

(4) *Waivers for submission.* On a case-by-case basis, a temporary written waiver of the requirement to submit electronic fish tickets may be granted by the Assistant Regional Administrator or designee if he/she determines that circumstances beyond the control of a receiver would result in inadequate data submissions using the electronic fish ticket system. The duration of the waiver will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

(5) *Reporting requirements when a temporary waiver has been granted.* Receivers that have been granted a temporary waiver from the requirement to submit electronic fish tickets must submit on paper the same data as is required on electronic fish tickets within 24 hours of the date received during the period that the waiver is in effect. Paper fish tickets must be sent by facsimile to NMFS, West Coast Region, Sustainable Fisheries Division, 206-526-6736 or by delivering it in person to 7600 Sand Point Way NE., Seattle, WA 98115. The requirements for submissions of paper tickets in this paragraph are separate from, and in addition to existing state requirements for landing receipts or fish receiving tickets.

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§ 660.216 Fixed gear fishery—observer requirements.

(a) *Observer coverage requirements—(1) Harvesting vessels.* When NMFS notifies the owner, operator, permit holder, or the manager of a harvesting vessel of any requirement to carry an observer, the harvesting vessel may not be used to fish for groundfish without carrying an observer.

(2) *Processing vessels.* Unless specified otherwise by the Observer Program, any vessel 125 ft (38.1 m) LOA or longer that is engaged in at-sea processing must carry two certified observers procured from a permitted observer provider, and any vessel shorter than 125 ft (38.1 m) LOA that is engaged in at-sea processing must carry one certified observer procured from a permitted observer provider, each day that the vessel is used to take, retain, receive,

land, process, or transport groundfish. Owners of vessels required to carry observers under this paragraph must arrange for observer services from a permitted observer provider except when the Observer Program has determined and given notification that the vessel must carry NMFS staff or an individual authorized by NMFS in addition to or in lieu of an observer provided by a permitted observer provider.

(b) *Notice of departure basic rule.* At least 24 hours (but not more than 36 hours) before departing on a fishing trip, a harvesting vessel that has been notified by NMFS that it is required to carry an observer, or that is operating in an active sampling unit, must notify NMFS (or its designated agent) of the vessel's intended time of departure.

(1) *Optional notice—weather delays.* A harvesting vessel that anticipates a delayed departure due to weather or sea conditions may advise NMFS of the anticipated delay when providing the basic notice described in paragraph (b) of this section. If departure is delayed beyond 36 hours from the time the original notice is given, the vessel must provide an additional notice of departure not less than four hours prior to departure, in order to enable NMFS to place an observer.

(2) *Optional notice—back-to-back fishing trips.* A harvesting vessel that intends to make back-to-back fishing trips (i.e., trips with less than 24 hours between offloading from one trip and beginning another), may provide the basic notice described in paragraph (b) of this section for both trips, prior to making the first trip. A vessel that has given such notice is not required to give additional notice of the second trip.

(c) *Cease fishing report.* Within 24 hours of ceasing the taking and retaining of groundfish, vessel owners, operators, or managers must notify NMFS or its designated agent that fishing has ceased. This requirement applies to any harvesting and processing vessel that is required to carry an observer, or that is operating in a segment of the fleet that NMFS has identified as an active sampling unit.

(d) *Waiver.* The West Coast Regional Administrator (or designee) may provide written notification to the vessel

owner stating that a determination has been made to temporarily waive coverage requirements because of circumstances that are deemed to be beyond the vessel's control.

(e) *Vessel responsibilities*—(1) *Accommodations and food*. An operator of a vessel required to carry one or more observer(s) must provide accommodations and food that are Equivalent to those provided to the crew.

(2) *Safe conditions*. Maintain safe conditions on the vessel for the protection of observer(s) including adherence to all USCG and other applicable rules, regulations, or statutes pertaining to safe operation of the vessel, and provisions at §§ 600.725 and 600.746 of this chapter. Have on board a valid Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety Decal that certifies compliance with regulations found in 33 CFR chapter I and 46 CFR chapter I, a certificate of compliance issued pursuant to 46 CFR 28.710 or a valid certificate of inspection pursuant to 46 U.S.C. 3311.

(3) *Observer communications*. Facilitate observer communications by:

(i) *Observer use of equipment*. Allowing observer(s) to use the vessel's communication equipment and personnel, on request, for the entry, transmission, and receipt of work-related messages, at no cost to the observer(s), the observer provider or NMFS.

(ii) *Functional equipment*. Ensuring that the vessel's communications equipment, used by observers to enter and transmit data, is fully functional and operational.

(4) *Vessel position*. Allow observer(s) access to, and the use of, the vessel's navigation equipment and personnel, on request, to determine the vessel's position.

(5) *Access*. Allow observer(s) free and unobstructed access to the vessel's bridge, trawl or working decks, holding bins, processing areas, freezer spaces, weight scales, cargo holds, and any other space that may be used to hold, process, weigh, or store fish or fish products at any time.

(6) *Prior notification*. Notify observer(s) at least 15 minutes before fish are brought on board, or fish and fish products are transferred from the vessel, to allow sampling the catch or observing the transfer, unless the ob-

server specifically requests not to be notified.

(7) *Records*. Allow observer(s) to inspect and copy any state or Federal logbook maintained voluntarily or as required by regulation.

(8) *Assistance*. Provide all other reasonable assistance to enable observer(s) to carry out their duties, including, but not limited to:

(i) Measuring decks, codends, and holding bins.

(ii) Providing the observer(s) with a safe work area.

(iii) Collecting bycatch when requested by the observer(s).

(iv) Collecting and carrying baskets of fish when requested by the observer(s).

(v) Allowing the observer(s) to collect biological data and samples.

(vi) Providing adequate space for storage of biological samples.

(f) *Observer sampling station*. This paragraph contains the requirements for observer sampling stations. The vessel owner must provide an observer sampling station that complies with this section so that the observer can carry out required duties.

(1) *Accessibility*. The observer sampling station must be available to the observer at all times.

(2) *Location*. The observer sampling station must be located within four meters of the location from which the observer samples unsorted catch. Unobstructed passage must be provided between the observer sampling station and the location where the observer collects sample catch.

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§ 660.219 Fixed gear identification and marking.

(a) *Gear identification*. (1) Limited entry fixed gear (longline, trap or pot) must be marked at the surface and at each terminal end, with a pole, flag, light, radar reflector, and a buoy.

(2) A buoy used to mark fixed gear must be marked with a number clearly identifying the owner or operator of the vessel. The number may be either:

(i) If required by applicable state law, the vessel's number, the commercial