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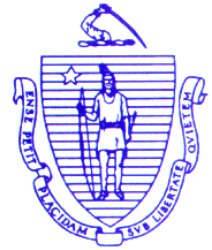
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Marine Fisheries Advisory

2016 *Vp* Control Plan Regulations Affecting Commercial Oyster Harvesters

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) has promulgated new regulations at 322 CMR 16.00 to meet federal public health mandates to minimize the risk associated with the bacteria *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* (*Vp*) related to the consumption of raw oysters. Two new measures have been implemented for the 2016 *Vp* Control Season (May 21st – October 18th) which affect the commercial harvest and handling of oysters.

The first measure establishes a more restrictive seasonal time-to-icing requirement for commercial oyster harvesters working in certain areas of Western Cape Cod Bay and Martha's Vineyard. During the period of July 1 – September 15, market bound oysters taken from Duxbury Bay, Kingston Bay, Plymouth Bay and Katama Bay must be adequately iced within one hour from time of harvest or first exposure, and prior to leaving the landing site. This measure is being taken to potentially reduce *Vp* illness at certain times when *Vp* risk is highest and in certain areas where *Vp* illness has been reoccurring. At all other times within the *Vp* Control Season (May 21 – October 18) harvesters in these affected areas will be subject to the state-wide 2-hour time-to-icing standard. It is important to note that despite this new 1-hour seasonal time-to-icing requirement, aquaculturists in the affected areas will still have 2-hours to conduct oyster culture activities on the day prior to harvest without being subject to mandatory re-submergence.

The second measure adopts a less restrictive 10-day re-submergence period for aquaculturists. Re-submergence is required when aquaculturists conduct oyster culture activities that exceed two hours, cull oysters off the aquaculture grant site or when oysters are returned to an aquaculturist from a primary buyer due to recall or non-compliance. Previously, aquaculturists were required to segregate these oysters on their license site and re-submerge them for 14-days (a federal baseline) to allow the oysters to purge elevated *Vp* levels. DMF has developed state-specific data that allows the state to reduce this re-submergence period. DMF will continue to refine this data to determine if this re-submergence period can be further reduced in future years.

For more information about aquaculture and *Vp* in Massachusetts, please contact our Aquaculture Project Coordinator, Chris Schillaci (508-990-2869 x 135; chris.schillaci@state.ma.us). Also please visit our Shellfish Program's [Vp webpage](#) and review the 2016 *Vp* regulations at [322 CMR 16.05](#).