



Freshwater Fishing Licensing FAQs for Anglers

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Freshwater Fishing-Licensing: Frequently Asked Questions for Anglers

Who needs a Non-tidal Angling Licence?

If you are 16 years of age or older, you must have a valid Non-tidal Angling Licence to fish for any species of fish in non-tidal waters (including salmon).

If you are an Indian (as defined by the [Indian Act \(Canada\)](#)) you are not required to obtain any type of fishing licence or stamp to sport fish in BC's non-tidal waters.

Does a Non-tidal Angling Licence allow me to fish in tidal waters (saltwater) for salmon or crab or any other saltwater species?

No. The Non-tidal Angling Licence is for fishing in non-tidal (freshwater) lakes, streams and rivers for species of trout, char, and steelhead.

To obtain a licence that is valid to fish in tidal waters (saltwater), you must go to the [Government of Canada's National Recreational Licensing System](#)

What options are available to purchase a licence?

In addition to the provincial [Freshwater Fishing E-Licensing System](#) that enables individuals to purchase their basic licence, conservation surcharges and other licences online, you can visit any [licence vendor](#) or [Service BC Centre](#) to purchase a licence in person. You can also use a Community Access Terminal (CAT) at no charge at any Service BC Centre or ask the Service BC agent to reprint the licence for you.

Note: If you need to reprint your licence, you will need your **Angler Number, Phone Number provided at the time of registration** and **Date of Birth** to log back into the E-Licensing System and reprint your licence.

What kinds of licences can I buy?

1. Every angler who is 16 years of age or older will need to buy a **Basic Licence** which allows him or her to fish in the non-tidal waters of BC.
 2. You will need to validate your basic licence with **Conservation Surcharge Stamps**, a **White Sturgeon Conservation Licence** and/or a **Classified waters Licence** if you intend to fish for specific fish (ex. Steelhead, non-tidal salmon, white sturgeon, etc.) or in specific locations (ex. Class I and Class II Classified Waters). See the [Recreational Freshwater Fishing Licence](#) webpage for more information on these opportunities.
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What are the fees?

See the [Recreational Freshwater Fishing Licence](#) webpage which lists the licence fees for all residency categories.

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How do I produce a basic non-tidal angling licence when asked by a conservation officer?

Upon request of an officer you may be asked to present your basic non-tidal angling licence. Your licence must be legible and can be provided in the following formats:

- An unmodified paper copy printed on 8.5 x 11 paper;
- An unmodified electronic copy on your digital device (i.e. a photo on your phone, tablet, computer, etc.).

Note: **When a conservation surcharge retention record is required**, an unmodified paper copy printed on 8.5 x 11 paper is required to record your catch. Please review the conservation surcharges in the [Freshwater Fishing Regulation Synopsis](#) or the [Recreational Freshwater Fishing Licence](#) webpage for more information.

Can I carry my basic non-tidal angling licence electronically?

Yes, but it must meet the following criteria:

- Legible
- Unmodified
- Immediately available, and
- When a conservation surcharge retention record is **not** required.

Note: **When a conservation surcharge retention record is required**, an unmodified paper copy printed on 8.5 x 11 paper is required to record your catch. Please review the conservation surcharges in the [Freshwater Fishing Regulation Synopsis](#) or the [Recreational Freshwater Fishing Licence](#) webpage for more information.

Where and when can I fish?

The provincial Fishing Regulation Synopsis is printed every two years and details fishing opportunities on lakes, streams and rivers across BC. You can access a digital copy or find out where to find a printed copy by accessing the [Freshwater Fishing Regulations](#) web page. You also need to be aware of In-Season regulation changes which are posted on this same page under the regional information sections.

The [Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC](#) (FFSBC) offers a detailed interactive map resource to assist you with finding a new fishing locale to try out

Can I go fishing immediately after I buy my licence?

Yes. You must carry your Non-tidal Angling licence with you when you are fishing.

Upon request of an officer you may be asked to present your basic angling licence. Your basic non-tidal angling licence must be legible and can be provided in the following formats:

- A legible unmodified paper copy printed on 8.5 x 11 paper, or
- A legible unmodified electronic copy on your digital device (i.e. a photo on your phone, tablet, computer, etc.)

Note: **When a conservation surcharge retention record is required**, an unmodified paper copy printed on 8.5 x 11 paper is required to record your catch. Please review the conservation surcharges in the [Freshwater Fishing Regulation Synopsis](#) or the [Recreational Freshwater Fishing Licence](#) webpage for more information.

Note: The receipt or payment confirmation is your financial record of purchase, it is not the licence.

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When are licences for the new season available?

New season licences will be available for pre-purchase during the month of March.

Note: Both the current year and the new season licence products will be available during the month of March. You must select “**the current season**” or “**the following season**” button to purchase licences based on whether you intend to fish before or after March 31. Please review to confirm the accuracy of your selections prior to completing your purchase(s). If in doubt you can contact [Service BC](#) in person, via phone or email, or in person at any [Licence Vendor](#) for more information

Can I buy a fishing licence by telephone?

No. Telephone sales are not available.

Can I buy a licence for someone else?

Yes. Non-tidal Angling Licences can be purchased for others (e.g. as a gift) provided you have permission from the licence holder-to-be, a valid payment method and all mandatory information for registration (full name, date of birth, address, phone number).

Information for BC Seniors

1. A BC resident who is 65 years of age or older at the time of licence purchase can buy a basic annual Non-tidal Angling licence for a reduced fee. There is no reduced fee for Conservation Surcharges, Classified Waters Licences, or White Sturgeon Conservation Licences.
 2. The option to buy a BC Senior’s licence will only appear in the online system if your Profile indicates that you are a BC resident, and your birth date indicates that you are 65 years of age or older.
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Information for disabled BC residents

1. A disabled BC resident who has an approved Application for an Angling Licence Fee Reduction can buy a basic annual freshwater fishing licence for a reduced fee.
2. There is no reduced fee for Conservation Surcharges, or Classified Waters or White Sturgeon Licences.
3. You can obtain an Application for an Angling Licence Fee Reduction from any Service BC Centre, or [online](#), or by writing to:

Fish and Aquatic Habitat Branch
PO Box 9365 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, B.C. V8W 9M3

4. Once your Application for an Angling Licence Fee Reduction has been approved, you can buy a reduced fee licence at any Service BC Centre, or online through this web site. Note: Licence Vendors do not provide or review and approve applications.
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Am I entitled to a refund?

Please review the licences you have selected to ensure they are correct prior to completing your purchase. Licences are non-refundable and non-transferable with few exceptions.

If in doubt do not complete the purchase until you have consulted the Freshwater Fishing Regulations Synopsis or confirmed with a Licence Vendor or Service BC Centre you are purchasing the correct licences for the type of fishing you intend to do.

- Refunds may be provided under the authority of the Ministry's *Refund Policy*. Requests must be received in writing and forwarded for review to the

Fish and Aquatic Habitat Branch
PO Box 9365 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, B.C. V8W 9M3
- Refunds will not be issued if:
 - You bought a licence and didn't use it
 - You bought a Freshwater Fishing Licence instead of a Tidal Waters Sport Fishing Licence
 - You bought a licence for someone else and found out after the purchase they already had one.
 - You are a resident of BC and Disabled and purchased a licence at the full price prior to qualifying for the reduced fee licence.

What is the Freshwater Fishing E-Licensing System?

The Freshwater Fishing E-Licensing System is an online system that allows anglers to obtain a Non-tidal Angling Licence, Classified Waters Licence, Conservation Surcharge Stamps and White Sturgeon Conservation Licences from any location with an Internet connection and printer.

What are the benefits of purchasing a licence online?

The Freshwater Fishing E-Licensing System allows anglers to obtain licences 24 hours a day, 7 days a week from any location with a computer, Internet access and a printer. Licence holders are also able to reprint a lost licence from home. Note: there is no additional cost to purchasing your licence online.

How do I access the Freshwater Fishing E-Licensing System?

Go to the [Freshwater Fishing Licence](#) webpage. New anglers and returning anglers can log on by clicking the yellow "Buy a Fishing Licence Online" button in the column on the right-hand side of the screen.

What do I need to buy an e-licence for the first time?

You need:

1. A **computer** connected to the **Internet**
 - Optional: a **printer** that is loaded with letter-sized (8.5 x 11) paper if you need to record your catch retention or choose not to carry your licence in an electronic format. If your printer doesn't work or you lose your licence, you can log back in and reprint your licence at any time. Please ensure you transfer any catch information to the reprinted licence.

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2. One of the following **compatible web browsers**:

If you receive a "Browser Not Compatible" error message you will need to update your browser to one of the compatible versions listed below to purchase a licence online:

- Microsoft Internet Explorer (version 11 or later)
- Mozilla Firefox (version 27-33 or later)
- Google Chrome (version 30-32 or later)
- Apple Safari (version 9.1.3 or later)
- Apple Safari Mobile (iOS version 5 or later)

3. Ensure that your browser's **pop-up blocking software turned off**.

4. **Adobe Reader** version 6 or higher is needed to print your licence. If you do not already have Adobe Reader, or you need to upgrade to a later version, you can download a free copy of Adobe Reader [here](#).

5. A valid **credit card number** to pay for your e-licence on the BC Government's secured credit card payment web site. **VISA, MasterCard** and **American Express** are accepted.

6. An **Angler Number**. You will already have one if you have registered yourself online or purchased an e-licence before. If not, the System will give you an Angler Number when you buy or register for an e-licence for the first time. If you forget your Angler Number, contact the FrontCounter BC Help Desk by phone at 1-877-855-3222 Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Pacific Time.

What does it mean if my licence is in 'Pending'?

If the payment process was interrupted for any reason such as loss of internet connectivity or you hit the back button to go to a previous screen to check information or to add an additional licence to your shopping cart, the licence you were attempting to purchase will be placed in a holding pattern while the system waits for the payment to complete. If that does not happen and you have a pending licence, you will have to wait for up to one hour until the original purchase attempt clears and you can begin again.

How do I return and log back into the e-licensing system to reprint or buy another licence?

You need three pieces of information to log back into the system, your **Angler Number, Phone Number** provided when you registered, and **Date of Birth**.

When you registered in the system you were provided with an **Angler Number**. It is vital you remember this number in order to return to the system and purchase future licences or to provide it to a licence vendor so they can issue your licences. If you have already registered and don't remember this information **do not register again**. There are a few ways you can retrieve the information yourself.

- Your **Angler number** would have been automatically emailed to you if you provided an email address so check your email account.
- It will also be displayed on the licence you previously purchased.
- You can find your number by accessing the e-Licensing system if you selected a secret question and answer option when you registered.

If you are unable to retrieve your Angler Number using one of these approaches, you can:

- contact FrontCounter BC Call Centre staff Monday to Friday during business hours at 1-877-855-3222 and they can retrieve it for you, or

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- you can visit any Service BC Centre during business hours Monday to Friday and they will retrieve it, and issue you a licence.

The **phone number** must be the same as what you entered when you registered. If you have a new number, you can still log back into the system using the old number. Once you are logged in, use the update function to amend the old number to the most current one, and then save the change.

Your **date of birth** should not be a problem unless there was an error upon entry. If this is the case, you can contact the Call Centre during business hours or visit any Service BC Centre Monday to Friday during business hours and they will assist you in correcting the information.
