



# Ministry of Agriculture

## SEAFOOD INDUSTRY LICENSING GUIDE

### INTRODUCTION

Ensuring seafood is safe for public consumption means that individuals and businesses conducting certain activities in the seafood industry (for example: receiving fish, processing fish, etc.) must be licensed. This document provides general information regarding licensing requirements for these certain activities. Additional information including licence application forms can be found at the following link:

[www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/topic.page?id=E1BBC2B708014019A5F31903A733735E](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/topic.page?id=E1BBC2B708014019A5F31903A733735E)

### What Activities Require a Licence?

A person or business conducting the following activities within the seafood industry is subject to specific licensing requirements:

- Those receiving commercially-caught fish, directly from a commercial fisher, require a **Fish Buying Station Licence**.
- Those buying commercially-caught fish, directly from a commercial fisher, without ever taking possession of the fish, require a **Fish Broker's Licence**.
- Those processing fish and/or aquatic plants require a **Processing Licence**.
- Those commercial fishers selling their own catch, directly to the general public for their own consumption, require a **Fisher's Vending Licence**.

While the Province licenses and regulates commercially-caught fish once they leave the commercial fisher's possession, commercial fisheries are regulated by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO).

### Fish Buying Station Licence

The buying of fish does not need to occur in order for this licence to be required. A person or business requires a Fish Buying Station Licence to physically receive fish, for commercial purposes, directly from a commercial fisher. A fish buying station can include, but is not limited to vehicles, vessels or shore-based facilities.

Regardless of the type of the fish buying station, there are requirements that must be met in order to obtain a Fish Buying Station Licence. An inspection of the fish buying station is typically done before the licence is issued.

## **Who does not require a Fish Buying Station Licence?**

- A person or business with a Processing Licence does not require a separate Fish Buying Station Licence for that location, provided their Processing Licence includes the appropriate licence category (i.e., finfish, salmon, invertebrates, roe herring).
- A person buying commercially-caught fish, directly from a commercial fisher, for their own personal consumption.

## **Fish Broker's Licence**

A Fish Broker's Licence is required by a person or business that is buying commercially-caught fish, directly from a commercial fisher, without taking physical possession of the fish, for wholesale distribution. Please note that a person or business that physically handles, transports or processes the fish or seafood on behalf of a fish broker, may need to be licensed as either a fish buying station or a fish processor.

## **Who does not require a Fish Broker's Licence?**

- A person or business with a Fish Buying Station Licence provided their licence includes the appropriate licence category (i.e., finfish, salmon, invertebrates, roe herring).
- A person or business with a Processing Licence provided their licence includes the appropriate licence category (i.e., finfish, salmon, invertebrates, roe herring).
- A person buying commercially-caught fish, directly from a commercial fisher, for their own personal consumption.
- A person or business buying commercially-caught fish, directly from a commercial fisher, for resale to others for their own personal consumption (e.g., retail stores or restaurants). However, a Fish Buying Station Licence or Processing Licence may be required.

## **Processing Licence**

A Processing Licence is required by a person or business that is processing fish, seafood or aquatic plants. Processing plants must meet certain regulatory requirements to obtain a licence. An inspection of the processing plant is typically done before a licence is issued.

Processing plants may also need to be registered with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) if conducting certain activities, including but not limited to:

- Exporting fish or seafood outside of British Columbia, or
- Handling bivalve molluscs (e.g. clams, oysters, etc.), or
- Handling cultured marine fish.

## Who does not require a Processing Licence?

- A commercial fisher preserving their catch while at sea by eviscerating, icing, freezing or packaging
- A fish farmer who stuns and/or bleeds their own farmed fish on site
- A retail business regulated under the Food Premises Regulation that processes, prepares and serves fish, intended for immediate consumption, at that location (e.g., restaurant)
- A retail business regulated under the Food Premises Regulation that processes, prepares and serves fish directly to the public for their own consumption (e.g., grocery stores, fish markets)

## Fisher's Vending Licence

A Fisher's Vending Licence is required by a commercial fisher that is selling their own catch directly to the public for their own consumption. A commercial fisher can sell their own catch from the location of their choice.

## Who does not require a Fisher's Vending Licence?

- A commercial fisher that is selling their own catch directly to any person or business for any purpose other than their own consumption.

## CONTACTS

### Ministry of Agriculture

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[www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/topic.page?id=E1BBC2B708014019A5F31903A733735E](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/topic.page?id=E1BBC2B708014019A5F31903A733735E)

### Service BC Offices

[www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca/locations/](http://www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca/locations/)

### FrontCounter BC Offices

[www.frontcounterbc.gov.bc.ca/](http://www.frontcounterbc.gov.bc.ca/)

### Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)

[www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/index-eng.html](http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/index-eng.html)

### Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)

[www.inspection.gc.ca](http://www.inspection.gc.ca)