

**CALIFORNIA CONFERENCE OF
DIRECTORS OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**

**GUIDELINES FOR RETAIL FISH SALES FROM
COMMERCIAL FISHING VESSELS**

revised July 2008

BACKGROUND

This guideline was originally created in May 1999. This revision was completed by the Bay Area Technical Advisory Committee in response to the adoption of the California Retail Food Code (CRFC).

The retail sale of whole-bodied fish directly to the consumer from commercial fishing vessels is a common occurrence in coastal areas of California. These sales typically occur at docks or wharves where fishing vessels are moored. The following guidelines have been prepared by the California Conference of Directors of Environmental Health (CCDEH) Bay Area Food Technical Advisory Committee with input from the CCDEH Southern California, Northern California, and Central Valley Food Technical Advisory Committees, the California Salmon Council, the University of California Sea Grant Extension Program, and the commercial fishing industry.

SCOPE

These guidelines are intended to provide guidance to local health jurisdictions and segments of the commercial fishing industry that are involved in retail fish sales from commercial fishing vessels. Local enforcement agencies that experience such fish sales are encouraged to adopt these guidelines in the hope that uniform statewide interpretation and enforcement will benefit both regulatory and industry interests alike. Any food processing or sales activities beyond those described in this guideline, such as steaking or filleting, will require that additional operational and structural standards be met, and must receive prior approval from the local Environmental Health Department. Section 114027 of CRFC, states that "Fish that are received for sale or service shall be commercially and legally caught or harvested.

REQUIREMENTS

1. All fish shall be sold whole. No filleting, steaking or processing, other than Gilling, gutting, and scaling are allowed.
2. Gilling, gutting and scaling of fish shall be done at sea prior to beginning sales and in accordance with all California Fish and Game regulations.
3. All fish sold shall be packed at the time of sale in a drip-proof, food grade bag (e.g., plastic) of sufficient strength to support the weight of the fish.
4. Fish shall be sold only by, or under direct supervision of, the fisherman who harvested the fish.
5. All sales must occur from the vessel. No selling stations will be allowed to be set up on or in any dock, wharf, parking area or other structure.
6. Consumers are not allowed on vessels selling fish. All shore attachments, protrusions or equipment that could injure a consumer or create a trip hazard shall be safely covered or removed.
7. The vessel or business name shall be prominently placed and clearly visible to consumers during sales activities so that the business or vessel is easily identifiable.
8. Fish must be maintained at a temperature of 41 degrees Fahrenheit or below at all times, including during storage (California Salmon Council Quality Guidelines recommend 32-35 degrees Fahrenheit). Acceptable means of maintaining temperature include approved refrigeration equipment or embedding in ice.
9. Ice used for the chilling of fish must be made from potable water and be protected from sources of contamination.
10. Stored fish must be protected from all sources of contamination.
11. Scombrototoxic fish must receive special care in handling, i.e., proper icing, refrigeration, or immediate freezing upon landing (catching), to prevent bacterial growth, spoilage, and histamine production. Scombrototoxic fish include tuna, albacore, mahi mahi, mackerel and others.
12. Discharge of fish scales, entrails, and other debris into marina waters is prohibited.
13. Only approved, cleanable utensils may be used to clean fish. Utensils, processing areas, and storage facilities such as holds must be maintained in

a clean and sanitary condition.

14. Vessel owners or operators shall conform to all regulations and requirements, including those of the California Department of Fish and Game, the local Harbor District or Port Commission, and the County Department of Weights Measures. Vessel owners or operators must acquire all required permits and licenses.
15. Vessel owners and operators must check with the local Environmental Health Department concerning applicable permits and fees.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information for maintaining fish quality on board commercial salmon fishing vessels is available from the California Salmon Council, P O Box 2255, Folsom, CA 95763-2255, telephone (916) 933-7050, FAX (916) 933-7055, or at their web site, www.calkingsalmon.org.