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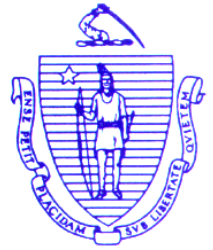
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Retail Boat Seafood Dealer Permit – Direct to Consumer Sales Frequently Asked Questions

The Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) has offered a Retail Boat Seafood Dealer permit for many years. During the Covid-19 public health crisis, we have seen a significant increase in interest in this permit because of the resulting uncertainty in seafood markets. DMF has created the following series of Frequently Asked Questions to help commercial permit holders better understand the rules and requirements of this permit.

What species can be sold directly off the boat?

Live lobsters & crabs and whole finfish caught under the authority of your commercial fishing permit can be sold off the boat when it is dockside, under the authority of a Retail Boat permit. A pilot program allowing for the sale of shucked sea scallop meat off the boat with certain labeling requirements has been established. Contact DMF at marine.fish@mass.gov for more information on the scallop meat pilot program.

Can I fillet or process finfish?

No, all finfish must be sold whole from the boat. However, this rule does allow the at-sea gutting of certain species (cod, haddock) to enhance fish quality.

Can I clean squid prior to selling it to the public?

No, squid must be sold whole from the boat.

Can I sell my shellfish directly to consumers?

No. Molluscan shellfish (e.g. oysters, clams, quahogs, bay scallops, shell-on sea scallops, whelks) may not be sold directly to consumers. Molluscan shellfish must be sold to a permitted Wholesale Dealer. A pilot program allowing for the sale of shucked sea scallop meat off the boat with certain labeling requirements has been established. Contact DMF at marine.fish@mass.gov for more information on the scallop meat pilot program.

Who can I sell finfish and sea scallop meat to?

Finfish and scallop meat may be sold to members of the general public.

Can I sell finfish or sea scallop meat off my boat once it has been put on the trailer and hauled out of the water?

No. Only dockside sales of finfish and scallop meat are permitted under the authority of a Retail Boat permit.

Does a Retail Boat permit allow me to transport live lobsters & crabs to consumers?

Yes. Because the seafood safety issues are less critical when dealing with live crustaceans, state regulations allow only live lobsters & crabs to be transported for sale. Commercial lobster permit holders with a Retail Boat permit may transport (in a vehicle) live lobsters & crabs, caught aboard their permitted vessel, for sale to the public including to persons and businesses that are not retail or wholesale dealers (e.g. restaurants). No other species for human consumption may be transported without additional permits.

Does the Retail Boat permit allow me to transport bait?

No. Bait may only be sold directly off the boat under the authority of a Retail Boat permit. If you would like to transport bait, you must obtain a Bait Dealer permit.

How do I apply for the Retail Boat permit?

The Seafood Dealer Permit Application can be downloaded [here](#). Pages 1 and 2 of the Dealer Permit Application Form must be filled out (found on pages 3 and 4 of the application packet), along with the Primary Buyer & Quota Managed Species Application Form (page 5 of the application packet). For the remainder of 2020, DMF has waived the \$65 fee so permit applications can either be mailed in or emailed to marine.fish@mass.gov.

Are there dealer reporting requirements?

Generally, there is a weekly seafood dealer electronic reporting requirement for all state dealers. Compliance with weekly state dealer reporting of quota-managed species is important as DMF uses this reporting to monitor annual quota utilization. Any finfish or scallop meat Retail Boat permit will carry these reporting requirements. However, state-only lobster permit holders with Retail Boat dealer permits who only sell live lobster off the boat are exempt from this weekly dealer reporting requirement. Instead, they must report these sales through the commercial permit trip-level reporting program by indicating themselves as the dealer for a given sale. More information on reporting requirements can be found [here](#). If you have additional questions on reporting, please contact dmf.stats@mass.gov.

Do I need a federal dealer permit?

If your vessel is federally permitted to commercially harvest any species, you will likely need a federal dealer permit in addition to the Massachusetts Retail Boat Seafood Dealer permit. For more information on federal dealer permitting for direct sales, click [here](#). Federal dealers have weekly electronic reporting requirements, and reporting federally also satisfies the state reporting requirements.

Can I sell bluefin tuna off the boat directly to consumers?

No. Consistent with FDA regulations, including HACCP requirements, histamine-producing species such as bluefin tuna and yellowfin tuna may not be sold directly to consumers off the boat. They must be sold to properly permitted Wholesale Dealers.