

Maine Department of Marine Resources
Lobster and Other Trap/Pot Gear Modification Requirements

The following Universal Requirements apply to ALL lobster gear in both State and Federal waters.

The following Universal Requirements also apply to all other trap/pot gear (including but not limited to all crab species, hagfish, finfish, whelk and shrimp) outside the State Waters Exemption Line and in Federal Waters.

- (a) No buoy line floating at the surface;
 - (b) No wet storage of gear over 30 days; and
 - (c) Fishermen are encouraged, but not required, to maintain knot-free buoy lines.
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Inside the Exemption Line – Lobster Gear Only – Must comply with one of the following options.

- (a) Option 1: All buoys must be attached to the buoy line with a weak link having a breaking strength no greater than 600 pounds (272.4 kg). Weak links may include swivels, plastic weak links, rope of the appropriate breaking strength, hog rings, rope stapled to a buoy stick, or devices approved in writing by the NOAA Fisheries Assistant Administrator (See contact information in Chapter 75.01(A)(3)). In addition, the weak link must be designed so that the bitter end of the buoy line is clean and free of knots when the weak link breaks; or
 - (b) Option 2: All buoy lines must be made entirely of sinking and/or neutrally buoyant line; or
 - (c) Option 3: All groundlines must be made entirely of sinking and/or neutrally buoyant line.
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State Waters Outside the Exemption Line AND in Federal Waters – Lobster & all other trap/pot gear

All persons who fish lobster gear and trap/pot gear (including but not limited to all crab species, hagfish, finfish, whelk and shrimp) in State Waters Outside the Exemption Line and in Federal Waters shall comply with each of the following ALWTRP requirements:

- (a) All buoys, floatation and/or weighted devices must be attached to the buoy line with a weak link having a breaking strength no greater than 600 pounds (272.4 kg). Weak links may include swivels, plastic weak links, rope of the appropriate breaking strength, hog rings, rope stapled to a buoy stick, or devices approved in writing by the NOAA Fisheries Assistant Administrator (See contact information in Chapter 75.01(A)(3)). In addition, the weak link must be designed so that the bitter end of the buoy line is clean and free of knots when the weak link breaks plus each weak link must be installed as close to the buoy, floatation and/or weighted device as possible. Weak links must be designed in such a way that the bitter end of the buoy line is clean and free of any knots when the weak link breaks. Effective April 5, 2008
 - (b) Buoy lines must be marked with a red, 4-inch mark midway on the buoy line. Effective April 5, 2008 (already required in Federal waters)
 - (c) All trap/pot surface buoys (including but not limited to all crab species, hagfish, finfish, whelk and shrimp) must be clearly marked with the owner's DMR License Number. Effective April 5, 2008
 - (d) Sinking groundline required. The attachment of buoys, toggles or other floatation devices is prohibited on groundlines. Effective April 5, 2009
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Federal Waters Only – Lobster & all other trap/pot gear

Must comply with all provisions OUTSIDE the State Waters Exemption Line (see a-d above) AND

- (a) Multiple traps only – no single traps allowed; trawls of 5 or fewer traps must have only one buoy line.
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Please note:

In any area, there is no percentage requirement for endline composition – as long as there is no buoy line floating at the surface.