

Aquaculture Licensing

Once Licensed: What to Expect

Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture
Aquaculture Development Division

June 1, 2022

Information contained in this document is subject to change.

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1. Introduction

The Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture (FFA) acts as the one-stop shop for aquaculture licensing for the province of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL). Once an operator is licensed to conduct aquaculture in NL, it is the licensee's responsibility to ensure compliance with licence conditions and departmental regulatory requirements. The [Aquaculture Policy and Procedure Manual](#) provides policy and procedural guidance for aquaculture licensees. Robust policies and conditions are in place to ensure industry operates in an environmentally sustainable manner while providing economic benefit to NL.

2. Background

Aquaculture licences may be issued for up to a six year term. Licences contain terms and conditions that are applicable to the operation. As the lead in the administration of the aquaculture licensing program, FFA is the first point of contact with respect to licensing related inquiries and will collaborate with provincial and federal regulators on jurisdictional responsibilities where necessary.

This guidance document is intended to provide aquaculture licensees with a suite of information and applicable links to assist licensees in navigating the responsibilities and expectations once a licence is issued. It is the responsibility of the licensee to review and adhere to aquaculture licence conditions and the associated requirements. To further support industry, FFA offers extension services that licensees may avail of. Information regarding available programs and contacts may be found at <https://www.gov.nl.ca/ffa/programs-and-funding/fisheries-and-aquaculture/support/>.

This guidance document is for information only and is not a substitute for the [Aquaculture Act](#) and regulations or other jurisdictional legislative requirements. In the event of an inconsistency between this document and legislation, legislation will always prevail.

Updated versions of this guide will be available on the FFA website under the Aquaculture Licensing section.

The following flow chart illustrates the main areas to be discussed in this guide. Each component is interconnected to form the basis of the aquaculture licensing requirements.



3. **Accela**

Accela is a web-based licensing service managed by FFA. It is available to licensees to perform various functions via the Accela [citizen access site](#) such as annual statistical reporting, Permit to Transfer and Transport (PTT) application submissions and Transfer Report submissions. In order to access the system, new licensees will need to be a registered user. FFA staff will provide the necessary registration forms as well as guidance to assist the new licensee in navigating the system.

4. **Introductions and Transferring of Licensed Species**

The movement and introduction of licensed species requires applicable regulatory approvals and permits. The introduction and transfer of aquatic animals and plants is co-managed by the provincial and federal governments. Outlined in the [National Code on Introductions and Transfers of Aquatic Organisms](#) (Code) are the key elements of the decision making process. The Code also identifies the role of the Introductions and Transfers (I&T) Committee and responsibilities of provincial and federal regulators in assessing the risk associated with the movement of aquatic animals and plants. Licensees are encouraged to consult the Code for more information.

4.1. **Application for Transfer and Transport**

Movement of aquatic animals and plants from or to a licensed aquaculture site require the submission of an Application to Transfer and Transport to FFA via the Accela citizen access site. A comprehensive review of the application occurs by FFA's Aquaculture Development Division (ADD) and Aquatic Animal Health Division (AAHD), as well as Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO). To streamline the assessment process, FFA coordinates the review.

Licensees may be required to provide aquatic animal health information to the AAHD for a disease risk evaluation. In an effort to mitigate the risk of disease transfer, aquatic animal health diagnostics, where applicable, are to be performed prior to the transfer and

provided by the applicant to the AAHD. Please contact the Chief Aquaculture Veterinarian (CAV) for the AAHD requirements. It is important for licensees to consider this when determining stocking plans. Submission of applications well in advance will allow for sufficient time to review and may mitigate unnecessary delays.

Salmonid transfers between the Atlantic Provinces are subject to the requirements outlined in the Health Policy for the Transfer of Live Cultured Finfish in Atlantic Canada. It is recommended that licensees contact the CAV at least four to six months prior to the transfer to seek clarity on requirements.

4.2. Introductions and Transfers Committee (I&T Committee)

The I&T Committee reviews requests to move aquatic animals and plants in an effort to identify and address potential ecological, genetic and aquatic animal or plant health risks. The I&T Committee has representation from FFA, DFO, and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA).

Requests to transfer alternative strains of species into the province may trigger a risk assessment as per the Code.

4.3. Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)

CFIA is the federal lead for the delivery of the [National Aquatic Animal Health Program](#). Its goal is to prevent the introduction and spread of aquatic animal diseases. CFIA-issued Import Permits may be required to import susceptible species of aquatic animals and their products into Canada.

4.4. Permit to Transfer and Transport (PTT) and Transfer Licence

If the transfer is approved, FFA will issue a PTT, and DFO will issue a Transfer Licence. Both authorizations will be provided to the licensee by FFA. These documents will contain a suite of terms and conditions that must be adhered to by the licensee.

4.5. Post Transfer Reports

Licensees will be required to submit a post Transfer Report to FFA via the Accela citizen access site within the timeline indicated on the PTT. In addition to the FFA Transfer Report, licensees must also submit a Transfer Report to DFO in accordance with DFO requirements. It is important to note that the FFA Transfer Report can only be submitted via the Accela citizen access site.

5. Reporting Requirements

5.1. Annual Licence Validation, Renewal and Fees

To ensure compliance with departmental requirements, FFA will conduct an annual review of each site licence for validation purposes and in the year of expiry, for licence renewal. Renewal is completed every six years. In the year of expiry, the licence will be re-issued if all requirements are met.

5.2. Annual Reporting

As per AP 7 Annual Reporting policy of the Aquaculture Policy and Procedures Manual, licensees are required to submit reports and management plan updates applicable to the operation. Since reporting requirements may differ between operations, each January FFA will communicate to licensees the requirements. These reports and management plan updates are required 45 days prior to March 31 and include:

- Production Statistics;
- Employment Statistics;
- Annual Aquatic Animal Health Report, where applicable;
- Production Plan Update;
- Net Cleaning and Disinfection Report, where applicable;
- Net Inventory Report, where applicable;
- Net Storage Report, where applicable;
- Environmental and Waste Management;
- Fish Health Management submitted to the CAV, where applicable;
- Biosecurity submitted to the CAV, where applicable;
- Integrated Pest Management submitted to the CAV, where applicable; and,
- Incident Management.

Production and employment statistics are to be submitted via Accela. The remaining reports are to be submitted to the aquaculturelicensing@gov.nl.ca email account.

Licensees are also required to pay an annual aquaculture licence fee (Appendix 1). This fee is required 45 days prior to March 31. Licensees are to ensure all annual fees associated with other permits or approvals issued by other regulators are paid in accordance with the regulator requirements. In addition, licensees must be in good financial standing with the Government of NL, and if a registered company, be in good standing with Registry of Companies of NL in order to be considered for annual validation or renewal.

5.3. Quarterly Reports

Depending on the operation, FFA require the submission of two quarterly reports: Biophysical Data and Quarterly Aquatic Animal Health Report. The Aquatic Animal Health Division will provide guidance on Quarterly Aquatic Animal Health Reporting. Biophysical data must be submitted to the AAHD and ADD. Quarterly reports are to be submitted on the following dates: April 15 (covering period of January 1 to March 31), on July 15 (covering a period of April 1 to June 30), on October 15 (covering period of July 1 to September 30) and, on January 15 (covering a period of October 1 to December 31).

5.4. Sea Lice Monthly Reports

Salmonid licensees are required to conduct sea lice counts, enter the data into a third party database and publicly report on a monthly basis on the industry association or corporate website. Accurate and timely counting of sea lice is crucial to ensure the successful implementation of the licensee's Integrated Pest Management Plan. Such data will assist in the monitoring of sea lice trends and enhance mitigation and treatment strategies. Sea lice counts typically suspend during the colder winter months due to animal welfare reasons.

5.5. Incident Reporting

Licensees have a responsibility to be open and transparent with the public and must adhere to provincial and federal reporting requirements with respect to disease, escape, quarantine and depopulation events. Incident reporting requirements are outlined in AP 17 Public Reporting policy of the Aquaculture Policy and Procedures Manual as well as in the conditions of licence. Should an incident occur at an aquaculture operation, licensees are required to submit incident reports as outlined in the [Aquaculture Operator Incident Reporting Guidelines](#) and AP 17 Public Reporting policy.

5.6. Aquaculture Activities Regulation (AAR) Reporting

In accordance with [AAR](#) requirements, licensees will be required to submit AAR reports on an annual basis to DFO. The information required will depend on the type of operation. Associated reporting forms can be found at the following link as well as various guidance material: <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/aquaculture/management-gestion/aar-raa-eng.htm>.

6. Licence Permits and Approvals

It is the responsibility of the licensee to ensure that all required permits and approvals issued by regulators for the site operation are maintained and current.

7. **Inspections and Audits**

7.1. **Inspections**

FFA Inspection Officers conduct on-site inspections at aquaculture sites including: Primary Site Inspections and [Code of Containment for the Culture of Salmonids in NL](#) (Code of Containment). Primary Site Inspections are conducted to determine compliance with site marking and gear placement requirements, and identify presence of hazards. Inspections as per the Code of Containment are conducted at salmonid cage culture sites to ensure compliance with the elements of the containment management program.

Primary Site Inspections are conducted regularly, at minimum once per year, and Code of Containment inspections are completed twice a year.

7.2. **Audits**

Code of Containment audits include, but are not limited to, net audits, inventory and storage audits. Please refer to the Code of Containment for additional information. AAHD performs biosecurity audits to ensure the licensee is following established biosecurity measures. For more information, please contact the Aquatic Animal Health Division.

8. **Compliance and Enforcement**

In the event the department deems the licensee to be in violation of departmental policy and regulatory requirements, FFA may suspend, cancel or not renew the aquaculture licence. It is important for aquaculture licensees to understand all requirements and seek clarification from FFA where necessary. Failure to adhere to licensing requirements, including reporting requirements, may be subject to administrative penalties.

For more information

If you would like further information, please contact the Aquaculture Development Division at (709) 292-4100 or by email at aquaculturelicensing@gov.nl.ca.

Acronym Listing

AAHD	Aquatic Animal Health Division
AAR	Aquaculture Activities Regulations
ADD	Aquaculture Development Division
ADO	Aquaculture Development Officer
CFIA	Canadian Food Inspection Agency
Code	National Code on Introductions and Transfers of Aquatic Organisms
Code of Containment	Code of Containment for the Culture of Salmonids in NL
DFO	Fisheries and Oceans Canada
FFA	Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture
I&T	Introductions and Transfers Committee
NL	Newfoundland and Labrador
PTT	Permit to Transfer and Transport

Policy and Guidance Reference

- Aquaculture Act: <https://www.assembly.nl.ca/legislation/sr/statutes/a13.htm>
- Aquaculture Policy and Procedures Manual:
<https://www.gov.nl.ca/ffa/files/licensing-pdf-aquaculture-policy-procedures-manual.pdf>
- Citizen Access Site: <https://licensing.eservices.gov.nl.ca/citizenaccess/>
- Code of Containment: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/ffa/files/Salmonid-Code-of-Containment-Updated-July-2021.pdf>
- Environmental and Waste Management Guidance:
- <https://www.gov.nl.ca/ffa/files/DOC-2022-00210-Aquaculture-application-guidance-document-Environmental-and-Waste-Management-Plan-Guidelines-2022.pdf>
- Aquaculture Operator Incident Reporting Guidelines:
<https://www.gov.nl.ca/ffa/files/21055-Aquaculture-Incident-Reporting-March-25.pdf>
- Aquatic Animal Health Division Viral Management of Infectious Salmon Anaemia virus (ISAv) Contingency Plan Guidelines: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/ffa/files/Viral-Management-of-ISAv-Contingency-Plan-Guidelines-for-Newfoundland-and-Labrador.pdf>
- Newfoundland and Labrador Biosecurity Audit Plan – Aquatic Animal Health Division Guidelines: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/ffa/files/Aquatic-Animal-Health-Division-Biosecurity-Audit-Plan-September-2020.pdf>
- NL Sea Lice Integrated Pest Management Plan:
<https://www.gov.nl.ca/ffa/files/Newfoundland-and-Labrador-Sea-Lice-Integrated-Pest-Management-Plan.pdf>
- Newfoundland and Labrador Aquatic Animal Reportable and Notifiable Diseases:
<https://www.gov.nl.ca/ffa/files/Newfoundland-and-Labrador-Aquatic-Animal-Reportable-and-Notifiable-Diseases-September-2020.pdf>

- Newfoundland and Labrador Cleaner Fish Surveillance Plan: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/ffa/files/Newfoundland-and-Labrador-Fisheries-Forestry-and-Agriculture-Cleaner-Fish-Surveillance-Plan.pdf>
- Salmonid Code of Containment for the Culture of Salmonids in Newfoundland and Labrador: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/ffa/files/DOC-2021-01446-Salmonid-Code-of-Containment-Updated-July-2021.pdf>
- AAR Monitoring Standard: <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/aquaculture/management-gestion/doc/AAR-Monitoring-Standard-2018-eng.pdf>
- AAR Guidance Document: <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/aquaculture/management-gestion/aar-raa-gd-eng.htm>
- AAR Forms: <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/aquaculture/management-gestion/aar-raa-eng.htm>.
- National Aquatic Animal Health Program: <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/science/aah-saa/naahp-pnsas-eng.html>

Appendix 1: Aquaculture Licence Fees

Aquaculture Licensing Fee Schedule

Activity	Name of Fee	Agency Responsible	Fee
New Licence Application Fees			
	Aquaculture Licence Application Fee - Finfish	FFA	\$145/hectare
	Aquaculture Licence Application Fee - Finfish Other	FFA	\$1,000
	Aquaculture Licence Application Fee – Shellfish	FFA	\$500
	Crown Lands Application Fee	FFA	\$150 (+HST)
	*Water Use Licence	ECC	\$400 (+HST)
	Title Document Preparation for Crown Lands Lease fee	FFA	\$300
Change of Ownership Fees			
	Aquaculture Licence Application Fee - Finfish	FFA	\$145/hectare
	Aquaculture Licence Application Fee - Finfish Other	FFA	\$1,000
	Aquaculture Licence Application Fee – Shellfish	FFA	\$500
	Crown Lands Notice of Assignment Fee	FFA	\$200
	*Water Use Licence	ECC	\$400 (+HST)
Annual Licence Fees			
	Finfish	FFA	\$145/hectare
	Finfish Other	FFA	\$1,000
	Shellfish	FFA	\$500
	Crown Lands Annual Rental Fee	FFA	\$8/hectare
	*Water Use Charge (Marine)	ECC	\$1,000
	*Water Use Charge (Freshwater)	ECC	\$10,000
	*Water Use Charge (\$5 per 1,000 m ³ licensed and used plus \$0.50 per 1,000 m ³ licensed but not used)	ECC	
Species Add-on Fees			
	Species Add-on fee – Finfish	FFA	\$1,000
	Species Add-on fee - Shellfish	FFA	\$500
Site Boundary Amendment Fees	Refer to New Licence Application Fees		

*Water Use Licence and Water Use Charge Fees do not apply to shellfish aquaculture.

Other provincial and federal costs that may be associated with aquaculture are not included.

FFA – Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture
ECC – Environment and Climate Change

December 9, 2021