

Marine Fisheries

Mechanical Gear for Harvesting Oysters and Clams on Private Shellfish Leases and Franchises (MECH Permit)

What Activities Require This Permit? Using mechanical gear for harvesting oysters and/or clams from leases and franchises. Mechanical gear consists of oyster dredges, patent tongs, power rakes, hydraulic escalators, hydraulic pumps, clam dredges, kicking with a clam trawl, kicking without a clam trawl, stick (power) rake, and any other gear constituting use of a mechanical operation to harvest shellfish.

What Is The Purpose of This Permit? To ensure that mechanical harvest of clams and oysters on leases and franchises only occurs in areas where bottom disturbance will not negatively impact surrounding ecosystems.

Who Issues This Permit? N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF), Habitat Enhancement and Protection Section

How Much Will This Permit Cost? No cost

Where Can I Get The Application For This Permit? N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries, Aquaculture, 3441 Arendell Street, Post Office Box 769, Morehead City, NC 28557; phone: 252-515-5500; 1-800-682-2632; 252-515-5478 or casey.silva@deq.nc.gov

How Long Will It Take To Review My Application? 2 weeks (14 days) for new permits, 1 week (7 days) for renewals

Where Do I Submit My Application? N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries, Aquaculture, 3441 Arendell Street, Post Office Box 769, Morehead City, NC 28557; phone: 252-515-5500; 1-800-682-2632; 252-515-5478 or casey.silva@deq.nc.gov

How Long Is My Permit or License or Certificate Valid? Permits expire on June 30 each year.

Notes/Comments: Mechanical gear shall not be used in any bed of aquatic vegetation nor within 100 feet of any bed of submerged vegetation, in any live oyster bed, nor within 100 feet of any natural or live oyster bed. Mechanical gear shall not be used in areas designated primary nursery areas. Mechanical gear shall not be used in areas where mechanical harvest will cause siltation of critical habitats, such as grass beds or natural oyster rocks, or in areas where suspension of sediments in the water column may release bacteria, heavy metals, or other substrates harmful to the environment or human health.

Legal Authority/Statute Reference: General Statute 113-182 and 143B-289.52; NC Fisheries Rules for Coastal Waters 15A NCAC 3K.0206

Link: <https://deq.nc.gov/aquaculture-permits>

Statewide Contact Information:

N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries
Aquaculture
3441 Arendell Street
Morehead City, NC 28557
Telephone: 252-515-5500; 1-800-682-2632; 252-515-5478

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