at least once every 30 days, and to connect their tablet (if issued) to the internet for at least 1 hour every 30 days. Failure to do so could result in remote account deactivation.

² Provider staff that hold observer certifications and take trips intermittently, such as program managers and area coordinators, will be exempt from these requirements but will still be listed as part time or LOA status, as defined above.