

SUBCHAPTER 030 - LICENSES, LEASES, FRANCHISES, AND PERMITS

SECTION .0100 - LICENSES

15A NCAC 030 .0101 PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS TO OBTAIN LICENSES, ENDORSEMENTS, AND COMMERCIAL FISHING VESSEL REGISTRATIONS

(a) Division of Marine Fisheries licenses are available at offices of the Division or by mail from the Morehead City Office of the Division, unless otherwise specified. In addition, Recreational Commercial Gear Licenses are available from license agents of the Wildlife Resources Commission in accordance with G.S. 113-270.1.

(b) For the purposes of this Rule, the procedures and requirements for the licensee shall also apply to the responsible party, the person holding power of attorney, the tournament organizer, and the vessel master.

(c) To obtain Division of Marine Fisheries licenses, endorsements, and Commercial Fishing Vessel Registrations, a licensee shall provide a completed application to an office of the Division by mail or in person. Applications submitted without complete and required information shall not be processed until all required information has been submitted. Incomplete applications shall be returned to the applicant within two business days with deficiency in the application so noted. The following shall be required for the application:

- (1) full name, physical address, mailing address, date of birth, and signature of the licensee. If the licensee is not appearing before a license agent or a representative of the Division, the licensee's signature shall be notarized.
- (2) a statement from the licensee that the information and supporting documentation submitted with the application is true and correct.
- (3) current and valid picture identification of the licensee. Acceptable forms of picture identification are state driver's license, state identification card issued by the Division of Motor Vehicles, military identification card, resident alien card (green card), or passport; or if purchased by mail, a copy thereof.
- (4) certification that the applicant does not have four or more convictions for violation of any provision of Subchapter 113 of the North Carolina General Statutes under the authority of the Marine Fisheries Commission or any rule adopted by the Marine Fisheries Commission pursuant to Subchapter 113 during the previous three years.
- (5) current articles of incorporation and a current list of corporate officers when purchasing a license or Commercial Fishing Vessel Registration in a corporate name. In the case of incorporation of an individual fishing vessel, the name of the vessel master shall also be specified. The licensee shall notify the Morehead City Office of the Division within five days of changing the vessel master.
- (6) a current copy of a written partnership agreement shall be provided when purchasing a license, endorsement, or Commercial Fishing Vessel Registration in a partnership name, if a partnership is established.
- (7) valid documentation papers or current motor boat registration, or copy thereof when purchasing a Commercial Fishing Vessel Registration. If an application for transfer of documentation is pending, a copy of the pending application and a notarized bill of sale may be submitted.
- (8) affirmation of liability insurance and that the operator is knowledgeable of United States Coast Guard (USCG) safety requirements for the vessels used in the operation in accordance with G.S. 113-168.6 when purchasing a Commercial Fishing Vessel Registration with a for-hire endorsement.

(d) In addition to the requirements of Paragraph (c) of this Rule, proof of residency for non-residents shall be documented by a notarized certification from the licensee stating the state where they are a resident. Proof of residency for residents of North Carolina shall be documented by the licensee as follows:

- (1) Standard or Retired Standard Commercial Fishing Licenses: A notarized certification from the applicant that the applicant is a resident of the State of North Carolina as defined by G.S. 113-130(4) and:
 - (A) a notarized certification from the applicant that a North Carolina State Income Tax Return was filed for the previous calendar or tax year as a North Carolina resident;
 - (B) a notarized certification that the applicant was not required to file a North Carolina State Income Tax Return for the previous calendar or tax year; or
 - (C) military identification or military dependent identification, and permanent change of station orders or assignment orders substantiating the military individual's active duty assignment at a military facility in North Carolina.

- (2) All other types of licenses:
 - (A) North Carolina voter registration card;
 - (B) current North Carolina Driver's License;
 - (C) current North Carolina Certificate of Domicile;
 - (D) current North Carolina Identification Card issued by the North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles; or
 - (E) military identification or military dependent identification, and permanent change of station orders or assignment orders substantiating the military individual's active duty assignment at a military facility in North Carolina.
- (e) In addition to the requirements in Paragraphs (c) and (d) of this Rule, the following shall be required:
- (1) Blanket For-Hire Captain's CRFL: a valid certification from the USCG that allows carrying six or fewer passengers or a valid certification from the USCG that allows carrying more than six passengers.
 - (2) Blanket For-Hire Vessel CRFL or Non-Blanket For-Hire Vessel License:
 - (A) valid documentation papers or current motor boat registration, or copies thereof for the vessel engaged as for-hire; or
 - (B) a copy of the pending application and a notarized bill of sale if an application for transfer of documentation is pending.
 - (3) Fish Dealer License:
 - (A) the physical address of the established location where business is conducted and, if different, the address where records are kept; and
 - (B) a valid Permit and Certificate of Compliance from the Division of Marine Fisheries Shellfish Sanitation and Recreational Water Quality Section, if purchasing a Fish Dealer License with clam or oyster categories or a consolidated license.
 - (4) Land or Sell License:
 - (A) valid documentation papers or current motor boat registration, or copy thereof; or
 - (B) a copy of the pending application and a notarized bill of sale if an application for transfer of documentation is pending.

The fees for a Land or Sell License shall be based on the vessel's homeport as it appears on the USCG documentation papers or the state in which the vessel is registered, in accordance with G.S. 113-169.5.
 - (5) Ocean Fishing Pier License:
 - (A) the information required in G.S. 113-169.4; and
 - (B) linear length of the pier. A Marine Fisheries inspector's signature is required to verify the linear length of the pier before the license can be issued.
 - (6) Recreational Fishing Tournament License to Sell Fish: name and date or dates of the tournament.
 - (7) Spotter Plane License:
 - (A) the information required in G.S. 113-171.1;
 - (B) the current aircraft registration; and
 - (C) a list of operators.
- (f) For a License to Land Flounder from the Atlantic Ocean, in addition to the requirements in Paragraphs (c) and (d) of this Rule, the following shall be applicable:
- (1) for the purpose of this Paragraph, "license year" means the period beginning July 1 of a year through June 30 of the following year.
 - (2) to qualify for a License to Land Flounder from the Atlantic Ocean, the applicant shall:
 - (A) have landed in North Carolina at least 1,000 pounds of flounder from a single vessel each year from the Atlantic Ocean during any two of the 1992-93, 1993-94, 1994-95 license years for which the person had a vessel that was licensed to land in North Carolina;
 - (B) have been licensed under G.S. 113-152 or 113-153 during any two of the 1992-93, 1993-94, or 1994-95 license years; and
 - (C) hold a valid Standard or Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License or valid Land or Sell License.
 - (3) it shall be unlawful for a person to hold more Licenses to Land Flounder from the Atlantic Ocean than the number of vessels that the person owns that individually met the eligibility requirements of Parts (f)(2)(A) and (f)(2)(B) of this Rule.
 - (4) the License to Land Flounder from the Atlantic Ocean is only valid when used on the vessel specified at the time of license issuance.

- (5) at the time of issuance, the applicant for the License to Land Flounder from the Atlantic Ocean shall specify the name of the vessel master for each License to Land Flounder from the Atlantic Ocean issued.
 - (6) the holder of the License to Land Flounder from the Atlantic Ocean shall notify the Morehead City Office of the Division of Marine Fisheries within five days of change as to the vessel master identified on the license.
 - (7) Licenses to Land Flounder from the Atlantic Ocean are issued for the current license year.
- (g) For a Recreational Fishing Tournament License to Sell Fish, in addition to the requirements in Paragraphs (c) and (d) of this Rule, the following shall be applicable:
- (1) it shall be unlawful for anyone other than the holder of the Recreational Fishing Tournament License to Sell Fish to sell fish taken during a recreational fishing tournament.
 - (2) fish to be sold under the Recreational Fishing Tournament License to Sell Fish shall be sold only to licensed fish dealers and shall comply with all applicable rules of the Marine Fisheries Commission or provisions of proclamations issued by the Fisheries Director as authorized by the Marine Fisheries Commission.
 - (3) it shall be unlawful for a licensed recreational fishing tournament organizer to fail to accurately and legibly complete a North Carolina Recreational Fishing Tournament Disposition of Proceeds from the Sale of Fish Form provided by the Division of Marine Fisheries and submit the form to the Division within 30 days after the last day of the tournament.
- (h) It shall be unlawful for a license, endorsement, or Commercial Fishing Vessel Registration holder to fail to notify the Division of Marine Fisheries within 30 days of a change of name or address, in accordance with G.S. 113-169.2.
- (i) If requested by the Division, it shall be unlawful for a licensee to fail to participate in and provide accurate information for data collection in accordance with 15A NCAC 03I .0113 and for survey programs administered by the Division.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-168; 113-168.1-6; 113-169.2-5; 113-171.1; 113-174.3; 113-182; 143B-289.52; Eff. January 1, 1991; Amended Eff. July 1, 1997; March 1, 1994; Temporary Amendment Eff. July 1, 1999; Amended Eff. August 1, 2000; Temporary Amendment Eff. April 1, 2001; Amended Eff. May 1, 2015; July 1, 2008; December 1, 2006; August 1, 2004; August 1, 2002; Readopted Eff. March 15, 2023; Amended Eff. March 24, 2025.

15A NCAC 030 .0102 PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS TO RENEW LICENSES, ENDORSEMENTS, AND COMMERCIAL FISHING VESSEL REGISTRATIONS

- (a) For the purpose of this Rule, the procedures and requirements for the licensee shall also apply to the responsible party, the person holding power of attorney, the tournament organizer, and the vessel master.
- (b) To renew Division of Marine Fisheries licenses, endorsements, and Commercial Fishing Vessel Registrations, except Recreational Commercial Gear Licenses, a renewal application shall be submitted by the licensee. Applications submitted without complete and required information shall not be processed until all required information has been submitted. Incomplete applications shall be returned to the licensee with deficiency in the application so noted. The following is required for the renewal application:
- (1) full name, physical address, mailing address, date of birth, and signature of the licensee.
 - (2) a statement from the licensee that the information and supporting documentation submitted with the application is true and correct.
 - (3) current and valid picture identification of the licensee. Acceptable forms of picture identification are state driver's license, state identification card issued by the Division of Motor Vehicles, military identification card, resident alien card (green card), or passport; or if purchased by mail, a copy thereof.
 - (4) the information required in Rule .0101(c)(4) through (c)(8) of this Section, if changed since last issuance of the license, endorsement, or Commercial Fishing Vessel Registration.

- (5) the information required in Rule .0101(e)(1) of this Section, if the linear length of the Ocean Fishing Pier has changed.
- (6) a valid Permit and Certificate of Compliance from the Division's Shellfish Sanitation and Recreational Water Quality Section, if renewing a Fish Dealer License with clam or oyster categories or a consolidated license.
- (7) certification that all information on the application is true and accurate. Notarization of the signature on renewal applications shall not be required.

The Division may require current copies of documentation for licenses, endorsements, and Commercial Fishing Vessel Registrations upon renewal when necessary to verify inconsistent information or the information cannot be verified by independent sources.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-168; 113-168.1-6; 113-169.2-5; 113-171.1; 113-174.3; 113-182; 143B-289.52;
Eff. January 1, 1991;
Amended Eff. March 1, 1994;
Temporary Amendment Eff. July 1, 1999;
Amended Eff. December 1, 2006; August 1, 2000;
Readopted Eff. March 15, 2023.

15A NCAC 030 .0103 AUXILIARY VESSELS

- (a) It shall be unlawful to fail to comply with Commercial Fishing Vessel Registration requirements set forth in G.S. 113-168.6 to operate a vessel used in conjunction with a commercial fishing operation.
- (b) An individual in command of a vessel that is auxiliary to a vessel with a Commercial Fishing Vessel Registration with an individual aboard who holds a Standard Commercial Fishing License or a Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License engaged in a commercial fishing operation using a pound net, long haul, or beach seine is exempt from the provisions of G.S. 113-168.2 (a1).

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-168.1; 113-168.2; 113-168.5; 113-168.6; 113-182; 143B-289.52;
Eff. January 1, 1991;
Temporary Amendment Eff. July 1, 1999;
Amended Eff. August 1, 2000;
Readopted Eff. June 1, 2022.

15A NCAC 030 .0104 COMMERCIAL UNLOADING OF FISH

It shall be unlawful to unload fish from a vessel in North Carolina that has been engaged in a commercial fishing operation outside State waters without possessing a valid:

- (1) Standard or Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License with applicable endorsement;
- (2) Shellfish License for North Carolina Residents without a Standard Commercial Fishing License;
or
- (3) Land or Sell License.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-168.1; 113-168.2; 113-168.4; 113-169.5; 113-182; 143B-289.52;
Eff. January 1, 1991;
Temporary Amendment Eff. July 1, 1999;
Amended Eff. August 1, 2000;
Readopted Eff. March 15, 2023.

15A NCAC 030 .0105 REQUIREMENTS FOR MUSSEL DEALERS

Persons dealing in mussels who are subject to licensing requirements under the provisions of G.S. 113-169.3 shall be required to purchase only the license applicable to clam dealers and shall be required to hold a valid Permit and Certificate of Compliance from the Division of Marine Fisheries Shellfish Sanitation and Recreational Water Quality Section, as described in Rule .0101 of this Section.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-169.3; 113-182; 143B-289.52;
Eff. January 1, 1991;
Temporary Amendment Eff. July 1, 1999;

*Amended Eff. August 1, 2004; August 1, 2000;
Readopted Eff. June 1, 2022.*

15A NCAC 030 .0106 DISPLAY OF LICENSES AND REGISTRATIONS

(a) It shall be unlawful:

- (1) for any person to use a vessel required to be registered under the provisions of G.S. 113-168.6 in a commercial fishing operation without a current Commercial Fishing Vessel Registration decal mounted on an exterior surface so as to be plainly visible when viewed from the port side; and
- (2) to display any Commercial Fishing Vessel Registration decal not issued for the vessel displaying it.

(b) It shall be unlawful to fail to display a Fish Dealer License required by G.S. 113-169.3 or Ocean Fishing Pier License required by G.S. 113-169.4 in prominent public view in each location subject to licensing.

(c) It shall be unlawful for any person licensed under G.S. 113-174.3 to fail to display a current for-hire vessel decal on the exterior surface of the vessel so as to be visible when viewed from the port side while engaged in for-hire recreational fishing.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-168.6; 113-169.3; 113-169.4; 113-174.1; 113-182; 143B-289.52;
Eff. January 1, 1991;
Temporary Amendment Eff. July 1, 1999;
Amended Eff. May 1, 2015; December 1, 2006; August 1, 2000;
Readopted Eff. April 1, 2019.*

15A NCAC 030 .0107 LICENSE REPLACEMENT AND FEES

(a) A licensee shall receive a replacement for a commercial license, endorsement, Commercial Fishing Vessel Registration decal, or Recreational Commercial Gear License upon payment to the Division of Marine Fisheries a fee of ten dollars (\$10.00) or a fee equal to the initial cost of the license, endorsement, or Commercial Fishing Vessel Registration, whichever is less.

(b) A licensee shall receive a replacement Coastal Recreational Fishing License or a for-hire license as defined in G.S. 113-174.3 upon payment to the Division of Marine Fisheries a fee of five dollars (\$5.00).

*History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-168.1; 113-168.6; 113-169.4; 113-173; 113-174.1; 113-174.2; 113-174.3; 113-182; 143B-289.52;
Eff. January 1, 1991;
Temporary Amendment Eff. July 1, 1999;
Amended Eff. December 1, 2006; August 1, 2000;
Readopted Eff. June 1, 2022.*

15A NCAC 030 .0108 LICENSE AND COMMERCIAL FISHING VESSEL REGISTRATION TRANSFERS

(a) To transfer a license or Commercial Fishing Vessel Registration, the license or registration shall not be expired prior to transfer.

(b) Upon transfer of a license or Commercial Fishing Vessel Registration, the transferee becomes the licensee and assumes the privileges of holding the license or Commercial Fishing Vessel Registration.

(c) A transfer application including a certification statement form shall be provided by the Division of Marine Fisheries. A transfer application shall be completed for each transfer including, but not limited to:

- (1) the information required as set forth in Rule .0101(a) of this Section;
- (2) a notarized statement from the transferee listing any violations involving marine or estuarine resources in the State of North Carolina during the previous three years; and
- (3) a notarized statement from the transferee that the information and supporting documentation submitted with the transfer application is true and correct, and that the transferee acknowledges that it is unlawful for a person to accept transfer of a license for which they are ineligible.

(d) A completed transfer application shall be returned to an office of the Division by mail or in person, except as set forth in Paragraph (e) of this Rule.

(e) A transfer application submitted to the Division without complete and required information shall be deemed incomplete and shall not be considered further until resubmitted with all required information. Incomplete applications shall be returned to the applicant with deficiency in the application so noted.

- (f) A License to Land Flounder from the Atlantic Ocean shall only be transferred:
- (1) with the transfer of the ownership of a vessel that the licensee owns that individually met the eligibility requirements of Rule .0101 (b)(1)(A) and (b)(1)(B) of this Section to the new owner of that vessel; or
 - (2) by the owner of a vessel to another vessel under the same ownership.
- Transfer of a License to Land Flounder from the Atlantic Ocean transfers with it all flounder landings from the Atlantic Ocean associated with that vessel. Any transfer of license under this Paragraph shall only be processed through the Division of Marine Fisheries Morehead City Headquarters Office and no transfer is effective until approved and processed by the Division.
- (g) Transfer of a Commercial Fishing Vessel Registration: If transferring ownership of a vessel bearing a current Commercial Fishing Vessel Registration, the new owner:
- (1) shall follow the requirements in Rule .0101 of this Section and pay a replacement fee as set forth in Rule .0107 of this Section for a replacement Commercial Fishing Vessel Registration; and
 - (2) shall submit a transfer application with the signatures of the former owner and the new owner notarized.
- (h) Transfer of a Standard or Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License:
- (1) It is unlawful for a person to accept transfer of a Standard or Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License for which they are ineligible. Grandparents, grandchildren, and legal guardians of an individual are eligible to transfer a license and receive a transferred license.
 - (2) A Standard or Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License shall only be transferred if both the transferor and the transferee have no current suspensions or revocations of any Marine Fisheries license privileges. In the event of the death of the transferor, this requirement shall only apply to the transferee.
 - (3) For purposes of effecting transfers under this Paragraph:
 - (A) "business" shall mean corporations and limited liability companies that have been registered with the Secretary of State; and
 - (B) "owner" shall mean owner, shareholder, or manager of a business.
 - (4) At the time of the transfer of a Standard or Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License, the transferor shall indicate the retainment or transfer of the landings history associated with that Standard or Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License. The transferor may retain a landings history only if the transferor holds an additional Standard or Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License. Transfer of a landings history is all or none.
 - (5) To transfer a Standard or Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License, in addition to the requirements in Paragraph (c) of this Rule, the following information is required:
 - (A) information on the transferee as set forth in Rule .0101 of this Section;
 - (B) notarization of the transferor's and the transferee's signatures on the transfer application; and
 - (C) if the transferor is retiring from commercial fishing, evidence showing that such retirement has in fact occurred, which may include, but is not limited to, evidence of the transfer of all the transferor's Standard Commercial Fishing Licenses, sale of all the transferor's registered vessels, or discontinuation of any active involvement in commercial fishing.
 - (6) The Standard or Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License that is being transferred shall be surrendered to the Division at the time of the transfer application.
 - (7) Fees:
 - (A) The transferee shall pay a replacement fee as set forth in Rule .0107 of this Section.
 - (B) The transferee shall pay the differences in fees as specified in G.S. 113-168.2(e) or G.S. 113-168.3(b) if the transferee is a non-resident.
 - (C) The transferee shall pay the differences in fees as specified in G.S. 113-168.2(e) if the license to be transferred is a Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License and the transferee is less than 65 years old.
 - (8) Transfer of Standard or Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License for a Business:
 - (A) An individual holding a Standard or Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License may transfer their license to a business in which the license holder is also an owner of the business in accordance with application requirements as set forth in Rule .0101(a) of this Section.

- (B) If a business is dissolved, the business may transfer the license or licenses of the business to an individual owner of the dissolved business. A dissolved business holding multiple licenses may transfer one license or multiple licenses to one owner or multiple owners or any combination thereof. A notarized statement showing agreement for the transfer of all owners of the business is required to complete this transaction.
 - (C) If a business is sold, the business may transfer the license or licenses of the business to the successor business at the time of sale.
 - (D) If an owner leaves the business, any license owned by that owner may be transferred back to themselves as an individual at the time the owner leaves the business, provided the owner was the last individual to own the license before the business owned the license. A notarized statement showing agreement for the transfer of all owners of the business is required to complete this transaction.
- (9) Transfer of Standard or Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License for a Deceased Licensee:
- (A) If an immediate surviving family member of the deceased licensee is eligible to hold the deceased licensee's Standard Commercial Fishing License or Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License, the Administrator or Executor shall give written notification within six months after the Administrator or Executor qualifies under G.S. 28A to the Division of the request to transfer the deceased's license to the estate Administrator or Executor.
 - (B) A transfer to the Administrator or Executor shall be made according to the provisions of Subparagraphs (2) through (4) of this Paragraph. The Administrator or Executor shall provide a copy of the deceased licensee's death certificate, a copy of the certificate of administration, and a list of eligible immediate family members to the Division.
 - (C) The Administrator or Executor shall only transfer a license in the Administrator or Executor name on behalf of the estate to an eligible surviving family member. The surviving family member transferee shall only transfer the license to a third party purchaser of the deceased licensee's fishing vessel. Transfers shall be made according to the provisions of Subparagraphs (2) through (4) of this Paragraph.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-168.1; 113-168.2; 113-168.3; 113-168.6; 113-182; 143B-289.52; Eff. January 1, 1991; Amended Eff. March 1, 1994; Temporary Amendment Eff. August 1, 1999; July 1, 1999; Amended Eff. August 1, 2000; Readopted Eff. March 17, 2021.

15A NCAC 030 .0109 ASSIGNMENT OF STANDARD COMMERCIAL FISHING LICENSE

- (a) For the purpose of this Rule, "licensee" shall mean the person issued a Standard Commercial Fishing License and "assignee" shall mean the individual to whom the licensee assigns a Standard Commercial Fishing License in accordance with the requirements of this Rule.
- (b) If requested by the Division of Marine Fisheries, it shall be unlawful for a licensee or assignee to fail to participate in and provide accurate information for data collection in accordance with 15A NCAC 031 .0113 and for survey programs administered by the Division.
- (c) The Division shall provide assignment forms to the licensee upon request.
- (d) The assignment form shall include the following information for the licensee:
 - (1) participant identification number;
 - (2) first, middle, and last name;
 - (3) business name, if applicable;
 - (4) Standard Commercial Fishing License number assigned;
 - (5) assignment start date;
 - (6) assignment termination date;
 - (7) signature;
 - (8) date licensee signed the form; and
 - (9) notarization of licensee's signature.
- (e) The assignment form shall include the following information for the assignee:
 - (1) participant identification number;

- (2) first, middle, and last name, and suffix, if applicable;
- (3) one of the following:
 - (A) driver's license number and expiration date;
 - (B) state identification number and expiration date;
 - (C) military identification number and expiration date;
 - (D) resident alien identification number and expiration date; or
 - (E) passport number and expiration date;
- (4) date of birth;
- (5) physical address of primary residence;
- (6) physical address of secondary residence, if applicable;
- (7) mailing address;
- (8) e-mail address, if applicable;
- (9) race;
- (10) gender;
- (11) height and weight;
- (12) eye color and hair color;
- (13) at least one of the following:
 - (A) home phone number;
 - (B) business phone number; or
 - (C) cellular phone number;
- (14) fax number, if applicable;
- (15) signature;
- (16) date assignee signed the form; and
- (17) notarization of assignee's signature.

(f) Only Division assignment forms shall be used to obtain an assignment. On the assignment form, the licensee shall designate what, if any, endorsements are included in the assignment. Endorsements shall not be assigned independent of the Standard Commercial Fishing License. It shall be unlawful for the licensee or the assignee to fail to submit within five days the completed assignment form to any office of the Division in person or by mail to the Morehead City Office. The Morehead City Office is located at 3441 Arendell Street, Morehead City, North Carolina, 28557. If the completed assignment form is not received by the Division within five days from the date it was signed, the assignment shall be null and void. Incomplete forms shall be returned to the licensee with deficiency in the form so noted. An assignment is in effect from the date specified on the assignment form and when:

- (1) the assignment form is complete with all required information;
- (2) signatures of the current license holder and the assignee are notarized; and
- (3) the assignee has in the assignee's possession the current licensee's original actual Standard Commercial Fishing License, including applicable endorsements in accordance with G.S. 113-169.2.

(g) For an extension of time for assignments, a new assignment form shall be completed in accordance with Subparagraphs (f)(1) through (f)(3) of this Rule.

(h) Assignments shall terminate:

- (1) when the date specified on the assignment form is reached;
- (2) if the licensee or assignee are determined ineligible for a license or assignment;
- (3) if the Division receives a notarized statement from the current license holder stating a revised date for an earlier assignment termination;
- (4) upon the licensee or assignee's death; or
- (5) when the Standard Commercial Fishing License expires.

(i) It shall be unlawful for an individual assigned a Standard Commercial Fishing License when involved in a commercial fishing operation to fail to have the original actual Standard Commercial Fishing License, any assigned endorsements, and a copy of the assignment form in the individual's possession ready at hand for inspection in accordance with G.S. 113-168.1.

(j) All landings occurring during the time of the assignment shall be credited to the licensee, not the assignee.

(k) It shall be unlawful to be assigned more than a single Standard Commercial Fishing License at any one time. It shall be unlawful to assign a Standard Commercial Fishing License to more than one individual at any one time. Assignments shall only be made by the licensee and shall not be further assigned by assignees. Masters identified on the Standard Commercial Fishing Licenses of corporations consisting of an individual fishing vessel shall not assign such licenses.

- (l) It shall be unlawful for a person to accept assignment of a Standard Commercial Fishing License for which they are ineligible.
- (m) It shall be unlawful for any assignee of a Standard Commercial Fishing License not to return the assignment and the Standard Commercial Fishing License with any assigned endorsements to the licensee within five days of notice that the assignment has been terminated or a demand by the licensee to return the license.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-135; 113-168.1; 113-168.2; 113-168.5; 113-169.2; 113-182; 113-187; 143B-289.52;
Eff. January 1, 1991;
Temporary Amendment Eff. October 2, 1999; July 1, 1999;
Amended Eff. August 1, 2000;
Readopted Eff. March 15, 2023;
Amended Eff. March 24, 2025.

15A NCAC 030 .0110 LICENSE REFUNDS

All license fees are non-refundable except if licenses are issued by the Division of Marine Fisheries in error.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-182; 143B-289.52; 147-84;
Eff. March 1, 1995;
Temporary Amendment Eff. July 1, 1999;
Amended Eff. August 1, 2000;
Readopted Eff. June 1, 2022.

15A NCAC 030 .0111 SURRENDER OF LICENSES

- (a) It shall be unlawful for any licensee to refuse to surrender to an agent of the Secretary all licenses, license receipts, endorsements, commercial fishing vessel registration or decals, and other forms and records relating to the license following service of notice of suspension or revocation of licenses in accordance with G.S. 113-171 and Rule .0114 of this Section.
- (b) It shall be unlawful for any person in custody or possession of any licenses, license receipt, endorsements, commercial fishing vessel registration or decals, and other documentation required to be surrendered to refuse to surrender same to an agent of the Secretary making such demand.
- (c) A license issued by the Division in error shall be required to be surrendered immediately upon service of a notice by an agent of the Fisheries Director to surrender the license.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-171; 113-182; 143B-289.52; S.L. 2010-145, s. 1;
Temporary Adoption Eff. July 1, 1999;
Eff. August 1, 2000;
Amended Eff. October 1, 2012;
Readopted Eff. March 15, 2023.

15A NCAC 030 .0112 FOR-HIRE LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

- (a) The license requirements for an operator of a vessel engaged in a for-hire operation are set forth in G.S. 113-174.3. Either the vessel owner or the for-hire vessel operator may seek to obtain the applicable for-hire vessel license. Only the vessel owner shall seek to obtain the applicable registration and endorsement required by G.S. 113-168.6. For the purpose of this Rule, "for-hire vessel operator" shall include the holder of a Blanket For-Hire Captain's Coastal Recreational Fishing License, Blanket For-Hire Vessel Coastal Recreational Fishing License, or Non-Blanket For-Hire Vessel License, as set forth in G.S. 113-174.3.
- (b) It shall be unlawful for a for-hire vessel operator to operate without:
- (1) holding the United States Coast Guard certification required in Rule .0101(a) of this Section;
 - (2) having a copy of the for-hire license in possession and ready at hand for inspection; and
 - (3) having current picture identification in possession and ready at hand for inspection.
- (c) If requested by the Division of Marine Fisheries, it shall be unlawful for a for-hire vessel operator or responsible person to fail to participate in and provide accurate information for data collection in accordance with 15A NCAC 03I .0113 and for survey programs administered by the Division. For the purpose of this Rule, "responsible person" shall mean any licensee or person engaged in regulated activity under Chapter 113, Subchapter IV, of the General Statutes, including regulated activity related to for-hire fishing.

(d) Requirements for display of licenses and registrations for a vessel engaged in for-hire recreational fishing are set forth in Rule .0106 of this Section.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-168.6; 113-174.1; 113-174.3; 113-181; 143B-289.52;
Eff. July 1, 2008;
Readopted Eff. April 1, 2019;
Amended Eff. March 24, 2025.

15A NCAC 030 .0113 OCEAN FISHING PIER REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

It shall be unlawful for the responsible party of the Ocean Fishing Pier License to fail to provide to the Division of Marine Fisheries by the 10th of each month a daily count of anglers fishing from the licensed pier from the previous month, including a daily count of zero for days when anglers did not fish. The information shall be submitted on a paper form provided by the Division or via electronic mail to the electronic mail address provided at the time of license issuance.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-169.4; 113-170.3; 113-174.1; 113-182; 143B-289.52;
Eff. April 1, 2011;
Amended Eff. May 1, 2015;
Readopted Eff. March 15, 2023.

15A NCAC 030 .0114 SUSPENSION, REVOCATION, AND REISSUANCE OF LICENSES

(a) All commercial and recreational licenses issued under Article 14A, Article 14B, and Article 25A of Chapter 113 shall be subject to suspension and revocation.

(b) A conviction resulting from being charged by an inspector under G.S. 14-32, 14-33, 14-72, or 14-399 shall be deemed a conviction for the purposes of license suspension or revocation.

(c) Upon receipt of notice of a licensee's conviction as specified in G.S. 113-171 or a conviction as specified in Paragraph (b) of this Rule, the Fisheries Director shall determine whether it is a first, second, third, fourth, or subsequent conviction. Where several convictions result from a single transaction or occurrence, the convictions shall be treated as a single conviction for the purposes of license suspension or revocation. For a second conviction, the Fisheries Director shall suspend all licenses issued to the licensee for a period of 30 days; for a third conviction, the Fisheries Director shall suspend all licenses issued to the licensee for a period of 90 days; for a fourth or subsequent conviction, the Fisheries Director shall revoke all licenses issued to the licensee, except:

- (1) for a felony conviction under G.S. 14-399, the Fisheries Director shall suspend all licenses issued to the licensee for a period of one year;
- (2) for a first conviction under G.S. 113-187(d)(1), the Fisheries Director shall suspend all licenses issued to the licensee for a period of one year; for a second or subsequent conviction under G.S. 113-187(d)(1), the Fisheries Director shall revoke all licenses issued to the licensee;
- (3) for a conviction under G.S. 14-72, 113-208, 113-209, 113-268, or 113-269, the Fisheries Director shall revoke all licenses issued to the licensee; and
- (4) for a conviction under G.S. 14-32 or 14-33, if the offense was committed against a marine fisheries inspector, the Fisheries Director shall revoke all licenses issued to the licensee and the former licensee shall not be eligible to apply for reinstatement of a revoked license or for any additional license authorized in Article 14A, Article 14B, or Article 25A of Chapter 113 for a period of two years.

(d) After the Fisheries Director determines that a conviction requires a suspension or revocation of the licenses of a licensee, the Fisheries Director shall cause the licensee to be served with written notice of suspension or revocation. If the licensee is not an individual, the written notice shall be served upon any responsible individual affiliated with the corporation, partnership, or association. The notice of suspension or revocation shall be served by an inspector or other agent of the Department or by certified mail, shall state the ground upon which it is based, and shall take effect immediately upon service. The agent of the Fisheries Director making service shall collect all license certificates and plates and other forms or records relating to the license as directed by the Fisheries Director. Upon service of a notice of suspension or revocation of a license, it shall be unlawful to fail to surrender any license so suspended or revoked.

(e) If a license has been suspended, the former licensee shall not be eligible to apply for reissuance of license or for any additional license authorized in Article 14A, Article 14B, or Article 25A of Chapter 113 during the suspension

period. Licenses shall be returned to the licensee by the Fisheries Director or the Director's agents at the end of a period of suspension.

(f) Where a license has been revoked, the former licensee shall not be eligible to apply for reinstatement of a revoked license or for any additional license authorized in Article 14A, Article 14B and Article 25A of Chapter 113 for a period of one year, except as provided in Subparagraph (c)(4) of this Rule. For a request for reinstatement following revocation, the former licensee shall describe in the request how the licensee will conduct the operations for which the license is sought in accordance with all applicable laws and rules, shall submit the request in writing, and shall mail the request to the Fisheries Director, Division of Marine Fisheries, 3441 Arendell Street, P.O. Box 769, Morehead City, NC 28557. Upon the application of an eligible former licensee after revocation, the Fisheries Director may issue one license sought but not another, as necessary to prevent the hazard of recurring violations of the law.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-168.1; 113-171; 113-182; 143B-289.52; S.L. 2010-145, s. 1; Eff. October 1, 2012; Amended Eff. May 1, 2017; Readopted Eff. March 15, 2023.

SECTION .0200 – SHELLFISH LEASES AND FRANCHISES

15A NCAC 030 .0201 STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR SHELLFISH LEASES AND FRANCHISES

(a) For the purpose of this Section:

- (1) "any acres under a shellfish lease" shall include a water column amendment superjacent to a franchise.
- (2) "application for additional shellfish lease acreage" shall include a water column amendment application to an existing shellfish bottom lease or to a franchise when the franchise holder also holds a shellfish bottom lease.
- (3) "extensive shellfish culture" shall mean shellfish grown on the bottom without the use of cages, racks, bags, or floats.
- (4) "intensive shellfish culture" shall mean shellfish grown on the bottom or in the water column using cages, racks, bags, or floats.
- (5) "plant" shall mean providing evidence of purchasing shellfish seed or planting shellfish seed or authorized cultch materials on a shellfish lease.
- (6) "produce" shall mean the culture and harvest of oysters, clams, scallops, or mussels from a shellfish lease and lawful sale of those shellfish to the public at large or to a licensed shellfish dealer.

(b) All areas of the public bottom underlying Coastal Fishing Waters shall meet the following standards and requirements, in addition to the standards in G.S. 113-202, in order to be deemed suitable for leasing for shellfish aquaculture purposes:

- (1) the proposed shellfish lease area shall not contain a "natural shellfish bed," as defined in G.S. 113-201.1, or have 10 bushels or more of shellfish per acre;
- (2) the proposed shellfish lease area shall not be closer than 250 feet from a developed shoreline or a water-dependent shore-based structure, except no minimum setback is required when the area to be leased borders the applicant's property, the property of "riparian owners" as defined in G.S. 113-201.1 who have consented in a notarized statement, or is in an area bordered by undeveloped shoreline. For the purpose of this Rule, a water-dependent shore-based structure shall include docks, wharves, boat ramps, bridges, bulkheads, and groins;
- (3) the proposed shellfish lease area shall not be closer than 250 feet to an existing lease;
- (4) the proposed shellfish lease area, either alone or when considered cumulatively with other existing lease areas in the vicinity, shall not interfere with navigation or with existing, traditional uses of the area; and
- (5) the proposed shellfish lease area shall not be less than one-half acre and shall not exceed 10 acres.

(c) To be suitable for leasing for shellfish aquaculture purposes, shellfish water column leases superjacent to a shellfish bottom lease shall meet the standards in G.S. 113-202.1 and shellfish water column leases superjacent to franchises shall meet the standards in G.S. 113-202.2.

(d) Shellfish bottom leases granted or renewed on or before July 1, 2019 and not renewed after July 1, 2019 shall be terminated unless they meet the following requirements, in addition to the standards in and as allowed by G.S. 113-202:

- (1) they produce 10 bushels of shellfish per acre per year; and
- (2) they are planted with 25 bushels of seed shellfish per acre per year or 50 bushels of cultch per acre per year, or a combination of cultch and seed shellfish where the percentage of required cultch planted and the percentage of required seed shellfish planted totals at least 100 percent.

(e) Shellfish water column leases granted or renewed on or before July 1, 2019 and not renewed after July 1, 2019 shall be terminated unless they meet the following requirements, in addition to the standards in and as allowed by G.S. 113-202.1 and G.S. 113-202.2:

- (1) they produce 40 bushels of shellfish per acre per year; or
- (2) the underlying bottom is planted with 100 bushels of cultch or seed shellfish per acre per year.

(f) Shellfish bottom leases granted or renewed after July 1, 2019 shall be terminated unless they meet the following requirements, in addition to the standards in and as allowed by G.S. 113-202:

- (1) they produce a minimum of 20 bushels of shellfish per acre averaged over the previous three-year period beginning in year five of the shellfish bottom lease; or
- (2) for intensive culture bottom operations, the holder of the shellfish bottom lease provides evidence of purchasing a minimum of 23,000 shellfish seed per acre annually and for extensive culture bottom operations, the holder of the lease plants a minimum of 15,000 shellfish seed per acre per year.

(g) Shellfish water column leases granted or renewed after July 1, 2019 shall be terminated unless they meet the following requirements, in addition to the standards in and as allowed by G.S. 113-202.1 and 113-202.2:

- (1) they produce a minimum of 50 bushels of shellfish per acre averaged over the previous three-year period beginning in year five of the shellfish water column lease; or
- (2) the holder of the shellfish water column lease provides evidence of purchasing a minimum of 23,000 shellfish seed per acre annually.

(h) The following standards shall be applied to determine compliance with Paragraphs (d), (e), (f), and (g) of this Rule:

- (1) only shellfish planted or produced as defined in Paragraph (a) of this Rule shall be included in the annual shellfish lease production reports required by Rule .0207 of this Section.
- (2) if more than one shellfish lease is used in the production of shellfish, one of the leases used in the production of the shellfish shall be designated as the producing lease for those shellfish. Each bushel of shellfish shall be produced by only one shellfish lease. Shellfish transplanted between shellfish leases shall be credited as planting effort on only one lease.
- (3) production information and planting effort information shall be compiled and averaged separately to assess compliance with the requirements of this Rule. Shellfish bottom leases granted on or before July 1, 2019 shall meet both the production requirement and the planting effort requirement within the dates set forth in G.S. 113-202.1 and G.S. 113-202.2 to be deemed in compliance. Shellfish bottom leases granted after July 1, 2019 and shellfish water column leases shall meet either the production requirement or the planting effort requirement within the dates set forth in G.S. 113-202.1 and G.S. 113-202.2 to be deemed in compliance.
- (4) all bushel measurements shall be in standard U.S. bushels.
- (5) in determining production averages and planting effort averages for information not reported in bushel measurements, the following conversion factors shall be used:
 - (A) 300 oysters, 400 clams, or 400 scallops equal one bushel; and
 - (B) 40 pounds of scallop shell, 60 pounds of oyster shell, 75 pounds of clam shell, or 90 pounds of fossil stone equal one bushel.
- (6) production rate averages shall be computed irrespective of transfer of the shellfish lease. The production rates shall be averaged for the following situations using the time periods described:
 - (A) for an initial shellfish bottom lease, over the consecutive full calendar years remaining on the bottom lease contract after December 31 following the second anniversary of the initial bottom lease;
 - (B) for a renewal shellfish bottom lease, over the consecutive full calendar years beginning January 1 of the final year of the previous bottom lease term and ending December 31 of the final year of the current bottom lease contract;

- (C) for a shellfish water column lease, over the first five-year period for an initial water column lease and over the most recent five-year period thereafter for a renewal water column lease; or
 - (D) for a shellfish bottom lease issued an extension period under Rule .0208 of this Section, over the most recent five-year period.
- (7) in the event that a portion of an existing shellfish lease is obtained by a new lease holder, the production history for the portion obtained shall be a percentage of the originating lease production equal to the percentage of the area of lease site obtained to the area of the originating lease.
- (i) Consistent with G.S. 113-202, G.S. 113-202.1, and G.S. 113-202.2, to be deemed eligible by the Secretary to hold additional shellfish lease acreage, persons holding any acres under a shellfish lease shall meet the following requirements at the time of submitting a shellfish lease application for additional shellfish lease acreage:
- (1) Paragraphs (d), (e), (f), and (g) of this Rule;
 - (2) Rule .0204 of this Section; and
 - (3) Rule .0503(a) of this Subchapter.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-182; 113-201; 113-202; 113-202.1; 113-202.2; 113-206; 143B-289.52; S.L. 2019-37, s. 3; S.L. 2024-32, s. 5.(a); Eff. January 1, 1991; Amended Eff. May 1, 1997; March 1, 1995; March 1, 1994; September 1, 1991; Temporary Amendment Eff. October 1, 2001; Amended Eff. May 1, 2017; October 1, 2008; April 1, 2003; Readopted Eff. August 23, 2022; Amended Eff. June 1, 2026; March 24, 2025.

15A NCAC 030 .0202 SHELLFISH LEASE APPLICATIONS

- (a) Application forms are available from the Division of Marine Fisheries, 3441 Arendell Street, Morehead City, NC 28557 for persons desiring to apply for a shellfish lease. Each application shall be accompanied by a map or diagram prepared at the applicant's expense including an inset vicinity map showing the location of the proposed shellfish lease with detail sufficient to permit on-site identification pursuant to G.S. 113-202(d1).
- (b) As a part of the application, the applicant shall submit a Shellfish Lease Management Plan for the area to be leased for shellfish aquaculture purposes on a form provided by the Division that shall:
- (1) state the methods through which the applicant will cultivate and produce shellfish consistent with the requirements in accordance with Rule .0201 of this Section;
 - (2) state the time intervals during which phases of cultivation and production will be achieved;
 - (3) state the materials and techniques that will be utilized in management of the shellfish lease;
 - (4) forecast the results expected to be achieved by the Shellfish Lease Management Plan activities;
 - (5) describe the productivity of any other shellfish leases or franchises held by the applicant; and
 - (6) state the locations of each corner defining the area to be leased with no more than eight corners.
- (c) The completed application, map or diagram, and Shellfish Lease Management Plan for the requested shellfish lease shall be accompanied by the non-refundable filing fee set forth in G.S. 113-202(d1), G.S. 113-202.1(c)(1), and G.S. 113-202.2(c)(1). An incomplete application shall be returned and not considered further until re-submitted complete with all required information.
- (d) Applicants and transferees not currently holding a shellfish lease, and applicants and transferees holding one or more shellfish leases that are not meeting production requirements, shall complete the Shellfish Aquaculture Education Program provided by the Division. The Shellfish Aquaculture Education Program shall provide the applicant information on shellfish aquaculture including:
- (1) shellfish lease application process;
 - (2) shellfish lease requirements and techniques;
 - (3) shellfish sanitation and National Shellfish Sanitation Program requirements;
 - (4) shellfish harvest requirements;
 - (5) aquaculture permits;
 - (6) best management practices; and
 - (7) shellfish lease user conflict avoidance.
- (e) After an application is deemed to have met all requirements and is accepted by the Division, the applicant shall mark the area for which a shellfish lease is requested with stakes at each corner in accordance with Rule

.0204(a)(1)(A) of this Section. The applicant shall attach to each stake a sign, provided by the Division containing the name of the applicant, the date the application was filed, and the estimated acres. The applicant shall be responsible for ensuring the sign remains in place until the shellfish lease application process is completed.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-182; 113-201; 113-202; 113-206; 143B-289.52; Eff. January 1, 1991; Amended Eff. April 1, 2011; September 1, 2005; May 1, 1997; September 1, 1991; Readopted Eff. August 23, 2022.

15A NCAC 030 .0203 SHELLFISH LEASE APPLICATION PROCESSING

(a) After acceptance of a completed shellfish lease application as set forth in Rule .0202 of this Section, the proposed shellfish lease area shall be inspected by agents of the Division of Marine Fisheries. Proposed shellfish lease areas inconsistent with applicable standards contained or referenced in Rule .0201 of this Section shall result in the return of the application for amendment to remove the inconsistencies. If the boundaries of the proposed shellfish lease area are modified, the stakes identifying such areas shall be relocated accordingly by the applicant or applicants. The failure of the applicant or applicants to amend the application or modify the shellfish lease area identification, when required, within 30 days of notification shall result in denial of the application.

(b) If the initial or amended shellfish lease application is deemed consistent with all applicable requirements, the Secretary or the Secretary's designee shall notify the applicant and publish notices of intention to lease in accordance with the standards in G.S. 113-202(f).

(c) The Secretary shall consider the shellfish lease application, the Division's proposed lease area analysis, and public comments, and may in the Secretary's discretion lease or decline to lease the proposed lease area or any part thereof. Special conditions may be imposed so that shellfish leases may be issued that would otherwise be denied. Should an applicant decide not to accept any special condition imposed on the shellfish lease by the Secretary, the application shall be considered denied.

(d) After approval of a shellfish lease by the Secretary, the applicant or applicants shall mark the lease in accordance with Rule .0204 of this Section within 30 days of approval.

(e) Proposed shellfish bottom lease areas remain public bottom until a lease contract has been executed by the Secretary.

(f) Proposed shellfish water column lease areas superjacent to bottom leases and franchises remain public water until a lease contract has been executed by the Secretary.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-182; 113-201; 113-202; 113-202.1; 113-202.2; 113-206; 143B-289.52; Eff. January 1, 1991; Amended Eff. October 1, 2008; March 1, 1994; September 1, 1991; Readopted Eff. June 1, 2022.

15A NCAC 030 .0204 MARKING SHELLFISH LEASES AND FRANCHISES

(a) All shellfish leases and franchises shall be marked by the lease or franchise holder as follows:

(1) Shellfish bottom leases and franchises shall be marked by:

(A) stakes of wood or plastic material no less than three inches in diameter and no more than 12 inches in diameter at the mean high water mark and extending at least four feet above the mean high water mark for each corner, except stakes more than 12 inches in diameter approved as part of a Coastal Area Management Act Permit issued in accordance with G.S. 113A-118 and G.S. 113-229 shall be allowed. The stakes shall be firmly jettied or driven into the bottom at each corner as identified in Rule .0202(b)(6) of this Section.

(B) signs displaying the number of the shellfish lease or franchise and the name of the lease or franchise holder printed in letters at least three inches high shall be firmly attached to each corner stake.

(C) yellow light reflective tape or yellow light reflective devices on each corner stake. The yellow light reflective tape or yellow light reflective devices shall be affixed to each corner stake, shall cover a vertical distance of not less than 12 inches, and shall be visible from all directions.

(D) supplementary stakes of wood or plastic material no less than three inches in diameter and no more than four inches in diameter, not farther apart than 150 feet or closer

together than 50 feet and extending at least four feet above the mean high water mark, shall be placed along each boundary, except if doing so interferes with the use of traditional navigation channels.

- (2) Shellfish water column leases shall be marked at each corner of the area by signs giving notice and providing caution in addition to the required signs as identified and approved by the Secretary in the Shellfish Lease Management Plan as set forth in Rule .0202 of this Section.
- (b) Stakes marking areas of management within shellfish bottom leases or franchises, as approved in the Shellfish Lease Management Plan, shall conform to Part (a)(1)(D) of this Rule and may not exceed one for each 1,200 square feet. Marking at concentrations of stakes greater than one for each 1,200 square feet constitutes use of the water column and a shellfish water column lease is required in accordance with G.S. 113-202.1 or G.S. 113-202.2.
- (c) All areas claimed in filings made pursuant to G.S. 113-205 as deeded bottoms through oyster grants issued by the county clerk of court or as private bottoms through perpetual franchises issued by the Shellfish Commission shall be marked in accordance with Paragraph (a) of this Rule, except the sign shall include the number of the franchise rather than the number of the shellfish lease. However, claimed areas not being managed and cultivated shall not be marked.
- (d) It shall be unlawful to exclude or attempt to exclude the public from allowable public trust use of navigable waters on shellfish leases and franchises including fishing, hunting, swimming, wading, and navigation.
- (e) The Division has no duty to protect any shellfish lease or franchise not marked in accordance with Paragraph (a) of this Rule.

History Note: Authority G.S. 76-40; 113-134; 113-182; 113-201; 113-202; 113-202.1; 113-202.2; 113-205; 113-206; 143B-289.52;
Eff. January 1, 1991;
Amended Eff. September 1, 1997; March 1, 1994; October 1, 1992; September 1, 1991;
Readopted Eff. August 23, 2022.

15A NCAC 03O .0205 SHELLFISH LEASE RENEWAL

- (a) Shellfish lease renewal applications shall be provided to lease holders by the Division of Marine Fisheries as follows:
- (1) for a shellfish bottom lease, a renewal application shall be provided in January of the year of expiration.
 - (2) for a shellfish water column lease, a renewal application shall be provided at least 90 days prior to the expiration date.
- (b) A shellfish lease renewal application shall be accompanied by a Shellfish Lease Management Plan that meets the requirements of Rule .0202 of this Section. The non-refundable filing fee set forth in G.S. 113-202(j) shall accompany each renewal application for a shellfish bottom lease.
- (c) To be eligible to renew a shellfish lease, persons holding any acres under a shellfish lease or franchise shall meet the requirements established in Rules .0201 and .0204 of this Section and 15A NCAC 03O .0503(a).
- (d) If it is determined, after due notice to the shellfish lease holder and after opportunity for the lease holder to be heard, that the lease holder has not complied with the requirements of this Section or that the lease as issued is inconsistent with this Section, the Secretary may decline to renew, at the end of the current terms, any lease. The shellfish lease holder may appeal the Secretary's decision by filing a petition for a contested case under G.S. 150B-23.
- (e) Pursuant to G.S. 113-202(a)(6), the Secretary is not authorized to approve renewal of a shellfish lease in an area designated as polluted by a proclamation issued by the Fisheries Director. Excluded from this requirement are shellfish leases located in conditionally approved waters that have been temporarily closed when the conditions of the written management plan are not met as described in 15A NCAC 18A .0905. Shellfish leases partially closed due to pollution shall be amended to exclude the area closed to shellfish harvest prior to renewal.
- (f) If the Secretary declines to renew a shellfish lease that has been determined to be inconsistent with the standards of this Section, the Secretary, with the agreement of the lease holder, may issue a renewal lease for all or part of the area previously leased to the lease holder that contains conditions necessary to conform the renewal lease to the requirements of this Section for new leases.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-182; 113-201; 113-202; 113-202.1; 113-202.2; 113-206; 143B-289.52;
Eff. January 1, 1991;

Amended Eff. September 1, 2005; May 1, 1997; March 1, 1995; March 1, 1994; October 1, 1992; September 1, 1991;
Readopted Eff. June 1, 2022.

15A NCAC 030 .0206 SHELLFISH LEASE APPLICATION: REQUEST FOR REVIEW

- (a) Any member of the public shall be allowed an opportunity to comment on any shellfish lease application during the public comment period and subsequent public hearing at which the lease application is being considered by the Secretary as set forth in G.S. 113-202.
- (b) Procedures for how an applicant or a person other than the applicant who is aggrieved may proceed with a contested case based on dissatisfaction of the Secretary's decision on a shellfish lease application are provided in G.S. 113-202(g). Additionally, a person other than the applicant who is aggrieved may submit a request for a determination of the appropriateness of a contested case hearing. The request and any supporting documentation for the basis of the aggrieved person seeking to commence a contested case shall be submitted within 30 days after the disputed decision is made to the Shellfish Cultivation Lease Review Committee and addressed to the Marine Fisheries Commission Office, Division of Marine Fisheries, 3441 Arendell Street, P.O. Box 769, Morehead City, NC 28557. The request shall be submitted on a form provided by the Division.
- (c) The Shellfish Cultivation Lease Review Committee shall notify the aggrieved person of the date of the public meeting for the Committee to consider the request no later than seven calendar days before the date of the public meeting.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-182; 113-201; 113-202; 143B-289.52; 143B-289.57;
Eff. January 1, 1991;
Amended Eff. March 1, 1994; September 1, 1991;
Readopted Eff. June 1, 2022.

15A NCAC 030 .0207 SHELLFISH LEASE PRODUCTION REPORTS

- (a) The holder or holders of a shellfish lease shall provide an annual production report to the Division of Marine Fisheries by March 31 of each year showing the amounts of material planted, purchased, and harvested; where and when the material was obtained; and when the material was planted in accordance with Rules .0201 and .0202 of this Section. The report shall include documentation of purchased seed in accordance with Rule .0201 of this Section.
- (b) The Division shall provide reporting forms annually to each shellfish lease holder to be used for the annual production report.
- (c) Failure by the holder or holders of the shellfish lease to submit the required annual production report or filing an incomplete report or a report containing false information constitutes grounds for termination as set forth in Rule .0208 of this Section.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-182; 113-201; 113-202; 113-202.1; 113-202.2; 143B-289.52;
Eff. January 1, 1991;
Amended Eff. September 1, 1991;
Readopted Eff. June 1, 2022;
Amended Eff. June 1, 2026.

15A NCAC 030 .0208 TERMINATION PROCEDURES FOR SHELLFISH LEASES

- (a) Procedures for termination of shellfish leases are provided in G.S. 113-202.
- (b) Consistent with G.S. 113-202(11) and G.S. 113-201(b), a shellfish lease holder that failed to meet the requirements in G.S. 113-202, G.S. 113-202.1, G.S. 113-202.2, or the rules of this Section that govern a determination of failure to utilize the lease on a continuing basis for the commercial production of shellfish may be granted a single extension period of no more than two years per contract period upon a showing of hardship by written notice to the Fisheries Director or the Fisheries Director's designee received prior to the expiration of the lease term that documents one of the following occurrences caused or will cause the lease holder to fail to meet lease requirements:
- (1) death, illness, or incapacity of the shellfish lease holder or the holder's immediate family as defined in G.S. 113-168 that prevented or will prevent the lease holder from working the lease;
 - (2) damage to the shellfish lease from hurricanes, tropical storms, or other severe weather events recognized by the National Weather Service;

- (3) shellfish mortality caused by disease, natural predators, or parasites; or
- (4) damage to the shellfish lease from a manmade disaster that triggers a state emergency declaration or federal emergency declaration.

(c) In the case of hardship as described in Paragraph (b) of this Rule, the notice shall state the shellfish lease number. In the case of hardship as described in Subparagraph (b)(1) of this Rule, the notice shall also state the name of the shellfish lease holder or immediate family member and either the date of death or the date of the illness or incapacity. The Fisheries Director may require a doctor's verification that the illness or incapacity occurred. In the case of hardship as described in Subparagraphs (b)(2) through (b)(4) of this Rule, the notice shall also include documentation of damage to the shellfish lease. Written notice and supporting documentation shall be addressed to the Director of the Division of Marine Fisheries, 3441 Arendell Street, P.O. Box 769, Morehead City, NC 28557.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-182; 113-201; 113-202; 113-202.1; 113-202.2; 113-205; 143B-289.52; Eff. January 1, 1991; Amended Eff. May 1, 1997; March 1, 1995; March 1, 1994; October 1, 1992; September 1, 1991; Temporary Amendment Eff. January 1, 2002; October 1, 2001; Amended Eff. May 1, 2017; April 1, 2003; Readopted Eff. June 1, 2022; Amended Eff. June 1, 2026.

15A NCAC 030 .0209 ASSIGNMENT OF SHELLFISH LEASES AND FRANCHISES

- (a) For the purpose of effecting assignments of shellfish leases or franchises in accordance with this Rule:
- (1) "transfer" shall be defined as any permanent assignment of a shellfish lease or franchise, in whole or in part.
 - (2) "sublease" shall be defined as any temporary assignment of a shellfish lease or franchise, in whole or in part.
- (b) No transfer or sublease of a shellfish lease or franchise, in whole or in part, shall be valid until notice is provided to the Division of Marine Fisheries as provided in Article 16 of Chapter 113 of the North Carolina General Statutes.
- (c) Notice to transfer or sublease a shellfish lease or franchise shall include:
- (1) shellfish lease or franchise number;
 - (2) date of transfer or sublease;
 - (3) name and city of shellfish lease or franchise holder;
 - (4) name and address of transferee or sub-lessee;
 - (5) waterbody and county of shellfish lease or franchise being transferred or subleased;
 - (6) area description and total acres of shellfish lease or franchise or portion of shellfish lease or franchise being transferred or subleased; and
 - (7) end date for a sublease.

The transferee or sub-lessee of a shellfish lease shall provide to the Division the required Shellfish Lease Management Plan and proof of completion of training requirements in accordance with Rule .0202 of this Section.

(d) A shellfish lease or franchise shall not be transferred or subleased to a nonresident of North Carolina in accordance with G.S. 113-202, G.S. 113-202.1, G.S. 113-202.2, and G.S. 113-206.

(e) A shellfish water column lease shall only be transferred in accordance with G.S. 113-202.1(f) and G.S. 113-202.2(f).

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-182; 113-201; 113-202; 113-202.1; 113-202.2; 113-205; 113-206; 143B-289.52; Eff. January 1, 1991; Amended Eff. April 1, 2011; March 1, 1994; September 1, 1991; Readopted Eff. July 1, 2022.

15A NCAC 030 .0210 STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR FRANCHISES

(a) A franchise holder desiring a permit from the Division of Marine Fisheries to conduct shellfish aquaculture on their franchise shall submit a Shellfish Management Plan, prepared in accordance with the standards for a Shellfish Lease Management Plan in Rule .0202 of this Section, to the Division following formal recognition of a valid chain of title and at ten-year intervals thereafter.

(b) The Shellfish Management Plan requirements in Paragraph (a) of this Rule and all other requirements and conditions of this Section affecting management of franchises shall apply to all valid franchises.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-182; 113-201; 113-202; 113-202.2; 113-205; 113-206; 143B-289.52;
Eff. January 1, 1991;
Amended Eff. October 1, 2008; September 1, 1991;
Readopted Eff. June 1, 2022;
Amended Eff. June 1, 2026.

15A NCAC 030 .0211 FISHING GEAR REQUIREMENTS FOR SHELLFISH LEASES AND FRANCHISES

- (a) It shall be unlawful to use any trawl net, long haul seine, swipe net, dredge, or mechanical method for shellfish on any shellfish lease or franchise except:
- (1) for a holder of a Permit to Use Mechanical Methods for Shellfish on Shellfish Leases or Franchises; or
 - (2) for the purpose of placing and retrieving cages, bags, or other aquaculture gear within any shellfish lease or franchise.
- (b) Permits to Use Mechanical Methods for Shellfish on Shellfish Leases or Franchises shall be issued by the Division of Marine Fisheries in compliance with 15A NCAC 030 .0500.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-182; 113-201; 113-206; 143B-289.52;
Eff. October 1, 1992;
Amended Eff. August 1, 1998;
Readopted Eff. March 15, 2023.

SECTION .0300 – RECREATIONAL COMMERCIAL GEAR LICENSES

15A NCAC 030 .0301 ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS FOR RECREATIONAL COMMERCIAL GEAR LICENSES

- (a) Recreational Commercial Gear Licenses shall only be issued to individuals.
- (b) If requested by the Division of Marine Fisheries, it shall be unlawful for a Recreational Commercial Gear License holder to fail to participate in and provide accurate information for data collection in accordance with 15A NCAC 03I .0113 and for survey programs administered by the Division.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-173; 113-182; 143B-289.52;
Temporary Adoption Eff. August 9, 1994, for a period of 180 days or until the permanent rule becomes effective, whichever is sooner;
Eff. February 1, 1995;
Temporary Amendment Eff. July 1, 1999;
Amended Eff. August 1, 2000;
Readopted Eff. March 15, 2023;
Amended Eff. March 24, 2025.

15A NCAC 030 .0302 AUTHORIZED GEAR FOR RECREATIONAL COMMERCIAL GEAR LICENSES

- (a) The following are the only commercial fishing gear authorized (including restrictions) for use under a valid Recreational Commercial Gear License:
- (1) one seine 30 feet or over in length but not greater than 100 feet with a mesh length less than two and one-half inches when deployed or retrieved without the use of a vessel or any other mechanical methods. A vessel may be used only to transport the seine;
 - (2) one shrimp trawl with a headrope not exceeding 26 feet in length per vessel;
 - (3) with or without a vessel, five eel, fish, shrimp, or crab pots in any combination, except only two pots of the five may be eel pots. Peeler pots are not authorized for recreational purposes;
 - (4) one multiple hook or multiple bait trotline up to 100 feet in length;
 - (5) gill nets:

- (A) not more than 100 yards of gill nets with a mesh length equal to or greater than two and one-half inches except as provided in Part (C) of this Subparagraph. Attendance shall be required at all times;
 - (B) not more than 100 yards of gill nets with a mesh length equal to or greater than five and one-half inches except as provided in Part (C) of this Subparagraph. Attendance shall be required when used from one hour after sunrise through one hour before sunset in Internal Waters east and north of the Highway 58 Bridge at Emerald Isle and in the Atlantic Ocean east and north of 77° 04.0000' W. Attendance shall be required at all times in Internal Waters west and south of the Highway 58 Bridge at Emerald Isle and in the Atlantic Ocean west and south of 77° 04.0000' W;
 - (C) not more than 100 yards of gill net may be used at any one time, except that when two or more Recreational Commercial Gear License holders are on board a vessel, a maximum of 200 yards may be used from a vessel; and
 - (D) it shall be unlawful to possess on board a vessel more than 100 yards of gill nets with a mesh length less than five and one-half inches and more than 100 yards of gill nets with a mesh length equal to or greater than five and one-half inches identified as recreational commercial fishing equipment when only one Recreational Commercial Gear License holder is on board a vessel. It shall be unlawful to possess on board a vessel more than 200 yards of gill nets with a mesh length less than five and one-half inches and more than 200 yards of gill nets with a mesh length equal to or greater than five and one-half inches identified as recreational commercial fishing equipment when two or more Recreational Commercial Gear License holders are on board a vessel;
- (6) one hand-operated device generating pulsating electrical current for the taking of catfish in the area described in 15A NCAC 03J .0304;
 - (7) skimmer trawls not exceeding 26 feet in total combined width; and
 - (8) one pound net used to take shrimp with each lead 10 feet or less in length and with a minimum lead net mesh of one and one-half inches, and enclosures constructed of net mesh of one and one-fourth inches or greater and with all dimensions being 36 inches or less. Attendance shall be required at all times and all gear shall be removed from the water when not being fished. Gear is to be marked and set as specified in 15A NCAC 03J .0501.
- (b) It shall be unlawful to use more than the quantity of authorized gear specified in Paragraph (a) of this Rule, regardless of the number of individuals on board a vessel possessing a valid Recreational Commercial Gear License.
 - (c) It shall be unlawful for an individual to violate the restrictions of or use gear other than that authorized by Paragraph (a) of this Rule.
 - (d) Unless otherwise provided, this Rule does not exempt Recreational Commercial Gear License holders from the provisions of other applicable rules of the Marine Fisheries Commission or provisions of proclamations issued by the Fisheries Director as authorized by the Marine Fisheries Commission.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-173; 113-182; 143B-289.52;
 Temporary Adoption Eff. August 9, 1994, for a period of 180 days or until the permanent rule becomes effective, whichever is sooner;
 Eff. February 1, 1995;
 Temporary Amendment Eff. August 1, 1999; July 1, 1999;
 Amended Eff. August 1, 2000;
 Temporary Amendment Eff. August 1, 2000;
 Amended Eff. April 1, 2009; July 1, 2006; November 1, 2005; August 1, 2002;
 Readopted Eff. March 15, 2023.*

15A NCAC 03O .0303 POSSESSION LIMITS FOR RECREATIONAL COMMERCIAL GEAR LICENSES

- (a) It shall be unlawful to possess more than a single recreational possession limit when only one individual on board a vessel possesses a valid Recreational Commercial Gear License, regardless of the number of Recreational Commercial Gear Licenses an individual holds, and recreational commercial fishing equipment as described in Rule .0302(a) of this Section is used, regardless of the number of individuals on board a vessel.

(b) It shall be unlawful to possess individual recreational possession limits in excess of the number of individuals on board a vessel holding a valid Recreational Commercial Gear License except as provided in Paragraph (f) of this Rule.

(c) It shall be unlawful for any individual who holds both a Recreational Commercial Gear License and a Standard or Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License and who is in possession of identified recreational commercial fishing equipment as described in Rule .0302(a) of this Section to exceed the single recreational possession limit.

(d) It shall be unlawful for individuals on board a vessel collectively holding only one Recreational Commercial Gear License and any Standard Commercial Fishing License or Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License and who are in possession of any identified recreational commercial fishing equipment as described in Rule .0302(a) of this Section to exceed the single recreational possession limit.

(e) It shall be unlawful to possess more than 48 quarts, heads on, or 30 quarts, heads off, of shrimp when only one individual on board a vessel possesses a valid Recreational Commercial Gear License, regardless of the number of Recreational Commercial Gear Licenses an individual holds, and recreational commercial fishing equipment as described in Rule .0302(a) of this Section is used.

(f) It shall be unlawful to possess more than 96 quarts, heads on, or 60 quarts, heads off, of shrimp if more than one individual on board a vessel possesses a valid Recreational Commercial Gear License and recreational commercial fishing equipment as described in Rule .0302(a) of this Section is used.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-170.4; 113-173; 113-182; 143B-289.52;
Temporary Adoption Eff. August 9, 1994, for a period of 180 days or until the permanent rule becomes effective, whichever is sooner;
Eff. February 1, 1995;
Temporary Amendment Eff. June 7, 1998;
Amended Eff. April 1, 1999;
Temporary Amendment Eff. July 1, 1999;
Amended Eff. July 1, 2006; August 1, 2000;
Readopted Eff. March 15, 2023.

15A NCAC 030 .0304	CONSIDERATION OF APPEAL PETITIONS
15A NCAC 030 .0305	EMERGENCY LICENSES
15A NCAC 030 .0306	HARDSHIP LICENSES
15A NCAC 030 .0307	APPEALS PANEL FINAL DECISION
15A NCAC 030 .0308	OFFICIAL RECORD
15A NCAC 030 .0309	REASONS FOR REVOCATION
15A NCAC 030 .0310	TEMPORARY EMERGENCY VESSEL CRAB LICENSES

History Note: Filed as a Temporary Adoption Eff. August 9, 1994, for a period of 180 days or until the permanent rule becomes effective, whichever is sooner;
Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-153.1; 1993 (Regular Session 1994), c. 576, s. 3; 143B-289.52;
Eff. February 1, 1995;
Temporary Repeal Eff. July 1, 1999;
Repealed Eff. August 1, 2000.

SECTION .0400 – STANDARD COMMERCIAL FISHING LICENSE ELIGIBILITY

15A NCAC 030 .0401 STANDARD COMMERCIAL FISHING LICENSE ELIGIBILITY BOARD

(a) The Chair of the Marine Fisheries Commission, the Secretary of the Department of Environmental Quality, and the Fisheries Director may each name a designee and an alternate designee to serve on the Standard Commercial Fishing License Eligibility Board as their representative in their absence.

(b) The Standard Commercial Fishing License Eligibility Board shall not review an application for eligibility without a quorum of the Eligibility Board members or designees being present. Two or more members of the Standard Commercial Fishing License Eligibility Board or their designees constitute a quorum.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-182; 143B-289.52; S.L. 1998-225, s. 4.24;
Temporary Adoption Eff. April 1, 1999;
Eff. August 1, 2000;

Readopted Eff. June 1, 2022.

15A NCAC 030 .0402 STANDARD COMMERCIAL FISHING LICENSE ELIGIBILITY APPLICATION PROCESS

- (a) Application forms for determination of eligibility for the Standard Commercial Fishing License Eligibility Pool are available at all offices of the Division of Marine Fisheries and online at <https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/marine-fisheries/licenses-permits-and-leases/commercial-fishing-licenses/eligibility-pool> and shall be submitted to any Office of the Division for processing.
- (b) Only one application per individual for determination of eligibility for the Standard Commercial Fishing License Eligibility Pool shall be accepted or may be pending at any one time. An applicant may have only one entry in the Standard Commercial Fishing License Eligibility Pool at any one time.
- (c) Individuals who currently hold or are eligible to purchase a Standard or Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License shall not be eligible to apply for additional Standard Commercial Fishing Licenses through the Standard Commercial Fishing License Eligibility Pool.
- (d) If an applicant has died or becomes ineligible and is subsequently selected from the Standard Commercial Fishing License Eligibility Pool, that license eligibility shall automatically revert to the Eligibility Pool.
- (e) Persons claiming retirement from commercial fishing or transferring their Standard Commercial Fishing License shall not be eligible to apply for a Standard Commercial Fishing License through the Standard Commercial Fishing License Eligibility Pool for two years from the date of the last transfer, except as provided in Rule .0404(3) of this Section.
- (f) Applicants shall notify the Division within 30 days of a change of address.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-182; 143B-289.52; S.L. 1998-225, s. 4:24; Temporary Adoption Eff. April 1, 1999; Eff. August 1, 2000; Amended Eff. October 1, 2008; February 1, 2008; Readopted Eff. June 1, 2022.

15A NCAC 030 .0403 STANDARD COMMERCIAL FISHING LICENSE ELIGIBILITY BOARD REVIEW

- (a) After determination of eligibility by the Standard Commercial Fishing License Eligibility Board, applicants will be notified in writing as to the applicant meeting or not meeting required eligibility criteria for the Standard Commercial Fishing License Eligibility Pool.
- (b) The Marine Fisheries Commission shall determine the number of licenses available from the Standard Commercial Fishing License Eligibility Pool at its first regularly scheduled meeting following July 1 of each year.
- (c) The Standard Commercial Fishing License Eligibility Board shall meet to review applications as often as deemed necessary by the Chair of the Eligibility Board.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-182; 143B-289.52; S.L. 1998-225, s. 4.24; Temporary Adoption Eff. April 1, 1999; Eff. August 1, 2000; Amended Eff. February 1, 2008; Readopted Eff. June 1, 2022.

15A NCAC 030 .0404 STANDARD COMMERCIAL FISHING LICENSE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

In determining eligibility of an applicant for the Standard Commercial Fishing License Eligibility Pool, the Standard Commercial Fishing License Eligibility Board shall apply the following criteria:

- (1) involvement in commercial fishing:
 - (a) significant involvement in the commercial fishing industry for three of the last five years;
 - (b) significant involvement in commercial fishing or in the commercial fishing industry prior to the last five years;
 - (c) in the case of an applicant who is under 16 years of age, significant involvement in commercial fishing for two out of the last five years with a parent, legal guardian, grandparent, or other adult; or

- (d) significant involvement of the applicant's family in commercial fishing. For the purpose of this Sub-Item, family shall include mother, father, brothers, sisters, spouse, children, grandparents, or legal guardian.

For the purposes of this Rule, "significant involvement" shall mean persons or corporations who are engaged in the actual taking of fish for sale, from the waters of the State, or other states, jurisdictions, or federal waters, or any licensed dealer or the dealer's employees who purchase fish at the point of landing. Significant involvement does not include activities such as those who transport fish from the point of landing, those who sell or make commercial or recreational fishing gear, those who operate bait and tackle shops unless they are engaged in the actual taking of bait for sale, or those who work in fish markets or crab picking operations;

- (2) compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and rules:
 - (a) the applicant shall not have any licenses, endorsements, or Commercial Fishing Vessel Registrations issued by the Division of Marine Fisheries or the right to hold them under suspension or revocation at the time of application or during the eligibility review;
 - (b) if selected for the Standard Commercial Fishing License Eligibility Pool, the applicant shall become ineligible for the Standard Commercial Fishing License Eligibility Pool if any licenses, endorsements, or Commercial Fishing Vessel Registrations or the right to hold them issued by the Division are suspended or revoked;
 - (c) four convictions within the last three years or the number of convictions that would cause suspension or revocation of licenses, endorsements, or Commercial Fishing Vessel Registrations as set forth in Rule .0114 of this Subchapter within the last three years shall result in the application being denied. An applicant for the Standard Commercial Fishing License Eligibility Pool shall provide certification that the applicant does not have four or more marine or estuarine resource convictions during the previous three years, as set forth in Rule .0101 of this Subchapter; and
 - (d) a record of habitual violations evidenced by eight or more convictions in the last 10 years shall result in the application being denied.

For purposes of eligibility for the Standard Commercial Fishing License Eligibility Pool, the term convictions shall include any conviction for violation of any provision of Chapter 113 of the North Carolina General Statutes and any rule implementing or authorized by such statutes, any conviction for violation of G.S. 76-40 and any rule implementing or authorized by such statute, any conviction of Chapter 75A of the North Carolina General Statutes and any rule implementing or authorized by such statutes, any conviction for violation of any provision of Article 7 of Chapter 143B of the North Carolina General Statutes and any rule implementing or authorized by such statutes, any conviction of resist, obstruct, or delay involving a Marine Fisheries Inspector or Wildlife Protector under G.S. 14-223, and any conviction involving assaultive behavior toward a Marine Fisheries Inspector or other governmental official of the Department of Environmental Quality or the Wildlife Resources Commission;

- (3) the applicant shall not have transferred a Standard Commercial Fishing License granted by the Standard Commercial Fishing License Eligibility Board; and
- (4) an applicant for the Standard Commercial Fishing License Eligibility Pool shall meet all other statutory eligibility requirements for a Standard Commercial Fishing License.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-168.1; 113-168.2; 113-182; 143B-289.52; S.L. 1998-225, s. 4.24; Temporary Adoption Eff. April 1, 1999; Eff. August 1, 2000; Amended Eff. October 1, 2008; February 1, 2008; Readopted Eff. June 1, 2022.

15A NCAC 030 .0405 STANDARD COMMERCIAL FISHING LICENSE ELIGIBILITY POOL APPLICATION DOCUMENTATION

- (a) The Standard Commercial Fishing License Eligibility Pool application form required by Rule .0402 of this Section to be submitted to the Division of Marine Fisheries shall include the following items for the applicant:
 - (1) participant identification number;
 - (2) full name;
 - (3) if applying as a business:

- (A) business name;
 - (B) state of incorporation;
 - (C) charter state;
 - (D) full name of business owner;
 - (E) full names of business agents, if applicable; and
 - (F) type of business entity, either corporation, partnership, sole proprietorship, or limited liability company;
- (4) type of picture identification used to verify the applicant's identify, either state driver's license, state identification card issued by the Division of Motor Vehicles, military identification card, resident alien card, or passport, and identification number and identification expiration date;
 - (5) date of birth;
 - (6) state of primary residence;
 - (7) e-mail address, if applicable;
 - (8) physical address;
 - (9) mailing address;
 - (10) home phone number, business phone number, fax number, and cellular phone number, if applicable; and
 - (11) race, gender, height, weight, eye color, and hair color.

If applying as a business, the business agent's information is required for Subparagraphs (a)(2) and (a)(4) through (a)(11) of this Rule.

(b) Documentation for applications for determination of eligibility for the Standard Commercial Fishing License Eligibility Pool shall include:

- (1) statements from individuals verifying the applicant's involvement in commercial fishing or the commercial fishing industry, which shall contain the individual's name, address, and telephone number, and the individual's signature shall be notarized;
- (2) proof of income derived from commercial fishing or the commercial fishing industry. Proof of this income shall be tax records; and
- (3) the extent to which the applicant has complied with federal and state laws, regulations, and rules relating to coastal fishing and protection of the environment. Federal compliance will be verified by a notarized statement from the applicant that the applicant has complied with federal laws, as set forth in Rule .0101 of this Subchapter.

(c) All documents required by this Rule shall be notarized.

(d) Applications shall be legible and complete or they will be returned.

(e) It shall be unlawful to submit false statements on applications or supporting documents. If eligibility is based on false information provided by the applicant, this eligibility shall be automatically revoked.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-182; 143B-289.52; S.L. 1998-225, s. 4.24; Temporary Adoption Eff. April 1, 1999; Eff. August 1, 2000; Readopted Eff. March 15, 2023.

15A NCAC 030 .0406 STANDARD COMMERCIAL FISHING LICENSE ELIGIBILITY POOL CERTIFICATION

Annual certification to maintain an eligible application in the Standard Commercial Fishing License Eligibility Pool shall be as follows:

- (1) the applicant shall certify that the information on the applicant's original application is correct and that the applicant desires to remain in the Standard Commercial Fishing License Eligibility Pool. A certification form shall be provided and mailed to the applicant at the last known address by the Division of Marine Fisheries;
- (2) the certification form with any changes, such as address, phone number, or updated fisheries involvement information since the last application or certification, shall be notarized and submitted to the Division within 12 months of the initial application and annually thereafter; and
- (3) failure to return certification that an application is correct or with changes within 30 days from when the Division mailed the form to the applicant shall result in the application being removed from the Standard Commercial Fishing License Eligibility Pool. An applicant that has been

removed from the Standard Commercial Fishing License Eligibility Pool shall receive a notice from the Division.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-182; 143B-289.52; S.L. 1998-225, s. 4.24; Temporary Adoption Eff. April 1, 1999; Eff. August 1, 2000; Readopted Eff. June 1, 2022.

SECTION .0500 - PERMITS

15A NCAC 030 .0501 PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS TO OBTAIN PERMITS

(a) To obtain a Division of Marine Fisheries permit, an applicant, responsible party, or person holding a power of attorney shall provide the following information:

- (1) the full name, physical address, mailing address, date of birth, and signature of the applicant on the application;
- (2) a current picture identification of the applicant, responsible party, or person holding a power of attorney, acceptable forms of which shall include driver's license, North Carolina Identification card issued by the North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles, military identification card, resident alien card (green card), or passport or, if applying by mail, a copy thereof;
- (3) for permits that require a list of designees, the full names and dates of birth of the designees of the applicant who will be acting pursuant to the requested permit;
- (4) certification that the applicant and his or her designees do not have four or more convictions for violation of any provision of Subchapter 113 of the North Carolina General Statutes under the authority of the Marine Fisheries Commission or any rule adopted by the Marine Fisheries Commission pursuant to Subchapter 113 during the previous three years; and
- (5) for permit applications from business entities:
 - (A) the business name;
 - (B) the type of business entity: corporation, "educational institution" as defined in 15A NCAC 03I .0101, limited liability company (LLC), partnership, or sole proprietorship;
 - (C) the name, address, and phone number of responsible party and other identifying information required by this Subchapter or rules related to a specific permit;
 - (D) for a corporation applying for a permit in a corporate name, the current articles of incorporation and a current list of corporate officers;
 - (E) for a partnership that is established by a written partnership agreement, a current copy of such agreement shall be provided when applying for a permit; and
 - (F) for business entities other than corporations, copies of current assumed name statements if filed with the Register of Deeds office for the corresponding county and copies of current business privilege tax certificates, if applicable.

(b) A permittee shall hold a valid:

- (1) Recreational Commercial Gear License, Standard Commercial Fishing License, or Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License to hold an Estuarine Gill Net Permit.
- (2) Standard or Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License to hold:
 - (A) an Atlantic Ocean Striped Bass Commercial Gear Permit;
 - (B) a Permit for Weekend Trawling for Live Shrimp; or
 - (C) a Pound Net Set Permit.

The master designated on the single vessel corporation Standard Commercial Fishing License is the individual required to hold the Permit for Weekend Trawling for Live Shrimp.

- (3) Fish Dealer License in the proper category to hold dealer permits for monitoring fisheries under a quota or allocation for that category.

(c) An individual who is assigned a valid Standard Commercial Fishing License with applicable endorsements shall be eligible to hold any permit that requires a Standard Commercial Fishing License except a Pound Net Set Permit.

(d) If mechanical methods to take shellfish are used, a permittee and a permittee's designees shall hold a valid Standard or Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License with a Shellfish Endorsement for a permittee to hold a:

- (1) Depuration Permit;
- (2) Permit to Transplant Oysters from Seed Oyster Management Areas; or

- (3) Permit to Use Mechanical Methods for Shellfish on Shellfish Leases or Franchises, except as provided in G.S. 113-169.2.
- (e) If mechanical methods to take shellfish are not used, a permittee and a permittee's designees shall hold a valid Standard or Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License with a Shellfish Endorsement or a Shellfish License for a permittee to hold a:
 - (1) Depuration Permit; or
 - (2) Permit to Transplant Oysters from Seed Oyster Management Areas.
- (f) Aquaculture Operation Permit and Aquaculture Collection Permit:
 - (1) A permittee shall hold a valid Aquaculture Operation Permit issued by the Fisheries Director to hold an Aquaculture Collection Permit.
 - (2) The permittee or designees shall hold appropriate licenses from the Division of Marine Fisheries for the species harvested and the gear used under the Aquaculture Collection Permit.
- (g) Atlantic Ocean Striped Bass Commercial Gear Permit:
 - (1) An applicant for an Atlantic Ocean Striped Bass Commercial Gear Permit shall declare one of the following types of gear for an initial permit and at intervals of three consecutive license years thereafter:
 - (A) a gill net;
 - (B) a trawl net; or
 - (C) a beach seine.For the purpose of this Rule, a "beach seine" shall mean a swipe net constructed of multi-filament or multi-fiber webbing fished from the ocean beach that is deployed from a vessel launched from the ocean beach where the fishing operation takes place. Gear declarations shall be binding on the permittee for three consecutive license years without regard to subsequent annual permit issuance.
 - (2) A person is not eligible for more than one Atlantic Ocean Striped Bass Commercial Gear Permit regardless of the number of Standard Commercial Fishing Licenses, Retired Standard Commercial Fishing Licenses, or assignments held by that person.
- (h) Applications submitted without complete and required information shall not be processed until all required information has been submitted. Incomplete applications shall be returned within two business days to the applicant with the deficiency in the application noted.
- (i) A permit shall be issued only after the application is deemed complete and the applicant certifies his or her agreement to abide by the permit general and specific conditions established under 15A NCAC 03J .0501 and .0505, 03K .0103 and .0107, Rule .0211 of this Subchapter, and Rules .0502 and .0503 of this Section, as applicable to the requested permit. The permittee's signature on the initial permit general conditions form shall be notarized. In the case of a person holding more than one permit, the permittee's signature on the permit general conditions form shall be notarized for the initial permit issued but shall not be required for subsequent permits.
- (j) For permit renewals, the permittee's signature on the specific condition form shall certify all information is true and accurate. Notarized signatures on renewal permits shall not be required.
- (k) In determining whether to issue, modify, or renew a permit, the Fisheries Director or his or her agent shall evaluate the following factors:
 - (1) potential threats to public health or marine and estuarine resources regulated by the Marine Fisheries Commission;
 - (2) whether the permit application meets the requirements for the permit; and
 - (3) whether the applicant has a history of eight or more violations of any provision of Subchapter 113 of the North Carolina General Statutes under the authority of the Marine Fisheries Commission or any rule adopted by the Marine Fisheries Commission pursuant to Subchapter 113 within 10 years.
- (l) The Division of Marine Fisheries shall notify the applicant in writing of the denial or modification of any permit application and the reasons therefor. The applicant may submit further information or reasons why the permit application should not be denied or modified.
- (m) Permits are valid from the date of issuance through the expiration date printed on the permit. Unless otherwise established by rule, the Fisheries Director may establish the issuance timeframe for specific types and categories of permits based on season, calendar year, or other period based upon the nature of the activity permitted, the duration of the activity, compliance with federal or State fishery management plans or implementing rules, conflicts with other fisheries or gear usage, or seasons for the species involved. The expiration date shall be specified on the permit.
- (n) It shall be unlawful for a permit holder to fail to notify the Division of Marine Fisheries within 30 days of a change of name or address, in accordance with G.S. 113-169.2.

- (o) It shall be unlawful for a permit holder to fail to notify the Division of Marine Fisheries of a change of designee prior to use of the permit by that designee.
- (p) Permit applications shall be available at the Division of Marine Fisheries; a list of permits and the location where each permit application is available is on the Division's website at <https://deq.nc.gov/dmf-permit-info>.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-169.1; 113-169.2; 113-169.3; 113-182; 113-210; 143B-289.52; Temporary Adoption Eff. September 1, 2000; May 1, 2000; Eff. April 1, 2001; Temporary Amendment Eff. October 1, 2001; Amended Eff. May 1, 2017; May 1, 2015; April 1, 2011; April 1, 2009; July 1, 2008; December 1, 2007; September 1, 2005; April 1, 2003; August 1, 2002; Readopted Eff. April 1, 2019; Amended Eff. June 1, 2026; March 24, 2025.

15A NCAC 030 .0502 GENERAL PERMIT CONDITIONS

- (a) It shall be unlawful to violate any permit condition.
- (b) The following conditions shall apply to all permits issued by the Fisheries Director:
- (1) it shall be unlawful to:
 - (A) operate under the permit except in areas, at times, and under conditions specified on the permit.
 - (B) operate under a permit without having the permit or copy thereof in possession of the permittee or the permittee's designees at all times of operation and the permit or copy thereof shall be ready at hand for inspection, except for a Pound Net Set Permit.
 - (C) operate under a permit without having a current picture identification in possession and ready at hand for inspection.
 - (D) refuse to allow inspection and sampling of a permitted activity by an agent of the Division of Marine Fisheries.
 - (E) fail to provide complete and accurate information requested by the Division in connection with the permitted activity.
 - (F) provide false information in the application for initial issuance, renewal, or transfer of a permit.
 - (G) hold a permit issued by the Fisheries Director if not eligible to hold any license required as a condition for that permit as stated in Rule .0501 of this Section.
 - (H) fail to provide reports within the timeframe required by the specific permit conditions.
 - (I) fail to keep such records and accounts as required by the rules in this Chapter for determination of conservation policy, equitable and efficient administration and enforcement, or promotion of commercial or recreational fisheries.
 - (J) assign or transfer permits issued by the Fisheries Director, except for a Pound Net Set Permit as authorized by 15A NCAC 03J .0504.
 - (K) fail to participate in and provide accurate information for data collection in accordance with 15A NCAC 03I .0113 and for survey programs administered by the Division.
 - (2) the Fisheries Director or the Fisheries Director's agent may, by conditions of the permit, impose on a commercial fishing operation and for recreational purposes any of the following restrictions for the permitted purposes:
 - (A) specify time;
 - (B) specify area;
 - (C) specify means and methods;
 - (D) specify record keeping and reporting requirements;
 - (E) specify season;
 - (F) specify species;
 - (G) specify size;
 - (H) specify quantity;
 - (I) specify disposition of resources;
 - (J) specify marking requirements; and
 - (K) specify harvest conditions.

- (3) unless specifically stated as a condition on the permit, all statutes, rules, and proclamations shall apply to the permittee and the permittee's designees.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-169.1; 113-170.2; 113-170.3; 113-182; 113-210; 143B-289.52; Temporary Adoption Eff. May 1, 2000; Eff. April 1, 2001; Amended Eff. April 1, 2009; September 1, 2005; Readopted Eff. March 15, 2023; Amended Eff. June 1, 2026.

15A NCAC 030 .0503 PERMIT CONDITIONS; SPECIFIC

(a) Aquaculture Operation Permit and Aquaculture Collection Permit:

- (1) It shall be unlawful to conduct aquaculture operations using marine and estuarine resources without first securing an Aquaculture Operation Permit from the Fisheries Director.
- (2) It shall be unlawful:
 - (A) to take marine and estuarine resources from Coastal Fishing Waters for aquaculture purposes without first obtaining an Aquaculture Collection Permit from the Fisheries Director;
 - (B) to sell or use for any purpose not related to North Carolina aquaculture marine and estuarine resources taken pursuant to an Aquaculture Collection Permit; or
 - (C) to fail to submit to the Fisheries Director an annual report, due on December 1 of each year on the form provided by the Division of Marine Fisheries, stating the amount and disposition of marine and estuarine resources collected under authority of an Aquaculture Collection Permit.
- (3) Aquaculture Operation Permits and Aquaculture Collection Permits shall be issued or renewed on a calendar year basis.
- (4) It shall be unlawful to fail to provide the Division with a listing of all designees acting pursuant to an Aquaculture Collection Permit at the time of application.

(b) Atlantic Ocean Striped Bass Commercial Gear Permit:

- (1) It shall be unlawful to take striped bass from the Atlantic Ocean in a commercial fishing operation without first obtaining an Atlantic Ocean Striped Bass Commercial Gear Permit.
- (2) It shall be unlawful to obtain more than one Atlantic Ocean Striped Bass Commercial Gear Permit during a license year, regardless of the number of Standard Commercial Fishing licenses, Retired Standard Commercial Fishing licenses, or assignments.

(c) Blue Crab Shedding Permit: It shall be unlawful to possess more than 50 blue crabs in a shedding operation without first obtaining a Blue Crab Shedding Permit from the Division.

(d) Coastal Recreational Fishing License Exemption Permit:

- (1) It shall be unlawful for the responsible party seeking exemption from recreational fishing license requirements for eligible individuals to conduct an organized fishing event held in Joint or Coastal Fishing Waters without first obtaining a Coastal Recreational Fishing License Exemption Permit.
- (2) The Coastal Recreational Fishing License Exemption Permit shall only be issued for recreational fishing activity conducted solely for the participation and benefit of one of the following groups of eligible individuals:
 - (A) individuals with physical or mental impairment;
 - (B) members of the United States Armed Forces and their dependents, upon presentation of a valid military identification card;
 - (C) individuals receiving instruction on recreational fishing techniques and conservation practices from employees of state or federal marine or estuarine resource management agencies or instructors affiliated with an educational institution as defined in 15A NCAC 03I .0101(1); and
 - (D) disadvantaged youths as set forth in 42 U.S. Code 12511.
- (3) The Coastal Recreational Fishing License Exemption Permit shall be valid for the date, time, and physical location of the organized fishing event for which the exemption is granted and the duration of the permit shall not exceed one year from the date of issuance.

- (4) The Coastal Recreational Fishing License Exemption Permit shall only be issued if all of the following, in addition to the information required in Rule .0501 of this Section, is submitted to the Fisheries Director, in writing, at least 30 days prior to the event:
 - (A) the name, date, time, and physical location of the event;
 - (B) documentation that substantiates local, state, or federal involvement in the organized fishing event, if applicable;
 - (C) the cost or requirements, if any, for an individual to participate in the event; and
 - (D) an estimate of the number of participants.
- (e) Requirements for dealer permits for monitoring fisheries under a quota or allocation:
 - (1) All species-specific permits listed in Subparagraphs (e)(2) through (e)(6) of this Rule are subject to the requirements of this Paragraph. During commercial harvest of a fishery opened by proclamation or rule for which a dealer permit for monitoring fisheries under a quota or allocation shall be issued, it shall be unlawful for a fish dealer issued such permit to fail to:
 - (A) submit by electronic means, including electronic mail, fax, or text message, by noon daily in quota monitoring logs, the previous day's landings for the permitted fishery to the Division. The form shall include the dealer's name, dealer's license number, date the fish were landed, permittee's or designee's signature, date the permittee or designee signed the form, and species-specific information as listed in Parts (e)(2)(A), (e)(3)(A), (e)(4)(A), and (e)(5)(A) of this Rule. If the dealer submits their trip tickets by electronic means, then the dealer shall submit their quota monitoring logs by electronic means. If the dealer is unable to submit by electronic means the required information, the permittee shall call in the previous day's landings to the Division of Marine Fisheries Communications Center at 800-682-2632 or 252-515-5500. Landings for Fridays or Saturdays shall be submitted no later than noon on the following Monday;
 - (B) submit the required form set forth in Part (e)(1)(A) of this Rule to the Division upon request or no later than five days after the close of the harvest in a commercial fishing operation for the fishery permitted;
 - (C) maintain related documentation in accordance with 15A NCAC 03I .0114;
 - (D) contact the Division daily, regardless of whether a transaction for the fishery for which a dealer is permitted occurred; and
 - (E) record the permanent dealer identification number on the bill of lading or receipt for each transaction or shipment from the permitted fishery.
 - (2) Atlantic Ocean Flounder Dealer Permit:
 - (A) In addition to the information required in Part (e)(1)(A) of this Rule, the form to record the previous day's landings of Atlantic Ocean flounder shall include the permit number, number of vessels used for harvest, and pounds harvested.
 - (B) It shall be unlawful for a fish dealer to allow vessels holding a valid License to Land Flounder from the Atlantic Ocean to land more than 100 pounds of flounder from a single transaction at their licensed location during the open season without first obtaining an Atlantic Ocean Flounder Dealer Permit. The licensed location shall be specified on the Atlantic Ocean Flounder Dealer Permit and only one location per permit shall be allowed.
 - (C) It shall be unlawful for a fish dealer to possess, buy, sell, or offer for sale more than 100 pounds of flounder from a single transaction from the Atlantic Ocean without first obtaining an Atlantic Ocean Flounder Dealer Permit.
 - (3) Black Sea Bass North of Cape Hatteras Dealer Permit:
 - (A) In addition to the information required in Part (e)(1)(A) of this Rule, the form to record the previous day's landings of black sea bass north of Cape Hatteras shall include the permit number, number of vessels used for harvest, and pounds harvested.
 - (B) It shall be unlawful for a fish dealer to purchase or possess more than 100 pounds of black sea bass taken from the Atlantic Ocean north of Cape Hatteras (35° 15.0321' N) per day per commercial fishing operation during the open season unless the dealer has a Black Sea Bass North of Cape Hatteras Dealer Permit.
 - (4) Estuarine Flounder Dealer Permit:
 - (A) In addition to the information required in Part (e)(1)(A) of this Rule, the form to record the previous day's landings of estuarine flounder shall include the permit number, number of vessels used for harvest, pounds harvested, gear category, and management area.

- (B) It shall be unlawful for a fish dealer to possess, purchase, sell, or offer for sale flounder taken from estuarine waters without first obtaining an Estuarine Flounder Dealer Permit required for specific management purposes for the applicable fisheries and harvest area.
- (5) Spiny Dogfish Dealer Permit:
 - (A) In addition to the information required in Part (e)(1)(A) of this Rule, the form to record the previous day's landings of spiny dogfish shall include the permit number, number of vessels used for harvest, and pounds harvested.
 - (B) It shall be unlawful for a fish dealer to purchase or possess more than 100 pounds of spiny dogfish per day per commercial fishing operation unless the dealer has a Spiny Dogfish Dealer Permit.
- (6) Striped Bass Dealer Permit:
 - (A) In addition to the information required in Part (e)(1)(A) of this Rule, the form to record the previous day's landings of striped bass shall include the permit number, number of tags used by area, pounds harvested by area, and for the Atlantic Ocean, type of gear used for harvest.
 - (B) It shall be unlawful for a fish dealer to possess, buy, sell, or offer for sale striped bass taken from the following areas without first obtaining a Striped Bass Dealer Permit validated for the applicable harvest area:
 - (i) the Atlantic Ocean;
 - (ii) the Albemarle Sound Management Area as designated in 15A NCAC 03R .0201; or
 - (iii) the Joint and Coastal Fishing Waters of the Central/Southern Management Area as designated in 15A NCAC 03R .0201.
 - (C) No permittee shall possess, buy, sell, or offer for sale striped bass taken from the harvest areas opened by proclamation without having a valid Division-issued tag for the applicable area affixed through the mouth and gill cover or, in the case of striped bass imported from other states, a similar tag that is issued for striped bass in the state of origin. Division striped bass tags shall not be bought, sold, offered for sale, or transferred. Tags shall be obtained from the Division; office locations that provide tags can be found on the Division's website at <https://www.deq.nc.gov/striped-bass-commercial-harvest-tags>. The Division shall specify the quantity of tags to be issued based on historical striped bass landings. It shall be unlawful for the permittee to fail to surrender unused tags to the Division upon request.
- (f) Estuarine Gill Net Permit:
 - (1) It shall be unlawful for an individual to deploy gill nets in Internal Waters, except for runaround, strike, drop, or drift gill nets, without possessing a valid Estuarine Gill Net Permit issued by the Division.
 - (2) Estuarine Gill Net Permits shall be issued or renewed by the Division on a calendar year basis. For renewals, any changes in information or supporting documents shall be provided by the permit holder at the time of renewal.
 - (3) It shall be unlawful for a permit holder:
 - (A) to violate the provisions of any rules or proclamations regarding the conditions set out in the federally issued Endangered Species Act 16 U.S.C. 1539(a)(1)(B) Incidental Take Permits, for the estuarine non-exempt gill net fisheries;
 - (B) to refuse or deny Division employees a trip aboard the vessel the permit holder is using or observation from a Division vessel to obtain data or samples in accordance with 15A NCAC 03I .0113;
 - (C) and the master and crew members of the boat, to interfere with or obstruct Division employees in the course of obtaining data or samples, which shall include refusal or failure to provide information on fishing gear parameters or to relinquish any captured sturgeon or sea turtle to Division employees;
 - (D) to avoid or mislead Division employees by providing incorrect information on fishing activity;
 - (E) to fail to provide a valid phone number at which the Estuarine Gill Net Permit holder can be reached, return phone calls, or answer text messages from the Division, or fail to notify the Division of a phone number change within 14 calendar days of such change;

- (F) to fail to comply with all observer notification system or call-in requirements set out by permit conditions, proclamations, or rules; and
- (G) to fail to report to the Division any incidental take of sea turtle or sturgeon within 24 hours.

(g) Permit for Weekend Trawling for Live Shrimp:

- (1) It shall be unlawful to take shrimp with trawls from 9:00 p.m. on Friday through 12 noon on Saturday without first obtaining a Permit for Weekend Trawling for Live Shrimp.
- (2) It shall be unlawful for a holder of a Permit for Weekend Trawling for Live Shrimp to use trawls from 12:01 p.m. on Saturday through 4:59 p.m. on Sunday.
- (3) It shall be unlawful for a permit holder during the timeframe specified in Subparagraph (g)(1) of this Rule to:
 - (A) use trawl nets to take live shrimp except from areas open to the harvest of shrimp with trawls;
 - (B) take shrimp with trawls that have a combined headrope length of greater than 40 feet in Internal Coastal Waters;
 - (C) possess more than one gallon of dead shrimp (heads on) per trip;
 - (D) fail to have a functioning live bait tank or a combination of multiple functioning live bait tanks, with aerators or circulating water, with a minimum combined tank capacity of 50 gallons; or
 - (E) fail to call or email the Division prior to each weekend use of the permit, specifying activities and location. Calls shall be directed to the Division of Marine Fisheries Communications Center at 800-682-2632 or 252-515-5500 and emails shall be sent to the email address provided in the permit specific conditions.

(h) Pound Net Set Permit: The holder of a Pound Net Set Permit shall follow the Pound Net Set Permit conditions as set forth in 15A NCAC 03J .0505.

(i) Scientific or Educational Activity Permit:

- (1) It shall be unlawful for institutions or organizations seeking exemptions from license, rule, proclamation, or statutory requirements to collect, hold, culture, or exhibit for scientific or educational purposes any marine or estuarine species without first obtaining a Scientific or Educational Activity Permit.
- (2) The Scientific or Educational Activity Permit shall only be issued for collection methods and possession allowances approved by the Division.
- (3) The Scientific or Educational Activity Permit shall only be issued for activities conducted by or under the direction of educational institutions, nongovernmental conservation organizations, or scientific institutions as defined in 15A NCAC 03I .0101(1) and approved by the Division.
- (4) It shall be unlawful for the responsible party issued a Scientific or Educational Activity Permit to fail to submit an annual report on collections and, if authorized, sales to the Division, due on December 1 of each year, unless otherwise specified on the permit. The reports shall be filed on forms provided by the Division. Scientific or Educational Activity permits shall be issued on a calendar year basis.
- (5) It shall be unlawful to sell marine or estuarine species taken under a Scientific or Educational Activity Permit without:
 - (A) the required license for such sale;
 - (B) an authorization stated on the permit for such sale; and
 - (C) providing the information required by 15A NCAC 03I .0114 if the sale is to a licensed fish dealer.
- (6) It shall be unlawful to fail to provide the Division with a list of all designees acting under a Scientific or Educational Activity Permit at the time of application.
- (7) The permittee or designees utilizing the permit shall call or email the Division no later than 24 hours prior to use of the permit, specifying activities and location. Calls shall be directed to the Division of Marine Fisheries Communications Center at 800-682-2632 or 252-515-5500 and emails shall be sent to the email address provided in the permit specific conditions.

(j) Shellfish Lease Restoration Permit:

- (1) It shall be unlawful to transport shellfish cultivated on a shellfish lease or franchise to a restoration site without first obtaining a Shellfish Lease Restoration Permit.

- (2) The Shellfish Lease Restoration Permit shall only be issued for approved activities associated with a shellfish lease or franchise.
 - (3) It shall be unlawful to harvest shellfish under a Shellfish Lease Restoration Permit without being recorded on a trip ticket through a certified shellfish dealer as set forth in 15A NCAC 03I .0114.
 - (4) It shall be unlawful for the permittee or permit designee to fail to maintain a record of all shellfish transported for restoration purposes and to fail to submit the record annually, unless otherwise specified on the permit.
 - (5) The permittee or designees utilizing the permit shall call the Division of Marine Fisheries Communications Center at 800-682-2632 or 252-515-5500 no later than 24 hours prior to use of the permit, specifying activities, location, and product size.
- (k) Shellfish Relocation Permit:
- (1) It shall be unlawful, without first obtaining a Shellfish Relocation Permit, to relocate shellfish from an area designated by the Fisheries Director as a site where shellfish would otherwise be destroyed due to maintenance dredging, construction, or other development activities.
 - (2) The Shellfish Relocation Permit shall be issued by the Fisheries Director only as part of a Coastal Area Management Act Permit issued in accordance with G.S. 113A-118 and G.S. 113-229 for development projects based on the status of shellfish resources in the development area, availability of Division employees to supervise the relocation activity, and if the Division has verified that there is no other avoidance or minimization measure that can be incorporated.
- (l) Under Dock Oyster Culture Permit:
- (1) It shall be unlawful to cultivate oysters in containers under docks for personal consumption without first obtaining an Under Dock Oyster Culture Permit.
 - (2) An Under Dock Oyster Culture Permit shall be issued only in accordance with provisions set forth in G.S. 113-210(c).
 - (3) The applicant shall complete and submit an examination, with a minimum of 70 percent correct answers, based on an educational package provided by the Division pursuant to G.S. 113-210(j), demonstrating the applicant's knowledge of:
 - (A) the application process;
 - (B) permit criteria;
 - (C) basic oyster biology and culture techniques;
 - (D) shellfish harvest area closures due to pollution;
 - (E) safe handling practices;
 - (F) permit conditions; and
 - (G) permit revocation criteria.
 - (4) Action by an Under Dock Oyster Culture Permit holder to encroach on or usurp the legal rights of the public to access public trust resources in Coastal Fishing Waters shall result in permit revocation.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-169.1; 113-169.2; 113-169.3; 113-182; 113-210; 143B-289.52; Temporary Adoption Eff. September 1, 2000; August 1, 2000; May 1, 2000; Eff. April 1, 2001; Amended Eff. May 1, 2017; May 1, 2015; April 1, 2014; April 1, 2009; July 1, 2008; January 1, 2008; September 1, 2005; October 1, 2004; August 1, 2004; August 1, 2002; Readopted Eff. April 1, 2019; Amended Eff. June 1, 2026; March 24, 2025.

15A NCAC 03O .0504 SUSPENSION AND REVOCATION OF PERMITS

- (a) All commercial and recreational permits issued under Article 14A, Article 14B, and Article 25A of Chapter 113, and rules of the Marine Fisheries Commission shall be subject to suspension and revocation. For the purpose of this Rule and in accordance with G.S. 150B-2, "permit" includes "certification" and "certificate of compliance".
- (b) If a license is required to hold a permit:
 - (1) all permits shall be suspended or revoked if the permittee's license privilege has been suspended or revoked as set forth in G.S. 113-171 and Rule .0114 of this Subchapter. The duration of the permit suspension or revocation shall be the same as the license suspension or revocation.
 - (2) in the event a person makes application for a new permit during any period of license or permit suspension, no new permit shall be issued during the suspension period.

- (3) in the case of revocation of license privileges, the former licensee shall not be eligible to apply for reinstatement of a revoked permit while license privileges are revoked.
- (c) If a license is not required to hold a permit, in the case of revocation of a permit, the former permittee shall not be eligible to apply for reinstatement of a revoked permit for a period of six months.
- (d) It shall be unlawful to violate any permit condition. For violation of permit conditions as specified on the permit, permits may be suspended or revoked according to the following schedule:
 - (1) violation of one permit condition in a three-year period, permit shall be suspended for 10 days.
 - (2) violation of two permit conditions in a three-year period, permits shall be suspended for 30 days.
 - (3) violation of three permit conditions in a three-year period, permits shall be revoked for a period not less than six months.
 - (4) violation of any permit conditions as set forth in 15A NCAC 03J .0505(a), permits may be revoked and the former permittee may not be eligible to apply for any future Pound Net Set Permits.

If several permit conditions are violated as a result of a single transaction or occurrence, the permit violations shall be treated as a single violation for the purpose of suspension or revocation.

- (e) Permit designees shall not be permitted to participate in a permit operation during any period they are under license suspension or revocation.
- (f) If violation of permit conditions requires suspension or revocation of a permit, the Fisheries Director shall cause the permittee to be served with written notice of the intent to commence suspension or revocation. If the permittee is not an individual, the written notice shall be served upon any responsible individual affiliated with the corporation, partnership, or association. The notice of the intent to commence suspension or revocation shall be served by an inspector or other agent of the Department or by certified mail, and shall state the grounds upon which it is based.
- (g) The Fisheries Director shall order summary suspension of a permit if he or she finds that the public health, safety, or welfare requires emergency action. Upon such determination, the Fisheries Director shall issue an order giving the reasons for the emergency action. The effective date of the order shall be the date specified on the order or the date of service of a certified copy of the order at the last known address of the permittee, whichever is later.
- (h) Upon service of a notice of suspension or revocation of a permit, it shall be unlawful to fail to surrender any permit so suspended or revoked.
- (i) It shall be unlawful to fail to surrender a permit issued by the Division in error immediately upon service of a notice by an agent of the Fisheries Director to surrender the permit.
- (j) It shall be unlawful to fail to remove all gear, markers, and devices associated with an Aquaculture Operation Permit within 30 days after expiration of the Aquaculture Operation Permit, termination of a shellfish lease for which the Aquaculture Operation Permit was issued, or notice by the Fisheries Director that an existing Aquaculture Operation Permit has been revoked or denied. Similar requirements for gear removal for a Pound Net Set Permit are described in 15A NCAC 03J .0505.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-171; 113-182; 113-202; 113-221.2; 143B-289.52; 150B-3; S.L. 2010-145;
Temporary Adoption Eff. May 1, 2000;
Eff. April 1, 2001;
Readopted Eff. March 15, 2023.

15A NCAC 03O .0505 FEES

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-169.1; 113-169.3; 113-182; 143B-289.52;
Temporary Adoption Eff. August 1, 2000; May 1, 2000;
Temporary Repeal Eff. September 1, 2000;
Temporary Rule Expired April 13, 2001.

15A NCAC 03O .0506 SPECIAL PERMIT REQUIRED FOR SPECIFIC MANAGEMENT PURPOSES

The Fisheries Director may, by proclamation, require individuals taking marine and estuarine resources regulated by the Marine Fisheries Commission, to obtain a special permit.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-170.3; 113-182; 113-221; 143B-289.52;
Temporary Adoption Eff. May 1, 2000;
Eff. April 1, 2001;

Pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.3A, rule is necessary without substantive public interest Eff. January 9, 2018.

SECTION .0600 – INTERSTATE WILDLIFE VIOLATOR COMPACT (WVC)

15A NCAC 030 .0601 WVC GENERAL PROVISIONS

(a) The purpose of this Section is to establish the rules necessary to implement G.S. 113 Article 22B, the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact.

(b) The rules in this Section shall apply to any person possessing a license, privilege, or right to take, possess, sell, buy, or transport wildlife in the State of North Carolina. Violations under this Section apply only to offenses charged by an inspector as set forth in laws or rules administered by the Division of Marine Fisheries or under G.S. 113-136(d). The rules shall not apply to any offenses committed in North Carolina or any other WVC state prior to July 1, 2025.

(c) The definitions in G.S. 113-300.6 Article II shall apply throughout this Section and to all forms prescribed pursuant to this Section, unless otherwise indicated.

(d) For the purpose of this Section:

- (1) "Member state" shall mean "party state" as defined in G.S. 113-300.6.
- (2) "Violation" shall mean violation of any provision of Subchapter 113 of the North Carolina General Statutes under the authority of the Marine Fisheries Commission or any rule adopted by the Marine Fisheries Commission pursuant to Subchapter 113.
- (3) "WVC" shall mean Wildlife Violator Compact.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-300.7;
Eff. June 1, 2025.*

15A NCAC 030 .0602 WVC CONDITIONS FOR NORTH CAROLINA VIOLATIONS BY NON-RESIDENTS

(a) All violations charged by an inspector are subject to the provisions of the WVC.

(b) Non-residents of North Carolina who are residents of a WVC member state at the time of a misdemeanor violation as set forth in Paragraph (a) of this Rule occurring in North Carolina may be released on personal recognizance when the violation results in a written citation requiring a violator to resolve the violation directly with the court, either in person, by mail, or through an attorney.

(c) Upon failure to comply with the terms of a citation issued by an inspector, as determined by a court of competent jurisdiction, the Division shall send notice of failure to comply by a letter sent by the U.S. Postal Service to the last known address of the wildlife violator or be delivered personally, and report the failure to comply to the non-resident's home state to start suspension procedures in accordance with the Wildlife Violator Compact Operations Manual. The suspension procedures in the Wildlife Violator Compact Operations Manual are incorporated by reference, including subsequent amendments and editions. A copy of the Wildlife Violator Compact Operations Manual can be found at <http://www.ncwildlife.gov> or <http://www.deq.nc.gov/wildlifeviolatorcompact>, at no cost.

(d) License privileges shall only be restored when the citation is resolved through the North Carolina Court System.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113.300.6; 113-300.7;
Eff. June 1, 2025.*

15A NCAC 030 .0603 WVC CONDITIONS FOR NORTH CAROLINA RESIDENTS FOR FAILURE TO APPEAR OR FAILURE TO COMPLY IN ANOTHER WVC MEMBER STATE

(a) North Carolina residents who commit a wildlife violation as defined by G.S. 113-300.6 in another WVC member state, who upon release on personal recognizance from the issuing state, fail to resolve the terms of his or her citation, shall have any licenses and permits for which the Division of Marine Fisheries has enforcement authority in North Carolina suspended pursuant to G.S. 113-300.7.

(b) If the Division receives notice of an unresolved citation from a member state, a Notice of Suspension shall be prepared and sent to the wildlife violator as follows:

- (1) the notice shall be a letter sent by the U.S. Postal Service to the last known address of the wildlife violator or be delivered personally;

- (2) the notice of suspension shall identify the state from which the notice of an unresolved citation was issued and describe any details of the violation and procedures to resolve the suspension provided by the issuing state to the Division;
 - (3) the notice shall provide the procedure for appealing to the issuing state the suspension; and
 - (4) the suspension shall have a delayed effective date of at least 14 business days from the date of the mail used to send the notice of suspension to the wildlife violator, to allow the wildlife violator to contact the court in the issuing state and resolve the citation.
- (c) Any suspension received by the Division shall remain in effect until such time as the North Carolina resident resolves the violation in the issuing state.
- (d) When a North Carolina resident resolves a violation with the court in the issuing state, it is the responsibility of the resident to submit a copy of either the court judgment resolving the matter or a notice of compliance from the issuing state. Upon receipt, the Division shall rescind any suspension and return any licenses or permits relevant to the Notice of Suspension.
- (e) The issuing state shall be notified by the Division if the suspension order is overturned by the Office of Administrative Hearings.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-300.7; 143B-289.52;
Eff. June 1, 2025.

15A NCAC 030 .0604 WVC RECIPROCAL RECOGNITION OF SUSPENSIONS

- (a) When the Division of Marine Fisheries receives notice of a suspension from a WVC member state of a person's license or permit that is the result of a conviction or an accumulation of convictions of wildlife violations in one or more WVC member states, the Division shall determine whether the conviction, or accumulation of convictions, leading to the suspension could have led to the suspension of licenses and permits for which the Division has enforcement authority pursuant to Chapter 113, Subchapter IV of the General Statutes. If it is determined that the person's licenses and permits would have been suspended under Chapter 113, Subchapter IV of the General Statutes, the person's North Carolina licenses and permits shall be suspended pursuant to G.S. 113-300.7 for the period of suspension imposed by the WVC member state where the violation occurred.
- (b) North Carolina shall communicate suspension information to other WVC member states using the WVC database, and shall include the following information about the wildlife violator:
- (1) name;
 - (2) date of birth;
 - (3) last known address;
 - (4) violations and convictions upon which the suspension is based;
 - (5) scope of the suspension, such as fishing, hunting, trapping, or all privileges or rights; and
 - (6) effective dates of the suspension and term of the suspension.
- (c) Upon request by a WVC member state for documentation of a violation and subsequent license suspension for license suspension hearings or other purposes, the Division shall provide certified copies of the citation or other charging instrument, any arrest or investigation reports, suspension orders, and the disposition of the matter.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-300.7; 143B-289.52;
Eff. June 1, 2025.

15A NCAC 030 .0605 APPEALS

A person served with a notice of suspension pursuant to this Section may obtain an administrative review of the suspension pursuant to G.S. 150B-23. Notice of the right to administrative review shall be included in the notice of suspension.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-300.7; 143B-289.52;
Eff. June 1, 2025.