

2015 Atlantic Halibut Endorsement Training Information for Commercial Fishermen

You are receiving this worksheet because you are a first-time applicant for an Atlantic halibut endorsement to your Commercial Fishing license. A brief summary of Maine Department of Marine Resources regulations concerning commercial fishing for Atlantic halibut is given below. Please note that this summary is intended as a quick guide to commonly asked questions, and does NOT include all Atlantic halibut regulations. Complete regulations concerning Maine's commercial fishery for Atlantic halibut can be found on DMR's website at <http://www.maine.gov/dmr/lawsandregs/regs/index.htm>. Please refer to Chapter 34 (groundfish) and Chapter 8 section 8.20F (Atlantic halibut reporting requirements). If you would like a copy of these regulations mailed to you, please contact DMR at 207-624-6550.

SEASON: The open season to fish for Atlantic halibut in Maine's territorial waters (out to three miles) begins at sunrise May 1st and ends at sunset June 30th.

LICENSE: Commercial Fishing license (Single, Crew, or Non-Resident as appropriate) with an Atlantic Halibut Endorsement required.

SIZE LIMIT: It is illegal to land, sell or possess Atlantic halibut less than 41 inches in total length head-on or 32 inches head-off (from the base of the pectoral fin to the tip of the tail).

POSSESSION LIMIT: Commercial vessels may land no more than 25 Atlantic halibut per year. Vessels with Federal multispecies permits are additionally limited to no more than one Atlantic halibut per trip.

TAGGING REQUIREMENT: All legal size halibut retained by a Commercial Fishing license holder must be immediately tagged with an approved landing tag. Landing tags must be attached tightly around or through the tail just before the tail fin.

GEAR TYPE & LIMITS: It is illegal to fish for Atlantic halibut by any method other than using size 14/0, 15/0 or 16/0 circle hooks, with a maximum of 450 circle hooks per vessel. Individuals fishing under a Commercial Fishing license with an Atlantic halibut endorsement must have marking buoys on each end of each trawl clearly labeled with their name and Maine Commercial Fishing license number.

REPORTING: Any harvester with a halibut endorsement is required to report trip level catch and effort information and submit it to the DMR Landings Program each month of the halibut season. See Chapter 8.20F of DMR regulations for the required data elements.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Question: Can I haul my halibut trawls on a day that I'm lobster fishing?

Answer: Yes, lobster is not considered a "marine species" by definition, so it is legal to have lobster aboard and be engaged in lobster fishing when hauling trawls or landing halibut.

Question: Can I set a "gangeon" off one of my lobster traps to fish for halibut?

Answer: Yes, as long as the hooks are 14/0, 15/0 or 16/0 circle hooks.

Question: If I hold a Federal Multispecies Permit am I limited to one halibut per trip, and do I have to apply a landing tag?

Answer: Yes, Federal Multispecies Permit holders are limited to one fish per trip whether fishing in State waters or Federal Waters, and yes, all halibut landed in a Maine port must have a landing tag

Question: Does the minimum size apply to fish imported from Canada?

Answer: Yes, all halibut coming into Maine must be 41 inches or larger with the head-on or 32 inches or larger with the head-off (pectoral length).

Question: If I do not fish, do I have to turn in a landings report?

Answer: Yes, you must submit a landings report for each of the two months of Maine's Atlantic halibut season regardless of your fishing activity. If you do not fish, you should check the "did not fish" box on the landings report.

Question: What would I record for my sea time if I haul halibut trawls and lobster traps on the same trip?

Answer: Estimate the time that it took you to haul your halibut trawls and steam time. Do not record the time it took you to haul your lobster gear.

If you would like more information:

If you have questions about Maine's Atlantic halibut fishery, please contact the following departments or individuals:

Reporting requirements: Robert Watts, DMR Landings Program, W.Boothbay Harbor, 207-633-9412.

Research questions: Sally Sherman, Scientist, West Boothbay Harbor, 207-633-9503.

Management questions: Chris Vonderweidt, Policy Development Specialist, Hallowell, 207-624-6558.

Licensing questions: DMR's Licensing Division, Hallowell, 207-624-6550.

Questions concerning enforcement: Marine Patrol, Division I (NH border to the St. George River) 207-633-9535; Division II (St. George River to the Canadian border) 207-667-3373.

Receipt of this document replaces the requirement to attend an endorsement training class.