



Isle of Man
Government

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Landing Obligation General Requirements 2019

The guidance below is based on current regulations. Please be aware that further changes may be made, especially for fish stocks where there is a high risk of choke. Changes could apply as a result of the December 2018 council negotiations.

Introduction

The Landing Obligation means that certain catches of fish are no longer allowed to be discarded at sea; it is the correct term for the 'discard ban'.

The History

When the European Union Common Fisheries Policy was reformed in 2012, it included the requirement to eliminate the practice of throwing unwanted catch overboard while at sea, a practice known as 'discarding', which is considered wasteful.

The Landing Obligation was introduced for all pelagic fisheries in January 2015. Since then, it has applied to anyone engaged in pelagic fisheries, targeting mackerel, horse mackerel, herring, tuna, blue whiting and boarfish. The Landing Obligation for demersal fisheries came into effect, on a phased basis, from 1 January 2016 and it was extended further in 2017. This means it now affects some demersal fishermen for some of their catches.

From 2019

On 1st January 2019, the Landing Obligation will be fully implemented and will apply to all fisheries that catch quota species, even if quota species are caught incidentally as by-catch. It will require you to record and land all species subject to catch limits. (This will include the queen and king scallop fisheries, as well as the nephrops fishery.)

When the Landing Obligation applies

The Landing Obligation applies to all size fishing vessels, including those under 10 metres in length. It does not apply to recreational fisheries.

Landing Obligation rules **do not** apply to non-quota species, but **only to** species which are managed by quota limits.

Fisheries not affected by the Landing Obligation

If you¹ use:

- pots, traps and creels, the Landing Obligation rules will not affect you. You can continue to discard fish and shellfish caught using these gears.
- beam trawls to fish for brown shrimp in the southern North Sea (IVb and IVc), the Landing Obligation rules will not affect you.

Fisheries that have limited exemptions

If you use:

- scallop dredges, longlines or rod and lines, the only quota species that you may continue to discard are skates and rays.

¹ Where the term 'you' is used in this document, this always refers to the Master or Owner of the fishing vessel concerned.

Fish that must be discarded

You must discard prohibited species, which should be released unharmed.

- **Bass is not subject to the Landing Obligation**, as it is not subject to a Total Allowable Catch. Note: bass cannot be caught commercially in the IOM territorial sea.
- **Spurdog is not subject to the Landing Obligation**, but is listed with other prohibited species.

Catch composition

Catch composition rules will no longer apply to quota species, although minimum mesh sizes set out in technical conservation rules must be respected.

Quota limits

The Landing Obligation requires that quota species are not to be discarded. You will need to adjust your fishing pattern, avoid unwanted catches and make use of the exemptions available in order to remain within quotas limits.

See your UK licence Annexe for details of 'Quota Limitations' and keep up to date with any variations to your licence.

General exemptions

You may choose to discard certain species for which there are exemptions. There are general exemptions across all fisheries:

- fish damaged by predators
- fish damaged by disease or parasites
- contaminated fish unfit for human consumption
- fish released during vessel tasks e.g. those stuck in the net when cleaning gear
- fish offal from processing e.g. fish guts and nephrops' heads

Fishery specific exemptions

Exemptions apply to fish species that are proven to have a good chance of survival and, in some cases, where it is acceptable that unwanted catches of certain species are unavoidable and costly to handle.

You should deploy selective nets and trawls in order to avoid catching unwanted species. The current technical conservation rules should be followed, see the document '[Landing Obligation Guidance 2019](#)'.

Fishing gear

The [Landing Obligation Guidance 2019](#) document provides information on new technical gear requirements that are mandatory in 2019 in the Irish Sea and Celtic Sea. Some exemptions can only be used where conditions on gear selectivity are met. Vessel operators are encouraged to use innovative gear designs to avoid unwanted catch – and more information can be found on the Seafish and Gearing Up websites (web links available at the end of this document).

Recording catches

Record in your fishing logbook:

- **all discards of any quantity of fish exempt from the Landing Obligation** (for example, skates and rays).
- **discards of non-quota species where more than 50kg of each species has been discarded in a trip**, recording the estimated weight of each species of fish discarded. This means if you have a two-day trip and discard 30kg one day and 25kg the next (55kg in total), you must record these discards.

Undersize catches

Undersized fish that has to be landed under the landing obligation must be recorded in your logbook as a separate entry for each species.

You must record that exact weight of all undersize fish on your landing declaration. Your landing declaration must be submitted within 24 hours of landing if electronic, or 48 hours if paper.

Storing catches

Vessels 12 metres length (LOA) or longer:

Undersize fish must be stored separately from those above the minimum allowed size e.g. in a separate, marked container.

Different species of undersize fish may be stored together unless it is a recovery species. For example, you must store cod caught in ICES Area VIIa separately and mark them on your stowage plan.

Vessels under 12 metres LOA:

You do not have to store undersize fish separately. However, if you have a logbook, you must sort, estimate their weight and record them.

What to do with undersize fish landed under the Landing Obligation

You are responsible for handling the undersize fish until they are transferred to a third party, for example, sold to another Registered Buyer or Seller². The person who buys or sells your fish should produce a sales note – even if it is going to be used for bait.

Any undersize fish landed must not be sold for direct human consumption. They may be sold for other uses including: bait, fishmeal and cosmetics.

More information on handling undersize fish under the landing obligation, see the document: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/753783/Ports_harbours_and_fish_markets_-_handling_undersize_fish_under_the_landing_obligation.pdf

² Refer to URL: <https://www.gov.im/categories/business-and-industries/fish-buyers-and-sellers/>

Enforcement

Current methods of enforcement and surveillance, including inspections, will be used to educate and check compliance.

Helpful website links

Website	Giving information on
http://www.seafish.org/responsible-sourcing/managing-discards/landing-obligation	More information on the Landing Obligation
https://www.gov.im/categories/business-and-industries/fish-buyers-and-sellers/	Details about Registration of fish buyers and sellers
https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/fishing_rules/discards_en	European Commission on discarding and the landing obligation
https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fisheries-management-landing-obligation	UK Government guidance on the landing obligation
https://www.gov.im/categories/business-and-industries/commercial-fishing/iom-licencing/uk-conditions-and-variations/	UK licence conditions, schedules and annexes
https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/fishing_rules/tacs_en	For a list of EU stocks for which Total Allowable Catch is set
https://gearingup.eu/	The GearingUp project to help find ways to reduce bycatch or unwanted catches