



Fish and Seafood Act Summary

Notice 2017-001

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The new *Fish and Seafood Act (FSA)* and the Fish and Seafood Licensing Regulation (FSLR) came into effect on January 1, 2017 following extensive consultations with more than 700 stakeholders including ministry licence holders, seafood associations, partner agencies, and First Nations. As a result of these [consultations](#), the new Act and its regulations have a greater emphasis on food safety, reduce the regulatory burden on the seafood industry, and continue the collection of important economic data.

Food Safety – food safety standards have been enhanced by bringing all operations into alignment with modern-day food safety standards, which in turn better protects public health. The responsibility for safe seafood rests with industry participants who are now required to develop and implement a Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP)-based food safety plan that identifies and addresses all potential food safety concerns.

Reduced Regulatory Burden – a new streamlined licensing model eliminates unnecessary licences through various licensing exemptions, especially for those operators (e.g., federally-registered fish processors) already regulated for food safety matters by another agency. Additionally, the new regulations are less prescriptive and will accommodate ongoing changes in the sector.

Economic Data – continuing the collection of important economic data is necessary in order to monitor and report on industry performance, and support the seafood industry and consumers.

The FSA regulates the following activities within the seafood industry:

- First receivers of commercially-caught fish from a commercial fisher require a Fish Receiver licence.
- Fish, seafood, and aquatic plant processors require a Seafood Processor licence.
- Commercial fishers selling their catch to the general public directly from their harvest vessel, or to restaurants or retail stores, require a Fisher Vendor licence.

Seafood Processor licence:

This licence replaces the provincial Processing Plant Licence and is required by persons operating a seafood processing facility in British Columbia, unless they are (including but not limited to):

- regulated by the CFIA as a federally-registered fish processing facility;
- regulated by a Regional Health Authority (under the provincial Food Premises Regulation) as a restaurant, retail store or cold storage facility that is also handling some seafood;
- a commercial fisher conducting limited processing (heading, gutting, freezing, packaging) of their own catch, on their fishing vessel while at sea; or
- a facility (such as a fishing lodge) that is only conducting limited processing (i.e., heading, gutting, filleting, icing, freezing, packaging) of sport-caught fish.

Food safety requirements – As in the past, all operators will have to meet general construction and operational standards under the FSA. In addition, to better protect public health, all licensed Seafood Processors are required to develop, maintain and follow a written sanitation plan and a written Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP)-based food safety plan that addresses all potential food safety concerns.

Fish Receiver licence:

This licence replaces the provincial Fish Buying Station licence and is required by persons receiving fish directly from a commercial fisher, unless they are (including but not limited to):

- regulated by a Regional Health Authority (under the provincial Food Premises Regulation) as a restaurant or retail store that is receiving fish directly (at that location) from a commercial fisher holding a Fisher Vendor licence;
- a provincially or federally licensed/registered fish processing facility that is receiving fish directly (at that location) from a commercial fisher; or
- a federally licensed commercial fishing or packing vessel that is receiving fish directly (on that vessel) from a commercial fisher.

Food safety requirements – As in the past, all operators will have to meet general construction and operational standards under the new FSA in order to protect public health.

Fisher Vendor licence:

This licence is required for commercial fishers who sell their catch to:

- restaurants or retail stores that are regulated under the provincial Food Premises Regulation; or
- the public, for their personal consumption, directly from their harvest vessel (where a fisher is selling their catch from a location other than their harvesting vessel, such as a roadside sale, other regulations such as the Food Premises Regulation may apply).

Food safety requirements – As in the past, all operators will have to meet general construction and operational standards under the new FSA in order to protect public health.

For additional information, please visit our website at: www.gov.bc.ca/seafoodlicensing