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# NS LOBSTER BUYERS HANDLING COURSE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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## 1. WHY WERE CHANGES MADE AND WHO WAS CONSULTED?

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Since informing lobster buyers of new training requirements in February 2016, the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture received feedback from across the province. Comments included concerns as well as support. There were specific changes suggested to improve the training initiative.

In response, the Department requested meetings with representatives from several associations that include lobster buyers in their membership to discuss the requirement. The associations involved are, the Nova Scotia Fish Packers Association, Affiliated Seafood Processors Association of Nova Scotia, the Seafood Processors Association of Nova Scotia and the Lobster Processors Association.

The group met several times to discuss their concerns and ways to improve the training initiative. Everyone agreed that quality was important and that certain changes could be made to improve the training initiative and make it more compatible with industry operations.

Changes have been made as a direct result of this industry feedback and the meetings with industry representatives.

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## 2. IS COMPLETION OF THE COURSE OPTIONAL?

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No. Course participation is mandatory for at least one representative of each licensed lobster buyer prior to January 1, 2018. On August 24, 2017, the Government of Nova Scotia amended the *Nova Scotia Fish Buyer's and Licensing Enforcement Regulations*. Any licensed lobster buyer not meeting this requirement will not have lobster included on their renewed 2018 Buyers Licence. Text of the Regulations can be found at:  
<https://www.novascotia.ca/just/regulations/regs/fcrbuyer.htm>.

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## 3. WHAT IS THE COURSE ABOUT?

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The course provides a baseline awareness of lobster biology and best handling practices for lobster. As quality-focused professionals, licensed buyers are one important link of several in the value chain. This course is similar to the training offered for the seafood sector in other jurisdictions.

#### **4. WHEN CAN I TAKE THE COURSE?**

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The NSDFA has partnered with the Nova Scotia Fisheries Sector Council (NSFSC) to coordinate a series of sessions throughout the province in advance of the January 2018 requirement deadline. For information on courses and registration, please contact Sandra at the Nova Scotia Fisheries Sector Council at 902-742-6167 or email [sandra@nsfsc.ca](mailto:sandra@nsfsc.ca).

Dates and locations can be found in the schedule attached.

Courses will also be available through Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) and Université Sainte-Anne. Course offerings can be found at:

[http://www.nsc.ca/learning\\_programs/marine\\_training/fisheries/schedule.asp](http://www.nsc.ca/learning_programs/marine_training/fisheries/schedule.asp)

Please contact Martha Holmes, NSCC School of Fisheries at [Martha.Holmes@nsc.ca](mailto:Martha.Holmes@nsc.ca) or 902-875-8641. If you would like to hold a course at the site of your operation or at another venue, contact Michelle Theriault at [Michelle.Theriault@usainteanne.ca](mailto:Michelle.Theriault@usainteanne.ca) or 902-226-3922.

#### **5. I HAVE/MY EMPLOYEES HAVE TAKEN SIMILAR TRAINING IN THE PAST, WILL THAT BE RECOGNIZED?**

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At present, the Lobster Quality Handling Course offered by the NSCC and Université Sainte-Anne is the only approved course.

#### **6. WHO IS TEACHING THE COURSE?**

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The NSCC School of Fisheries and Université Sainte-Anne will be teaching the course at locations and campuses across the province.

#### **7. WHO SHOULD TAKE THE TRAINING?**

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Deciding who needs the training will be at the discretion of the licensed buyer. Each licensed buyer will identify the individual(s) within their operation who are responsible for lobster handling and ensure they complete the training. Although the requirement is that only one individual obtain the training, license holders may choose, and are encouraged, to send as many their employees as they wish.

#### **8. WHEN SHOULD I GET THE TRAINING?**

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Beginning in 2018, for new issuances or renewals of Fish Buyers Licences endorsed for lobster, the Department will require proof that the applicant, the licence holder or a representative has successfully completed an approved Lobster Quality Handling Course. The complimentary sessions, being coordinated through the NSFSC, provide an opportunity to ensure staff are trained in advance of the requirement. Each licensed buyer will need to

identify the individual(s) responsible for their lobster handling and have them take the training in time to complete the required lobster buyers licence renewal documents. The renewal process begins in the fall of each year.

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## **9. WHAT HAPPENS IF MY EMPLOYEE TAKES THE COURSE, AND THEN LEAVES THE JOB?**

Individual training is valid for 3 years, and not based on the period participants work for your company. New hires can be registered for upcoming courses if they do not already have the training.

Validation of the training requirement will occur annually through the licence renewal application process. As such, should your designated representative leave your company throughout the year, you will be required to identify a new certified representative during the next renewal period.

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## **10. DOES THIS COURSE EXPIRE?**

Participants will receive certificates that will be valid for 3 years from the date of course completion. The renewal date will be indicated on the certificate provided when training is complete.

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## **11. HOW MUCH WILL THE TRAINING COST?**

The sessions coordinated by the NSFSC will be offered free of charge.

Courses organized independently of the NSFSC process and after the completion of the complimentary NSFSC sessions, will cost the regular price of \$85.00 per person.

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## **12. WILL CERTIFICATES AND RECEIPTS BE PROVIDED?**

Yes, participants will receive a certificate. Receipts will be provided for business expense and tax purposes.

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## **13. WILL THE TRAINING BE HELD CLOSE TO MY LOCATION?**

Courses will be offered at multiple locations around the province to ensure everyone who needs the course can complete it before 2018. Please see the attached schedule for a complimentary NSFSC organized course near you.

N.S. Community College (NSCC) and Université Sainte-Anne are the current service-providers, with offerings at their campuses and at other sites throughout the province upon request (see FAQ # 3). All courses that have been, or may be, arranged outside of the NSFSC process will cost \$85.00 per participant.

#### **14. WILL IT BE OFFERED ONLINE?**

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At this time, the training is only held in person. Course offerings are scheduled throughout the province.

#### **15. HOW OFTEN WILL THE TRAINING BE OFFERED?**

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The course will be offered on a regular basis, and will take into account the seasonal availability of those in the lobster industry.

#### **16. IS THERE A TEST AT THE END OF THE COURSE?**

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Yes, there is a final evaluation for the purposes of reviewing and reinforcing the learning points from the program. For those who desire, the evaluation can be done verbally rather than in written form.

#### **17. ARE THERE OPTIONS AVAILABLE FOR THOSE WHO MAY HAVE READING AND WRITING DIFFICULTIES?**

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The course has been designed and can be delivered in such a way that it is accessible for people with a range of preferred learning styles. Provisions have been made to allow those who prefer a verbal evaluation (rather than the written test) to do so in a convenient and confidential manner.

#### **19. QUALITY INVOLVES EVERYONE IN THE VALUE CHAIN. WHAT IS BEING DONE TO INVOLVE OTHERS IN THIS LOBSTER QUALITY INITIATIVE?**

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The focus on lobster quality is intended to increase the value of lobsters for everyone by preventing avoidable damage and quality loss. We recognize that maintaining lobster quality involves everyone that touches lobsters; not just buyers.

In an effort to engage all stakeholders in the value chain, a committee of lobster buyer representatives and the Department has been established to address involvement by other stakeholders in the value chain who influence the quality of lobster (e.g., harvesters, shippers, transport, and federal government).

The committee's objective will be to bring an enhanced awareness of quality issues among all lobster stakeholders in Nova Scotia. A strategy will be developed to seek participation from others in the value chain who have a commitment to quality for the benefit of the whole industry. As an order of early business, the committee plans to reach out to key harvester organizations to identify representatives to participate in this committee.

Industry participation on the committee to date includes representatives from the NS Seafood Alliance, Seafood Processors Association of Nova Scotia, Affiliated Seafood Processors of Nova Scotia and the Lobster Processors Association of NS and NB.