NOVA SCOTIA
Fisheries and Aquaculture

October 1, 2024

Upcoming Changes for Industry – Summary of Changes

The Department has been undertaking a licence policy review and plans to implement several changes to reduce red tape, enhance customer service, assist in the orderly development of the industry, and promote compliance and enforcement. The upcoming changes and when they will come into effect are summarized below.

A number of the changes being made are specific to lobster buyer license holders. The lobster fishery is one of the most lucrative fisheries in Canada. There is ongoing concern about illegal activity in this sector.

The Department would like to remind licence holders of their record-keeping and reporting requirements as outlined in the licence conditions. Please carefully review these conditions and be aware that Conservation Officers or the Department may request records from licence holders at any time to conduct compliance audits.

As a reminder, a licence holder who fails to comply with the *Fisheries and Coastal Resources Act,* the *Fish Buyers' Licensing and Enforcement Regulations,* the *Fish Inspection Regulations,* or their licence conditions, could form the grounds for regulatory prosecution with penalties upon conviction of a fine up to $1 million, imprisonment of up to ninety (90) days or a combination of both a fine and imprisonment.

1. Licence Effective Periods & Expiry Dates

We are moving to 2-year licence terms and staggered licence expiry dates. This renewal period, licences in Shelburne and Yarmouth counties (group 1) will be renewed to Nov 30, 2025 (11 months), and licences in all counties (group 2) will be renewed to Nov 30, 2026 (23 months). From those dates, licences will be renewed for 2 years. Fees will be prorated. See the below renewal schedule. Please note that licence holders with multiple licences across the province will renew all of their licences at the same time.

Group	Expiry Date 1	Expiry Date 2	Expiry Date 3	Expiry Date 4
1	Dec 31, 2024	Nov 30, 2025	Nov 30, 2027	Nov 30, 2029
2	Dec 31, 2024	Nov 30, 2026	Nov 30, 2028	Nov 30, 2030

Group 1 = Licence holders in Shelburne and Yarmouth counties
Group 2 = Licence holders in all other counties.

2. Lobster Buyers

a) In this renewal package, lobster buyers must provide the locations and other information pertaining to all holding and/or handling facilities owned or leased and used by them (including the facilities the Department is already aware of). These facilities will be added to the 2025 fish buyers licences.

b) Licence holders can only store and/or handle their lobster at facilities listed on their fish buyers licence, except for storage in crates or cars in the harbour on an as-needed basis (effective Jan 1, 2025).

c) To add additional holding and/or handling facilities to the fish buyers licence, a written request to amend the licence is required (effective Jan 1, 2025).

d) Storing lobster at locations not listed on the fish buyers licence is only permitted due to unforeseen circumstances. If this occurs, licence holders must notify the Department in

writing, of the location, reason, and how long the alternate facility will be used, within 3 days of first using the alternate location (effective Jan 1, 2025).

e) Lobster buyers will be required to record daily the amount of dead loss (for lobster) (effective Jan 1, 2025)

f) Lobster buyers will be required to report monthly the amount of dead loss (for lobster) (effective Jan 1, 2025).

g) Lobster buyers will be required to report on lobster purchases from other buyers and the location of sales (effective Jan 1, 2025).

3. CFIA Alignment for Fish Processors

a) Effectively immediately, to reissue and renew a fish processors licence, the applicant must provide a SFC Record of Licence and licence details which includes at least one fish and seafood or related sub-commodity.

The types of processing that are permitted will no longer be referenced on the NS fish processors licence. Any type of processing is permitted provided that the licence holder meets the SFC Regulations and the NS fish processors licence conditions (refer to change 3.c). below for more information).

b) Licence holders must have the appropriate SFC licence details in place at the time of processing (effective Jan 1, 2025). Appropriate means that at the time of processing, the sub-commodity relevant to species being processed is reflected on the SFC licence for the activity *preparing food for inter-provincial trade* (i.e., trade outside NS but within Canada), *preparing food for export* (i.e., trade outside Canada*), and/or preparing food for intra-provincial trade* (i.e., trade within NS). The activities on the SFC licence should reflect the business' activities.

c) Effective immediately, a depuration facility is no longer a condition for a soft-shell clam processor licence. Please consult CFIA on questions around depuration requirements.

4. Other Changes

a) A licence must be displayed at the place of business (i.e., all facilities listed on the licence) (effective Jan 1, 2025). One licence will be issued for each location listed on your renewal application.

b) Licence holders, within 30 days after its occurrence, must notify the Department if the licence holder or its shareholders, directors, officers, agents or key employees have been charged with a fisheries-related offence (effective Jan 1, 2025). For charges or convictions that occurred prior to Dec 2, 2024, the licence holder is not required to notify the Department.

c) Licence holders, within 30 days of notifying the Department of a change in the majority voting shares or the Department becoming aware of a change in the majority voting shares, the licence holder must provide completed Consent to Disclose Information and Request to Relinquish forms, and an application to reissue the licence (i.e., the application package to reissue the licence) (effective Jan 1, 2025).

d) Fish processors will be required to report the source location of fish and fish products entering their facility and location of sales, both to the provincial level (for sales within Canada – e.g., NS, PEI) or country level (for sales outside of Nova Scotia – e.g., USA, China) (effective Feb 1, 2025).

e) Licence holders must submit an annual employment survey for the prior year (effective Feb 1, 2025).

Refer to the Questions & Answers document that follows for further information.