



## Regulations for Specific Products

### Selling Fish and Shellfish

This fact sheet reviews the state regulations for fish and shellfish sold to the end consumer or sold to restaurants and grocery stores including:

- Washington State fish and shellfish licenses;
- Required shellfish licenses;
- Selling shellfish at farmers markets and farm stands;
- Fish and shellfish processing and HACCP; and
- Aquatic farm registration.

Please note: The local health jurisdiction where you sell fish or shellfish will also have requirements, including licensing, food worker permits, and inspections. Please contact them directly for specific information.

### Washington State Fish and Shellfish Licenses

A license is required for any commercial enterprise to catch and sell fresh, raw fish and shellfish. Fish licenses are administered by the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). For applications or more information on these licenses, please contact the WDFW License Division by visiting [www.wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/commercial](http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/commercial), emailing [commercialsales@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:commercialsales@dfw.wa.gov), or by calling (360) 902-2464.

#### **Anadromous Fish Buyer/Dealer License**

This license authorizes the purchasing or selling of steelhead, trout and other anadromous game fish harvested by treaty fishermen lawfully exercising fishing rights. Cost: \$285 per year.

#### **Direct Retail Endorsement License**

This license allows a fisherman to land and sell his or her catch or harvest in Washington State to anyone *other than a licensed wholesale dealer*. The fisher must have a salmon, crab or sturgeon license to be eligible for this endorsement. Cost: \$155 per year.

#### **Fish Buyer License**

This license authorizes a representative of a wholesale dealer to buy and sell food fish (classified species listed in [WAC 220-12-010](http://WAC 220-12-010)) and shellfish at wholesale markets. Cost: \$200 per year.

#### **Wholesale Fish Dealer License**

This license is required for any Washington State business engaging in commercially buying or processing food fish or shellfish, including:

- custom canning and/or processing of personal use food fish or shellfish;

- wholesale buying and/or brokering of food fish or shellfish;
  - commercial manufacturing or preparation of fertilizer, oil, meal, caviar, fish bait or other by-products from food fish or shellfish; and
  - a business employing a fish buyer.
- Cost: \$355.00/year.

## Required Shellfish Licenses

A variety of shellfish are harvested in Washington's Puget Sound and coastal regions, including oysters, clams, mussels, geoduck, and scallops. These are filter feeders capable of concentrating chemicals, bacteria, viruses, or marine biotoxins. To protect consumers, commercial shellfish growing areas, certified harvest sites, and licensed processing facilities are monitored by the Washington State Department of Health (DOH).

Fishers and Shellfish farmers that harvest or sell molluscan shellfish (clams, oysters, mussels, and/or scallops) for human consumption are required to obtain all three of the following:

- Washington State Master Business License;
- Washington State Department of Health (DOH) Commercial Shellfish License; *and*
- Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) Aquatic Farmer Registration.

There are three major types of commercial shellfish operations licensed by DOH:

1. Harvesters who harvest shellstock (live, unshucked product) and sell only to other licensed Washington State shellfish dealers;
2. Shellstock shippers who grow and harvest shellstock, and buy and sell in or outside Washington; and
3. Shucker-packers whose activities may include those of harvesters and shellstock shippers, plus shucking product for packing in jars or similar containers.

Commercial shellfish operations are licensed for a period of one year, and licenses must be renewed annually. All operations must meet stringent state and federal sanitation standards, and are regularly inspected by the DOH. To obtain a commercial shellfish license, please contact DOH Office of Shellfish and Water Protection at (360) 236-3330. For a list of Washington licensed shellfish companies go to: [www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf/Pubs/sf-co-alpha.pdf](http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf/Pubs/sf-co-alpha.pdf)

For more information and licensing and permit applications, please contact the DOH Office of Shellfish and Water Protection Program by visiting [www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf/commercial.htm](http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf/commercial.htm) or calling (360) 236-3330. You may visit [www.wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/commercial](http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/commercial) or contact the WDFW License Division by emailing [commercialsales@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:commercialsales@dfw.wa.gov) or by calling (360) 902-2464.

## Selling Shellfish at Farmers Markets and Farm Stands

Selling shellfish at farmers markets and farm stands requires a **Retail Food Establishment License** from the local county health department. Please see the "Licensing" fact sheet.

If shellfish are processed in any way (e.g., shucked, smoked, cooked, cut, frozen), then a WSDA Food Processor License is also required. See the WSDA Food Processor License and Facilities fact sheet.

Any fish or shellfish that is displayed on ice must have fresh ice that is made from potable (drinkable) water.

## Fish and Shellfish Processing and HACCP

If you cut, clean, freeze, smoke, cook or otherwise prepare your fish or fishery products (including shellfish) for sale, then you are considered a “fish processor” and will need to obtain a WSDA Food Processor License. In addition, a WDFW Wholesale Fish Dealer’s License (described above) is required for commercial fish processors.

Food safety hazards must be controlled when handling raw fish and shellfish or processing fish or shellfish. State and federal laws require that all handlers and processors assess their operations to identify any critical food safety hazards that are not addressed by Standard Sanitation Operating Procedures (SSOPs). If after conducting a hazard analysis, one or more critical food safety hazards are present, then you are required to develop and implement a Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) Plan that is species and process specific for your operation. Two different agencies regulate fish and shellfish HACCP requirements.

- For **fresh, raw fish and processed fish and shellfish product**, contact WSDA Food Safety Program at (360) 902-1876 or visit [www.agr.wa.gov/FoodAnimal/FoodProcessors/HACCP.aspx](http://www.agr.wa.gov/FoodAnimal/FoodProcessors/HACCP.aspx).
- For **fresh, molluscan shellfish**, visit [www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf](http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf) or contact DOH Office of Shellfish and Water Protection Program at (360) 236-3330.

## Aquatic Farm Registration

An aquatic farm is defined as “any facility or tract of land used for private, commercial culture of aquatic products.” This includes commercial culture of salmon, trout, oysters, clams, and aquatic plants, as well as U-catch trout ponds, ornamental fish growers, fish and shellfish hatcheries, etc. Anyone who raises aquatic products for eventual sale must register the aquatic farm with the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife. Operations where wild-caught finfish or shellfish are held temporarily, prior to sale, are excluded. Before an Aquatic Farm Registration card will be issued, a Department of Health beach certification number must be submitted for beaches used for the commercial harvest of bivalve shellfish. This application is not annual but serves as a lifetime registration. The one-time application cost is \$105. For more information, please visit [www.wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/commercial](http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/commercial) or contact the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife License Division at [commercialsales@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:commercialsales@dfw.wa.gov) or by calling (360) 902-2464.

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## Recommended Fact Sheets

4. Licensing
19. WSDA Food Processor License and Facilities

*For further information, to provide comments, or suggest a resource to add to this fact sheet, please email [smallfarms@agr.wa.gov](mailto:smallfarms@agr.wa.gov) or call (360) 902-2888.*