



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Northeast Fisheries Science Center
166 Water Street
Woods Hole, MA 02543-1026

April 1, 2016

MEMORANDUM FOR: MRAG Americas and Northeast Fisheries Observer Program
Observers

FROM: Amy Martins Branch Chief,
Fisheries Sampling Branch (FSB) 

SUBJECT: Revised Vessel Selection Letter and vessel selection protocols

The Fisheries Sampling Branch with the Greater Atlantic Regional Field Office have revised the Vessel Selection Letter (enclosed). **Please remove and dispose of all old copies of the vessel selection letter from your blue regulatory compliance binder (section EF) and replace with this new copy.**

Below is a description of vessel selection protocols:

Steps to take when selecting a vessel for NEFOP coverage:

1. The first step is to contact the vessel either over the phone or in person at the docks. It is always preferable to set up a trip with the captain before the day of the trip, this may take multiple phone calls or trips to the dock. (If possible it is a good idea to check on safety equipment while setting up a trip at the dock. Will a Valise raft be needed?)
2. If you are having a hard time contacting the vessel over the phone or in person OR you suspect the vessel owner is avoiding being selected for coverage, please contact your Area Lead Coordinator (ALC). Fisheries Sampling Branch (FSB) Area Leads Mike Tork (Mid-Atlantic) or Sara Weeks (Northeast) will work with ALC's to provide outreach to the captain/vessel owner.
3. Once outreach efforts from both MRAG Americas and FSB staff have failed to produce an observed trip, the Vessel Selection Letter should be used as a last resort. The letter should be mailed to the permit holder using certified mail or physically handed to a vessel owner/captain at the dock. Always seek approval from your Area Lead Coordinator before handing out the Vessel Selection Letter.
4. Once delivery of the Selection Letter has been confirmed, FSB staff will track the vessel's activity and landings and if no trip results from the selection letter and the vessel has actively fished, the FSB reports the refusal to the Office of Law Enforcement.

What's different about this version?

This revised Vessel Selection Letter has several major differences from the previous version:

- It requires that the vessel give at least 24 hours notice before fishing on the selected trip.
- A Frequently Asked Question section was added that explains why they are receiving the Selection Letter, what authority we have to cover the vessel, and whom they can contact to do safety inspections, ask questions or call to set up an observed trip.
- Language was added that describes the vessels responsibilities once a Selection letter has been received.
- It includes safety information and links for USCG safety examiners.

The revised Vessel Selection Letter can also be found at <http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/fsb/forms/>

If you have questions regarding SBRM vessel selection or the seaday schedule please contact **Sara Weeks** at (508) 495-2227 or Sara.Weeks@noaa.gov or **Mike Tork** (508) 495-2339 or Mike.Tork@noaa.gov.

Attached: Vessel Selection Letter