

## New Application Process for Fish Buyers and Processors - New Licences & Amendments

This document provides an overview of the new fish buyer and processor licence application processes for **new licences** and **amendments to existing licences**, for applications received on August 1, 2025 and later. Refer to the Questions and Answers at the end of the document for important clarifying information.

### An application is required for the following scenarios:

1. New Applicants: currently is not licensed with the Department and seeking a fish buyer and/or fish processor licence to operate in NS
2. Existing Licence Holder looking to:
  - a. Apply for a new licence due to a change in ownership (formerly called licence reissuance)
  - b. Amend a licence to:
    - i. add a species
    - ii. relocate fish processing facility to another county
    - iii. relocate a primary lobster holding and handling facility
    - iv. add or remove a secondary lobster holding and/or handling facility
    - v. add or remove a building as part of processing facility
    - vi. change their business name
    - vii. amalgamate into a new company.

### New Applicants

1. Complete the [\*Application for a New Fish Buyer and/or Fish Processor Licence\*](#)
2. Develop a business plan in accordance with the [\*Business Plan Development Guide for Licence Applicants\*](#)
3. Submit the application form, business plan and other required information, as per section 9 of the application form, electronically via email to the Department.

### Existing Licence Holders (Non-Family Succession)

1. Notify the Department prior to, or within 30 days of, a change in the holder of the majority of voting shares of the company
2. Complete the [\*Application for a New Fish Buyer and/or Fish Processor Licence\*](#).
3. Develop a business plan in accordance with the [\*Business Plan Development Guide for Licence Applicants\*](#)
4. Submit the application form, business plan and other required information, as per section 9 of the application form, electronically via email to the Department, within 30 days of notifying the Department of a share change.

### Existing Licence Holders (Family Succession)

1. Notify the Department prior to, or within 30 days of, a change in the holder of the majority of voting shares of the company
2. Complete the [\*Application for a New Fish Buyer and/or Fish Processor Licence \(Family Members\)\*](#)
3. Submit the application form, declaration form and other required information, as per section 6 of the application form, electronically via email to the Department, within 30 days of notifying the Department of a share change.

**Amendments**

1. Complete the [Application to Amend a Fish Buyer and/or Fish Processor Licence](#).
2. Develop a business plan in accordance with the [Business Plan Development Guide for Licence Amendments](#).  
**Note:** a business plan is required only for amendments to add a species or move a processing facility to another county.
3. Submit the application form, business plan (if applicable) and other required information, as per section 13 of the application form, electronically via email to the Department.

**Questions and Answers**

1. **My company wishes to have an existing fish buyer licence reissued to us, is this permitted?**  
No. Starting August 1, 2025, existing licences cannot be reissued to another company except for lobster buying licences and snow crab buying licences or processing licences, which can be reissued until January 2, 2026. Your company would need to apply for a new licence. It is recommended that your company does not go ahead and purchase any property or assets that are tied to another NS fish buyer licence until a Conditional Approval is provided by the Department.
2. **My father holds the majority of the voting shares of the company that holds a fish processor licence, and I wish to take over the family business. To apply for a new licence, do I need to submit a business plan, and will all species be transferred from the original licence to the new licence?**  
For family succession planning, when a family member wishes to take over the family business, as part of a new licence application, a business plan does not need to be submitted. If the licence is approved, all species will be transferred from the original licence to the new licence.
3. **What is the definition of a family member?**  
A family member means a spouse, common-law partner with whom the individual has co-habited for at least 1 year, parent, stepparent, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, child, stepchild, parent-in-law, or child-in-law.
4. **I have never written a business plan before. Is there a template available?**  
Yes, for both a new licence and to amend a licence, there is a business plan template that you may download from the Department's website and use as guidance. Click [here](#) for the website.
5. **I have already written a business plan. Do I need to redo it to be aligned with the business plan development guides?**  
No, you do not need to redo your business plan. There is a business plan mapping document available on the Department's website that you can use to map out which sections of your existing business plan correspond to our requirements. Click [here](#) for the website.
6. **I amended my fish buyer licence to add a species. Do I need to apply for new designated buyer cards?**  
Yes. You will need to apply for new designated buyer cards because all species that are permitted to be purchased are listed on the back of the card. You must wait for your amended licence to be approved before applying for the amended cards.

**7. How much will new and amended designated buyer cards cost?**

If a card is issued for one year or less, it costs \$33.15. If issued for more than one year, it costs \$66.30.

**8. Will licence application and licence fees change?**

No, fees will not change.

**9. If I am approved for a new licence, will my licence be good for two years?**

When your licence is first issued, the expiry date will be November 30 with the year of expiry depending on which county you operate in. For licence holders in Yarmouth and Shelburne counties, licences expire on November 30, 2025 and every 2 years thereafter. For licence holders in all other counties, licences expire on November 30, 2026 and every 2 years thereafter.

**10. If I am first issued a licence and the expiry date is only a few months away, do I have to pay the full two-year licence fees?**

No. Once all application requirements have been met, the applicant will be required to pay pro-rated licence fees. For example, if you meet requirements by August 30, 2025 and your business is in Shelburne county, you will pay three-month licence fees to November 30, 2025.

**11. Will all licences be renewed for 2 years?**

Yes, all licences will be renewed for 2 years from their expiry date.