Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Division of Marine Fisheries
251 Causeway Street, Suite 400
Boston, Massachusetts 02114
(617)626-1520
fax (617)626-1509

SHELLFISH HARVESTING, HANDLING, AND TRANSPORT AFFIDAVIT

** THIS AFFIDAVIT MUST BE READ, SIGNED, AND RETURNED WITH THE 2015 PERMIT APPLICATION IN ORDER TO OBTAIN A COMMERCIAL SHELLFISH PERMIT

SHELLFISH HARVESTING, HANDLING and TRANSPORT

Massachusetts shellfish are renowned for their high quality. Commercial harvesters, including shellfish growers, are required by the National Shellfish Sanitation Program (NSSP) and by Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (MarineFisheries) and Department of Public Health (DPH) regulations to harvest shellfish only from open non polluted areas, and to take steps that protect the shellfish from temperature abuse and exposure to contamination during handling and transport to wholesale dealers for sale.

Disease causing bacteria and viruses can be found in raw shellfish. Contamination may occur at any point in the food distribution system, including the point of harvest. Since molluscan shellfish filter water to obtain food, any bacteria, viruses and protozoa in the water will be concentrated by the shellfish. Shellfish from waters contaminated with sewage wastes accumulate higher levels of disease causing pathogens which can cause Norovirus, hepatitis, cholera, and various other forms of viral and bacterial gastroenteritis. Exposure to contaminants during transport and lack of temperature control can further degrade the shellfish and allow growth of pathogens that can cause illness from Vibrio bacteria. Remember, shellfish is considered ready-to-eat. Consumers may not cook it; a step that generally kills pathogens.

HARVEST

Individuals commercially harvesting shellfish must have a state commercial fishing permit or other MarineFisheries permit endorsed for commercial shellfish harvesting and the companion Shellfish Transaction Card (322 CMR 7.01 (2)).

Shellfish for direct marketing may only be harvested from waters classified as Approved or Conditionally Approved by MarineFisheries and in the “open status”. Harvesters should consult with local shellfish authorities or MarineFisheries to determine those areas that are open and safe for harvesting or closed to protect public health due to sanitary problems, biotoxins (Red Tide) oil spills or chemical contaminants.

HANDLING

Harvesters shall assure shellfish are harvested, handled, and transported in a manner to prevent contamination and deterioration. All containers used to hold shellfish shall be clean, free of debris, and fabricated using safe, easily cleanable materials (smooth surface). Shellfish should be covered or in a closed vehicle during transport to prevent exposure to direct sun light and contaminants.

Boats used in harvesting must be kept clean. Shellfish should be stored on raised areas to prevent contact with bilge water and away from fuel, oil and other chemicals. Shellfish should be covered to prevent exposure to hot sun and birds. Each harvest boat must have a sanitation device or container with a tight fitting cover

(Over)
and be secured and placed to prevent contamination of shellstock by spillage or leakage. Containers should be emptied only into a sewage disposal system and cleaned. The overboard discharge of human waste is prohibited in Massachusetts.

Dogs, cats and other animals are not allowed on harvest vessels.

**All containers of shellfish must be individually tagged.** The tag shall contain the full name of the harvester, DMF Commercial Shellfish Permit number, date and time of harvest, the type and quantity of shellstock, the initials MA, the shellfish area name and number, and if applicable the aquaculture site number. The following statement shall be written in bold capitalized type “**THIS TAG IS REQUIRED TO BE ATTACHED UNTIL CONTAINER IS EMPTY OR IS RETAGGED AND THEREAFTER KEPT ON FILE FOR 90 DAYS**”.

**TRANSPORT**

All species of shellfish, regardless of the time of year, should be transported to a permitted wholesale dealer as soon as possible to be placed under refrigeration. Shellfish may also be sold to a wholesale dealer at the landing site. **Shellfish bound for market may not be stored at any unpermitted facility prior to delivery to a permitted wholesale dealer.**

The NSSP and DPH have **maximum timelines** for delivery of shellfish to a permitted wholesale dealer by the harvester after harvest or exposure. In January, February, March, April, November and December, shellfish must be delivered to the dealer on the **same calendar day of harvest**. In May, June, July, August, September and October shellfish must be delivered to the dealer in **less than 18 hours from time of harvest or exposure**.

**Only Surf Clams and Ocean Quahogs** intended for thermal processing are exempt from these standards.

**Additional requirements apply to oysters during the V.p. control season.**

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Harvesters who do not submit federal vessel trip reports must report shellfish landings to **MarineFisheries** on a trip-level basis.

To obtain additional information referenced in this document visit: [www.mass.gov/marinefisheries](http://www.mass.gov/marinefisheries)

Harvesters should be familiar with The Division’s Shellfish Harvest and Handling Regulations at 322 CMR 16.00.

You may also contact: Division of Marine Fisheries, 1213 Purchase St. – 3rd Floor, New Bedford, MA 02740 Tel. (508) 990-2860

**SIGNATURE REQUIRED FOR PERMIT RENEWAL**

To obtain a permit or renew a permit, it is an NSSP requirement that each harvester acknowledge that they have read and understand the information provided in this document. After reading, please sign below and return the entire document with your permit application. It is advised that you retain a copy of this document for your files.

Full Name (print) ________________________________

Address ____________________________________________

Signature ___________________________________________ Date ________________